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LAWRENCI' OF ARABIA

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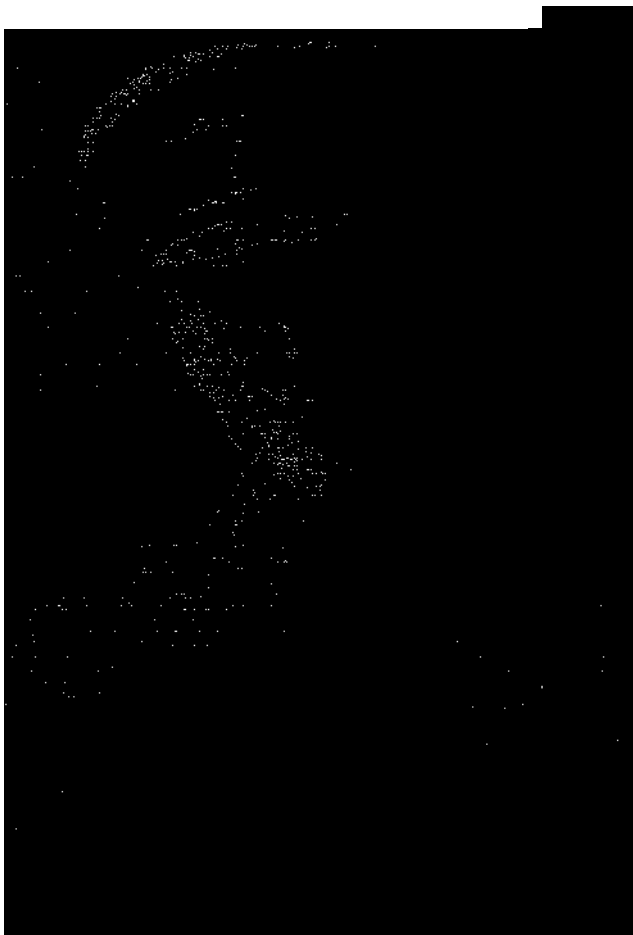
LLOYD GEORGE

THE UNVEILING OF ARABIA

THE FIRST WAR IN THE AIR

CAPTAIN ALBERT BALL, V.C.

Etc.



JAN CHRISTIAN SMUTS

Photo Topical Press

GENERAL SMUTS

R. H. KIERNAN

WITH NINE ILLUSTRATIONS IN HALF-TONE
AND TWO MAPS



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To
JOHN ALAN

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PREFACE

WHEN South Africa's leader visited England in 1942 boys frequently asked the writer what Smuts had done that he should be welcomed with such honour and heard with such respect by the whole nation. Some of them knew his name vaguely, and associated it with old books about the Boer War, in which Smuts appeared as the central figure in group photographs of sturdy, heavily moustached men who wore bandoliers across their chests and broad-brimmed hats.

Smuts fought against Britain in the most exciting venture of that war. Then, through British fair dealing and trust, he became our staunch friend. Believing in unity among mankind, he first worked to achieve the unity of his own land; and then strove, against tireless and often vicious opposition, for South African co-operation with Britain and the Commonwealth. In that partnership he saw South Africa great among the nations without losing her Freedom and individuality. In 1914, with Botha, he ensured that South Africa stood by Britain, and again took the field in two African campaigns. In the central direction of the last war Mr Lloyd George was greedy influenced by his advice, and assigned him many duties. Smuts planned the air defence of London and urged the formation of the Air Ministry, and was one of the creator[^] of the R.A.F. At the Peace he gave advice and warning to the Allies, much of which, it can be argued, has been

PREFACE

justified. With President Wilson he was the leading protagonist of the League of Nations, which he hoped would set mankind on the path to unity. For many years between the wars he had to combat an extreme nationalism in South Africa which threatened to disintegrate the Union and separate it from the British Commonwealth.

It was Smuts's influence in 1939 which again ranged South Africa by the side of Britain, his energy which produced the armies of East African and Libyan fame and started a vast production of war-material in a land lacking great heavy industries. Smuts is a soldier, philosopher, and far-sighted statesman. In the British Commonwealth of Nations he sees a model for future associations of peoples, each retaining its liberty and personality, but all working for the good of the whole. He is one of the world's few illustrious men.

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Even before the Company was dissolved the settlers of the eastern Cape drove them out and formed a republic. The Company had employed its own troops, reinforced by levies from the settlers. By this time Europeans had extended their penetration as far as the Great Fish River to the east of Cape Town and almost to the Orange river, and in the Bantu races were meeting foes more formidable than their earlier adversaries, the Bushmen and Hottentots. Now, to defend themselves against these warriors, the Boers developed the * commando '—a system of conscription of burghers, or citizens.

A great, uncrowded land imbued the Boers with a love of freedom and dislike of interference from a central Government. Yet they were not long to enjoy this spacious, unfettered way of life. Events in Europe caused their land first to be occupied by the British, then transferred to Holland, and finally, at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, to be attached to Great Britain. A British Governor and Council administered the Cape and were followed by British colonists in fair numbers.

The new rulers of the Cape made English the official language, though not one-eighth of the Europeans were British. The local officials were replaced by magistrates who did not speak Dutch or Afrikaans, Slavery was abolished, and the Boers were not adequately compensated for the loss of their black labour. Hottentots were made equal in law to white men, and the British employed them as police—an innovation which some Boers were ready to meet with armed resistance. Again, when bands of natives raided outlying farms the British did not always deal with them as promptly and drastically as was the Boer custom, and

even regarded this plundering and destruction as an expression of resentment at injustice, rather than as evidence of natural wickedness.

To many of the Boers the British administration seemed wildly revolutionary, for they regarded the native as barbaric, dangerous by reason of his great numbers, and in need of firm discipline rather than sympathy and liberal, humanitarian treatment. To escape from the British regime, and to rediscover their former freedom and sense of independence, thousands of Boers in 1836 began to leave the Cape, pressing farther into Africa, on the Great Trek.

The *voortrekkers*, with their ox-wagons, women and children, horses, cattle, and household goods, plodded away over the stony, barren hills, great mountain ranges, through primeval forests, across the dry desert, and into endless dim green veld. They fought the savages and studied their tactics; in fighting and hunting they became wary and alert, and cool, steady, deadly marksmen. The Great Trek eliminated the weak and hardened the remainder in muscle and spirit. The elders, patriarchs of the migrating groups, read the Bible aloud to their people, and to their settlements and laagers gave Biblical names, such as Hebron, Elam, and Bethesda.

A group of *voortrekkers* reached Natal, where there were already English settlers. Some of them were treacherously massacred by the Zulu chief, Dingaan, near the town now called Weenen, which means "Weeping." But a company of Boers, numbering less than five hundred, went out to meet the Zulus. Laagered near the Umslatoos river, they were attacked

by an army often thousand Zulus, the best-disciplined and bravest of warriors. As the black *impis* advanced against the laager they were met by the accurate fire of men who had learned never to waste a shot. Thousands were slain, so that the river ran red, and was called thereafter Blood river.

The Boers now hoped to settle in Natal, free of the British. But the British had a prior claim to the land. Moreover, Natal had a seaboard, so that a Boer state established there might enter into relations with European Powers to Britain's disadvantage. Natal was therefore annexed to Britain. Boers who refused to live under British rule turned away into the interior to join the Boers who had crossed the Orange and Vaal rivers, setting up the Orange Free State and the Transvaal Republic, both of which Britain recognized as independent.

II

Among the *voortrekkers* who crossed the Vaal was a boy of ten, Paul Kruger. Before he was fifteen years old he had fought against Zulu and Matabele. His youth and early manhood were occupied with trekking, hunting, and leading commandos in native wars. Such was his education, and he had little knowledge of the world beyond the veld. His reading was the Bible, and chiefly the Old Testament. A narrow, unforgiving spirit, Kruger's dislike and distrust of the British was inbred.

For a time it seemed that the Boers had again discovered solitude, freedom, and power. They had wide

holdings of land, herds of catde, and black labour. The Governments of the Republics made no great demands on the burghers, and if a man had a grievance he simply talked it over, smoking a pipe, on the President's *stoep*. The Boer Governments hoped to expand their territory and gain a sea-outlet for trade, but this hope was constantly deferred by British action.

When troubles occurred between Boers and Basutos the British instituted a protectorate over Basutoland. In 1870, when diamonds were found at Kimberley, the British annexed the territory, angering the Free Staters—for they had understood that the Orange river would be the northern limit of the British sphere in South Africa. Soon afterwards the authorities in the Cape and in London agreed that the Transvaal Government, which was engaged in a native war, was too weak and financially unsound to be allowed to continue. Its weakness might cause trouble among other tribes. Britain annexed the Transvaal, and then proceeded to smash the Zulus who had destroyed a British force.

Representative government was promised the Transvaal, but when a beginning of this system was delayed the Transvaalers revolted and defeated the British at Majuba, but agreed to accept self-government under British suzerainty. In 1884 another Convention was signed with the Transvaal, restricting the Republic's dealings with foreign Powers, granting freedom of residence and trade in the Transvaal for all Europeans, and (as the Boers claimed later and the British denied) abandoning the claim to suzerainty.

In this Convention Britain's attitude was friendly and generous, but Kruger retained his dislike **and**

'suspicion, Now President of the Transvaal, he dreamed of an Afrikaner Empire, lying from the Indian Ocean to the Adantic; and the Boers began to move into Bechuanaland. Through this district lay the route from the Cape to the territory north of the Transvaal. Britain annexed it, and then annexed Zululand.

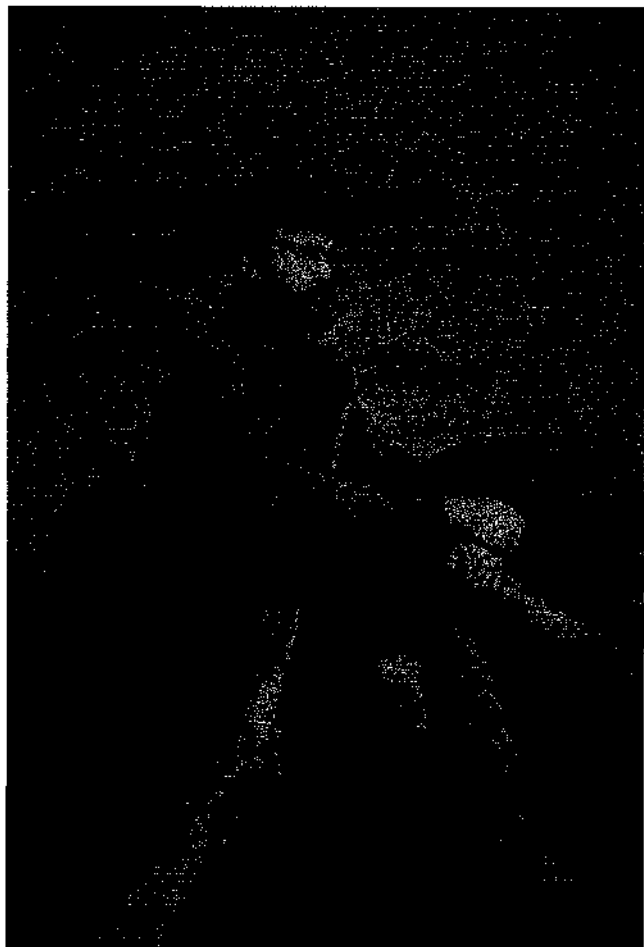
The Boers were allowed to control Swaziland, but as the British held Amatongaland and Kpsi Bay, they still lacked free access to the sea. Two arms of British territory now enclosed the Boer Republics, in the east from the Cape to Portuguese East Africa, and in the west from the Cape to the Limpopo.

The north remained for expansion, and here Kruger was thwarted by Cecil Rhodes, an Englishman who had made a vast fortune in gold and diamonds. Believing that the dominance of Britain throughout the world would be a force for the universal good of humanity, Rhodes had resolved to make South Africa his own contribution to Britain's domain. He hoped to bring the English and Dutch together in co-operation, federate the South African states under the Crown, and extend British power over the whole length of Africa. It was he who had urged the annexation of Bechuanaland, which led from the Cape past the Boer Republics to lands in the north containing gold and wide pasture, sparsely inhabited by the Matabele and suitable for European settlers. He had won the friendship and support of Dutch leaders in the Cape.

By treaty with the Matabele Rhodes gained concessions for mining and trading north of the Transvaal, and formed the British South Africa Company. In a few years, after wars with the Matabele, the country



PART OF A BOER COMMANDO IN NATAL
Photo E.N.A.



GENERAL SMUTS DURING THE BOER WAR
Photo E.N.A.

became Rhodesia, a part of the British Empire* The Transvaal was now enclosed in the north. The Boer Republics might well think that this was a British policy of encirclement; but Rhodes did not want to encircle them; his aim was to incorporate them in a united South Africa.

m

In 1886 gold was discovered on the Witwatersrand, and there followed a great inrush of foreigners, mostly British. Soon they outnumbered Boers on the Rand, and Johannesburg arose, a formless, rushing, bustling, ugly mining town. At one time a foreigner, or Uidander, could become a Transvaal citizen with full rights after one year's residence. Alarmed at the growing number of Uidanders, Kruger now extended the residential and other, qualifications until it took fourteen years for a newcomer to attain full citizenship. Meanwhile the Uidanders had no share in the government, even in the local government of the gold-bearing region, into which they were putting their work and capital, and which provided most of the State revenue.

This question of the franchise was only one grievance of the Uidanders. Various price-raising monopolies were resented. Pynamite locally obtained, for example, cost more than dynamite imported from Europe. The Uidanders alleged that European Dutch and German officials employed by the Transvaal were corrupt. Kruger's reply was that the Uidander was not invited to the Transvaal, and could get out if he did not like the conditions; and that the British Uidanders

wanted the same political rights as Transvaalers while retaining their own citizenship, an attitude they would not think of adopting in a stronger country. The Boers generally considered that they would profit little from the wealth which was being made out of their country.

Some of the Uitlanders did not represent the elite of their own countries, and were aggressive, excited, and unbalanced by their new-found prosperity. They treated the Transvaal and its old President with contempt. Some of the British thought that a Briton should not be kept in a position of inferiority anywhere in the world, and certainly not in a small Republic run by an incompetent Government. Others feared that Krugpr might be driven by the clamour of the Uitlanders into an alliance with Germany, which was late in the scramble for African possessions and was envious of Britain's success.

In 1895 Uitlanders formed a plan for overthrowing the Transvaal Government by force. Rhodes, now Premier of the Cape, and head of the wealthiest companies in South Africa, was ready to support them. He was ill and had already lived longer than the doctors expected. Believing that South African unity might never be achieved if he died with his work unfinished, he would not wait, though he knew that the Transvaalers themselves were tired of Kruger and his chief assistants. At the end of 1895 one of his agents, Dr Jameson, began a raid with five hundred men of the British South Africa Company from near Mafeking into the Transvaal. A rising in Johannesburg, projected to accompany the raid, came to nothing, and Boer commandos easily captured Jameson's men.

The immediate result of the Jameson Raid was to rally the Boers to Kruget. William II of Germany sent a telegram of congratulations to him, and the condemnation of British Imperialism was world-wide. Disclaimed by the Cape Dutch, Rhodes resigned the Premiership. Those who had shared his vision of a great South Africa, many of them Cape Dutch, were amazed and repelled.

There w[^]s one young man who had responded to Rhodes's vision and had publicly declared his faith in the man and his policy. The Jaffieson Raid was a turning-point in his life. Embittered by Rhodes's aggression, and detesting all that was English and Imperial, he left the Cape and became a Transvaal citizen. In the course of years all the world, save some of his own countrymen, came to regard him as the most illustrious of South Africans. His name was Jan Christian Smuts.

CHAPTER II

STATE ATTORNEY

The village school—Smuts learns English—His memory—
At Stellenbosch—A feat in Greek—Brilliant success at
Cambridge—A disciple of Rhodes—The Jameson Raid—
Disillusion—Transvaal State Attorney—Kruger and Milner
—The Bloemfontein Conference—Smuts seeks a com-
promise—The Boer War begins

SMUTS was born in 1870 on a farm near the hamlet of Riebeeck West, in the Cape. Many of the South African Dutch had intermarried with French and Germans, but the Smuts family was of almost pure Dutch stock. Jan Smuts was a slight, paie'boy, quiet, unusually shy and reserved. His language was Afrikaans and scraps of dialect he acquired from the native farm-workers. Until he was twelve he could not read or write. At that age he went to the village school. He was taught English, which he still speaks with a trace of foreign accent, learned to write, studied night and day, read every available book, and rapidly overtook and passed his fellow-pupils.

As a student he possessed one rare advantage, for he could memorize a book at one reading! Solemn, reticent, studious, not interested in games, no one would have marked him among a group of boisterous country lads as a future leader of guerrillas. Indeed, the obvious forecast for him would have been the career of a teacher or scholar, in a quiet, uneventful setting.

From the village school he went to Victoria College, Stellenbosch, where he remained five years. He was now a tall, thin youth, fair, with steady, rather sombre blue eyes. Contact with older students did not alter his character, and he remained shy, self-contained, and dignified, taking little part in the livelinesses of college life. A joy to his teachers, for he had immense powers of work, he learned German and High Dutch, read the German poets and philosophers, Shelley and the meditative poets. His recreations were walking and taking a Bible class with natives on Sundays.

One good friend he made, and she became his wife. Her tastes were as serious as his, for they studied Greek, botany, and German together. Greek was required for his matriculation, and as he could find no tutor, Smuts had to teach himself. In six days he learned a Greek grammar, applied the rules and vocabulary to translation, and passed the examination with first place. Finally he graduated with honours in literature and science and won a scholarship for Cambridge. When Rhodes visited the college, eight years before the Jameson Raid, Smuts, as the ablest student, was chosen to make an address. Rhodes was impressed and marked Smuts for future employment in his own service.

The scholarship was not sufficient to cover his expenses, so that Smuts had to borrow from a friend. It was a small sum, yet the repayment was to take many years and continued even after Smuts's marriage. At Christ's College, Cambridge, his outstanding success in the Law Tripos revealed a power of intense concentration, an analytical mind, and a mighty

memory. His success merited and earned the praise of Maitland, Professor of English Law at Cambridge, brilliant jurist and historian, for Smuts took a First in both Parts. In the Bar Examinations he came first in the History of Law and Constitutional Law and won the George Long Prize. Moreover, while reading for the Tripos with the intensity needed to gain such results, he found time and energy to write a philosophic study of the American poet, Walt Whitman, in which, it has been discerned, he anticipated some of the hypotheses of the psycho-analysts.

At the university he lived quietly, made few contacts, and had no sponsor to set him on a career justified by his brilliant success. He was offered a teaching post in law, and would have become a superb teacher, for even then he possessed in the most marked degree the gift he has since shown of lucid statement and of clearly summarizing and organizing facts so that their significance becomes plain. He refused the offer for one reason—that he longed to return to South Africa. Smuts could never resist the call of his own land. Years later, when England clamoured to keep him, he again returned to his country, knowing well that South Africa held for him much suffering and combat.

In 1895 he was admitted to the Cape Bar, lived at Cape Town, and while awaiting briefs earned a little money by writing for various journals. He was too little of a mixer/ too reserved and academic in outlook for the ordinary run of business in the Courts to come his way; so with time on his hands he became interested in politics and joined the Bond. This was a

party, composed chiefly of Cape Dutch and had been originally anti-British. This attitude had been greedily modified by Rhodes, and the Bond shared his hopes of a united South Africa.

Smuts became an enthusiastic disciple of Rhodes. When those who distrusted Rhodes's motives attacked his policy the Bond sent Smuts to speak in his defence at Kimberley. Smuts propounded the Rhodes thesis with all the force and clarity of a first-class legal mind, and with all the conviction of one who believed intensely everything he said. He could defend the Premier's conduct and ideals, for he was in sympathy with his aim of forging unity in South Africa and developing co-operation between British and Boers; and he believed that Rhodes was perhaps the only man who could achieve this end.

Almost immediately after his speech came the Jameson Raid! Smuts was young, sensitive, and unused to politics. He was shocked, angry that he had defended a man capable of this cynical, cold, scheming policy of aggression; he felt that he had been betrayed in his trust, and—worse, perhaps, to the Smuts of that time—that he had been made ridiculous. The bitterness of Smuts's reaction is not surprising, for older, more hardened politicians in the Bond and elsewhere were equally chagrined and disgusted with Rhodes.

In Smuts the Jameson Raid stirred up a memory of past British history in South Africa, and his mind now reviewed British policy as seen through the eyes of Boer extremists. He felt that he must escape from everything tainted by Rhodes and the British. So he left the Cape, entered the Transvaal, and became, as

any Uidander could become, a second-class burgher with the prospect of reaching full citizenship in fourteen years.

II

There was little scope for a lawyer of Smuts's type in the rough-and-tumble life of a mining town such as Johannesburg, but he made a living, taught law in evening classes, and married. When Kruger added to his troubles with the Uidanders a dispute with his own Chief Justice, Smuts supported the President; and though among lawyers he found little support, he was probably right in his interpretation of the legal points at issue. Kruger recognized the brilliance and hard honesty of Smuts's mind, realized that he was not tied to any group of Transvaal interests, and that he could trust him. Against considerable opposition he appointed the newcomer to the position of State Attorney.

At once the Transvaal Government felt that a new force had arrived! Heads of the Police Department who seemed unable to cope with various illegal practices were dismissed. Illegal traffickers in liquor and gold were hunted. New criminal laws involving serious punishments were introduced. Casualness and corruption stirred redsedly. Old vultures looked up uneasily from the fat carcass of the Transvaal. Bitter things were said of the State Attorney, only twenty-eight years old, who took the enforcement of law in his own hands. Nor were the Uidanders spared, for when they refused the common duty of commando

service Smuts arranged for replacement of military service by a scutage, or money-payment.

Smuts had arrived in the Transvaal too late either to impress the clamorous element among the foreigners with strong government or to negotiate a feasonable agreement with them. Events were moving rapidly towards armed conflict. Britain's Governor and High Commissioner at the Cape, Milner, possessed a sense of the grandeur, dignity, and destiny of the British Empire which, had it been present in pre-1939 British Governments, would have prevented the rise of European tyrannies and might have averted war. To Milner the Uitlanders were as helots in a contemptible state. That British people should be left in such a position was an outrage. Nor was Milner the man to approach the old President with friendly informality. The two men were products of different worlds. Milner had been educated in Germany and at the Balliol of Jowett, where he had won brilliant academic success; he was a barrister and civil servant with wide experience of financial administration in England and Egypt. Kruger's education extended to litde more than learning to read and write, and in boyhood and early manhood his years were spent in farming, hunting, and fighting. Then for many years he had been engaged in the petty politics of the Transvaal. He read the Bible, considered that God guided his actions, and was by nature narrow and obdurate. Finally, the background of his whole life was resentment and distrust of the British.

The Englishman and the Boer met in conference at Bloemfontein. Kruger came ready at first to bargain, to reach some vague understanding tentatively,

fearing that any concession would open the gate and enable the Englishman to take everything. Above all he was reluctant to give way too far on the franchise, for the Transvaal burghers feared they would be outvoted in their own land by crowds of foreigners. Milner, on the other hand, had no intention of bargaining, and had clear-cut demands for franchise for the Uitlanders after five years' residence, with more share in the government of the country. Kruger pointed out that many thousands of Uidanders were satisfied with the Government, and tried to shift the discussion to the dynamite monopoly, compensation for the Jame-son Raid, and other topics. Milner insisted that he had come to discuss the franchise. Each accused the other of warlike preparations, and Kruger cried out that Milner wanted to take the Boers' independence.

Though Smuts was still resentful of the Britain represented by Cecil Rhodes, he did not want war. Persuading Kruger to reconsider the franchise and to yield on the dynamite monopoly, provided Britain showed her cards plainly, he drew up a programme of reforms which was presented to Milner. It was not enough. Again, on Smuts's urging, Kruger made further suggestions to improve the Uitlander position. Again he could not satisfy British demands. Then it seemed to Kruger that he was being asked to hand the government of his country to foreigners. The conference ended without agreement, and though it was later suggested by the Transvaal that the Uidanders should have a seven years* franchise, war was nearer. The British were moving troops towards South Africa, and Boer commandos were rallying near Pretoria.

Smuts did not abandon efforts for peace. In the summer of 1899 he was negotiating with the British Agent at Pretoria, making concessions in the franchise and offering more representation in government for the mining areas. At one time the British Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, was delighted with the results of these negotiations, hoping that war would be averted. Then the question of British suzerainty arose, obscured the results achieved, and wrecked the conversations. Milner had said that not for a million pounds would he be an Englishman living under the heel of the Transvaal crew. Rhodes considered that Kruger had given way more than he had expected, but that he would not fight.

On the other hand, the Boers of the Transvaal remembered their victory of Majuba and were not unduly impressed by British military power. The Orange Free State supported the Transvaal. The British Government noted with concern the Boers' importation of arms, v Kruger declared that he would not agree to the " far-reaching and insolent demands " of Britain. Probably encouraged by hints of assistance from Germany,*he requested the removal of British troops from the Transvaal frontier, the withdrawal of forces already landed, the diversion of reinforcements on the way to South Africa, and demanded an immediate reply.

This was too much even for Chamberlain, who had been less ready than Milner to force the issue in arms, and had said that the pains of the Uitlanders were a lesser evil than the sufferings of a war. Kruger's ultimatum led to the outbreak of war in October 1899.

Boer guns rolled forward; thousands of horsemen, joyous and self-confident, swept across the plains towards Natal. Unhampered by transport, they carried only their rifles and ammunition, mealies arid biltong. Tnbir fresh meat was driven along in herds among the columns. With that flair for war which is common among Boers, they hoped to ride thus to the south and east and reach the sea. This was the correct strategy, but it was not followed by the Boers' old and over-cautious leaders. Two years later, Boers were to ride their horses into salt water, but it was the Atlantic, not the Indian Ocean. The veteran Joubert was dead, Cronje a prisoner of war on St Helena; and those Boers who rode laughing and shouting into the waves were led by one of the younger men whose chance came too late—the lawyer, Jan Christian Smuts.

CHAPTER III

GUERRILLA GENERAL

Boer strength and weakness—Smuts, propagandist—British successes—The gold mines—Smuts saves the Treasury—Captures Modderfontein—Drives, devastation, internment camps—Nearly captured—Smuts crosses the Orange river—A Basuto ambush—A narrow escape—Sufferings of the commando—A battle of wits—Fight with the 17th Lancers—Poisonous fruit—ScobelTs pursuit—Smuts in North-west Cape—Attack on a convoy—A spy—Capture of Springbok and Concordia—Siege of Ookiep—Smuts in British and Boer eyes

WHEN war began the British had some twenty-five thousand men in South Africa, many of them colonial volunteers. The Regulars were trained for European warfare and the few who had seen active service scarcely realized the effect of accurate shooting from modern, rapid-firing weapons, for their opponents had been ill-armed savages. Those who had fought on India's North-West Frontier were the best equipped to meet the Boers. British cavalry still hoped to ride the enemy down with horse and sabre. The artillery was the most efficient branch of the Army.

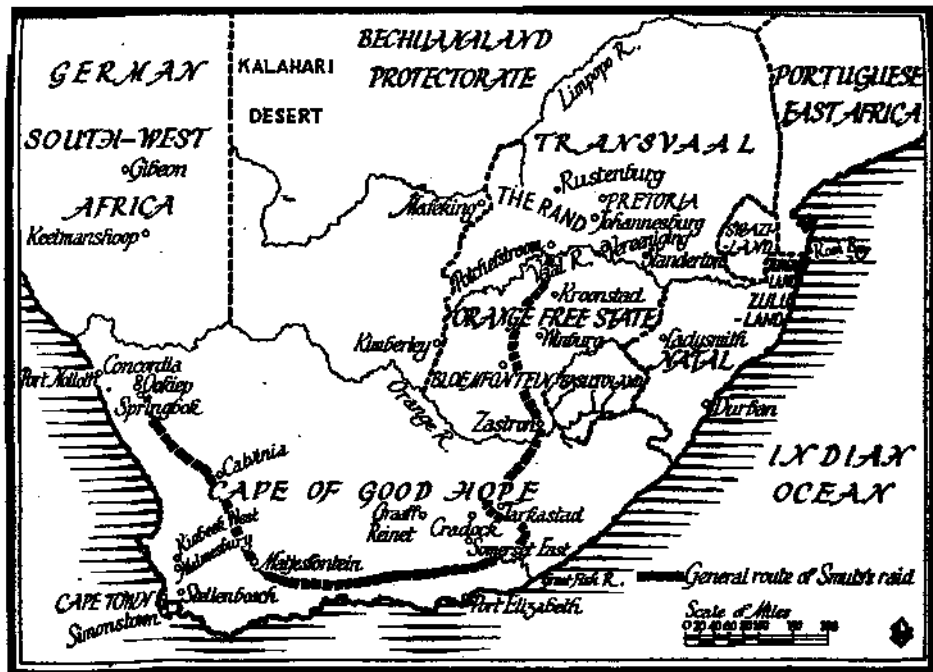
The Boers had sixty thousand men, of whom about one-third were well placed to invade Natal. Their Mauser rifle was a better weapon than the British Lee-Metford. The men from the country districts were accustomed through hunting to rough living, long

hours in the saddle, firing accurately from cover, and fending for themselves. They had a tradition of veld fighting. Organized in commandos and sections, they could act on their own initiative and were highly mobile. Every commando knew its own district thoroughly well, and in strange places could rely upon food, shelter, and information from the population. Two-thirds of the Boer artillery strength of one hundred guns were modern.

The individualism and sturdy independence of the Boers was sometimes a handicap to their leaders, for a burgher considered he could take leave of his unit and go home if any inclination or private reason occurred to him. Also it was by no means certain that an order would be carried out exactly as given. Finally, their generals in the first part of the struggle were old men who had made reputations in native campaigns but proved quite unfitted to conduct war against Europeans.

It might almost be said that the old generals lost the war in the first few months. The Boers won notable victories in the field at Stormberg, Magersfontein, and Colenso, but did not exploit them. There should have been a rapid thrust of their horsemen through Natal and into the Cape, for at the beginning they could not be stopped, and many of their Dutch kinsfolk would have joined them. Instead of this, large Boer forces were pinned down to the sieges of Mafeking, Ladysmith, and Kimberley, and the Boer advantages in numbers, tactical skill, and a friendly Cape population were largely wasted.

At this period Smuts was kept busy with legal work,



SMUTS'S GENERAL ROUTE IN THE RAID ON THE CAPE

organization, and propaganda. One of his decisions was a matter of life or death to Winston Churchill, who was a war correspondent, but had been captured taking part in the defence of an armoured train. Most military authorities would have shot him. Smuts sent him to an officers' prison camp at Pretoria.

As for propaganda, Smuts had published as part-author just before the war a booklet setting out the Boer case against Britain, a story of injustice and almost ceaseless pressure from a Great Power. It was a biased version of history, and Smuts in later years was not proud of it. But it was vivid propaganda, provided the friends of the Boers in England with ammunition, and helped to crystallize world opinion against Britain. In the first months of the war it was part of Smuts's task to keep the Boer view of the quarrel before the world, and it was done successfully.

Meanwhile the British, unprepared as always for the situation encountered at the beginning of a war, slowly gathered troops and guns in great numbers, learned from bitter experience to counter or copy what was useful in Boer tactics, and at length passed to the offensive. The Transvaal was invaded, the sieges raised, and the British advanced on Pretoria. At this point, it had been suggested, the Boers should have destroyed or threatened to destroy the gold mines, so that financial interests might have been persuaded to urge the British Government to negotiate again, with more favourable terms. Smuts seems to have been in favour of destroying the mines—and the common Boer view was that as gold had caused the war fear of losing the gold mines would encourage the mine-

owners to end it. When the explosive charges had already been laid, Botha vetoed the plan, as he "was averse to destroying other men's property when it was in his power and trust. The invading army which occupied Johannesburg and the Rand found the mines intact.

As the British advanced on Pretoria Kruger and the Government moved to Machadadorp, whence later the President departed for Holland. Smuts led a commando to meet the British and make a last fight in front of the capital. He did not make contact, and as everything seemed lost, there was talk of making peace. Steyn, the Free State President, angrily insisted on continuing the war, and in the event Smuts thought that his decision was right. Although the fighting involved further loss of life, suffering, and the destruction of property, it also assured that in future years the Boers would retain their pride and self-respect. Lord Kitchener was to say later, "It is impossible for a people that has fought as the Boers have done to lose their self-respect, and it is just as impossible for Englishmen to regard them with contempt/'

The Transvaal funds, more than half a million pounds in gold bullion and cash, were in a Pretoria bank. Smuts had to see that the Treasury did not fall into English hands. Forcing the unwilling bank to surrender it, Smuts dispatched it by train as shells screamed over the veld and fell around the station, in front of the advancing British army.

Smuts's office work was ended, and he went off to join de la Rey's men in the Western Transvaal. Although the opportunities most favourable to the

Boers had been lost, the younger Boer leaders now in command evolved a plan for reoccupying the Rand and destroying the mines—for they considered it a fair act of war to destroy them when captured from the enemy. The British were to be drawn away from the Rand by operations elsewhere, whereupon the surprise attack would lead to the occupation of the gold area and devastation in the mines. After this the Boer forces were to move south and raise the Dutch in the Cape and Natal. The funds which Smuts had preserved from the British would keep them in stores and equipment for many months to come.

Smuts had hopes for the scheme. At various points in the Transvaal the Boers met success. De Wet harried the British and kept them marching and manoeuvring to corner him. Botha experienced victory and failure. The British began to see that the war was not yet won. De la Rey and Smuts attacked their posts, captured convoys, plundered or burned stores. In small detachments their men covered the Western Transvaal. Yet the Boers could not achieve their design against the Rand.

With a thousand men Smuts surrounded Modderfontein, and after an attack lasting nearly two days rushed the place, breaking in from an unexpected quarter, and inflicted more than two hundred and sixty casualties. A British convoy which arrived during the fighting—unwarned by heliograph, because there was no sun—became part of his booty. Reinforced, he then held the place against a column twenty-five hundred strong. He was firmly dug in, and the British commander wisely fell back after feeling the first sting

of resistance. Smuts had an eye for a strong position and knew how to use every natural advantage to the utmost. He discovered a flair for irregular warfare, and learned much from de la Rey, a veteran of Kaffir wars. Later, at Buffelshoek, after fighting several rear guard actions, Smuts decided to make a stand. The British force pursuing him studied his dispositions—and turned away. By this time the British had learned the cost of attacking a determined, well-entrenched foe who had carefully chosen his ground.

The British took drastic measures to check the Boer guerrilla tactics. Women, children, and non-combatants were lodged in camps where they could not help their menfolk by supplying food, shelter, and information. Farms were burned. The country was sectioned with barbed wire and blockhouses to restrict the enemy's movement and guard the railways. Great drives were made, with lines of cavalry, infantry, and guns sweeping the Boers before them day after day for scores of miles. For the troops it was a wearying affair, as the Boers simply retreated, fighting only under conditions of their own choice, as guerrillas should; or, by slipping through some gap at night or riding round the flank of the line, the Boers would make the drive end fruitlessly in the veld, perhaps to begin again in reverse. The Boers ambushed convoys, sniped, captured strong-points, wrecked trains and telegraph, and fled into the wide spaces of Africa. They released their prisoners, after taking their rifles, ammunition, horses, boots, and clothing. Some Boers were captured and shot for wearing British uniform before they were aware that they were breaking the

laws of war. In the British-made desolation it was impossible to find replacements of clothes, and they wore the uniforms because they were in rags.

Smuts had not the excuse of being unfamiliar with the conventions of war, but his men often wore British uniform, as an alternative to going naked, during his famous raid into the Cape.

II

From the beginning of the war Smuts had believed that the Boers* most promising strategy would be to invade the Cape in force and raise rebellion among the Cape Dutch. De Wet, Hertzog, and others had made raids south of the Orange river with small forces, and had been harried northward again. However, the Boer leaders thought something might still be done by an inroad into the far South, and Smuts was given the command.

When he set out on this famous ride through country strongly held by the enemy his commando numbered about three hundred and fifty. After taking one section of his men across the Vaal he returned for another and was nearly captured at the first step of his venture. Resting one night after crossing an icy, swollen river, he was surprised by British troops directed to his camp by native spies. In the rush of yelling, shooting men Smuts managed to escape, but without horse or boots. Next day a horse was found for him, and he could rest his cut and bruised feet. Soon after this, after rejoining his men across the Vaal, he was attacked by

Australians and only extricated his commando after several hours' retreat. Even then he could not get ahead across the Free State, for he had to see safely over the Vaal numbers of Boer women and children who were trekking from the British round-up.

Well-informed of Boer movements from their native spies and scouts, British columns everywhere in the Free State tried to checkmate him. Smuts slipped aside, made long, rapid marches, avoiding all the traps set for him. Once he doubled back, and British Intelligence judged that he had decided to return to the Transvaal. Actually Smuts turned back to ride round one of the enemy columns, and was soon headed south again. Where every important point was guarded, he had to find crossings of rivers and railways where he could pass with the least risk. In this game of manoeuvre he kept the initiative, so that the British had to toil after him or be moved about the country in trains to head him off. They would make dispositions to meet him in districts from which he had disappeared. The hunters' task was made more difficult by the presence of other small Boer detachments, and by the fact that Smuts had divided his men into sections with instructions to assemble at Zastron, so that the British Command could never decide which was the main body.

In the official *History of the War in South Africa* the British historian expresses the opinion that there was hardly in the war a more impressive feat of daring, perseverance, and good fortune than Smuts's three-hundred-mile ride from the Transvaal to the Orange river.

When he reached this point his men were worn out and exhausted by their month's march. Just before reaching the Orange river Smuts's men were joined by a party of young Free Staters, one of whom, Deneys Reitz, gives in *Commando* an exciting, first-hand account of the subsequent operations. General French had taken every precaution in covering the river crossings, but owing to some troops being moved without his knowledge one ford was left unguarded. One of the Free Staters guided Smuts to this place, where the horses had to struggle across against a torrent. The barrier, along which such careful measures had been taken to stop him, was overcome. "In timing his crossing," says the British historian, "his skill and fortune attained its climax."

The commando narrowly escaped disaster as soon as it set foot in the Cape. On the south bank of the Orange the men were ambushed by Basutos-, who had chosen an excellent position. Fortunately for the Boers the natives were irresolute, and the commando passed through with only a few casualties. This lively reception in the Cape was only a foretaste of adventure and hardship.

From this point Smuts was pursued, checked, and harried in a country which seemed to burgeon around him with sabres, guns, and bayonets. In the first weeks his men were worn out, soaked and chilled with rain, wind, and sleet. Their clothes were in shreds, and they wrapped themselves in blankets, or wore sacks as jackets, cutting holes for arms and head, and pulled their slouch hats well down to keep the sheets of rain from flowing down necks over frozen bodies. From

the high ground, into which they were usually forced by the British columns, they gazed enviously at the comparatively warm tented camps of their enemy in the valleys. The weather to the British was like a touch of home. To the Boers, accustomed to warmth and dry, bright sunlight, it was wearing, painful, and depressing.

Near one place, called the Murderer's Pass, Smuts rode off with three men to reconnoitre a British camp. His three men were killed, his horse was shot, and only rapid action, long legs, and a quick eye for a line of escape under cover saved him. Once, on the way to meet another commando, they rode into a British force, and had to retire throughout the night on foot, leading their horses, which were half starved. There followed through that night and for more than sixty hours a forced march in heavy rain and a 'hurricane of cold wind. In the daylight hours they were often seen by the British and shelled. Horses died. Smuts could not have fought any prolonged action at that time, as he was short of ammunition. Deneys Reitz recalls that his own bandoliers contained but four rounds!

When they halted to rest at a farm, the British, everywhere present, began to close in around them. They were saved by a crippled civilian, who when darkness fell guided them past the enemy. Night and day Smuts now drove his men, who were so exhausted that every halt saw them sag at the knees and crumple up to sleep on the ground in the rain and bitter wind. Smuts would have them quickly on their feet again, and the march would go on.

To his men Smuts was wholly unlike any other

commando Reader. The Boer did not hesitate to sit down with his officer, smoke and argue with him, discuss plans, and state his grievances; and the officers, often elected by the men, had to deal with these individualists in the spirit of tact, with humour and a light rein. Smuts, however, was grim, silent, and reserved. He did not discuss his plans. Though always courteous even to the humblest, his orders -were short, clear, and to be obeyed. Weariness, cold, rain, and danger meant nothing to him while there was work to be done, and had to be met as stoically by his men. Whereas in most men courage is lessened by the experience of war, Smuts seems to have been untouched by fear. At any rate, he showed no feeling at the sight of death and wounds, whatever he may have inwardly thought about those accompaniments of war. He would seem quite unmoved by the whisde of bullets when he was exposed and knew that he was the target.

From the commando the forced march demanded an effort of body and will, but for Smuts it was also a battle of wits with the British, who were trying to close his route southward. Zigzagging, outwitting columns and detached picquets, he steadily made his way farther into the Cape. This particular effort was needed because Smuts was aware that the enemy was closing all gaps on a main and a branch railway line ahead/ Actually Smuts crossed these lines just before the last arrangements to meet him were completed. He was through again! "A miracle of judgment and endurance," was the British verdict.

At the railway the Boers approached a goods train

hopefully, but found it empty. Another train they allowed to pass without attempting to derail it lest it should contain civilians. Smuts discovered later that it was carrying General French, who was directing the great hunt!

His men came out of that march exhausted by the sustained physical effort and the weather. Some, whose horses had died, staggered along carrying their saddles. They were in this case when they found another British force across their path! It was on the Eland's river, in the neighbourhood of Tarkastad, a squadron of the 17th Lancers, a hundred and thirty strong, with a Maxim and a 9-pounder gun.

This squadron, Smuts knew, was a force detached sufficiently far from immediate assistance to be struck down quickly. To get horses and ammunition, and to force a way out of the chilly, rainswept mountains, he decided at once to attack. There was no discussion, just rapid orders. The lancers' bivouac was surrounded under cover of mist. As the Boers rode forward they surprised a patrol of lancers, shot several, and seized the bandoliers from the bodies. They pursued the remainder, then dismounted and ran forward firing from cover. Some men reached a position very close to the British tents, and lay behind a ledge in the ground opposite a number of soldiers who had come out to meet them. There ensued a match in snap-shooting, at which the Boers excelled. Every soldier who raised his head was -shot at once. Three of four men at the gun were killed, and as other lancers ran from the camp towards the Boers they were dropped in their stride by the unseen marksmen.

Before the soldiers could recover from the surprise and this accurate fire the Boers rushed the camp. The surviving lancers retired.

It was a short, sharp decision, which gave Smuts ammunition, horses, food, fodder, boots, saddlery, rifles, and clothing—sometimes the uniforms of dead lancers. He lost one man killed and six wounded; the British casualties were thirty-two officers and men killed and fifty-three wounded. The booty was quickly gathered, and as another cavalry squadron was seen approaching, the Boers made off. The job had been done just within time.

Soon Smuts was again hemmed in by his pursuers, and again he escaped, as his foes describe, by " prompt and bold " manoeuvre. It was the greatest chase of the war, with Smuts at a disadvantage in horses, weapons, ammunition, food, and numbers. In five weeks he covered seven hundred miles, often in mountainous and heavily forested country, and French could not pin him down. Starving, driven into the mountains once more, the commando ate wild fruit which poisoned men and officers. All were sick and in pain. Stjiuts suffered most, but kept his men moving, as the British were close on his heels. Some of the Boers had to be tied in their saddles. Hardly able to move, Smuts once had to be helped up a mountainside by his men, as the first British scouts overtook them and opened fire. The sickness passed away. Recruits arrived from the Cape population, and one of them rescued the commando, when it was surrounded, by leading it along a path known to him but not to the British. The local knowledge of these rebel British

subjects was now at Smuts's disposal as he rode through the Eastern Cape, and provided one tangible advantage for the quarry.

Earlier in the war Smuts had hoped for a general rising in the Cape, "the beginning . . . of the deliverance of the whole of South Africa and the union of our people into a great nation." Hundreds of men joined him, and Kitchener put the Cape under martial law; but there was no general rebellion.

In October, after another brush with the 17th Lancers, in which some of his men were overwhelmed when the soldiers charged on foot, Smuts divided his force, sending van Deventer towards Somerset East, while he made for the Graaff Reinet railway. General Scobell was only a few hours behind him, marching night and day. Smuts kept ahead, and though Scobell made three night marches in four days, he took only a few weary stragglers, the wrecks of horses, and an empty laager. Smuts met another Boer commando, and they were harried about the Cape together, but always drew clear of the British. He was fortunate that the British could not devote their whole attention to him, for by this time other commandos were in action. One of them used to reappear as regularly as day every time the British Command listed it as definitely out of action. Its leader was an expert train-wrecker.

The year ended with Smuts still at large and with increased numbers. The perpetual marching and counter-marching had a depressing effect on the British troops. Harassed and shot at, they went hungry when their supplies were captured or destroyed, yet rarely had the satisfaction of hitting their elusive foe;

for the Boers chose the time and place to stand and fight, and did not stand long enough to suit their more lumbering adversary. Recruits came in, but as a rule they were useless for guerrilla war in the vast spaces of South Africa, as they lacked horses. The British had commandeered all the horses, partly because for a long time it had been clear that this was a war for mounted men, and also as an effective method of preventing a rising in the Cape.

The ordinary Regular soldier, riding or 'foot-slogging' after a shadowy opponent, would have felt more cheerful had he realized that all this movement was gaining nothing decisive for the Boers. Smuts, indeed, knew that the Cape campaign was useful only in that it was holding troops in the south which otherwise could have been employed north of the Orange, where Botha, de Wet, and others were waging a similar guerrilla war. Yet if Cape Town were captured, he thought, it might unleash the revolt which it was his hope to encourage when he entered the Cape. To accomplish this he asked for reinforcement from the north, with picked officers. A thousand men, he thought, might turn the scale if the operation against the capital were thoroughly organized. He did not get them. The northern commanders had fought brilliantly, but the weight of the British in South Africa was now too great for the Cape adventure to be anything more than a diversion. The commandos in the Free State and the Transvaal were, in fact, rapidly nearing a worse condition for supplies than those in the Cape.

With the forces at his disposal, far less than a single

British brigade, Smuts began to lay at least the foundations for an offensive towards Cape Town. The best route was klong the Atlantic side of the Gape, an approach along which Herfczog and Maritz had worked. Early in 1902 Smuts with a few officers rode three hundred miles into the north-western districts of the Cape. Here he met van Deventer. This officer, whose name was to be associated with that of Smuts in arduous campaigning years later under the British flag, had been hotly pursued on parting from Smuts. Driven round in circles, headed off, his capture seemed certain, but with uncanny, instinctive skill he led his men with their foundered horses through the British net, reached the region of Somerset East, and to his utter astonishment received the surrender of the local troops, with their ammunition and horses.

Van Deventer was in action as Smuts's party arrived, and his men loudly cheered Smuts, whom they had not seen from the day they rode off. Now they were lying out on small kopjes attacking an English convoy bound for Calvinia, Many scores of ammunition wagons were in flames, sending out showers of bullets in a crackling cascade. The troops guarding the convoy had taken up a position to make a fight, but they were soon overcome by a rush from their rear. The Boers saved from the fires a great store of ammunition, boots, clothing, nails, and horseshoes, and took many horses. For the British the loss was not important, but the booty was invaluable to the Boers, who lacked bases and existed almost entirely on such captures. Among the dead after this fight were a Free Stater, a Transvaaler, and a Cape rebel, so that at their burial

Smuts could point the lesson that three great states of South Africa were making a common sacrifice for freedom.

Smuts now organized various small detachments which had been operating along the Orange river. One detachment had recently been approached by a man who asked to join them. He had a story of imprisonment and escape from the British, and as he was Cape Dutch, he was allowed to join. Soon afterwards he disappeared—and was next seen with British cavalry, who attacked the Boers in the half-light one morning and killed several men.

A few days later Smuts captured a British post in a dawn attack. Van Deventer was wounded—and the spy was captured. Once convinced that they had taken the right man, Smuts ordered him to be shot. There was no trial or formality, merely a brief order, "Take him out and shoot him." The man, on his knees, begged for mercy. He was taken away and allowed to pray with a minister while Hottentots dug his grave. He seemed brave enough at first, but when the reality of the situation became clear to him, as the *predikant* said, "Brother, be calm; your time has come," and he saw his grave, he asked to see Smuts again. The officer in charge of the execution knew that Smuts would have no mercy on him, and prepared to end the affair with all speed. The man was allowed to recite the Lord's Prayer, and at the word "Amen" the volley was fired.

At one point in the mountains of the eastern Cape Smuts's men had seen the distant lights of Port Elizabeth, but they did not reach the sea. Now, at the

other side of the continent they came to the Atlantic, and many of the Boers saw the ocean for the first time. They were amazed at the sight, and rode into the water delightedly. Indeed, some of the officers had to watch that they did not venture too far and get drowned. Deneys Reitz describes how he asked a Hottentot, in jest, to point out the road to London, adding the information that they were going to ride there that night. "My God, baas," the man replied, "don't do it; the water is over your head here, and you will all be drowned." Some Boers once fired at an English cruiser close inshore, and when a gun was turned on them galloped off into the dunes. Afterwards they could boast that they had fought the only naval action in the war!

Smuts next aimed at capturing the villages of Springbok and Concordia, and the small town of Ookiep, a centre of copper-mining. Springbok, with a small garrison of British and Hottentots, was defended by three forts, well-built, surrounded by barbed wire, with good fields of fire. A night attack with dynamite on the first fort was driven off. Next day the Boers sniped continually at the loop-holes, but a second attack with dynamite bombs in darkness under heavy rifle-fire again failed. The fort was only captured when the garrison had no water, as the Boer fire had pierced all the tanks. When the other forts had fallen, Smuts easily captured Concordia a few miles away, for the local Town Guard made no resistance.

Then Smuts began the siege of Ookiep. He did not believe in sieges as a direct means of victory, and knew that the best opportunities had been lost by the

diversion of large Boer forces to sieges at the beginning of the war. Ookiep was defended by a battalion of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, local men, and irregulars. The town was surrounded by thirteen blockhouses and entrenched strong-points, and had an inner defence of trenches, sangars, and loop-holed walls. The loss of life in a determined attack on such a position would have been too great. But by the siege Smuts hoped to draw a relieving force from the Cape Town region by sea to Port Nolloth, at the end of a thirty miles railway line across the desert.

Smuts began operations at the beginning of April 1902, by occupying ridges north and east of the town from which they could sustain a ceaseless fire on the British positions. Attacks were made at night to keep down casualties. An attempt to rush the northern defences failed, though two blockhouses were taken. One of these was occupied after the garrison had been stunned by an explosion of dynamite sticks tossed on the roof. The other was captured as the result of the sheer physical strength of Maritz. The little fort stood on a rocky height. The Boers reached a position near the summit in darkness. Maritz tied three dynamite charges together, a weight of twenty pounds, stood on a man's shoulder to judge the exact distance, and then hurled the charges on to the roof. There was a terrific explosion, the roof fell upon the defenders, and the place was taken.

With a plentiful stock of captured supplies Smuts settled down to the investment, and sent a detachment to watch the relieving expedition which soon began to arrive at Port Nolloth. He did not discuss plans with

his men, but it was the general opinion that when this force began its relieving march he would leave a detachment to harass and engage it while the main body struck south into the prosperous districts around Cape Town. Meanwhile the siege continued uneventfully, and the British sent a message offering to play the Boers at football!

Smuts was never to make that advance towards Cape Town, for at the end of April a summons and safe-conduct arrived from Kitchener, requesting his presence at a peace conference to be held at Vereeniging, on the Vaal. He knew that this probably meant the end of the war and the end of Boer resistance. Telling his men why he was leaving them, he warned them that they might have to face disappointment. As he set off for Port Nolloth they crowded round, cheering him.

He sailed to Cape Town, whence he was taken in a battleship to Simonstown. Reaching Matjesfontein by train, he was met by General French, who naturally tried to sound the mind of a leading Boer, but without success. From this point his train travelled only at night, and was preceded by an armoured train which swept the veld with a searchlight. At various places the British troops turned out to do honour to their adversary, and every man was curious to see the Boer who had led the Army such a dance. At Kroonstad he met Kitchener, who suggested that further fighting was pointless and would only result in the utter ruin of the Republics. Smuts did not discuss this, but protested against the farm-burning. Kitchener showed that he regretted it, though he was entitled to take such

action by the laws of war. At Standerton Smuts left the railway and rode into the veld to meet Botha and delegates from the commandos, for an election of representatives for the peace conference at Vereeniging.

The men assembled, emaciated, half starved^ ragged, many of them ill. All that remained to them was courage, and it was plain that resistance must cease. When they had elected their representatives the Boers went back to their commandos, riding or leading their weak, bony horses. Smuts was not a delegate, but the British wanted him at the conference, as the officer commanding the Boer forces in the Cape, and Botha needed his legal advice, so he went on to Vereeniging.

There were present all the famous leaders, among them de Wet, de la Rey, and Beyers. All reported that their commandos were worn out. Many of them had lost everything they possessed, even their wives and families. Smuts's men in the Cape were in better condition, and his commandos were strung out on the general line Namaqualand to Cradock, strategically placed to begin an invasion of the south-west Cape and to check relief forces crossing the Orange. But numerically they were unable to carry out either operation, and there was no hope of reinforcement. Against some two hundred and fifty thousand British the Boers had only eighteen thousand men in the field. All that the Transvaal and Free State could do was to carry on a desultory war for perhaps another year, and fight to extinction. Some of the Free Staters were prepared to do so; Botha, de la Rey, and Smuts urged peace. In his speech, the most moving he ever made, Smuts pointed out that they were not defeated completely

in the military sense, but that they could not let the nation be destroyed; that they had to consider the prisoners of war, and the women and children dying in the concentration camps. " We represent the blood and tears of an entire nation." The Boers, he said, had fought for independence, but they could not sacrifice the Afrikaner people for that independence:

" They call upon us from the prisoner-of-war camps, from the concentration camps, from the grave, from the field, and from the womb of the future, to decide wisely and to avoid all meanness which may lead to decadence and extermination of the Afrikaner people, and thus frustrate the objects for which they all made their sacrifices. . . . We have given thousands of lives, we have sacrificed all our earthly goods; our cherished country is one continuous desert; more than twenty thousand women and children have already died in the concentration camps of the enemy. Has all this brought us nearer to our independence? . . . If no deliverance comes from elsewhere we must certainly succumb."

Some of the Boers had hoped that European Powers would come to their assistance, for the Press of Germany and France had been abusive of England. Kruger had probably been encouraged to fight by Germany, but when he had fled to Holland and wanted to visit Germany he was threatened with arrest if he crossed the frontier! So Smuts told the Boer delegates that they should abandon any hope of help from Europe. " For us," he said:

* * the foreign situation is and remains that we enjoy much sympathy. . . . That is all we get, nor shall we receive anything more. . . . Europe will sympathize with us till

the last Boer hero lies in his last resting-place, till the last Boer woman has gone to her grave with a broken heart, till our entire nation shall have been sacrificed. . . . The war of freedom in South Africa has been fought, not only for the Boers, but for the entire people of South Africa. The result of that struggle we leave in God's hands. Perhaps it is His will to lead the people of South Africa through defeat and humiliation and even the valley of the shadow of death to a better future and a brighter day."

The Boers voted for peace negotiations, many of them weeping as they signed the resolution. Smuts did not vote or sign; he was not an elected delegate. But he was appointed to the committee which conducted the negotiations for peace.

m

When Smuts approached the Orange river his name was almost unknown to the world, save as the State Attorney of a small Republic at war with a Great Power. His operations in the Cape made him famous. "With many of his fellows," wrote the British official historian:

Smuts shared the patriotism, the keen observation, the tactical opportunism, the mingled daring and caution which kept the cause of the Republics alive long after the States themselves were dead. But his observation was enlarged by a certain statesmanship and prescience which marked him out from those whose vision was bounded by the line of kopjes within artillery range. His patriotism was remarkable chiefly for the tinge of romance and enthu-

siasm which made it glow amidst the Somewhat sombre prepossession of some of his countrymen. Sharing to the full their inextinguishable hope and bitterness, his hope rose to a higher and brighter flame, and his animosity towards his country's enemies was ennobled by a species of soldiership or chivalry to which all but a few of his compatriots were contemptuous or strangers.

That passage was written a generation before Smuts was everywhere recognized as one of the world's few illustrious figures, but it would stand as part of his epitaph to-day.

To the men he led Smuts must have appeared a singular character. Even toughened and hardened by war, he did not greatly resemble the Boer type in physique. Tall, slim, blond, of ascetic features, he was quiet, reserved, and courteous. His manners were always perfect, and he was always approachable to his men. Yet they knew that this man, who bore all the appearance of a scholar, and carried Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* as reading material on his forays, was coldly resolute, grim, fearless, skilled in all the affairs of guerrilla war, and a hard taskmaster who did not spare himself. If they did not understand him as easily as they could assess the character and abilities of most of the commando leaders, they trusted and revered him. So, years later, did British soldiers. In the following years Smuts always had sturdy supporters among the men, Boer and British, who had seen war at his side.

CHAPTER IV

UNION

Peace and reconstruction—Smuts, Het Volk, and self-government—Smuts and Botha—Native status—Gandhi—Creating the Union—Hertsog breaks away—Defence force—Strikes on the Rand—Smuts's duty

THE Boer negotiators offered to abandon the independence of the Republics in foreign relations, permit British supervision of internal affairs, surrender the Rand, and make a defensive alliance with Britain. Smuts pointed out that this would leave only the title of independence. Kitchener might have accepted such terms, but Milner was not satisfied. In the final treaty the Boers had to yield everything. Yet the Boer leaders knew that they had friends in England who had always opposed the war, and Kitchener hinted to Smuts that these friends might soon be in political power. In signing the treaty, therefore, it was clear that they might expect generous treatment in the near future. Britain, in fact, promised at once to raise loans for reconstruction, and arranged that military administration in the Boer States should be followed by civil government, which in turn would be replaced by Boer self-government.

Milner did excellent work in post-war reconstruction—work which also provided young University men from England with agreeable posts, to the discontent of young Afrikaners. Uidanders swarmed

back. Business began to revive. Milner had to set up organization for the repatriation of prisoners of war, the liberation of one hundred thousand Europeans and rather more natives from internment camps, the demobilization of Imperial troops, and the rebuilding of devastated farms. To add to these problems there was drought and catde disease. A vigorous start was made by the removal of martial law, the review and lessening of sentences on Cape rebels, and by relief works on roads, railways, forestry, and irrigation. The impoverished Boers needed scores of commodities to restart life, and the British administration revived, to a limited extent, the medieval practice of trying to protect the citizen from the greed of profiteers.

Tired and depressed, Smuts returned to Pretoria and entered practice again as a barrister. Chamberlain visited South Africa, speeded various financial arrangements and claims to compensation, praised the Boers, and showed that he desired goodwill between Boer and Britain. In 1903 Smuts was offered a place on a nominated Legislative Council, but refused it. He did not welcome responsibility to which he had not been voted by the people, preferred to remain outside the administration until the Transvaal received self-government, and did not consider such status yet due. Also he was averse to some features of Milner's policy, particularly the employment of Chinese labour in the mines. This, he considered, would add to the already difficult problems arising from native labour in a country with a black majority, as the endless reserve of Asiatics might increase the numbers of non-Europeans in South Africa to the peril of the Europeans. It seemed to him

that the Transvaal was becoming powerless to arrange its future, in the grip of the mine-owners.

Chinese labour in the Rand raised a political storm in England. Though to describe the status of the Chinese as slavery would be, as Churchill said, to use "a terminological inexactitude," to many Liberals the conditions of their service too closely resembled servitude. In 1905, together with the issue of Protection, which most Tories wished to see replace Free Trade, the Chinese labour question helped to bring down the Government. The Liberal Party came into power.

Before this event Smuts had become convinced that the time for self-government was due. The war had strengthened the spirit of Boer nationality. There was an Afrikaner revival, evinced by such signs as a demand for the wider, and official, use of Afrikaans, and disputes over the language syllabus in schools. The grant of self-government, Smuts considered, would be a matter of self-interest for Britain, as without it there would surely be a renewal of strife. To promote the cause of self-government he had started with Botha in 1904 a new political party, *Het Volk*.

When the Liberals attained power at Westminster this party sent Smuts to England to urge self-government. Smuts met Churchill, Morley, and Lloyd George—who had risked his life in the Chamberlain stronghold at Birmingham to denounce those he held responsible for the war. With the exception of Lloyd George, these Liberals qualified their agreement with the demand for self-government. Some of them were not convinced of the benefits of full self-government at that time. When Smuts met the Premier, Campbell-

Bannerman, he argued that the existing government of the Boer States should be replaced by self-government as the only means of achieving Boer-British co-operation. The Premier was already almost convinced of this, and Smuts's visit led him to a rapid decision. The grant of self-government was agreed to by the Liberal Cabinet almost without discussion, and a commission was sent to Pretoria to settle the form of government. In a few months the Transvaal, and a little later the Orange Free State, were self-governing stages, independent *in fact*, if not in name.

No other Power would have done as much, or so quickly, after a victorious war, though many Boers did not appreciate Britain's generous attitude. But Britain's action, only four years after the end of war, profoundly influenced Smuts's career. It was a turning-point in his life. Britain placed her trust in the Boers, and that attitude won Smuts for the Empire. Ever afterwards he held it his duty to see that the trust was not betrayed.

Botha became Premier of the new Transvaal Government. Smuts served as Colonial Secretary. The weariness and bitterness of the post-war years vanished. Smuts became a driving-force in government. In fact, in the opinion of some Boers as the years went on, he evinced some of the hard, inhuman characteristics of the machine.

In appearance and character he was in contrast to Botha. The war had developed Smuts physically, and he was no longer the thin, hollow-cheeked lawyer. Tall, fair, wiry, with blue, steady, rather appraising eyes, he was a manly, soldierly fip— of powerful individuality. Yet despite his sol

essentially reserved and shy. He could not be *all things to all men' in the manner of a politician. It was as though something dynamic was always held back within him. His mind was meditative, and he was apt to view the long-range effects of a plan rather than its immediate details, yet he was a man of rapid executive action. He could not suffer fools gladly, and though Always courteous could be too brief and formal even with men who were not fools. Thus he made enemies.

Botha was more heavily built, a good companion, tactful, friendly, capable of making any insignificant burgher feel that a personal interest was taken in his grievances. Those who later attacked Botha in the political field always felt that he was flesh and blood that could be hurt, whereas with Smuts it seemed that their shafts struck and fell away from a stone wall. If he answered questions with perhaps undue care for the exact meaning of words, or gave a frank, courteous, friendly, but wholly non-committal reply—for lawyers and politicians these practices are sometimes inevitable—they began to call him "Slim," the most favourable translation of which is "cautious." But the verbal assault seemed wasted on him. Perhaps it seemed a puny thing compared to the argument of war which Smuts had experienced.

Botha and Smuts worked together in harmony and loyalty for a dozen years, making history. The chief article of their political faith was that South Africa could develop only by co-operation and merging of the Dutch and British elements. But they welcomed all white peoples, and hoped that each would give something of the best in its own stock. They saw South

Africa as a younger United States, growing in the unity of many nationalities. They would receive Jews, though the Jew was disliked by the farming, pastoralist Boer as the incarnation of capitalism and exploitation. In later years Smuts was a champion of the Jews, advocated the plan for a National Home in Palestine, and detested persecution of Jews in Central Europe.

The black races, however, formed the majority of the population.¹ Smuts's attitude to this awkward fact, which still presents many unsolved problems in South Africa, was that of the Cape Dutch and the South Africans of British stock, which, although more liberal than that of the Free State and Transvaal Boers, does not appear very progressive to those who have not to meet the situation. Smuts held that power should rest only with the Europeans, who had checked the course of barbarism in South Africa. The franchise, for instance, as the source of political power, should not be shared with the Bantu millions, and there should be no union of black and white, for the native was apart, not merely in colour but in mind, and required different institutions. Asiatic immigration, which only added to South Africa's colour problems, he considered should be stopped. The native African, however, had rights *in* the country, and should have a training suited to him, in manual work. Smuts's attitude to the native question does not seem at first sight to differ greatly from that of the majority of South Africans. His attitude, in fact, is more liberal; but the native problem is immensely difficult. The native is detribalized, schemes

*In 1911 the Europeans numbered 1,300,000. The rest, 4,700,000, were mostly natives.

to segregate him on parts of the land—not the best parts—with few exceptions have been unsuccessful, and he is not wanted in the towns, where his labour, as also that of Coloureds (Eurafricans) and Asiatics, might become a threat to the employment of Europeans.

The question of Chinese labour was small enough to be answered. By an agreement with the mine-owners it was ended on the Rand, and after 1910 this problem was cleared away.

Smuts was anxious to reassure English-speaking South Africans that England's generous attitude involved no perils for the British position, and therefore made Dutch an optional and English a compulsory subject in the schools. The result of his measure, however, was to alarm Boers who feared their country would be entirely dominated by English policies. Soon another occasion arose to annoy the Boers. When a strike occurred on the Rand Smuts summoned British troops to guard the mines. The Boers among the workers resented this, accusing Smuts of turning on his own people and of bringing foreign soldiers against men who had fought for their country.

Many other problems arose in the first years of self-government. The Transvaal Government had to cope with bad trade, a period of drought, crop failures, much poverty, and with the question of Indian immigration. Indians had been admitted into Natal and at that time outnumbered the Europeans. The Transvaalers did not want to be overrun by Asiatic labourers and traders who could work for the lowest profits and live "on nothing/* Smuts and Botha could have dealt with the matter boldly, clearly, and finally, for the

Government of a country can surely claim the right to exclude aliens whom it deems for any reason undesirable.

The Indians, however, were British subjects and had sympathizers in England whose livelihood was not imperilled by the immigration. As Smuts's aim was to win British goodwill and justify British trust in self-government, he had to exercise restraint and much patience. Trouble with the Indians continued for years and was a harassing problem for the later Union Government on the eve of the Great War in 1914. The Natal Indians lost the franchise, and a Class Areas Bill was proposed, to empower the Government to segregate Asiatics in certain districts. There were disputes over registration, Indian marriage laws, and taxation. The Indians' champion was Gandhi, who in these early South African days was not averse from wearing top-hat, tie, and tails, and had not won the degree of fame for saintliness since attained. Once he organized a march of thousands of Indians from Natal to the Transvaal frontier, so that the gaols became overcrowded with his countrymen. In these South African disputes, Gandhi developed his doctrine of resistance without the use of force. He claimed considerable rights for Indians in South Africa, claims which were supported by Indians in India who in their own land would have treated some of the immigrants hardly as human beings. At length Smuts reached an agreement with Gandhi by which the regulations concerning the Indians were modified but wholesale immigration was stopped. No one in South Africa was better fitted to appreciate saintliness or mysticism than Smuts,

but Gandhi met a negotiator as patient, subde, **and** obstinate as himself. Victory went to Smuts. Yet Gandhi may have observed that if the British Lion expects its cub to be reasonable when its tail is twisted in a non-violent manner the Lion himself might well be longsuffering under the same indignity.

II

While dealing with these various problems there was always one object before Smuts's mind—the achievement of the unity of South Africa. In speeches, writing, and conversation, and by the encouragement of Union societies, he quietly propagated the idea. He drew up a plan of union and was anxious to realize it as quickly as possible, lest a Tory Government attained power in England and delayed it.

In 1908-9 a National Convention representing the Cape, Natal, Transvaal, and Free State held sessions at Durban, Cape Town, and Bloemfontein to discuss union. The Transvaal representation took the lead, and had a constitution already prepared by Smuts. The majority were soon agreed on union under the Crown. Smuts then adroitly prevented any debatable points, such as native policy, the place of the English and Dutch languages in schools, or the functions of the local authorities in the four States, from dividing the Conference and obstructing his purpose. An example of his skill in finding a compromise, in this case with local pride and loyalties, was in the arrangement by which Pretoria was made the seat of government, while Bloemfontein became the headquarters of the

judiciary, and Cape Town the meeting-place of Parliament. Again, in the Cape, which had always adopted a comparatively liberal attitude, the non-Europeans were to retain the franchise under various qualifications; whereas the Boer States still excluded the natives.

The constitution agreed upon was passed by the Imperial Parliament, and the Union of South Africa was established in 1910. From the inception of the idea to the achievement of the reality the Union was largely the work of Smuts. He opened the door by pressing for a speedy establishment of self-government; he convinced Britain that her trust was not misplaced; the preliminary propaganda, the plan of action, and the form of the constitution were his; and his persuasiveness and determination to be conciliatory during the negotiations crowned all with success. Smuts's mind can deal with deep, involved, philosophical subjects, but he expresses himself on public occasions in the simplest language. To the representatives of the States he outlined the necessity of union in clear terms, showing that while Boer and Briton had fought against each other for what both considered exalted aims, now both should have a common object, union under the Crown. Under the Crown, Smuts said, South Africa could rely on the protection of Great Britain; but this might not endure, for in some future crisis Britain might be unable to extend protection; therefore South Africa should be unified, strong, and self-reliant. A strong South Africa should be founded, and strength was impossible if a people of one and a quarter millions remained divided under four Governments.

Botha was Premier of the Union from 1910 until his

death in 1919. Born in Natal, his grandparents were *voortrekkers* from the Cape. When he was seven years old his parents moved into the Free State, and Botha's youth was passed as a hard-working pioneer farmer. At twenty-two he settled in a part of Zululand which was later joined to the Transvaal. He had fought in the Boer War at Ladysmith—incidentally, it was Botha who captured Winston Churchill—and won brilliant success at Spion Kop and Colenso. When old General Joubert died he was put in command of the Transvaal forces. It was too late to do more than temporarily check the British advance on Pretoria, but for eighteen months, with de Wet, he continued a fluctuating guerilla warfare. Before the war he had opposed Kruger's narrow policy towards the Uidanders and corruption in the Transvaal. Now he appreciated the liberal aspects of the treaty with Britain, and resolved to abide by it. As Premier of the Transvaal he had striven with success to promote goodwill between Boers and British. In the pre-Union conferences his tact had conciliated some of his extremist followers. Botha could manage difficult or stupid men more easily than Smuts, though in all things they acted in close agreement. In the Union Cabinet, Smuts became Minister of Defence, Mines, and Interior, and later took over Finance. Though Botha possessed more patience than Smuts, there was one member of the Cabinet with whom friction seemed unavoidable—Herfczog, Minister of Justice.

Hertzog was four years older than Smuts. Born near Cape Town, of German stock, he was educated at Stellenbosch and studied law at Amsterdam. Return-

ing to Africa, he made little progress as a barrister, but gained a judgeship in the Free State. His sentiments were all against the mining, capitalist, commercial atmosphere which entered South Africa with the discovery of diamonds and gold. He feared that the agricultural and pastoral life of the Boers would be broken down, and that the Uitlander would become politically supreme over the Afrikaner. After fighting in the commandos, he stood out at Vereeniging for the forlorn hope of retaining Boer independence. As Minister of Education, under self-government in the Free State, Hertzog was not interested in conciliating British opinion and insisted on bilingualism in the schools. Indeed, his coldness towards the British connexion brought him a following among Boers who foresaw a complete dominance of their land by Britain and still hoped to establish their independence in republics. At the Union negotiations he was the champion of equality between Briton and Boer and between the languages. This language question was one of those which Smuts was relieved to see postponed for later discussion, as it was calculated to stir up Boer sentiment. Hertzog wanted a post in the Union cabinet, as he considered himself the best suited to guard Afrikaner interests.

Botha appointed him reluctantly, and was probably persuaded to do so by Smuts, who thought that the appointment would conciliate Afrikaner feeling. The Minister of Justice, however, soon showed that he was out of sympathy with both men. In his opinion they were so anxious to win British approval that they were unjust to their own people. Hertzog intended to work

for the predominance of the Dutch race in South African affairs, rather than equal partnership with South Africans of British race. At length he declared that he would support the Empire only as long as it benefited Afrikaners.

He was a member of the Botha-Smuts group, which became the South African Party in 1911 and had the support of English-speaking voters and moderate Afrikaners, but was soon to lead his own party. He resented Botha's hesitation in appointing him to the Cabinet and disliked some kindly remarks which Botha made about Rhodes at the unveiling of a memorial. When Botha attended an Imperial Conference in 1911 Hertzog showed that he expected more 'pro-British' measures to follow as a matter of course, as though Botha was simply a British agent. When increased contributions to the Royal Navy were suggested, as Britain was being compelled to build against Germany's growing armaments, Hertzog opposed payment, merely ignoring the argument that the Navy was the Union's first line of defence.

One result of the Conference, which reviewed the world situation and the rising strength of Germany, was the creation by Smuts of a new Defence Force, consisting of a small permanent corps of artillery, engineers, and mounted police, with a Reserve of volunteers and men recruited under a form of conscription. From Parliament Smuts obtained considerable powers in using this Force.

In 1912 Botha resigned, and on re-election left the discordant Hertzog out of the Cabinet. Smuts did his best to prevent this break, for he foresaw worse trouble

from a Hertzog out of power. His fears were justified. Hertzog led an active Opposition, consisting at first of only five supporters in Parliament but with considerable following in the country. With the war-cry "South Africa First" there began a bitter campaign against Botha and Smuts and their policy of co-operation between the races and development within the Empire. Their policy, said Hertzog, sacrificed the Afrikaner to Britain. His lead was well-received among many of Boer stock, and in subsequent years Britain could be blamed by them for everything that hurt either the country or the individual, from drought to a bankruptcy. As the Jew to the Nazi, Britain to the Hertzogite at that time was the source of all evil. Hertzog's party, the Nationalists, could find no reason for remaining in the Empire, and in a British war considered that South Africa should be neutral. The English in South Africa, Hertzog said, never regarded themselves as South Africans, but as English. This was one of the generalizations which contained just enough fact to pass as the whole truth. Hertzog's defection caused Botha to seek more support from the Unionists, who were mainly British, which antagonized more of the Afrikaans-speaking people.

While Botha and Smuts were worried by the Hertzog Opposition and were dealing with Gandhi, serious labour disputes led to an exciting situation. At a New Kleinfontein mine in 1913 a local strike occurred, and when the matter in dispute was settled the mine-owners refused to dismiss a few non-strikers. Other mines and various trades came out on strike. There was disorder, looting, and destruction. The trouble spread to the

Rand, and a basic issue, the recognition of trade unions, was raised.

The Government had intended allowing owners and workers to settle their quarrels between themselves, but its intervention was forced by mob action, killings, risks to the mines, and dangers from large numbers of natives in the compounds. As there were not enough police, and the Defence Force was not yet ready for action, the Government could not guarantee order and the safety of life and property. The alternative was surrender. Botha and Smuts negotiated with the men's leaders at Johannesburg amid scenes of excitement and violence. The Government and the Chamber of Mines recognized the trades unions, and a Commission to examine hours, wages, and cost of living was promised.

This victory encouraged extremists among the workers' leaders to go farther. At the beginning of 1914 another list of demands was drawn up. Coal mines, gold mines, and railway workers came out, and a general strike throughout the Union was proclaimed. Now Smuts had said that any strike was an appeal to public opinion. A general strike is much more—it is revolutionary. If this strike was not broken all work would cease, public utility services would go out of action, the people in the towns would starve, the employers and the middle classes would be dominated by a dictatorship of the white proletariat. The true proletariat of South Africa is, of course, black; and if the Government failed to restore order and successfully meet this challenge to the people a quarter of a million representatives of the true proletariat around Johannesburg might break out!

This time Smuts was ready. Martial law was declared; sixty thousand men, partly from the new Defence Force, were called out; officers were instructed to fire, after warning, if strikers tried to wreck railway installations. Trains, sanitation, lighting services, and food supplies were kept functioning. Then de la Rey in Johannesburg, with adequate fire power in support, and with a threat to blow up the Trades Hall, compelled the leaders to surrender. Nine of them—not one a South African—Smuts at once put in gaol. That night they were taken to Durban, whence they were rushed out of the country by steamer to England.

To justify his actions—the declaration of martial law and the deportations, which were illegal—Smuts spoke at great length in Parliament. He was indemnified by a large majority, and laws were passed that in future men should not be forced to join unions, and should be punished for refusing duty in a public utility service. On the other hand the Government met some of the workers' grievances by laws providing for compensation for accidents and industrial diseases.

Smuts* had won, but the power of Labour, stronger than its small representation in Parliament suggested, was set against the man who to maintain order had twice stood in its path. This enmity was added to the Nationalist opposition. Moreover, sections of liberal opinion in South Africa and Britain condemned his martial law and deportations as too drastic. The Unionists (the British party in South Africa) even helped Labour successfully to oppose the Government's request for less restriction on the power to impose martial law. The Nationalists were in the front

rank of the attack on Smuts, some of them with the additional incentive of personal dislike or jealousy to make the worst of his actions. Finally, during the strike some of the Defence Force officers had betrayed unwillingness to serve Botha and Smuts. In most cases this attitude seems to have been founded on Nationalism, sometimes adulterated with jealousy of the Union's principal leaders, rather than on sympathy with the workers or esteem for the weapon of a general strike.

Most of these reactions were expected by Smuts. He knew that his firm action would arouse many emotions, from intensified hatred to mild disapproval. Yet firmly and without any hesitations he followed the line of his duty as he saw it, regardless of the results to his own career. There was such a strong current of feeling against him that in the spring of 1914 there were prophets foretelling the end of his political life.

Labour might desire revenge on Smuts in politics, but the British among its leaders could not in a world crisis oppose his co-operation with Britain. The ratio of Boer to British in the Union has remained fairly even, at about 60 to 40 per cent. It varies regionally, as in the Free State (Boer) and Natal (British). Owing to intermarriage it would be difficult to-day to fix an exact ratio. Racialism, or at least the feeling among many Boers that the country was under foreign tutelage, was the strong irritant used by the Nationalists. The unease it caused was brought to an eruption of armed revolt when the world crisis came.

CHAPTER V

REBELLION AND JUNGLE WAR

Germany in Africa—Hereros—A dangerous neighbour—Smuts advocates war—Defeat of rebels—A peril averted—Smuts goes to war—A rowdy election—Smuts's hopes for South Africa—Botha and the Opposition—Smuts in German East Africa—" A war in a 200 "—Lettow-Vorbeck—The Nationalists and Smuts's victory—Smuts in England—The " British Commonwealth of Nations "

GERMANY started late in the 'scramble for Africa' and acquired only two areas, in the east and the south-west, suitable for white settlers. These territories she would have linked together by occupying part of Bechuanaland and the Matabele country, had not Rhodes forestalled her. In the later 'nineties she viewed with envy the great regions controlled by Britain, yet she could not intervene to her own profit during the Boer War, partly because France would not support her, but mainly because she lacked a fleet, Germany did not set aside her dreams of an African Empire, considered Britain alone could thwart her, and began to build a powerful fleet. In the areas she already occupied the natives were not unused to primitive brutality, but the conduct? of the Germans was their worst affliction. German administration was marked by ferocious cruelty, plundering, and murder. Helplessness, which in most human beings arouses a protective instinct, brings out the worst features in the

German character. Natives under German rule in Africa were helpless; they had no rights, and could hope for neither justice nor pity.

The Hereros of German South-west Africa were driven to rebellion by the brutality of the Germans, when in less than thirty years the numbers of these natives had fallen from eighty-five to sixty thousand. The Germans crushed the revolt by methods of extermination. The death of prisoners of war was ensured by placing their camps on the cold, foggy shores of the Atlantic. Three years after the Hereros began to show fight only thirty thousand remained. It was a lesson read against future revolt, and no doubt was also learned well by plundered, flogged, terrorized natives of German East Africa.

To Germany Africa signified only a torrent of raw materials, millions of negroes to be disciplined and trained as soldiers, great naval bases on the Indian and Atlantic Oceans, and domination of the world, Africa could give all this. In the Union alone, Germany saw gold, diamonds, and great spaces in which to breed another German nation. In this region, where the Boer War was a recent event, the way might be prepared by playing upon Afrikaner discontents to weaken Britain. Afrikanders who hoped to injure Britain, and establish their complete independence if Britain should fall, might be persuaded to open the door for Germany. By bringing about their own downfall, such Afrikanders would save Germany much exertion and cost. So the Germans kept a large Consulate in South Africa, quietly stimulated malcontents, dropped hints of re-establishing the Republics, and in

German South-west Africa maintained a garrison too large for such a meagre, desert-type country in which the natives had been thoroughly cowed.

The phrase *Fifth Column' had not then been coined, and though the art was not unknown to them, the Germans had not perfected the technique of suborning the victims of their projected invasions. Smuts, however, was aware that Germany was a dangerous neighbour, well-placed to invade the Union through areas where particularism and dislike of Britain were strongest.

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When war began in 1914 Botha at once informed Britain that the Union could defend itself, and movements of British troops from South Africa were begun. Then Britain requested the Union to occupy German South-west Africa, whose wireless stations were relaying order!* and information to German warships. Though Parliament was not in session, Botha agreed. The Defence Force began to take up war positidns. Six hundred men were on the German border, under Maritz, the burly dynamite-thrower of Ookiep days.

The Germans crossed the frontier, apologized for their uncertainty as to the exact position of the dividing line—but remained on Union territory. Even in Africa the German was determined to fight on the soil of his neighbour. This act made the task of Botha and Smuts somewhat easier when they asked Parliament's sanction for starting the campaign, yet both men expected opposition.

Before the Assembly Botha urged support of Britain by all measures, and co-operation in defence of the Empire. Hertzog opposed the campaign. A victorious Germany, he said, would punish the Union: a victorious Britain would probably transfer German South-west to the Union, or the Union could occupy the colony easily; so there was no point in fighting for it. Smuts, supporting Botha, recalled that the mother countries of many South Africans—in Britain, France* and Belgium—had been attacked. The Boers, he said, had fought for liberty, and from Britain they had received liberty to develop in any way they pleased. Now the world was threatened by a military autocracy which suppressed smaller nations. South Africa had paid in tears for its freedom. Were the people now merely going to let the Germans take it away? He indicated that there was a larger question to be decided. Was South Africa going to do its duty not only to itself, but to the whole world? Finally he pointed out that German troops were already inside the Union, that German warships were cruising in Union waters, and that but for the Royal Navy the trade of South Africa would be seriously threatened. The wireless stations of German South-west, he said, were a danger to British and to South African trade. The British Government, therefore, had said, "There is work for you to do."

Support for the Government was given by a large majority, but Hertzog and his Parliamentary followers voted against it and represented a widespread attitude in the country. Some of the Boer leaders, among them de Wet and de Ia Rey, had never been reconciled to

Britain. On a visit to Germany Beyers had been impressed by Prussian military efficiency. These men opposed South Africa's entering the war by a campaign in Africa. Beyers, Commandant-General of the Defence Force, had even considered using the Union forces at the time of the Rand strikes to overthrow Smuts and Botha. Now, in a letter of resignation to Smuts, he asserted that most Boers opposed the campaign, and that even the Cabinet in London had not been unanimous on going to war with Germany. Britain, he wrote, was alleged to be fighting for the rights of small nations and the sanctity of treaties, against Gehnan barbarism. Yet, when it suited her, Beyers wrote, Britain overlooked the rights of small nations, disregarded treaties, and had used barbarous methods against the Boers. Smuts replied:

Your bitter attack on Great Britain is . . . entirely baseless. . . . Your reference to barbarous acts during the South African War cannot justify the criminal devastation of Belgium and can only be calculated to sow hatred and division among the people of South Africa. You forgot to mention that since the South African War the British people gave South Africa her entire freedom under a constitution which makes it possible for us to realize our national ideals along our own lines, and which, incidentally, allows you to write a letter for which you would, without doubt, be liable in the German Empire to the supreme penalty. . . . My conviction is that the people of South Africa will have a clearer conception of duty and honour than is to be deduced from your letter and action.

Opposition to the campaign increased, and more Defence Force officers resigned. De la Rey, with a

following in the Transvaal, seemed about to lead an armed rising, when for the moment he was dissuaded by Smuts and Botha, and his men dispersed. Then, shortly after meeting Beyers at Pretoria, de Ia Rey set off by car with the ex-Commandant-Geijeral towards the Defence Force camp at Potchefstroom. What they intended is riot clear, for de Ia Rey was accidentally shot on the way by a policeman hunting criminals, and Beyers for the time drew back. Maritz, however, came out in open rebellion, handed over to the Germans Defence Force men who would not follow him, and invaded the northern Cape. Transvaalers, called up for service against him, refused duty. De Wet planned to join Maritz, not merely with the object of overthrowing the Government because of its war policy, but to fight for independence. Collecting forces in the Free State, he occupied some towns. The Free State was solidly anti-war and anti-British. Natal was all British, the Transvaal and the Cape were divided. Beyers and de Wet accused the Government of murdering de Ia Rey.

Some qommandos of the Defence Force could not be relied upon, and there is a story that Smuts neatly disarmed one of them near Pretoria. They were mounted men, well-armed and plentifully stocked with ammunition. After inspecting them and praising their turn-out, he told them that it had been decided that such men as they were far more useful in civil life than with the forces. He explained that the Government was short of horses and arms, and then offered them excellent prices for theirs, with immediate payment in cash. The men agreed, and went back to their farms

and ranches, delighted with a profitable stroke of business that would have pleased a countryman in any land. Arms and horses they could not easily acquire again while the Government was buying, and their doubtful loyalty could cause no more trouble.

Smuts had* waited, hoping that opposition to the German campaign would die down, for he was reluctant to take any action that might lead to civil war. He held back some of his Boer supporters who would have enjoyed any shooting-match. Now, with open rebellion to deal with, he declared martial law, yet advised the rebels to go home, promising complete amnesty if they did so. About ten thousand men remained in arms against the Government. Botha raised forty thousand, officered mostly by veterans of the old Boer commandos. Englishmen were employed as rarely as possible, to avoid introducing a racial quarrel, for Botha and Smuts judged that Afrikaners should settle the dispute among themselves. It became clear that, though Afrikaner opposition was noisy and very demonstrative, the majority of Afrikaners either were unwilling to rebel or felt that the rebellion discredited them in the world and, in regard to Britain, was making Boer honour a doubtful quantity. Those who resolved to stand in with a generous Empire, in partnership with which they could build a great South African nation respected in the world, proved to be the most effective element in the Afrikaner people.

Rebels who had joined Beyers were defeated at Rustenburg, and their leader was drowned crossing the flooded Vaal. The death of old comrades of the South African War was an agony to Botha, and he

could not hide his pain. Smuts suffered equally, but it was his nature to screen his hurts behind an iron self-control. De Wet was routed after a fierce action at Mushroom Valley, near Winburg, and was later made prisoner. Maritz eventually fled into Portuguese territory.

Some of the people in the remote townships had thought that Botha was using British troops, but most of the commandos he personally led were recruited from Transvaal Boers. One old woman, seeing a Boer column passing her door, shouted out, "Where are the damned English?" A young Boer replied, "Old lady, *we* are the damned English-" The Nationalist rising was quelled, in the wisdom of Botha and Smuts, by the efforts of Boers.

Hertzog had not condemned the rebellion and now sought clemency for the rebels. His plea was likely to win him popularity, but was quite unnecessary, for neither Botha nor Smuts intended to create martyrs. The rebel rank and file were released, suffering only certain temporary civil disabilities. One Defence Force officer named Fourie, who had not resigned and had therefore led men into mutiny while on active service, was executed. Smuts regarded him, on the evidence of his conduct during the rebellion, not as a misguided patriot, but merely as a marauder. De Wet was sentenced to six years imprisonment, but was released a few months later on promising to abstain from revolutionary politics.

The rebels had been impelled by varied motives. With the ordinary Boer of the more remote districts and small towns, there was dislike of the British on

Nationalist grounds, fed by Nationalist propaganda and quietly encouraged by German agents. The connexion with Britain, though it was even then politically an invisible thread, could be blamed for the social, economic, and political ills which at times afflict all states. Propaganda could make Britain the personification of cynicism, exploitation, unemployment, drought, gold mines, and Jewish finance. Some Nationalists, who were not misled by these illusions, fought simply because Britain's war in Europe seemed the best opportunity of regaining Boer independence. With some of the leaders, nationalism was weighted with jealousy and dislike of Botha and Smuts. Finally, in appealing to force against the decision of Parliament, the malcontents were encouraged by Ulster's conduct on the eve of war. It seemed to some of them that if a few thousand Ulster Irishmen without experience of war, in a tiny corner of a small country, could successfully defy the will of the Imperial Parliament it should be child's play for a strong party, with warlike adherents, to overthrow the Union Government.

The speed and seeming ease with which the Government checked the rebellion made the danger seem less than was in fact the case. Had the revolt been allowed to gain adherents by success England would have been faced by another theatre of war at a time when she could hardly cope with military events in Europe. The rapid success in the field was Botha's work, but the organization of supply, equipment, transport, and mobilization was Smuts's work. Night and day throughout these grave weeks he was at his post, tireless, dynamic, calm, fearless; he was always available,

ready with quick and balanced decisions to meet each phase of the situation. Botha once said that few people realized the value of Smuts's work at that time. While revolt in the Union was being suppressed Smuts was also preparing for the attack on the Union's German neighbour.

m

The Union Government had stood by Britain during the dark, early months of the war, and was now to provide the Empire's first military success since the halting of the German invasion of France. By the spring of 1915 Botha was ready to invade German South-west Africa with some fifty thousand men, more than half of English descent, against the German forces numbering about ten thousand. The main strategy was to overwhelm the Germans quickly in order to avoid a long guerrilla war. Two columns moved from the Orange river and the Kalahari and two from the Atlantic coast inland.

Much of the country was desert-type, with poor soil, pale grass, thorn, and sand, burned by the sun, waterless. As the Germans retired they poisoned the wells, leaving warning notices. But they left no warning of the mines which they scattered everywhere, in open places, houses, stables, and even kraals. It was a war of manoeuvre, involving long, rapid marches and wide flanking movements, carried out by thirsty columns. Soon the North and East of the colony, including the capital, Windhoek, were occupied by Botha. Gladly Smuts left his administrative work to take part in the

campaign. Joining the forces operating in the South, he hastened their advance, so that Gibeon and Keetmanshoop were quickly captured. The German Governor then suggested peace on the basis of the *status quo*. Botha and Smuts demanded surrender of the whole territory. The campaign went on. At length the German tried a final bluff, informing Botha that Germany was now so strong that it would be advisable for him to end this side-show in a friendly spirit. When this suggestion had no effect he surrendered! At the cost of some four hundred casualties, of which one-quarter were killed, the Union held the whole colony.

Smuts was heartened by doing a soldier's job again, away from offices and politics, in the open air. He regarded the success as an example of co-operation between Boer and Briton, and hoped that it would help to bring unity in South Africa. The conquered territory was vast, and though much of it was desert, there was enough land to support many future South Africans. But when he gave voice to such views the Nationalists accused him of Imperialism, a new charge to add to those of engendering civil war and dividing the Afrikander people.

In the elections of 1915 the Nationalists and Labour men recalled every conceivable charge against Smuts. He had put Britain before South Africa, he was a traitor to South Africa; he was responsible for the deaths of Fourie and de la Rey, and he was "in the pocket" of the mine-owners; he had disregarded the law by his deportations and had been only too ready to use martial law; he had muddled the country's finances. In the last charge there may have been some

measure of truth, for Smuts had not the faintest interest in money or its problems, and his wife managed his own household affairs. Germany's agents stimulated this campaign, hoping that an anti-British Government might replace Botha and Smuts.

Smuts's meetings were howled down, and shots were fired at him. Moreover, in Europe the war was going badly for Britain and her allies, and this had its *effect* on the elections. Though rowdyism and the injustice of the attack may have turned votes in favour of Botha, Smuts, and their South African Party, the Nationalists, under Hertzog, greatly increased their representation in Parliament. The Free State was solidly Nationalist, the other Boer districts more moderate. In the new House the South African Party had fifty-four seats, the Nationalists twenty-seven, the Unionists forty, and Labour three. Yet the voting showed ninety-five thousand for the S.A.P. and seventy-seven thousand for the Nationalists. Botha and Smuts resumed office with the support of the Unionists, but obviously a considerable section of the people were opposed at least to the Government's attitude to the war, and many in this section could be influenced by an appeal to anti-British sentiment.

Botha and Smuts stood for a great South African nation, free, unrestricted, progressive, the equal of any state in the world, respected by all. This status among the nations lay open to South Africa through partnership with Britain, who had kept every pledge to South Africa. That South Africa had a brilliant future among the nations of the world was so clear to Botha and Smuts that they could not understand why many of

their own Afrikander people preferred to close the door on the outer world, go back to petty regionalism and parish politics—and in the end remain at the mercy of any aggressive Power. Under the vicious fury of attack from his own race, Botha at times became dispirited. Smuts also felt the lash, but in the knowledge that his course was right his nature could set aside the sting of personal wounds and enable him hardily to keep on his course.

Owing to the rebellion, unrest, and the German South-west campaign, the Union had not sent many troops to other theatres of war in Africa. The Government now raised an army for operations in German East Africa, and a force of artillery and infantry for employment in Europe. Smuts departed to take command in East Africa. Botha was left to face a bitter Nationalist Opposition, which rejected all his advances for a reasonable understanding. No good news from Europe came to ease his situation. Verdun was held, but the French Army was battered; British blood flowed without apparent success on the Somme. The South Africans, one-third of them Boers—most of these had fought against England—were valorous in that battle, and always later when the British were hard-pressed; but in their own country another rebellion was narrowly averted. The Nationalist onslaught continued. Britain paid unprecedented prices for South African commodities, but when prices fell slightly from these high levels the Nationalists could point to British exploitation. When Britain seized Dutch ships carrying contraband of war she provided the Nationalists with a handy stick to belabour Botha.

Against the unscrupulousness of the attack Botha could not call too often on Unionist support, lest he should drive any of his Afrikaner supporters into the Hertzog camp. Blackening lies were used against him, and as Hitler has shown, a lie need only be big enough to win acceptance, and propaganda must be repetitive to be effective. The sustained attack cost Botha some of his followers. The infinite patience, knowledge of men's motives, the wit and astuteness of a Charles II, would hardly have been enough to disconcert the Opposition in South Africa; and Botha's was merely a sincere, honest, able mind. Read as history the quarrels are those of the village, but a village quarrel can make an inferno. It is not surprising that Botha died, after years of this political hell, at the age of fifty-seven, in 1919.

Smuts was fortunate to be away from all this.

IV

The Nationalists opposed the appointment of Smuts to the East African command with the British rank (unpaid) of lieutenant-general—and it is rather typical that they were concerned as to whether or not he would draw salaries from Britain and from the Union. On the other hand, Britain was delighted at the conception of an old opponent commanding her troops. Some idea of his judgment, calmness, and intellect had already reached Great Britain; his courage and military skill were known to thousands from personal experience. The British regarded the appointment as

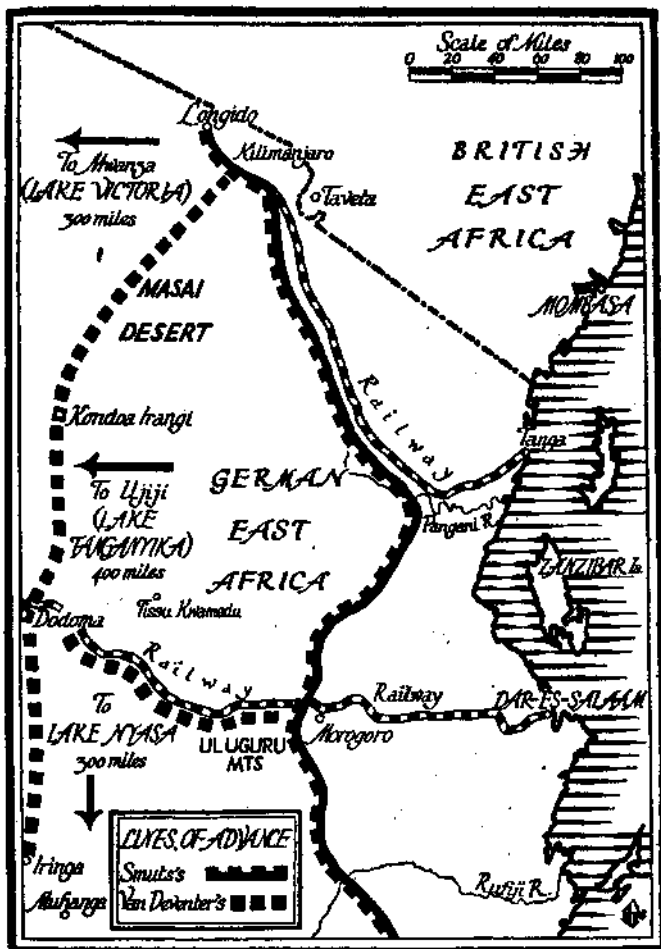
proof that freedom and trust within the Empire was not merely a theory but a working system. The appointment of an Afrikaner, particularly Smuts, was hailed almost as an inspiration. A measure of the progress in the relationship of England and the Dominions is that such an appointment to-day would cause no remark.

An expedition into East Africa had already been repulsed in 1914. When Smuts took command of his army of South Africans, Rhodesians, Indians, King's African Rifles, native troops, Belgians, and British, the Germans held not only their own colony but parts of British territory. Their army consisted mainly of *askari* recruited from the most savage tribes and was commanded by a skilful soldier, von Lettow-Vorbeck. Yet, here, as in German South-west Africa, though, in far greater measure, the country was a *jtore* formidable⁴ obstacle than the enemy.

The vast war area contained every kind of tropical feature—forests, tall grasses much higher than a man, great rivers, swamps, fetid jungle, mountain ranges, waterfalls, scrub, and parched desert. Troops might be hampered by floods or parched with thirst. Terrific rains would hold up operations, and by contrast, as at Tissu Kwamedu, Smuts's men might have to fight for wells. The country swarmed with wild life—eland, wildebeest, lion, giraffe, leopard, sassaby, buffalo, rhinoceros. Insect life was as varied, with locusts, tsetse fly, mosquitoes, and parasites that killed horse and man. Snakes and hundreds of other zoological specimens abounded. The campaign has been called "a war in a zoo." Rain, heat, fever, malaria, afflicted

the troops. Smuts had to replace thousands of South Africans by Indians and native levies from other parts of Africa, men better fitted to resist the diseases and climate of this fantastic arena.

Starting from Longido, in the first weeks of the campaign he outflanked the strong German positions at Kilimanjaro, captured the German base at Taveta, and began a north-to-south drive through German East Africa across the difficult interior, avoiding the more unhealthy coastal region. A Belgian column was sent forward from Tanganyika, and British troops advanced from Nyasaland. Smuts and his second-in-command, that van Deventer who had fought at his side in the Boer War, operated in separate columns to reach and then occupy the main railway in the centre of the colony. Van Deventer made some long, difficult marches, thrusting on through merciless desert conditions. Lettow-Vorbeck concentrated against him, but retired on the approach of Smuts's forces. Both columns reached the railway. Smuts occupied Morogoro, the administrative capital, and began to work through difficult, disease-ridden high country. The Belgians took Mwanza and controlled Lake Victoria. Portuguese under British command occupied Dar-es-salaam. The force from Nyasaland commanded the southern highlands of the colony. Eventually the German was driven into the south-east, but Smuts could never bring him to a final action. As the Germans retired they destroyed all food supplies. The pursuers found nothing to help their slender rations. Smuts shared with his men all the privations and hardships—even to the malaria. They knew he **had** done



GERMAN EAST AFRICA, ILLUSTRATING
THE CAMPAIGN OF 1916

everything possible to get supplies through wild country where pack-horses died, bridges were washed away, roads did not exist, and all communications ran through hundreds of miles beset with perils from the enemy, disease, and wild life.

Smuts drove his men hard. Once they covered more than one hundred and fifty miles in less than a fortnight, through water, jungle, mud, and forest, hacking their way *in* humid heat, making tracks, building bridges, always under harassing fire from the *askari*. Smuts worked, ate, and slept with his men, and carried out a large part of the scouting and reconnaissance himself. Officers of his rank in the Great War were as a rule merely names, something abstract, to the men who carried out their orders. It was easy, and often the only relief, for toiling soldiers to berate such an abstraction as a lieutenant-general. But however hard Smuts worked his men he could not fail to be respected and popular, for he was one of them, ' up the line 'with them, equally travel-stained, weary, or ill, and as much a target for the hidden *askari*.

Lettow-Vorbeck was a worthy foe. By skilful handling, his force of eight thousand men occupied the attention of an army many times its size, in a campaign that cost his adversaries millions of pounds. One clever guerrilla succeeded in eluding another. Compared to Smuts in the Free State and the Cape, the German had many advantages. In East Africa the country favoured defensive tactics far more than in the South. Warfare resembled the manoeuvring of ants on a prairie of high grass. The most rapid flanking or encircling movements which Smuts could plan left

ample time and space for the enemy to avoid action. Smuts in 1901-2 was at an even greater numerical disadvantage than the German in East Africa, and the British had means of transporting and supplying troops in the Cape which Smuts lacked when it was his turn to be the hunter. Again, the black *askari* of Germany was less affected by the climate than Smuts's Europeans. Finally, while Smuts in the Cape had to engage the British when he could, in order to attract recruits and stimulate a general revolt, it was enough for Lettow-Vorbeck to avoid decisive action and keep his forces in being, to attain his sole object of holding an Allied army from more fruitful employment. Smuts's task had been unenviable.

The German Commander finally entered Portuguese East Africa, remained in action until the end of the war, and surrendered with a fragment of his forces at the Armistice. His name was given to a corps in the Reichswehr which Germany was allowed to organize after her defeat. Some aspects of Smuts's direction of the campaign, such as his continuance of operations into the German colony during the rainy season, came under criticism. The official verdict, however, fully justified his conduct of the operations; and his old adversary in the Cape, Lord French, in terms more enthusiastic than the Army Council's, described his work as a masterpiece of strategy and tactics.

When the main affair was finished, with Lettow-Vorbeck manoeuvred from the best areas of East Africa, at the beginning of 1917 Smuts was sent to an Imperial Conference in London. Although the Imperial Premiers were to meet, Botha could not go. His

joyless task was still to meet the venomous opposition in South Africa. On his way to England by the Cape Smuts spoke proudly of South Africa's part in the war, and of the future greatness of the nation. He could point to great areas of Africa conquered, and to glory won by South Africans in Europe. Before the end of the war, apart from thousands of natives, South Africa was to contribute more than n per cent, of her European man-power, a figure that compared most favourably with those of Australia and Canada (13.43 and 13.48) in view of the discouragements to recruiting raised by Nationalist propaganda and the fact that a limit had to be fixed in taking Europeans from a country with a large black majority. South Africa made a great contribution to the Empire's effort, but when Smuts spoke with satisfaction and hope that such a successful beginning had been made he met bitter criticism, jealousy, and spite. What new harm would he do to South Africa in England—in Smuts's spiritual home? The insults and innuendo of the Opposition form sad reading to-day and are hardly credible to those accustomed only to the 'give and take' and absence of personal animosity in English politics. But the saddest feature of this conflict was that South Africa's greatest subject should be driven, by the attack of a minority, to affirm his patriotism in words. "Every drop of blood and every bit of courage and determination I have in me will go to the service of my country."

There were, of course, many to speak, in English and Afrikaans, in praise of Smuts's skill and gallantry in war and of his vision of a strong South African

nation, taking a place as a factor in the world, abandoning puny wrestlings and narrow spite; and Smuts always looked to the rising sun and quickly forgot the darkness. Yet he suffered. His face at that time seemed marked with suffering, for despite his resiliency, and self-control that was a shield of steel, injustice and ingratitude are penetrative. His welcome in England must have atoned for much.

The Lion was licking his wounds of the Somme, Russia was tottering to revolution, and America was still neutral. Smuts brought freshness and a new hope. He was a victorious general, something unknown in England, an old enemy and therefore doubly a friend. For England, growing cynical under the burden of vain casualties, shirkers, and war profiteers, 'becoming disenchanted of the high ideals of 1914, Smuts brought words of liberty, right, and freedom, recalling the earlier mood. There was about him an air of bright hope, power, and romance. He seemed the embodiment of the vigour and youth of Empire. From the greatest to the humblest the people wanted him to stay. Churchill wrote that if Smuts's talents were not used Britain deserved to be defeated. Lloyd George took the wholly unprecedented step of bringing him into the War Cabinet, and harnessed in Britain's service his calm judgment, foresight, sagacity, and experience of war.

V

His very presence in England was a testimony that Britain's war against Germany's attempt at military

imperialism was just. Smuts represented another idea of Empire in which all nations were free.

"The British Empire," said Smuts,

"is not founded on might or force but on moral principles of freedom, equality, and justice. . . . The German Empire... has not yet realized that ultimately all victories are moral, and that even the political government of the world is a moral government. The fundamental issue in this struggle . . . is that the government of the world is not military, and it cannot be run by a military machine, but by the principles of equity, justice, fairness, and equality, such as have built up this Empire."

Britain, he told the people, had left the narrow path of right in fighting the Boers, but had recovered and had made amends by giving the Boers the liberty which they had feared would be lost. Because of this policy of justice a small nation which fifteen years before had been at war with Britain was then fighting at her side. When he fought for the Boers, Smuts said, he was fighting for liberty and freedom, and that was why he was fighting again.

A banquet was held in his honour in the Royal Gallery of the House of Lords, at which men famous in politics and the Services were present. In a brilliant speech Smuts defined the Empire, assessed its unique character, and suggested methods for its harmonious governance in the future, advocating consultation between the states, each of which should be autonomous under the Kingship. At one point he said:

"The British Empire is much more than a state. I think the very expression 'Empire' misleading, because it makes people think as if we were one entity, one unity.

... We are not an Empire. Germany is an Empire, and so was Rome, and so is India; but we are a system of nations, a community of states and of nations far greater than any Empire that ever existed. . . . We are not one nation, or state, or empire, but we are a whole world by ourselves, consisting of many nations and states and all sorts of communities under one flag. We are a system of states—not only a static system, a stationary system, but a dynamic system, growing, evolving, all the time towards new destinies. Here you have a kingdom with a number of Crown colonies; besides that you have large protectorates like Egypt, which is an Empire in itself, which was one of the greatest Empires in the world. . . . You have great dependencies, like India—also an Empire in itself, one of the oldest civilizations in the world . . . and beyond that we come to the so-called Dominions, a number of nations and states almost sovereign, almost independent, who govern themselves . . . who all belong to this group, this community of nations which I prefer to call the British Commonwealth of Nations."

There was no name derived from political ideas of the past, said Smuts, which could describe this form of Empire. He did not foresee that the term he had coined, the "British Commonwealth of Nations," would pass into official use.

CHAPTER VI

THE CENTRAL WAR MACHINE

Smuts's status—A king deposed—Passchendaele—Rapallo—Welsh miners—A secret mission—Smuts and the Austrian Empire—Air defence of London—Creation of the *Air Ministry and the R.A.F.—Hopes for peace—Smuts's scheme for a League of Nations

AT the centre of war-planning, in London, where decisions were made affecting the fate of nations and the lives of millions, Smuts had a distinctive status. Having played no part in any political or Service rivalries, disputes, or intrigues, his judgment could be accepted as unbiased. Every one, great and small, who had some claim or idea which had been rejected sought Smuts's opinion and help. His unique standing was valuable to the Cabinet both at home and in its relations with Continental politicians. Smuts had no record to rise up against him in the diplomatic field.

In his first months in England Smuts helped to decide the fate of one of Europe's lesser monarchs. The French felt that the pro-German, anti-democratic King of Greece was a danger to the Allied armies at Salonika and should be removed. The British Foreign Office was hesitant. At his cottage at Walton Heath Lloyd George conferred with the French Premier, Lord Milner, and Smuts; and, sitting in the garden on a warm summer night, they decided that Constantine

should be deposed. This was done, and soon afterwards Greece joined the Allies.

Soon after his arrival in England Smuts was sent by Lloyd George on a mission to France and Belgium, where he inspected South African troops, discussed war aims with the French Premier, and affirmed to a rather depressed King of the Belgians—whose country was occupied by the Germans—that the first aim of Britain was the restoration of Belgium. He also met the leading British soldiers.

At this time there were two main schools of opinion among the British regarding the future conduct of the war. British G.H.Q. in France was for concentrating effort on the Western Front. Lloyd George, viewing the whole series of fronts in Europe and the Near and Middle East as a unity, held that the offensive should be made at some point weaker than the German western defences. .

Smuts's view was essentially that of Lloyd George. He advised an offensive against the Turks, and was offered the command in Palestine. This he refused, probably because he knew that there would be opposition to the release of troops from France, and that Palestine would for a long time remain a passive front. Smuts could not have endured inaction during a world war. While advocating operations against the Turks, he also* advised the creation of a reserve behind the British front in the West to meet special emergencies, and he supported the suggestion for an assault against the Belgian coast, with its submarine bases at Zeebrugge and Bruges, which worried* the Admiralty.

Lloyd George hesitated before allowing an offensive in Flanders, but Smuts's opinion carried weight with him. Smuts, in his turn, had been influenced in favour of this operation by the arguments of the British G.H.Q. in France. Later in the year an attack towards Passchendale was launched, as a first step in operations against the Belgian coast. There was no second step, for the German defences, moated by mud and water, held the onslaught. The British sustained huge casualties under fantastic fighting conditions, so that a large part of the army was almost destroyed, and its survivors remained badly shaken. In the course of the battle the Germans were able to detach divisions to help the Austrians rout the Italians at Caporetto. Following this disaster, Smuts accompanied Lloyd George to meet the King of Italy and Allied military and political leaders at Rapallo, to find means of assisting a wilting ally.

On the journey through Italy they observed the signs of defeat and disorganization, and saw the British and French troops already on their way to support the Italians. With the exception of the King of Italy, who was mainly concerned with convincing the British and French that his army was not disgraced, the Italian representatives at the conference were excited and seemed to lack any realistic idea of what action should be taken. The French plainly showed their contempt for them. Lloyd George and Smuts could see no useful result arising from the contact of excitement with contempt. Coolness and tact were demanded. Lloyd George and Smuts provided both, and led the Italians into a more effective frame of mind. Maximum aid

was promised and given. The Austro-German offensive was finally halted.

As a contrast to these affairs of general war direction, Smuts was called upon to deal with an immediate danger at home. Towards the end of 1917 industry was being 'combed out' to provide men for the Services. Recruiting on the voluntary system had taken the country's best men, most of whom by this time were dead or disabled. Conscription had been introduced, but had been evaded on a large scale. In Birmingham alone, for instance, it was discovered that a hundred thousand men who could have been in the Services without loss to war production were still in civil life. When the call-up was made more searching various agents stirred up trouble among industrial workers. Large strikes were threatened in the Welsh coal-fields.

Smuts was sent to speak to the miners. He was an ideal choice. Lacking any political record in England, his reputation stood for personal gallantry and a loyalty to the Empire that was an example to the homeland. From Cardiff to the coal-fields his route was lined with strikers, anxious to see the famous South African soldier, and expecting, Smuts said, to see a black man. At Tonypany he faced a large meeting of angry miners. He said:

" Gentlemen, I come from far away, as you know. I do not belong to this country. I have come a long way to do my bit in this war, and I am going to talk to you to-night about this trouble. But I have heard in my country that the Welsh are among the greatest singers in the world, and before I start, I want you first of all to sing to me some of the songs of your people."

There was silence for a *moment*; then some one began *Land of my Fathers*, and from that moment Smuts had won the sentiment of the crowd. It was a masterly gambit, which brought to his argument the courtesy and patriotism of the Welsh. So it was throughout the coal-fields. In two days the miners were back at work, and the Navy, with only one week's supplies, had its coal again. Smuts may have wondered why no one had thought of these tactics on the Rand!

Lloyd George had mentioned the Welsh love of song to his emissary, but could provide no such Open Sesame for Smuts's next mission. The Austrian Empire at that time included Hungarians, Serbs, Poles, Roumanians, Italians, and other nationalities. Throughout the war this heterogeneous state was the chink in Germany's mail, so that when certain feelers for peace reached Lloyd George from Austria Smuts was sent to Switzerland to meet Count Mensdorff, representing Czernin, the Prime Minister. Smuts was instructed not to include Germany in any peace proposals.

Precautions were taken to keep the meeting secret, but without success, for Switzerland was a junction of official and private, espionage systems. At the outset of the discussions it seemed plain to Smuts that the Austrian was trying to discover what the British had to offer, and had little authority to propose anything on behalf of his own Government. It was also clear that Mensdorff's intention was to bring Germany into the discussions. Smuts's career had been passed in war and administration, while Mensdorff was an experi-



Men of the East Africa Rifles crossing
the Riuu River, Tanganyika



Troops embarking for German East Africa

SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS IN THE GREAT WAR

Photos E.N.A.



AT AN INSPECTION OF THE CITY OF LONDON VOLUNTEERS AT THE
GUILDHALL DURING THE GREAT WAR (MAY 1917)

Photo Topical Press

enced diplomat, trained *in* Paris and London, adroit and persistent in his object. But Smuts was equal to keeping him to the point.

Smuts mentioned the sympathy felt for Austria in Britain and the general feeling that she was being used by Germany for German purposes. England, he said, would welcome an Austrian Empire that was really liberal, making her peoples satisfied and contented, provided that she was dissociated from Germany and in good relations with the Allies. Such an Empire would be actively supported, and could be a sort of British Empire in Central Europe, governing varied peoples successfully. Mensdorff said that the impression in the Austrian Government had been that the Allies intended to dismember the Austrian Empire, and that the views Smuts had put forward would be welcomed. But no change could be made in time of war, and there could be no break with Germany.

Mensdorff said that Czernin favoured general disarmament and a League of Nations. Smuts replied that the views of Britain and America on a League of Nations were well known, but that Germany could not be left in a position of military predominance in Europe, and that Europe would have to be so arranged that this danger would be averted in future. Mensdorff's reply was that there was no danger of a dominant military Germany, as a "new order" was arising there. The Parliamentarians and the well-educated workers were advancing in influence, and the Socialists were powerful. Smuts answered that the German General Staff dominated the civil government. When peace came, Mensdorff answered, the whole military

regime would be swept aside. He suggested that informal peace negotiations should begin, including Germany, with Austria as a friendly intermediary. Smuts replied that it was not the British Government's intention, nor the people's temper, to open negotiations with Germany.

Mensdorf's subsequent attempts to draw Smuts into a discussion of general peace terms failed, but Smuts was willing to discuss such Austrian interests as Poland, the Danube countries, and Italian claims, for he wanted to gauge the Austrian attitude to changes in those areas.

Again the Austrian tried to bring Germany into the picture. If the war continued, he said, there would be widespread ruin in Europe. Germany would be reasonable, he urged, demanding only certain claims on Belgium, Alsace-Lorraine, and Russia—and colonies. Britain, he said, surely did not expect to break the German Army, and make it put up the white flag! If the War was not stopped, he warned Smuts, America would assume the economic and financial leadership of the world, and Japan would dominate Asia. Smuts replied that Britain would carry on until Germany was beaten, or until revolution occurred there.

Mensdorff, whose chief had probably dispatched him to Switzerland on orders from Berlin, still tried to bring about the inclusion of Germany in the talks. Austria, he promised, would put all pressure on Germany to accept disarmament, in submarines and other weapons, and to settle future disputes by arbitration. Austria, Smuts pointed out, had now a great opportunity for breaking with Germany and starting afresh.

Mensdorff answered that Austria wanted peace, hoped to be the intermediary, was in sympathy with Britain, and wanted to co-operate with her in future; but that a separate peace might be impossible. Again he suggested that Germany should be brought to discuss peace terms. Smuts refused, but left the door open for Austria to resume discussions on her own behalf.

This meeting convinced the Cabinet that the time for including Germany in peace talks had not arrived, and encouraged it to formulate war aims that could not be misunderstood and would let both sides know the position exactly. Once more Smuts met an Austrian envoy in Switzerland, and it seemed for a time that Austria was ready to make a separate peace. But it was the eve of the German offensive in 1918, and the Austrians, probably believing a German victory possible, drew back. Smuts, however, made it clear to them that peace would not be simply a matter of bargaining for territory, but would be the application of justice to all peoples, Hungarians, Serbians, Roumanians, and Italians included. If the negotiations had continued, in this spring of 1918, it might have been possible to save Austria and set up some stable system between the Alps and the Black Sea. Smuts conceived a Federal Empire, consisting of states with complete independence in domestic affairs. If this Federation had been born then, many of the problems and crises of subsequent years, even the present war, might have been avoided. Later, when the Austrian Empire broke up, it was impossible to weld such a Federal State.

n

From these matters of high diplomacy Smuts's mind was directed to another immediate and practical problem—involving perhaps the most important creative and administrative work he accomplished in these months in Europe.

Aviation in 1917 was a new weapon of war, in early development. Methods of attack and defence of cities were hardly tested, save by airships in attack, and by a thin defence by aeroplanes, searchlights, and guns, which had proved effective against these large targets. Airmen knew that the fast aeroplane, a small, speedy target with greater power of evasive action, would be a far harder problem for the defence.

Britain's air forces had been administered by boards and committees dealing with supplies, equipment, and policy, and consisted of two main branches, the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service. Aircraft were used for reconnaissance, artillery observation, tactical bombing, coastal and submarine patrol, and fighting to protect these activities. Capable administrators had been at work, seeking to get the most value out of air power, but could show no results commensurate with their efforts, because their authority was vague, plans were not unified, and the two Services made divergent and competing demands on material.

Events occurred in the summer of 1917 to change this condition. Just before noon on June 13 fourteen Gothas in diamond formation flew over London, dropped bombs, killed 162 people and injured 432.

At a school in Poplar a bomb fell among sixty-four children, killing eighteen. The defence sent up more than seventy aircraft. Most of the pilots never saw the enemy, and the Germans returned without loss. There was much public indignation; the Cabinet arranged for two leading fighter squadrons, Nos. 56 and 66, to be brought from France, and discussed reprisals against German cities. Reprisals, however, were almost useless, unless they could be sustained in such a way that Britain, as Lord Trenchard said, could "go one better" than the Germans. While considering reprisals, the Government ordered the air forces to be doubled I

As the raid was not followed up, the two fighter squadrons returned to France, arriving in the first week in July. Then, on July 7, a fine morning with thin high cloud, twenty-one Gothas crossed the coast, flew across London in the diamond formation, and bombed again. Among the fifty-four killed and a hundred and ninety injured, about a quarter met their death or wounds from anti-aircraft fire. Ninety-five British aircraft went up, about one-third of them the best fighters of the day—Camels, S.E.^a's, Sopwith Pups, and Bristol Fighters. Thirty-six made contact with the bomber formation, and one Gotha was shot down.

Even the inexperienced public of that time realized that night-bombing was difficult to counter; but there was widespread anger that the Germans should be allowed 'to get away with it' in broad daylight, in view of millions of people. On that Saturday afternoon and on the following Monday and Wednesday there were Cabinet meetings to discuss the new menace. As

a result, a special committee was formed to examine the problems of home defence against air raids, air organization, and the general direction of aerial warfare. The Prime Minister was the nominal chairman, but the main part of the work and the responsibility for creating the lines of future policy fell upon Smuts. He had seen the July raid, and noting its effect on a section of the public, said that the effect of bombing on morale would have to be considered. He worked rapidly, and presented his first report on July 19.

There had been much dispute over air policy, and leading men had expressed contrasting views. Smuts, as a neutral in these disputes, had the full confidence of the administrators and experts who now put their opinions before him. They were men of great ability and technical experience and were satisfied that the power of rapid analysis and synthesis which he showed in dealing with the great mass of evidence would lead to notable progress. The first report dealt with the air defence of London.

Smuts recalled that the July raid had encountered only sporadic gunfire and a ragged, unorganized aeroplane defence* though we had more aircraft in action than the enemy. Slow aircraft and a wide distribution of guns, in groups or singly, had been adequate to deal with the Zeppelins and should be retained lest airship attacks recurred. But for the defence of the nerve-centre of Britain, Smuts wrote, plans would have to be almost entirely reset. In place of the several authorities which had conducted defence, there should be a centralized command under an officer of great ability and air experience. Gun barrages would have

to be formed in front of the targets. R.F.C. home service units, fixed and mobile batteries, and the whole London area, including Harwich, the Thames, Medway, and Dover, would have to be unified under this command, which would also include the Observer Corps and the Royal Defence Corps east of a line from Grantham to Portsmouth. Squadrons should be trained to fight as a team against the enemy formations, which could beat off attacks by individual fighters. He foresaw the possibility that the Germans might make feint attacks to draw the defenders into the air. As it took at least forty-five minutes for an aircraft to descend, refuel, and again climb to the attack, the Germans would be able to launch their main bombing while most of the fighters were grounded, or otherwise out of action. He therefore pointed out that aircraft would have to be sufficiently numerous to deal with the feints and the main effort.

Smuts's suggestions were adopted and rapidly proved effective. In a few weeks the Germans abandoned day bombing as a policy and made their attempts at night. Smuts had considered this problem, and warned the Cabinet that night bombing would be against areas rather than particular targets, which the Germans would usually be unable to distinguish. He pointed out that the Thames would act as a guide to bombers in good weather, so that the enemy would not be restricted to attacking on moonlit nights. Among his general recommendations he mentioned the possibility of the Germans' using gas, and suggested that the Government should instruct the people in the necessary counter-action; and in view of the

casualties from anti-aircraft fire, that the public should be warned to take cover on the first warning. Smuts could not find the answer to the night bomber, for he could not enable pilots to see a small target moving and changing direction at speed in the darkness. But he informed the Cabinet that more powerful searchlights were to be used—one of their objects was to blind the enemy—and supported an idea of the new commander of London's air defences, Brigadier-General E. B. Ashmore, for a shield of wires suspended from balloons inside London's fighter patrol area.

The speed and competence with which day-bombing was met, a feat of the last war rarely appreciated, was largely due to Smuts. Losing no time in dealing with the varied tasks assigned to him, he next approached the more general problems of air warfare. Far sooner than it was entitled to expect—for it should be remembered that air power was a new thing, untried in many of its uses, and as yet unorganized—the Cabinet received Smuts's recommendations.

In the Official History, *The War in the Air*, Smuts's second report to the Cabinet is described as "the most important paper in the history of the creation of the Royal Air Force." At that time, it should be recalled, the air arm had been employed almost entirely on duties of co-operation with the Army and Navy. Smuts foresaw in 1917 the immense future scope of air action.

The air arm, he reported, would soon be beyond the status of a subsidiary to the Army and Navy, and could be used for independent operations. "Nobody that witnessed the attack on London on July 7 could have

any doubt on that point." As far as could be assessed at that time, he wrote, there was absolutely no limit to the scale of its future employment in war. " And the day may not be far off when aerial operations, with their devastation of enemy lands and destruction of industrial and populous centres on a vast scale, may become the principal operations of war, to which the older forms of military and naval operations may become subordinate."

The Cabinet, at the time of this report, was under the impression that production was so advanced that there would soon be a surplus of aircraft beyond the needs of the land and sea Services. On ~~its~~ ^{his} premise, Smuts advised the formation of an Air Staff, to plan independent air operations. The design of aircraft and engines should be settled according to the operations policy decided upon, and such planning called for an Air Ministry. " Aircraft is destined to work a far-reaching change in land warfare," he wrote, and to benefit by this change Britain would have to develop a new organization, an Air Ministry, equipped with the best available brains. The new Ministry should control and administer every kind of war activity, and should work out an amalgamation of the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service. Moreover, he advised the Cabinet that all this planning should be secret, so that the Germans would not start a development on similar lines, and Britain would enter the new era of independent air warfare fully prepared and with every advantage.

Smuts's report was adopted by the Cabinet, and he was next appointed to the chairmanship of an Air

Organization Committee to work out the draft and details of the scheme. British G.H.Q. in France did not welcome these new suggestions, holding it dangerous for an Air Ministry to assume control with theories which had not been borne out by experience. Nevertheless the work of the committee went on.

Meanwhile, as the daylight attack was proving too expensive, the Germans had begun the night-bombing of London by aeroplanes. The Cabinet asked Smuts to examine the problems of bombing Germany. When Smuts approached the task it was discovered that Britain's air preparations were not as forward as the Cabinet had supposed, and that the air expansion programme was in arrears. Smuts informed the Cabinet that to achieve adequate results the country's whole industrial organization would have to be reviewed, and that priorities would have to be given to aircraft production. Again, he insisted that there must be a clear understanding of what the air policy was to be, so that to fulfil it the right arrangements could be made in the manufacture of operational and training aircraft, provision of aerodromes, building, and the recruitment of ground crews. Air expansion, Smuts wrote, was a fundamental question of war policy which the Cabinet must answer.

Convinced of the importance of air priorities, the Cabinet then made him Chairman of an Air operations Committee and a War Priorities Committee, which studied all these matters and their possible effects on the two older Services, and decided varied problems concerned with the production and allotment of materials of war. Smuts was also a member of a com-

mittee on manpower, which began the task of finding the ground personnel, particularly mechanics, for the air expansion. This committee also studied the strength of the Allies and the enemy on the Western Front, assessed the remaining man-power of Britain, considered how to use it and how to conserve it until the weight of American numbers should be felt in Europe.

Only Smuts could have carried on, for the most part simultaneously, such many-sided activity. When other leading men were tired his mind was fresh and clear. He had no departmental work to explain and defend in Parliament. The problems he settled affected many naval, military, and industrial interests, and as it was recognized that Smuts had no axe to grind or coteries to sustain, his decisions were accepted as based on the sole consideration of winning the war. His work was even extended to a committee dealing with air policy. In fact, his constructive mind was set to examine every aspect of the new air organization. At length, in the first months of 1918, all this planning, creating, and drafting was finished. The Air Ministry appeared, with Lord Rothermere as Secretary of State and an efficient Air Council. Soon afterwards the Royal Air Force, a separate Service, came into being.

From this work in London Smuts was sent to the Middle East to judge where the British army there could be best employed. He recommended that Mesopotamia should become a defensive front, and that troops should be transferred to Palestine for an offensive against the Turks. With Allenby, who had captured Jerusalem, he discussed all matters of reinforcement,

strategy, and supply for a drive northward into Syria. Once more his recommendations were adopted by the Cabinet, but the assault was delayed by the German offensive in the West in March and April 1918.

On a visit to France before the German attack Smuts indicated the points on the front which would probably be found weakest, and it was at these places that the Germans bent the British lines in March and April. Sent to report on these British defeats, Smuts told the Cabinet that in his opinion they were owing to lack of reserves and loss of morale among men who, after the 1917 battles, had been put to work through the winter on building fortifications for a lengthened line taken over from the French.

In that summer of 1918 few of the Allied leaders saw how definitely the war had swung against Germany, even when the French counter-attacks were made in June. Lloyd George, viewing the war as a whole, was conscious of the beginning of the end. Churchill, in September, judged that victory was near, if only because of the British superiority in artillery and aircraft. The British military leaders were not so optimistic. Smuts seems to have shared their mood, and felt that the war might continue into 1920. Few would have prophesied that before the end of the year Germany would be defeated.

Thus, a speech at Glasgow was very different from Smuts's resilient tone of a year earlier. Out and out victory, he said, might demand an endless campaign; nations might be decimated, and civilization be put in peril. His speech suggested that a middle way short of total defeat of the Germans might be advisable,

leading to a decent, reasonable peace. This was one view which Lloyd George would not accept, His fire and force drove on to the complete victory over Germany. Yet many shared the mood of Smuts that summer, after the German advances on the Somme, Lys, and Marne. Smuts yearned for peace, even at the price of a partial victory, so that a new settlement of Europe on principles of unity and co-operation could be established.

III

A few months after his arrival in England Smuts made known his views on the need for a League of Nations. All people wanted peace, he said, yet everywhere one saw destruction, and millions had perished. Unless man stopped this self-destruction in future, civilization would die. Men had learned to destroy scientifically, but the social conscience had not kept pace with this knowledge. Yet it was not a matter of fate that man should go on destroying; it was in man's choice to avoid such ruin.

To accomplish this, he said, the heart of man would have to be changed, and the post-war period, when resentments smouldered, was not the time to begin making plans for an enduring peace. A beginning should be made at once. The first step, in his opinion, was to conclude the war with a reasonable, just peace, after victory. Then the nations should be allowed to decide their own fate, and not be handled, re-arranged, and partitioned by the great Powers. Once this self-determination had achieved a settlement

no

GENERAL SMUTS

an international order could be built on the basis of national order, with agreement between the nations to confer on all vital issues. For a nation which defied the common will, there should be some force, or sanction, to be used as a last resource. Disarmament would help to keep the peace, said Smuts. There would always be a danger of war while the nations were heavily armed.

Yet a League of Nations, he continued, could not exist as had previous Concerts of Powers, simply to preserve the *status quo*. There would have to be a consultative body which would revise the peace settlements, so as to meet the aspirations of progressive forces, which could not be repressed without the risk of another war. If such a system of international co-operation could be created he considered something would have been gained from the war.

While he was occupied with great affairs at the central direction of the war during 1917 and 1918 his mind revolved such ideas and hopes. Diplomatic journeys, visits to France and the Middle East, manpower, air policy, and organization were all almost secondary in his mind to the problems that would arise at the peace. Above all else, when peace should come he wanted to see a League of Nations solidly established. The name of Smuts became identified with that of President Wilson as an apostle of the League. Lloyd George requested him to write a Memorandum of his views on the constitution, functions, and powers of the League. A month after the Armistice, when he had resigned from the War Cabinet, Smuts published his scheme.

It embodied the ideas of consultation between states, sanction, mandates instead of annexations, and many of the features which later characterized the League. One of his main suggestions was that the League should act as guardian of the new states that would be created out of the wreckage of the Austrian, Russian, and Turkish Empires. Some of these, which were both impoverished and not politically trained for self-government, would be guided by some particular state on behalf of the League and under its ultimate control. None of them would be annexed by the victors. The League would protect the new states from their powerful neighbours. "Europe is being liquidated," he wrote, "and the League of Nations must be heir to this great estate."

He suggested the powers and constitution of a League and the means of building world peace. Of these means, one was the abolition of conscription, the "tap-root of militarism," for if it continued all labours would be in vain. In most countries conscript armies would be replaced by militia, with numbers and conditions of service as allowed by the League and with little power of aggression. As another method of achieving peace Smuts envisaged the nationalization of the armaments industries. Private arms factories, in his opinion, created large vested interests, which could foster to their own profit a war atmosphere among the peoples through the Press and other agencies, exaggerating petty incidents until they appeared like serious international situations. Armament factories, therefore, should be nationalized, and their production made subject to League inspection. He also recommended



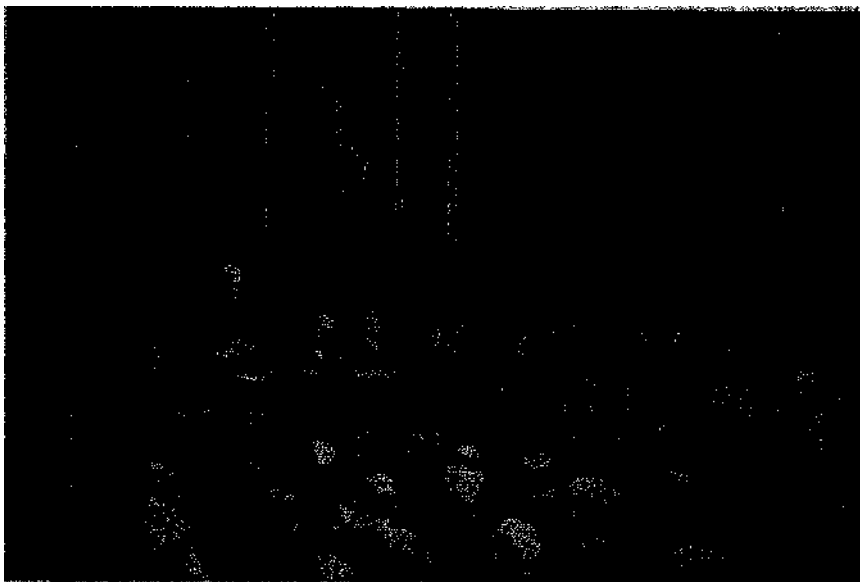
AFRICAN TROOPS LANDING TRANSPORT AT MAJUNGA, ON THE
WEST COAST OF MADAGASCAR, IN THE AUTUMN OF 1942

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SOUTH AFRICAN INFANTRY WITH A GUN CAPTURED
FROM THE ITALIANS

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GENERAL SMUTS ADDRESSING MEMBERS OF BOTH BRITISH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT
IN OCTOBER 1942

Mr Churchill and Lord Simon can be seen on the left of General Smuts.

Photo Keystone

CHAPTER VII

SMUTS AND THE PEACE

Smuts meets a revolutionary—Champions a lenient treaty—Attitude to Germany and Russia—Denounces the Treaty—Signs under Protest—Comment on his views—Hertsog comes to Paris

AT the Peace Conference Smuts was the principal member of the committee, under President Wilson, which drafted the Covenant of the League of Nations. Though some of his suggestions, such as the abolition of conscription and the nationalization of arms factories, were not embodied, the influence of Smuts's plan is seen everywhere in the Covenant. Smuts believed that it was vital for America to accept the League, if it was to be a strong instrument for shaping the world's future. The Covenant was rejected in America, mainly because it was made an issue of domestic politics. Wilson died in 1924; Smuts lived to see the tragedy of the League—defiance from some nations, other Powers avoiding the obligation to help the weak effectively against strong aggressors, the bewilderment of the millions who wanted the League to prosper but who could never discover reasons satisfactory to honest minds as to why it failed to check the international banditry of Japanese, Italians, and Germans.

During the early days of the Peace Conference Smuts visited Budapest on a mission to end fighting

between Hungary and Roumania and to establish a neutral zone between them. On the way he passed through Vienna, where British authorities had prepared a luxurious meal for his party. In view of the lack of food in the country and the ragged, starving crowds he had seen, Smuts was furiously angry, "His eyes when angry," wrote an observer, "are like steel rods." He ordered his party, in future, to live on the Army rations they had brought with them. At Budapest the best hotel had been commandeered for them, but they lived on soldiers' fare in railway coaches. The city was full of wretched, hungry crowds, defeated in war and now plundered by revolutionaries. A Government set up by Bela Kun under Lenin's patronage was trying to establish Communism. Smuts soon came to an understanding on the points of his mission, but almost at once Bela Kun drew back from it, probably on orders from the Kremlin. However, he suggested a scheme for the economic union of the Danubian States which appealed strongly to Smuts. The plan came to nothing, and when the question of war reparations from these states arose at Paris Smuts said the earlier suggestion should have been accepted. He opposed collecting reparations from Austria, or from the relics of her Empire. Regarding the new State of Czechoslovakia, which he visited, he foresaw a serious situation arising if millions of Germans and hundreds of thousands of Magyars were included against their will, apart from the fact that this would violate the Allies' peace principle of self-determination. Trouble might come, for instance, from the Sudetenland.

During the drafting of the peace treaties Botha and Smuts were sympathetic towards the defeated, because they could recall the misery of the vanquished. But this was a small influence in the fight Smuts made for more lenient treatment for Germany. He held that Germany could never be anything but a formidable factor in Europe; that with unrest in Germany, Europe would never be stable, and that England could not be prosperous while Europe was unsettled. Even if Germany accepted the Peace, he considered that lack of goodwill would create such an international situation that the League could not function. Germany, said Smuts, might be made absolutely powerless, yet would find ways and means of getting revenge. He disliked the idea of military occupation of any part of Germany, and held that she should be brought into the League at once.

When most of the conquerors wanted to extract the last farthing from Germany he advocated the fixing of reparations at a reasonable figure, one which the German economy could meet—though part of his advice was misunderstood, so that he was quoted as a supporter of larger reparations. He opposed the detaching of certain territories in Europe from Germany, such as the transfer of Danzig to Poland, a state which was "an historic failure." He would not support the exaction of reparations from the countries freed from the Austrian Empire, because he believed payment would result in disputes and discontents which would drive them into alignment with Germany again.

A vindictive treaty, he held, would weaken Germany

and leave her open to Bolshevik propaganda, whereas Germany should, in fact, be left strong enough to act as a barrier against Russia. Smuts wanted to prevent Communism spreading, but was against intervention in support of any Russian faction. The various warring governments, he thought, might later be summoned before the League, which would insist on an armistice between them. Britain's attitude to Russia should be helpful and friendly, for perhaps some Soviet system would prove to be Russia's best line of development. In the meantime, as Russia worked out her own fate, Germany should become an outpost against Bolshevism.

In speech and writing he protested urgently against the peace treaties. Many of the important arrangements he considered unjust, inexpedient, pernicious, impracticable, and not in accordance with the Fourteen Points, which Wilson had put forward in January 1918, as the basis for a fair peace, a pronouncement which the Germans claimed should bind the Allies. In the Peace Settlement he saw the beginnings of future war, with Britain involved as a guarantor of the Peace. His signature was given at Versailles under protest and for two reasons only. In the first place he hoped, once this formal peace had been reached, that the work of evolving real peace might be started through the League. Secondly, had he refused to sign, trouble would have resulted for Botha in South Africa. Botha signed in order to establish the Union's right to sign as a Dominion, the equal of any state in the world. Though he had appealed dramatically for a peace without vengeance, Botha in Paris had been

concerned mainly with South African affairs, and was disinclined to tilt in European tournaments.

Such were Smuts's views. They are open to endless argument. Balfour, for example, pointed out that his attitude to the Fourteen Points was too legal, and showed fully why they could not be treated as a contract between two litigants. He also remarked that it was widely assumed that Germany was penitent, becoming immediately on defeat a widely different nation from the one that built up armaments and caused the war. Why should there be so much faith in Germany's behaviour, Balfour asked, and so little hope in Poland's ?

Again, in regard to reparations from the new Danubian states, Britain could not accept a burden of repayment of her own war debts while her Central European competitors in trade made a fresh start, unhandicapped. As for Germany, no one expected her to pay more than the amount of the damage she had done, and all expected that even that sum would soon be modified. It was, in fact, reduced. Germany did not suffer as other countries have suffered after defeat in war. In the end, it has been shown, Germany came out of the reparations juggling with a handsome profit, which she used to gather strength for another war. The large part of the agonies which Germany claimed to endure arose mainly from the frustrations of a bad loser.

Moreover, in deploring various features of the Peace, Smuts did not realize that many demands from the European nations were not essentially based on the desire for revenge, but arose from roots deep in history.

The main example of such claims was in Poland, which had held the gate against Eastern barbarians while Western civilization developed, and was a nation of glorious tradition when Germany was a swarm of petty states, ruled tyrannously for the most part by robber princelets* or rustic bumpkins. Poland's reward had been cold-blooded, planned partition, and suppression by Russians, Austrians, and Germans, led by the founder of, modern Germany.

Smuts never ceased to plead for a lenient peace for Germany, yet he opposed the return of German colonies. In this he was influenced probably by Germany's vicious record as an administrator of black territories, and certainly by the feeling that the Treaty cast the shadow of another war. In view of the risk of war, it was his opinion and the Union's that South-west Africa should not be held by such a dangerous neighbour! Indeed he held that the colony, as a pastoral country, would be best developed within the Union, and should be annexed, not mandated.

To mention but one more aspect of Smuts's view of the Treaty, he fully expected Germany to respond to lenient treatment with gratitude. In the twenty years following the Treaty such treatment was, in fact, accorded her. The Allies did not force her to pay her bills. Even before Hider, Germany had ceased any pretence of intending fully to pay her reparations, which had been reduced. Germany was not subjected to the widespread military occupation which she expected; she was allowed a highly trained professional army of 100,000 men, which, it is now believed, she soon raised to 500,000. Supervision of German dis-

armament was conducted, at least by the British, in a gentlemanly and quite ineffective manner. Later America and Britain helped indirectly to finance her rearmament. Germany was allowed to break the Treaty at will, and annex from her neighbours lands which contained German populations. Yet this reasonableness—judged weakness and degeneracy by Germany—only stimulated the appetite for domination. The Allies fed the tiger which has clawed or devoured them. It may be argued that the Treaty failed not through severity but by the moderation of its application. The liberal spirit of the conquerors and the German response to it, were in fact, well-illustrated in German South-west Africa.

Here the Union accepted the League's mandate. Though land was needed for the settlement of poor South Africans, none was confiscated from the Germans, who held the fruitful areas. But when the Union introduced Boers into the poorer districts to settle as farmers the Germans protested. The Union paid pensions to former German civil servants who had retired and even increased them to meet the higher cost of living. The Germans were offered Union citizenship, and almost all accepted. Then, as Germany grew stronger and more aggressive they passed a resolution that all Germans in South-west owed allegiance to the Reich. German propaganda newspapers appeared. Young Germans went to Germany to be trained by the Nazis. Soon the features of Nazidom appeared, with the abolition of freedom of speech and of the Press, even of thought, and the outward sign of the swastika and the Nazi salute.

Those who possessed businesses which the Nazis could destroy were 'broken' unless they accepted the creed, Germans held two passports, Union and German!

Smuts's trust in Germany's reformation was not justified. Yet, in other things, notably his idea for a federation of the old Austrian states, his advice was far-sighted and might well have prevented the present war. On the other hand, had the Allies stood together and enforced the Treaty that also would have prevented the war. So, in the light of history, it seems to many to-day that the peace-makers would have done well to keep in mind the type of settlement which the Germans understand and respect; a treaty modelled on the German pattern. There existed such a pattern in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which the Germans imposed after the downfall of Russia. No German expressed any discontent with it. This treaty took one-third of Russia's western population, 89 per cent, of her coal mines, 85 per cent, of beet-sugar lands, 32 per cent, of her agricultural lands, and demanded huge financial reparations. There has been recently another example of what Germany considers the just dues of a conqueror. In less than eighteen months, France paid to Germany during the occupation roughly £1,000,000,000. That was the sum which the Allies received from Germany from 1920 to 1932! Also, during those years Germany borrowed about the same sum from America and Britain, and did not repay it.

Smuts regarded the Germans as led away by German Imperialism from their natural path of honesty, culture,

and peacefulness; so that with kind treatment they would become honourable members of the community of nations. As late as 1934 he said that Germany's Versailles status was "an offence to the conscience of Europe." He later regretted some of his beliefs, especially in the light of German conduct in the two years preceding the outbreak of war. To Smuts Nazidom was among other things a tyranny masked as patriotism, under which men surrendered liberty and personality. This, in itself, was heresy to Smuts's faith in the high destiny of mankind. It was worse retrogression that, having given up their own freedom, the German people should support the destruction of the liberty of their non-German neighbours. With Churchill, Smuts was among the first to recognize the menace of the Nazi and Fascist system, long before Hitler began his foreign aggression, and while he was fervently protesting that he intended harm to no one.

It needed the advent of Nazi baseness to turn Smuts from his optimistic view of Germany; but he can distinguish between German and Nazi still, for he seems unable to believe in anything but the finest in men. He well knows that selfishness, pettiness, dishonesty, and unscrupulousness exist, for he has seen much of these vices in his political life; and he saw the fine conception of the League of Nations rejected in America, for transient political reasons, by small minds. Yet he can never align himself to the trivial, puny, and short-sighted in politics and human conduct. He can ignore them, as a weak undercurrent in the grand creative stream of man's work. Such a mind could not

expect anything but the best from Germany, until the Nazis demonstrated their quite different ideals in the conquered countries of Europe.

II

As there was much discussion at the Peace Conference regarding the rights of small nations to self-determination, Hertzog came to Paris and conferred with Lloyd George on self-determination for the Boers. Lloyd George gently pointed out that his visitor was the spokesman only of a political party, not of the South African nation; that the old Republics had freely accepted self-government and had then of their own will joined in the Union with the British colonies. The Union, said Lloyd George, was itself an outstanding example of self-determination.

The arrival of Hertzog may have reminded Smuts, who had been so long absent, of what to expect in South Africa. Botha, whose stay in Europe had been brief, could hardly have forgotten! In the midsummer of 1919 they returned to South Africa, and soon afterwards Botha died.

CHAPTER VIII

PRIME MINISTER

Hertzog and secession—The Israelites—Ireland—Rand general strike—Labour joins Hertzog—Smuts fights unemployment—Bondelswarts—The Ruhr—Smuts's defeat—Hertzog's Afrikaner Policy—The Gold Standard—Holism—Hertzog—Smuts Coalition—Status Act—Malan and Dominion Party—Neutrality—Smuts's view—Great Trek Centenary—War—Hertzog v. Smuts—Smuts becomes Prime Minister—Raises army—Production of equipment—Smuts's policy towards Opposition—Smuts and Ossewa Brandwag—Visits African Fronts—In England

THE prosperity of the war years soon departed, and Smuts had to meet the following period of depression with the added disadvantage that much sentiment was hostile to him. In 1920 and 1921 he fought two elections, mainly on the issue of secession from the British Commonwealth.

In the first contest Hertzog claimed that the Union had the right to secede. Smuts held that the constitution placed legislative power in the hands of King, Senate, and the Assembly, no part of which could break with the others, save by revolution, and that the Union's policy should be frank, honest co-operation with the Commonwealth. The Nationalists accused him of erecting barriers to South African independence, described him as a thick-skinned opportunist, complained that he burdened the Union with England's

troubles, and asserted that the Union was sucked dry by the Commonwealth. "It is now the sole object of General Smuts to form a great British Empire," said Herfczog. "South Africa is too small for him." On the other hand extremists among the English-speaking South Africans attacked him for doing too little "to save the British connexion." "The election gave neither the South African Party nor Nationalists a clear majority.

Many Afrikaners saw that a country with such a small European population could not afford to be divided. Smuts relied on this feeling in approaching the Nationalists for some kind of agreement. The move was defeated by the extreme wing of Hertzog's party. Smuts then turned to the Unionists, and brought about their fusion with the S.A.P.

In the next election he made a direct attack on the Nationalist claim to the right of secession. The Union, he said, had to choose between being a strong nation and seceding from the British Commonwealth. He brought out the stark realities of secession, showing that it would lead to the dissolution of the Union's component States, British from Boer, and to trouble for both from the natives, in a suicidal weakening of the White position. (In 1921 Europeans numbered 1½ millions, the natives more than three times as many.) These warnings impressed the considerable section of Afrikaners to whom secession, independence, or republicanism were only academic questions.

Surprised by this bold, forthright attack, Hertzog revived the old charge that South Africa was exploited by imperialist, capitalist interests, and argued that, in

any case, secession was not under discussion at this election. Smuts was returned with the support of seventy-eight seats, against forty-four Nationalists. Labour lost twelve seats.

Meanwhile there had been other excitements. Industrial depression and the higher cost of living led to strikes in Port Elizabeth and elsewhere of the under-paid, half-starved natives. Sometimes force had to be employed against them, and there was bloodshed. Then a native religious sect, the Israelites, refused to move from Bullhoek, to which they made a yearly pilgrimage. Refusing to notify infectious diseases, births, and deaths, they defied the law and became a menace to public health. PoHce instructed not to use force were sent to move them on, but were themselves chased away. The Israelites gained confidence, especially as they were convinced that bullets* could not harm them, and remained on their camping-ground. After much fruitless persuasion the Native Affairs Commission (recently established by Smuts to make a more sympathetic contact with the natives and to give advice on native problems) recommended the use of armed force to move them. The Israelites charged, and found that they were not divinely protected from wounds and death. Smuts's opponents took the fullest advantage of the bloodshed which occurred for propaganda against him.

In 1921 Smuts came to England for an Imperial Conference, at which he indicated Japan as a menace of the future and the Pacific as a centre of coming difficulties. He suggested that Britain should liberate her diplomacy from ties with France, escape the unpopularity

which French policy incurred, and seek collaboration with America.

At this time Ireland was in revolt. Just before the Great War a Home Rule Bill for Ireland had been passed by the Imperial Parliament, giving a moderate measure of self-government to Ireland. It had not been applied because of the intransigence of Ulster interests, the threat of armed defiance of Parliament, the weakness of the Liberal Government, and Irish Nationalist willingness to forgo the measure until after the war. Ireland had supported Britain in the war, but a small revolt, unpopular with the people, had been handled with less wisdom than was shown by Botha and Smuts in South Africa, and the loyalty which had raised two South Irish divisions turned cold. As a result of further unwisdom, rebellion broke out after the war. It was the time of "the troubles"—of ambush and execution, curfew, torture, and Black-and-Tans. Britain's enemies were cynically amused, and her friends were distressed, for during the war and at the Peace Conference the British had championed the small nations of Europe. America was restive.

While revolt still flared in Southern Ireland the Government decided that a new Parliament should be opened for the North. The King was to speak at the ceremony. Smuts suggested that the occasion would provide a timely opportunity for an appeal for peace and conciliation. He wrote the King's speech himself.

It seems to have had some effect. De Valera had wanted to meet the Ulster leader, Craig. When Craig refused Lloyd George decided to send Smuts. De Valera distrusted offers from English statesmen, but

was willing to meet a Boer. At a conference in Ireland with three of the rebel leaders, Smuts pointed out the uselessness of rebellion, which would receive no help from outside and would only result in widespread ruin and desolation. Britain, he said, would never agree to an Irish Republic; but even if a Republic were established *it* would never be really independent, and would always be at the mercy of great Powers. Dominion status, however, would bring with it real independence, the recognition of the world, and the support of the other Dominions. Irish freedom, he urged, would not be limited by the common Kingship. He showed that Dominion status worked well in other nations of the Commonwealth.

This appeal from Smuts, who could be regarded, at the lowest estimate, as more disinterested than the English leaders—who had not offered full Dominion status—seems to have had considerable results. An armistice was arranged, and negotiations led to the formation of the Irish Free State. In the opinion of the best judge of Smuts's career, Sarah Gertrude Millin, this bringing together of Irish and British statesmen was his greatest achievement of the eighteen years after the war.

Smuts returned to a stormy South Africa. The price of gold was falling, production costs were high, and low-grade mines faced bankruptcy. A commission of inquiry recommended that more native labour should be employed. If this were done a few thousand whites would be displaced; but if production ended it would mean unemployment for many more, white and black. While the Chamber of Mines, for the employers, and

the men's leaders conferred, coal-miners' wages were cut, and twenty thousand men struck work. Huge numbers of natives became unemployed. Smuts was reluctant to intervene, and told the miners that if they did not start work they would, in the end, lose more than they hoped to gain. He had less sympathy with the white miners in this affair than with the natives. The task of finding the way of peace in industry was made more difficult for him by the Nationalist accusation that he was the paid agent of the mine-owners.

Most of the Rand workers by this time were backveld Boers, unused to industrial conditions, who had taken the places of English and Dutch who had served in the war. They were paid wages that would seem like riches to more skilled workers in England. They had strong unions, but the black man was regarded as a menace to their livelihood which must be suppressed. Railway engineers joined the miners and were followed by the workers at the power-station. A Council of Action, composed of Communists, took the lead over the Rand Federation of Trades which had been negotiating with the Chamber of Mines. Commandos of workers, and wilder elements of Johannesburg, terrorized the Rand, holding all the townships. Mine officials and women were attacked. There were murders. Natives were violently treated with the intention of making them fight—whereupon the armed commandos would have vented their spite against them. \On Smuts's advice the natives remained quiet under all provocation.

A general strike was proclaimed. Smuts then declared martial law in the Rand and its neighbourhood,

mobilized local units of the Defence Force, called out the burghers in arms, and set off for Johannesburg. The strikers intended to wreck his train, but he entered the city by car, under fire. As they drove through a crowd of men the car's tyres were punctured by shots. Smuts had the car stopped and the tyres mended—instead of getting well clear of the scene. As some of the men approached one of his party fired at them with a revolver. Smuts told him to stop. While the tyres were being repaired Smuts sat quietly by the roadside, coldly regarded the men who would have liked to seize him, but dare not come nearer. Smuts was always cold, still, unemotional, but quick to take decisive action in a moment of danger. In Johannesburg a striker tried to stop him at a bayonet's point. Smuts simply pushed the bayonet aside, and entered the building he was visiting before the man could make up his mind what to do.

Smuts's arrival put new heart into the population of Johannesburg, which was helpless in face of the disorder created not by mere strikers but by methodically organized, armed groups. A plan of action was formed and put into force at once. All along the Rand the revolutionaries were fought and beaten. Fordsburg, which they made a headquarters, was cleared of civilians before the guns opened fire. In one hour these last rebels surrendered. Nearly three hundred police and troops had been killed, about one hundred and sixty revolutionaries, roughly the same number of natives, and some scores of non-combatants. South Africa, employers and labour, had experienced a faint taste of what Red revolution involves.

Hertzog had not openly supported the strikers, though the workers, perhaps, expected him, once the crisis was reached, to summon his followers to come out in arms for a republic. But Smuts knew that every decision he had taken would be brought up against him when he asked Parliament for indemnity for the introduction of martial law. He was not mistaken. The Nationalists ran true to form in the violence of their denunciation. They recalled the rebellion of 1914, the 1913 strike, the fiative strike at Port Elizabeth, and the affair at Bullhoek, as precedents for Smuts's manner of repressing disorder. "The Prime Minister's footsteps drip with blood," said Hertzog. Though the Rand disorders were hardly a day's wonder to the rest of the world, they were decisive for Smuts, for they brought Labour into close association with the Nationalists, and strengthened Hertzog's position in the towns.

To effect the alliance, the Nationalists (a landowning, conservative body) reduced secessionist talk, for Labour had British leaders. In return Labour indicated that its Socialist plans were modified. A strange alliance, yet the parties had two aims in common. Both were determined to exclude the black man from industrial work which could be performed by Europeans. Lack of employment for natives in the towns would benefit the country party by providing black labour on the land. Secondly, both patties were resolved to overthrow Smuts.

It was unfortunate that Rhodesia voted on the character of its future government just when these disorders had occurred in the Union. Smuts deatly wished to bring Rhodesia into the Union, and complete

Rhodes's plan. The Rhodesians, however, were unfavourably impressed by recent events, and did not want to lose their close connexion with Britain or become merged in a country with a Boer majority. They voted against incorporation.

Smuts tried to counter the trade depression by developing industries begun in the war years. He introduced measures dealing with workers' compensation, wages, and apprenticeship, tried to increase the export of fruit, coal, and maize, endeavoured to get better prices for farmers and check the usury on loans to them. He began a programme of public works, protected some industries, and tried to check the dumping of cheap foreign goods. These measures, he hoped, would increase employment, especially among the "poor whites," landless and workless men, who numbered about one-twelfth of the population. But measures of Protection in South Africa were handicapped by the smallness of European numbers and by the low purchasing power of the Euraficans, Indians, and natives. Moreover, much of the gold, diamonds, and coal had perforce to be exported, and the foreigner who buys is also anxious to sell.

One more worry was added to the general depression. The Bondelswarts, a Hottentot tribe of South-west Africa, revolted and were roughly treated by aircraft. Smuts was not responsible for the casualties but was blamed for them by his opponents. A majority of the Native Affairs Commission censured the Administrator's report on this affair, and the Mandates Commission of the League of Nations condemned his conduct of relations with the Bondelswarts. Smuts was

as much surprised as the people of the Union at what had occurred, but his adversaries could again cry " bloodshed."

Smuts was tired, and probably welcomed the change of atmosphere and the contact with larger issues when he came to the Imperial Conference in London in 1923. In that year the French replied to a German failure to deliver reparations in the form of coal by occupying the Ruhr, claiming that tKey had the right to do so by the Treaty. Britain denied that France had this right. The Germans in the Ruhr refused to work while the French were in occupation. They were supported by the German Government, which devalued the mark, took the opportunity to pay off its internal debt with almostf valueless money, defrauding even its own nationals, and then said Germany was ruined and could pay no more reparations.

In England Conservatives pointed out that Germany's wounds were self-inflicted and held that Britain should support her old ally of the war. Liberal opinion was against France and acclaimed Smuts, who inveighed not only against the Ruhr occupation, but against French policy generally, the reparations settlement, and the trend of European affairs. French occupation of the Ruhr, he said, was ruining Germany and would bring about a world collapse. Britain should refuse any share that was offered by the French in any profits from the Ruhr. The Peace Treaty, said Smuts, was being regarded as a scrap of paper. Too much generosity on the part of Britain and America might simply enable France " still more effectively to subsidize and foster militarism on the Continent." Though

he sympathized with France, he said, he also had a profound sympathy for Europe. " Let France in the day of her victory and greatness not forget her noble historic mission as the great bearer of the liberal tradition in Europe. . . ."

He urged that German reparations, fixed at £6,000,000,000 sterling in 1921, should be reduced, and that Germany should be allowed a moratorium of two years to re-establish her finances and credit before starting payment. As things stood, he said, the economic and industrial bases of Europe were giving way, and there were more armed men than in 1914. Even the new, small states had armies which they could not afford. Smuts saw despair and weariness among the peoples and the approach of famine for many. Europe seemed to him to be marching to suicide. He called for a great conference of the Powers interested in reparations, at which the United States should be represented and carry her full responsibility.

America, did take part in the attempted settlement of the German reparations problem, by the Dawes Plan (1924) and the Young Plan (1929), which among other arrangements reduced German annual payments and stated the amount Germany should pay up to the fifty-ninth year! The chief German negotiator in 1929, Dr Schacht, may have considered Germany's creditors as perhaps a little over-sanguine. Certainly they seem to have lived with the illusion that victory in war is permanent.

When Smuts returned to South Africa the Opposition charged him with neglecting the Union for world affairs.. Instead of acting as a spokesman for the British

Government against the French, they said, or as the ag[^]nt of Rand mining interests, he should have been working to lessen unemployment. His mind, said the Nationalists, was in the clouds of international affairs, when he should be grappling with hard, rocky facts of distress in his own country, Hertzog was a far more astute politician than Smuts and could make the most of this line of attack. In the Transvaal there was a Nationalist leader more personally popular than Hertzog, livelier, more companionable, and more amusing. Tielman Roos conducted a bitter campaign against Smuts in the small townships.

Although he reduced the numbers of workless, the unemployment problem defeated Smuts, as it did governments almost everywhere in the world. He was tired and weakened by malaria, and realized that after seventeen years of office—in the Transvaal and the Union—the people wanted him to stand aside for new men. When a bye-election went against his party Smuts decided on a general election, eighteen months before it was due. His party was defeated. Smuts lost his own seat for a Pretoria constituency, but was then returned unopposed at Stariderton. His South African Party, with its Unionists, won fifty-three seats, the Nationalists sixty-three and the Labour eighteen. Nationalists and Labour had combined in a pact to effect this result, and Hertzog became Premier, bringing Labour men into the Cabinet.

Smuts left Groot Schuur, the house bequeathed by Rhodes for the use of Prime Ministers, and went to Irene, one of his farms, to rest, read, write, walk the veld and mountains—and wait for the new Pact

Government to break down. He had been surprised by what he considered the unnatural alliance of the British, socialist leaders of Labour with the Boer, landowning, Nationalist section, and did not think it would last more than a few months. The Nationalists may have thought so too; for their attacks on Smuts continued even when he was out of office.

II

But Hertzog was fortunate. Whereas Smuts was for years confronted with depression and unemployment, the bad times were now ending. There was a return for some years to prosperity in mining and agriculture. The early years of Hertzog's premiership were marked by a pronouncement that though the Union had a right to secede from the British Commonwealth, it was the intention to maintain the British connexion, and that to break with Britain under existing conditions would be a national disaster. At the same time Hertzog pursued a strongly Afrikaner policy and withdrew concessions to British trade. The British were informed that they would have to bargain in the South African market, as other nations did. Their preferences were abolished, despite the argument that these preferences were some return for the protection of the Royal Navy. Advantages were given to Germany. Cattle from Rhodesia and the Bechuanaland Protectorate were partly shut out. Such measures were intended not only to increase trade and help Union farmers, but also to underline the Union's independence of the Commonwealth.

In 1926 stamps appeared without the King's head, and Nationalists proposed introducing a new South African flag, abandoning the Union Jack. Smuts was justified in prophesying that this suggestion would cause turmoil in the country, and he reminded the people that all promises made under the British flag had been honoured. There followed two years of hot debate over the flag's design. Should it contain the Union Jack and the old Transvaal flag, as the South African Party wanted; or should it be entirely new⁵, breaking with the past and pointing to the future, as the Nationalists claimed? Many designs were put forward before a compromise was reached, accepting two flags, the Union Jack and the Union flag.

Again, in the years of Hertzog's power Afrikaans became a fully official language, and its use in everyday life was stimulated. The Government ordered an Afrikaans dictionary and a translation of the Bible. The increasing number of Afrikaners in official posts was partly due to the fact that the English speakers were reluctant to learn Afrikaans, though years earlier Smuts had said that language qualifications would carry weight in appointments and promotions. The English hardly considered Afrikaans as a language, but as a dialect which was not useful even in every part of South Africa. They either took a patronizing attitude towards this tongue, or* resented the Government's encouragement of it, seeing its use as a step towards a break with Great Britain.

Hertzog gave the mark of Afrikanerdom to South Africa. Yet he returned from the Imperial Conference of 1926 satisfied with a definition of the mutual status

of Great Britain and the Dominions as " autonomous communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations."

The Nationalist Prime Minister was eager to take every step to raise South Africa's standing among the world's states. When the prestige of the Dominions was increased by Canada's election to the League Council, and the Dominion sent a minister to Washington, Hertzog created a Ministry of External Affairs and appointed ministers plenipotentiary to Washington, Rome, and The Hague. In London South Africa was represented by a High Commissioner. Thus South Africa was politically represented in great world capitals.

Hertzog won the elections of 1929 on the platform of a " White South Africa," a slogan which could be relied upon to bring in the votes, Boer and British. Phrases which Smuts had used were turned to convey the meaning that he stood for equality between black and white, in a great " Kaffir " State extending from the Cape to the Sudan. Evidently there were many who believed this, as people in other countries will credit the equally ridiculous at election times. A split in the Labour Party enabled Hertzog to gain so many seats that he could continue with much less Labour support.

This ended his run of good fortune. Political skill or unscrupulousness was of no avail in the troubles that now befell South Africa in common with the rest of the world. The depression came, with falling prices and

drought. England went off the gold standard. Herjteog stayed on gold and strove desperately to cope with the new situation. South Africa could not compete abroad with countries whose exchange was cheap. Some countries could sell the same commodities as the Union at half the price. Agriculturists could not export, and therefore could not pay their bills at home. There were bankruptcies everywhere.

Smuts had warned the country of the futility of staying on gold, but had been unheeded. But when the popular Nationalist, Tielman Roos, added his voice, with the same message, the public began to listen. In London, it had been discovered, a South African pound gained 42 per cent, in value. There had, therefore, been a great export of capital, which people expected to see further increased when the exchanges again became equalized. Up to this time Hertzog had tried to meet the depression by duties on goods from non-gold countries and by giving bounties on exports. Now he tried to control the flow of capital from the Union.

. Smuts had passed some of his time in visits to England and North America, lecturing on League of Nations and world problems. Everywhere he was received with respect and honour, while his long list of honorary degrees and civic dignities increased. A book in which he formulated his view of evolution, and his philosophy, Holism, had attracted due attention from philosophers and scientists. Holism is a word derived from the Greek *holos*, whole. Without analysing Smuts's thesis, it may be said that Holism has been held to explain his actions throughout his career; for the holistic theory envisaged units of the universe always

striving and yearning to perfect themselves and co-operate together in greater units, without losing their own freedom, significance, and personality. Thus, in Smuts's career there is a consistent influence, a desire for humanity to work together. Smuts's own labours and yearnings began with co-operation with the Boers, his own race, and then with the English. Next, he strove to join the units of South Africa into a whole, in the Union. In the League of Nations he worked for a more holistic society of peoples, each retaining its personality and freedom, yet welded together to evolve a better world. Soon his philosophy was to be put to another practical test, which involved the setting aside of thoughts of personal power, and oblivion towards insults, to bring political unity in South Africa.

Whatever Smuts's prestige abroad, in South Africa it took the intervention of Tielman Roos to convince the public that Smuts was right in his advice to go off gold. At the beginning of 1933, despite his statement that the Government would fall rather than abandon the gold standard, Hertzog gave way, and adopted sterling.

Prosperity speedily returned, and Smuts's earlier injunctions were remembered. He began to experience popular acclaim. Now he could bring against Hertzog the charges 'so often laid at his own door—responsibility for the period of depression in trade and agriculture, and for increased taxation. He could add other charges which no one had ever been able to make against his own administrations—nepotism and malpractices, which, he said, were common knowledge. He pointed out that the Government had now adopted a policy towards gold which it had recently said would

bring disaster on the country. The Government should resign and allow a National Government to make a fresh start. Hertzog would not resign.

Approached by Roos to form a coalition to defeat Hertzog, Smuts held back. Labour negotiated with him for a programme of reformatio. At this point, having learned much from misfortune, and doubting the loyalty of some of his own party, Hertzog offered Smuts a coalition with the South African Party. Smuts pondered upon this offer.

With him it was the least consideration that acceptance would mean serving with the leader of those who had insulted him for years. He could easily disregard insults. Indeed, so accustomed was South Africa to* a Smuts who ignored personal attacks that on the sole occasion of his resenting an insult the country was astounded! More unattractive to him was the prospect of serving in a Government in which he would have to restrain his impatience with the second-rate. He knew also that he would have to modify some of his principles, particularly on the native question. Regarding this, however, it was obvious he could do little to check most of the Nationalist schemes. These were known to involve taking away the Cape natives' franchise, and allowing all the natives in the Union under certain conditions to elect a number of Europeans to represent them. Hertzog also intended to allot land for native use and set up native councils to deal with their own affairs as in the Transkeian territories. Smuts did, in fact, oppose a " Colour Bar " Bill, forbidding employment of natives and Asiatics on skilled and semi-skilled work in*certain districts, but without success.

These, and other acts, are resented by the non-Europeans, who outnumber the two million whites by nearly four to one. The natives of the Protectorates, governed from Whitehall, do not want to be placed under the Union. The Basutos are so anxious to avoid transference and to impress Britain with their loyalty, that already in the present war they have contributed 17,000 men from a total population of 560,000.

As Smuts considered his decision he knew that to overthrow Hertzog would not be impossible. Yet such a step might renew the strife of years, at a time when South Africa was growing prosperous, and there was goodwill between British and Dutch. He wanted no revival of political and racial strife. So Smuts followed his own philosophy of unity and co-operation. Accepting office under Hertzog, he became Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice. In 1933 the new coalition swept the elections. Trade increased, the High Commissioner in London became President of the League, Union Ministers were appointed to Paris and Berlin. There was growing prestige externally, and internal peace. But a suggested fusion of the Smuts and Hertzog parties at once discovered extremist resistance. Dr Malan, editor of the Nationalist *Die Burger*, refused to cease Republican propaganda under such a fusion. He wanted the Union's sovereign status to be defined in black and white, and a clear statement and acknowledgment of the Union's right of secession and right to neutrality in Britain's wars.

There has never been an English-speaking South African with the prestige and talent to impress the Afrikaans-speaking people with the true character of

British ideas and institutions. Any teaching on these subjects from Smuts could not be as effective as from an Englishman of a type they could honour. Most Afrikaners, therefore, do not fully realize that English liberties are not defined in black and white. Limned in grey, they are nevertheless easily discernible to English people. Aspects of English constitutional law which seem as quicksands to the foreigner appear to the Englishman, and in fact are as they appear, solid rock. Again, Afrikaner Nationalists, in common with people of other nations, are sometimes bewildered by the English habit of waiting for a difficulty to arise before devising the appropriate solution—which has usually been found by compounding law and custom, common sense and forbearance. When Britain has departed from this practice, as in drawing up the Statute of Westminster in 1931, "to make clear the Powers of the Dominion Parliaments," and remove certain legislative restrictions on the Dominions, difficulties have at once appeared. Wise men, including Mr JHughes, of Australia, have pointed out that certain relationships within the Commonwealth cannot be defined.

The Union Government tried to satisfy the Malanites by a Status Act defining the Union's international position and adopting parts of the Statute of Westminster. The Union was now declared a sovereign independent state, and the Union Parliament a sovereign legislative body. No British legislation could have force in the Union without a special Act of the Union Parliament. Dr Malan was not satisfied. The future of the Simonstown naval base worried him, and he held that the Union should declare its neutrality.

Smuts's attitude to all this was that it concerned matters which need not be put into writing* For instance, if the Union desired to secede from the British Commonwealth it would do so, and if it wanted to remain within the Commonwealth it would do so, whatever the formula of sovereignty. He supported the Status Act, but said, " Whether it is neutrality or secession or any of the things complained about, they will be decided not by legal documents but by the ordeal of facts and grave events." Five years later his view was entirely justified.

At the other extreme from the Malanites a group of English-speaking South Africans who saw the Status Bills as the thin end of the wedge to separate the Union from the Commonwealth formed the Dominion Party with a following in the coastal areas of Natal. While Afrikaner Nationalists were ready almost as a matter of course to describe Smuts as a traitor to his country* this extreme English party could accuse him of betraying his faith in the British connexion! The Dominion Party had only a small representation in Parliament, and did not reflect the majority opinion of the English-speaking people, but it could harass the Government by demanding a statement that the Union would not remain neutral in war, and held, contrary to Hertzog's view, that the Empire, as, for instance, through the King, still had authority over the Union.

In the years from 1933 this question of neutrality assumed more importance with the growth of German rearmament and aggression. The Dominion Party was alarmed by a declaration of the Defence Minister, Pirow, that the Union would not enter a Common-

wealth defence scheme, because—although secession would find no support, and anti-British feeling did not exist—a Government that tried to commit the Union to war might be faced by revolution. Hertzog also proclaimed that the Union had the right to neutrality, though he did not state that it would be used in war.

With Hitler in power and Germany becoming an arsenal and* military cantonment, the shadow of war lengthened over Europe. In London in 1934 Hertzog appealed for better treatment for Germany—" Let us break the bonds and set harassed and captive souls free. . . ." In the following years of strain, as the Nazis introduced conscription, occupied the Rhineland, annexed Austria, and absorbed territory neighbouring the Reich, the Malanites clamoured for a statement of Union neutrality in the event of war, while the Dominion Party wanted assurance that Britain would be supported. When Hertzog upheld the League in the Italo-Abyssinian conflict Malanites opposed him, on the grounds that the Union should not be committed in foreign affairs.

In the 1938 elections the Hertzog-Smuts United Party won a great majority over the extremist groups. Smuts had taken the middle line of common sense in the disputes over secession and neutrality, and had tried to lead the die-hard English section into his own equable frame of mind^ pleading with them to align their forces with the friendly Afrikanders. When they said that the Union had been handed over to the Boers he recalled the work of his lifetime, insisted that he had not betrayed his ideals, and asked for their trust. He was answered during the elections by a vicious attack

from the extremist British. As the war peril grew Smuts had no doubts that South Africa, with the right to remain neutral, would support Britain. The Dominion Party did not share his view with such certainty.

Replying to one of Malan's questions on the Government's attitude in the event of war in Europe, Smuts said that the Union would not be automatically involved, but that Parliament would decide whether or not participation would be in South Africa's interests. Neither the Union, he said, nor the other Dominions, were bound by the Locarno Pact, in which Britain had engaged to defend various European frontiers. If war came South Africa could decide, according to the situation, what her attitude would be. "My personal opinion," said Smuts, "is that if Great Britain is involved in a war there can be no doubt—I cannot imagine that South Africa would fail to go to her assistance. I think it is quite clear that if Great Britain is in danger, or is attacked, South Africa will assist her."

When Smuts's view was put before Hertzog the Prime Minister said that this statement was General Smuts's opinion. He did not clearly state what his own attitude would be in the event of a British war. Pirow, however, promised that South Africa would enter no war unless her interests compelled her. These statements were made in 1938, when Germany had reached almost the culmination of her treaty-breaking and aggressions. The extreme parties in South Africa were both excited—the Malanites fearing that the Union would enter war, and the Dominion Party suspecting that a neutral policy would be adopted. The majority

of the people, however, were content to follow the Fusion Government,

In 1938 fell the Centenary of the Great Trek. The Fusion leaders were anxious to make it an affair of common rejoicing for the Dutch and British. But the long-drawn pageants and celebrations only recalled old memories of victories and defeats, and revived racial emotions among the Boers. The Englishman participated in the celebrations, and the Boer received him with goodwill, but he could hardly be part of the rejoicing in spirit.

South Africa shared the common optimism when Chamberlain averted war at Munich. Hertzog foresaw a long period of peace. Smuts, however, despite information from men at the centre of affairs in Europe, was not so sanguine. "It is a dangerous and cruel world," he said. "Back to a reformed League must be our policy; . . . but for peace I would arm to the limit." He gave warning that the world was in a process of change, with great ideological forces and science remoulding human society and the human outlook. "The needs of human organization in society, in the State, and among States generally for an international system have been immensely intensified. . . . We are moving rapidly to a new and unknown order of things."

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In 1938 the Sudetenland was handed over to Germany, and Hitler announced that his quarrel with the Czechs was ended. "We want no more Czechs!" In

the spring of 1939 he invaded Czechoslovakia. In Smuts's view the Germans had a case in demanding the cession of the Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia with its German population. Twenty years earlier he*had said that it would cause trouble. But for the attack on a non-German state he found no justification. Britain gave a guarantee of support to Poland, which was obviously Hitler's next victim, and made it abundantly plain that she would fight Germany if Poland chose to defend herself. Therefore, when the Germans invaded Poland in August, Smuts realized, as did the British Government, that Hitler's main intention was less to destroy Poland than to challenge Britain to a life-and-death struggle. When Britain accepted the challenge in September there were no alternative courses in Smuts's mind. South Africa would stand by Britain. But this was not the view of Hertzog.

Hertzog and Smuts, opponents for more than twenty years, had for the last six years stood at the head of a United Party. Speaking on the Status Bill, Smuts had said that the Union had two roots of trouble: the racial, the friction between Boer and Briton, and the political, the sense that the country was not clearly independent, but was led by another nation. Both roots, he said, would have to be cut. In these years the racial question had receded, and despite extremist sections the political atmosphere had been sweeter. Now, on the outbreak of war in Europe, as the Panzer divisions and aircraft blasted a way through Poland, the cleavage between Hertzog and Smuts appeared again.

Hertzog told the Cabinet: " I am going to remain neutral, and under no conditions allow South Africa

to enter this war." Smuts urged breaking off relations with Germany, and in the Cabinet of thirteen members had a majority of one. On Monday, September 4, the Prime Minister met the Assembly, and announced the difference of opinion in the Cabinet as turning upon the alternatives of remaining neutral but preserving a friendly attitude to Britain, or actively entering the war. He proposed that "The existing relations between the Union of South Africa and the various belligerent countries will, in so far as the Union is concerned, persist unchanged, and continue as if no war is being waged." He recalled repeated statements that the Union would go to war only if the country's interests demanded it. In this case, he held, there was no danger to her interests. Instead of trying to prove this, Hertzog then proceeded with a line of argument which probably lost him most valuable votes. He almost justified Hider's actions and asserted that world domination was not the German motive. The years of unrest and the war in Europe, he said, were the fruits of the Treaty of Versailles. "I have always said that unless the injustice of Versailles was removed, the soul of Hider and the German nation would be so embittered that Germany would do anything to put an end to her humiliation."

In beginning his reply, Smuts recalled Hertzog's statement that the Cabinet was divided on the issue of active participation in the war, and proceeded to state the issue more exactly:

"The position we take up is this, that it would be wrong and it would be fatal for this country not to sever relations with Germany at this stage. We think it would

be wrong and fatal for this country to continue to consider Germany as a friend and to continue as if nothing had happened in the world. Is Germany, under the circumstances of to-day, going to be considered as a friendly Power, or are we going to take what I consider the proper course and sever relations with her? That is the point on which we have broken. The question of our active participation is not at issue.

" To my mind, if we were to take up the middle course the Prime Minister proposes we would be 'adopting an attitude unknown to international law. In war you are either a friend or an enemy. . . . If we are to adopt this course of modified neutrality we shall be up against the gravest difficulties possible. No nation in the world—certainly not Germany—would be under any obligation^ to recognize that behaviour. . . . Is it not wiser and better to adopt a clear-cut line recognized by international law, recognized by the usages of nations, and sever relations with Germany and look upon her as an enemy? "

He reminded the Assembly of German conduct in the two previous years, and said that the action Hertzog proposed would practically dissociate the Union from its friends in the Commonwealth.

" Nothing would be more fatal for this country, poor as it is in defence and rich as it is in resources, than to dissociate itself, directly or indirectly, from its friends in the Commonwealth. It is not only a question of loyalty and self-respect, which I assume we all feel deeply. It is a question of the gravest importance and deepest interest for the future of South Africa."

A Natal member said that in the eyes of English-speaking South Africans the Union was already at war.

He accused the Prime Minister of adopting a policy of secession from the Empire, and promised that every British person in South Africa would resist it and uphold the constitution, " which maintains the liberty and freedom of the people of this country . . . and is, after all, the finest instrument of human government yet devised."

Malan said that Smuts himself had deplored the Treaty of Versailles, and that if the Union went to war simply because Britain was involved it would be a case of South Africa's future being decided by another nation.

This rankling sense of " another nation " can merit sympathy. The Boer stock has only one country—South Africa. But to the English-speaking, even though permanently settled in the Union and rearing families of Union citizens, England never ceases to be a homeland. They would always support England at war, whatever the merits of the case. This obviously cannot be an instinct with those of Boer stock.

A Smuts man, J. H. Hofmeyr, claimed that when part of the Commonwealth was at war, the rest was at war. The Commonwealth, he said, was the Union's best friend, and South Africa's interests could not be separated from those of the rest of the world. Then he urged the highest reason for Union participation—that which to most of the people in Britain justified the war—the danger of Hitler's dominating the world with ideas which challenged respect for freedom, human personality, and the longing felt by all normal people for the brotherhood of mankind.

By a narrow majority of eighty to sixty-seven the

Assembly adopted Smuts's policy, and the Union went to war. Though perhaps 40 per cent, of the European population were anti-war, the men of Boer stock in Cabinet and Parliament had decided the issue, for the English-speaking section alone could not have forced a break with Germany. These men were swayed not merely by Smuts's arguments, though he largely represented their outlook, and many of them, like Smuts, had fought against Britain. They were men who were alarmed at the far-reaching German aggressions, preferred freedom to the regimentation and tyranny of the Nazi, and had been won for the Commonwealth by the honourable conduct of Britain towards South Africa through nearly forty years. Economic considerations for the Union's overseas trade had now begun to have weight with some Boers, but it was the impulse of the higher ideals which was decisive.

Hertzog resigned, and the Governor-General called upon Smuts to form a Government. Included in the new Cabinet were men who had supported him in Hertzog's Government, and leaders of Labour and the Dominion Party. Hertzog, Pirow, who had followed him out of office, and Malan, anxious to avert such excitements as had occurred in 1914, adjured their followers to avoid any kind of illegal action. When Smuts severed relations with Germany opposition to the war remained Parliamentary and constitutional.

Before hostilities were six months old, Hertzog moved that it was time to end the state of war with Germany, ridiculed the idea that Hitler was aiming at world domination, and said that Great Britain's war on

the Reich was "nothing else than crime by international murder and robbery." Smuts retorted that his speech sounded like a chapter from *Mem Kampf*.

After the fall of France Hertzog again addressed the Assembly, urging that peace should be made at once with Germany and Italy. He appeared to think that Churchill and England were in despair, and had an exaggerated notion of Italy's warlike qualities, which, he considered, Britain in the war had not equalled:

" Deprived of her great ally, France, with whom she began the war against Germany, Britain stands to-day behind her own boundaries, exiled from the European continent, defeated and threatened. All her original war materials are in the hands of the enemy, and, judging by the statements made by her Prime Minister, she is continuing the war in a spirit permeated with despair. Against Britain with her fifty million people stands Germany with her eighty or a hundred millions. Germany has virtually the whole of Western and Central Europe. Then there is Italy, who is well-established on sea, on land, and in the air. Her five to seven million well-trained soldiers have a fighting reputation not yet surpassed by British deeds or heroism in the war as far as is known. This review is sufficient to make anyone appreciate the stupidity of further participation by South Africa. South Africa now stands doomed as a second Sancho Panza, to do service as imperial postillion of Europe and her warmongers."

Britain and her allies were defeated, he said, yet General Smuts had rejected a German peace offer without consulting Parliament.

Smuts replied:

" A year ago General Hertzog treated the country to a glorification of Hitler. To-day it is a glorification of Germany and her victories. But an argument of that sort would have just the opposite effect to that hoped for. . . . We do not run away.... I ask my honourable old friend to think back forty years, when the same arguments were used as he uses now. They did not move him or me then. Although we were defeated in the end, we reaped the fruits of our perseverance.. ..

General Hertzog has been saying the war is lost, but is that a fact? . . . With the exception of France, Hitler's tactics have secured him victories only over small nations not strong enough to defend themselves. But that is not defeat. A country is not defeated by losing some of its patrols. Germany is now coming to the end of her tether. We have seen what has happened to her Blitzkriegs and her great efforts in the Channel and over Britain itself. I say that this is going to be nothing more than a repetition of what happened in the time of Napoleon. Then, Britain, standing alone, defeated France, who had the whole of Europe in her power. Hitler has those countries in his power, but they hate him, and the day will come when what happened to Napoleon will happen to Hitler. In the last war Germany was winning for four years, and then lost it in the last few months. That Colossus had feet of clay, and suddenly it collapsed."

Hertzog spoke for only one section of the Afrikaans-speaking South Africa. The spirit of the remainder was shown in the great response of young Afrikaners of the finest type to the call for men. South Africa's army of volunteers contains more material of the highest type, in physique and ability, than any other

volunteer force in the world. A very high proportion would be chosen as officers at once in any other army. In its ranks the English and Afrikaans stock mix with the greatest comradeship—yet it contains men of the Boer War, men who served on opposite sides in the 1914 rebellion, even some who as children had been in the British internment camps. This army, when Smuts became Premier and Minister of Defence in 1939, had to be built up almost from nothing.

IV

The Union's war preparations were backward, partly because Pirow's plans had envisaged only warfare on the northern frontier, veld-fighting, and arrangements to meet a possible Japanese landing in Portuguese Africa. Material was insufficient, because the Union had no great heavy industries, European factories were busy supplying their own needs, and the vast demands of modern war were not foreseen as likely to arise in South Africa. Smuts had been in the pre-war Cabinet, and was conscious of deficiencies, but to avoid friction he had to overlook much. For him, in view of the crises of the later thirties, the main thing was to remain in the Cabinet—for the hour of fateful decision.

With a large minority in opposition to the war, conscription was not introduced. But volunteers came in a great stream, as in 1914, and the fact that this time 70 per cent, were Afrikaans-speaking is an indication, if it were needed, that Hertzog did not represent

all the best in the country. Next, as Smuts saw that the war would call for South African troops far beyond the Zambesi, and that it was a mechanized war, he set up a department of War Supplies, which in a few months began to turn out great quantities of small arms, guns, armoured cars, and every kind of war-equipment. Recruiting and production was extraordinary, in view of the fact that every plan was opposed in Parliament. The Opposition was determined to cripple Smuts's efforts. The Prime Minister had to be doubly careful, because some of his plans could be brought into political dispute. For instance, some of the Opposition held that Union troops could not legally be employed outside South Africa. Smuts stated that the first necessity was to protect the Union and the naval base at Simonstown, and as yet he gave no encouragement to volunteers who wished to serve abroad. But he said that the enemy and circumstances would decide the Union's military activities, and not the Statute Book. He promised, however, that only volunteers should be sent north of the Equator. The hatred of the Opposition was directed not at the English-speaking people, but first at Smuts and secondly at Afrikaners who followed his lead. These they described as renegades and British serfs. On the other hand there were those who wanted Smuts to introduce martial law, gag the Opposition, and clap all suspected persons into gaol. He had to plot his course through contending storms. A freedom to criticize, abuse, and obstruct was allowed which would not have been tolerated had the Opposition been in power, for sections of it were strongly marked

by the characteristics of Nazidom. One such section was the Ossewa Brandwag, the Outpost of the Ox-wagon.

This society arose as a result of the racial feeling stirred up by the Voortrekker Centenary. Its badge was the wheel of an ox-wagon, and it aimed at disciplining the Afrikaner, through a cultural organization in military form, to accept the ideals of the Voortrekkers, who are regarded as the apostles of Afrikaner Nationalism. It is against all that it considers alien to Afrikanerdom, such as capitalism, Jewry, liberalism, and democracy. Hostility to these things existed in South Africa long before the Nazi era; but they are essentially Nazi. The movement claims to be non-political, but it cannot fail to exercise considerable political influence when 60 per cent, of the people of the Union is Afrikaner, and it was welcomed by Malan and Pirow. Yet it would break Nationalist leaders were it sufficiently strong, as surely as it would overthrow Smuts or any other leader who failed to support its policy. Smuts's opinion of this organization is that it is of the same type as the organization which put Hider in power. If it is only a cultural movement, he asked, why should it follow the example of the German Storm Troopers in drilling, and why should it drill at night?

" If it is only culture that is involved why all this espionage and attempts at espionage? Why are details being gathered about the numbers of men in the army and about the size of guns and the quantity of munitions? I say that all this is being done to prepare the way for a new order—a Nazi order—in South Africa.... At the

heart of this movement is a sinister coterie which' is trying to introduce a new Nazi order into South Africa."

There have been examples of sabotage in the Union, but the opposition to the war has been constitutional. Some wilder spirits might wish to take up arms, but rebellion in the age of the tank and the aeroplane is more difficult than it was in 1914; and the shortage of war equipment gave the Government reason to commandeer privately owned arms. Moreover, the Opposition is not unified. Some are anti-war and anti-British, some are one or the other; some are active for their ideas; others are only academically interested. Some are genuine Nazis, others Republicans. Some Afrikaners were swayed simply by the probable economic effects on the Union of war or neutrality, though in the past such considerations had little weight with the race as a whole.

The army and its equipment grew. Smuts visited the East African Front, met Eden and Wavell at Khartoum, and reviewed the situation in North Africa and the Middle East. South Africans were prominent in terminating Italy's brief rule in Abyssinia, and, in doing so, helped to pin down an Italian army while Egypt's defences were weak. With British and Commonwealth troops they then shared the victories and reverses in the Western Desert and Libya. Among their officers were men who inspire hero-worship throughout the hard-bitten forces of the Middle East—such officers as General " Dan " Pienaar, a tough, wiry Free Stater, a veteran of East African and Near **East** fighting in the last war. Under fifty years of age,

he could recall internment as a child in a British camp during the Boer War.

In die New Year of 1941 Smuts said:

" This African continent of ours must be rendered safe for the future of the young democratic communities which are setting up house here. When the python starts swallowing one or more of them, none of them will be safe— certainly not South Africa, the most appetizing of them all."

While the Union troops removed these dangers Smuts was appointed Field-Marshal by the King, as an honour to himself and as the leader of South Africa, which had achieved such great feats.

By 1942 the South African war effort was so far advanced that Smuts could come to England. By visits to Army units, coast defences, and devastated areas he was enabled to judge the spirit of the people and the extent of defence measures. He cautioned vigilance where so much was at stake, but believed that the invader would have a hard task, " infinitely harder than the air invader of 1940 found to his cost." With Churchill he met a great assembly of miners' representatives. The coal situation was grave, and Churchill's speech to the miners was not reported. But Smuts's main business in England was to discuss the general planning of the war and future strategy. He studied the submarine war with the Anti-U-boat Warfare Committee and Admiralty experts, and for several weeks attended meetings of the War Cabinet and of the Defence Committee, and special meetings dealing with particular aspects of the war. Reviewing the war to both Houses of Parliament, he dealt

with the fall of Singapore, which had mystified, angered, and depressed the public. He showed—AS none of the military publicists had done—that the great naval base had been inevitably doomed by the Japanese occupation of Indo-China. In a broadcast he expressed his faith in the competency of the British central planning of the war. It was typical that he should see unity in the diverse battle-grounds of the world. "The war is one, and there is but one vast front covering all the Continents." Almost coinciding with his departure by air for Pretoria came the Anglo-American operations in French North Africa. No doubt Smuts has had a voice in the great decisions for the future. In giving them efficient and speedy effect he will support the British Commonwealth magnificently.

Smuts is a man of action, physically fearless, a philosopher, a far-sighted planner, and a statesman with immense knowledge of war, government, and international policies. Under the most difficult conditions for nearly forty years he has been the loyal friend of Britain and the ardent apostle of the ideals represented by the British Commonwealth of Nations. That is why he is received with such honour and respect, and why many would regard his survival to these perilous days with thankfulness to Providence should anything happen to Mr Churchill. For Britain's younger leaders there would remain a source of guidance, bold yet wise, far-sighted and profoundly experienced.

APPENDIX I

SMUTS AND THE NATIVE QUESTION

ON January 21, 1942, Smuts addressed a public meeting, at the City Hall, Cape Town, under the auspices of the South African Institute of Race Relations, on the subject of "The Basis of Trusteeship in African Native Policy." Smuts was not speaking as Premier, laying down a policy, but was rather exchanging ideas with people actively interested in the native question.

There were, said Smuts, two outworn schools of thought on race relations. One of these held that the relation between black and white should be one of equality, while the other based its attitude on the superiority of the European race over the black. More recently there had been revived the idea of trusteeship, the relation of guardian and ward, which Smuts recalled had been put forward repeatedly by Rhodes. This principle of trusteeship had been expressed in the Covenant of the League of Nations: "The lot, the advancement, the upliftment, of the backward peoples is the sacred trust of civilization." The idea of trusteeship, said Smuts, is an advance in that it bypasses the controversy of equality and superiority—a fruitless controversy—and puts the matter on an ethical, almost religious basis, when the Covenant speaks of a "sacred trust" of the advanced to help the backward peoples. Yet the subject still contained great difficulties. In South Africa there was the element of fear, for the Europeans were in a small minority. Again, the European and the African were on different cultural levels. Thirdly, the German ideology spreading over the world, the idea of the master people alone fit to govern while the rest obey, a return to the old idea of slavery, reached South

Africa, and by inclining people to accept the attitude of one people being superior to another, had exercised an influence on race relations.

To meet the South African fear of the black majority, said Smuts, segregation of the native had been tried, to separate Europeans and Africans for their own self-preservation. It had failed. South Africa was no longer isolated; communications had been opened up, and the native question had to be considered from the viewpoint of all Africa. Natives from various parts of the country, for instance, were attracted by the wages paid in the Transvaal: there was movement from the old Reserves to the urban centres. Urbanization was accelerated; there was detribalization, the breaking-down of the tribal tradition and culture and the authority of the chiefs. "All these," said Smuts, "are breaking down far more rapidly than is desirable or good, for the natives of this country." Finally, the natives were entering industrial service, leaving their old system of communal labour in their areas. This was a very far-reaching change, "and no one even to-day sees the limits of it."

In view of all this, Smuts asked, how did trusteeship help towards solving the problems? Even in a trusteeship there was a dominant person, who looked after the ward; but dominance was not the fundamental aspect. The fundamental aspect of trusteeship was the responsibility of the guardian for the benefit of the ward. The trust was placed on the European, and that concept had to be made real if success and happiness were to be attained. "There are helpless people on our doorstep, and we are the trustees for them. We have to look after them, and if we do not do so we are breaking our trust." South Africa must look a long way ahead, for a heavy penalty might well be paid for neglect of duty towards the native.

Smuts then indicated some of the lines along which trusteeship would have to be applied:

" We Europeans on the African continent have done something for native education. Missionaries have made a point of it for generations now, and they have done a great deal. . . . The Government has slowly, tardily, and haltingly followed and done its bit. But, if we honestly and sincerely ask ourselves the question: ' Are we doing our duty—are we fulfilling our duty as trustees—are we discharging our sacred trust? * I do not think we can lay our hands on our hearts and say we are doing it. . . . In health and housing . . . we are just beginning to make a start.

So far we have always looked the other way and given no thought to these helpless people. We cannot do that as trustees. . . . There is a very heavy death-rate among native children, and a serious incidence of sickness among adults which we cannot tolerate. . . . This continent is full of disease. . . . In German East Africa I had to comb the country for native porters. They were difficult to find. The doctors usually informed me that, physically, they were not up to standard. Sickness, disease, and general weakness were even then undermining the health of the African race . . . and . . . the Native forms a very large part of our population. . . . He is the worker, and you need him.- He is carrying this country on his back."

Smuts next uttered a warning of the price which would have to be paid unless attention was given to the nutrition of the black population. In the old days the natives had mealies and milk, but in the native locations milk was very scarce. " The native children, when they are a couple of months old, are fed merely on mealie pap which their mothers ram down their throats." Nutrition in the rural areas was deteriorating, and in the towns the position was worse. The African, leaving aside those in the rural areas, and mentioning only those in the towns, could not in most places support his family on the wages he received. What Services, asked Smuts, were given to them? Generally, for reasons which he approved, the natives were given their

own areas or locations to live in, but they were usually far from their place of work, and they had to pay for their own transport. Living conditions in the towns made demands on the native which his wages could not meet, and intolerable conditions were arising. The authorities of the community should be more helpful and sympathetic than they were. " Even if we do not do it in the interests of the natives, sooner or later we shall have to do it in our own interest. It will be to our good if we do it, because, if we do not, there will be something to pay."

In concluding his address Smuts expressed his faith in the sense of justice and fair play of the people of South Africa, and that they would rise to their duty, so that conditions which were lamentable, unwholesome, and intolerable, would in the days to come be ameliorated and removed. One helpful factor for the future he saw in the happy relations existing between black and white in the Services. "I think what is happening in North Africa, where the common task is shared by whites and blacks alike, . . . is going to be helpful in the building up of that South Africa to which we are all looking forward. . . . We want the European contact to mean for Africa, and South Africa in particular, a blessing and not a blight." On the basis of trusteeship, Smuts hoped, South Africa would evolve such an adjustment of race relations as would be a pattern for Africa, and for the rest of the world.

In this address Smuts avoided raising political issues, though he said that some things must be pointed out even if they involved politics. In an article in a periodical in October 1942 Margaret Ballinger, a Member of the South African Parliament, advocated a new native policy which envisaged a new political status for the natives. When war began, she wrote, and the native was told that it was a war for democracy, he wondered what that had to do with him. If he fought in the war, he asked, would he regain his lost

rights? Would he get the franchise? South Africa is not a democracy, the writer continues, but has expressed its faith in democratic principles. What does such an attitude involve in racial relations in South Africa? Not immediate social equality, for that has never existed, and as far as one can see never will exist in South African society. But it should mean a gradual recognition of the natives' right to have a share in the making of the laws that govern them, as education increases their ability to use this right. "This," she continues, "should begin now with the extension of the present Cape representation to the other Provinces of the Union, on a revised franchise which would continue to exact a certain educational standard, but would no longer demand a property qualification." There need not be abrupt change, but a building upon things which already exist. The democratic State owes its members protection and a share of what it has to give towards providing a fuller existence; and it should encourage and assist its members to use their rights fully, these rights being graduated according to individual needs. Thus, she suggests, the poll tax should go, and be replaced by a taxation arranged according to ability to pay. The poorest should not have to pay for their own services, and get only what they can pay for. Education, for instance, should be provided from general revenue. All African children should be got into school. Colour bars should be abolished, so that the African is not confined to the lowest work in industry. He should be encouraged to develop skill, and there should be a basic wage to meet the needs of a worker and his family.

To provide opportunities for the African who rises in life, the Land Acts, excluding natives from all but their traditional Reserves with some minor extensions, should be repealed; the Urban Areas Act, preventing Africans from acquiring land in the towns, should also go. For those who do not rise in the economic scale, "the casualties in life's

struggle," there should be a share in the social services. At present, Margaret Ballinger concludes, the African lacks the protection of the democratic State, He lacks old age pensions; there is no provision for helping invalid and handicapped African children. The excuse is expense, because the native is so numerous. But if this condition continues it may become beyond South Africa's financial means to deal with it. The real extravagance is in not meeting the situation while it is within the country's power to do so. Any possibility of revolution lies not in the application of the democratic principle, but in the failure to apply it.

APPENDIX II

SOUTH AFRICA IN 1943

ASKED for an account of the situation in South Africa, at a Press conference on January 14, 1943, the new High Commissioner in London, Colonel Deneys Reitz, began by a brief outline of South African history, showing that the Union's position within the Commonwealth was on a different and more difficult basis than that of the other Dominions. After the Boer War, Colonel Reitz went into exile in Madagascar rather than live under the Union Jack. " But as the years rolled on," he said, " we found that the British were treating South Africa with justice and magnanimity." Influenced by Smuts, he returned to South Africa. Britain, said Colonel Reitz, " in effect not only gave us back the two Republics, but threw in the Cape Colony and Natal for full measure, and to-day we who fought against the British in the old days realize that we enjoy a greater measure of liberty than we had even under our own rule."

Colonel Reitz continued:

In 1910 General Botha, who had commanded the Boer armies in the field, became our first Prime Minister, and it looked as if there was to be peace and unity at last. But the South African Dutch are an intensely race-conscious people, as determined to maintain their separate identity as are any of those fierce little Balkan communities that have given the world so much trouble.

Before long there came rumours that General Botha's policy was too pro-British, and there was dissension and strife and the hiving off of political parties accompanied by quarrels that have rent South Africa to the present time.

To-day the position is roughly as follows: 5 5 per cent.

of our European population (s of Dutch descent, speaking their own Afrikaans language, and approximately 45 per cent, of our population is of English descent, speaking English as their home tongue. Of the 55 per cent. Dutch citizens about half were in favour of South Africa remaining neutral when the war broke out in September 1939. They hold that South Africa would be safer as an independent republic, free of all ties with the British Empire. They argue that so long as we are a member of the Commonwealth so long will we continually be drawn into Britain's wars.

The remaining half of our Dutch section hold, on the contrary, that with our strategic position half-way between the two hemispheres, with our enormous mineral wealth, and with great predatory powers, like Germany, Italy, and Japan, seeking whom they may devour, our only hope of survival is within the folds of the Empire. We argue too that we can only achieve nationhood inside the protection of the Commonwealth; as a separate third-class republic we would deteriorate into a state of chronic civil strife with the two races trying for domination of each other. A little mental arithmetic will show, therefore, that over 70 per cent, of the people of the Union of both races are standing solidly behind General Smuts.

Also, English and Dutch in South Africa are freely intermingling and intermarrying, and I would prophesy that within the next thirty years or so even our most fervid racial politicians will find *it* hard to distinguish an Englishman from a Dutchman. We will have all become South Africans without distinction of race or origin.

Our more reasonable elements on both sides increasingly look on the overdone racial fanaticism of our nationalist leaders as but a stage removed from the Ju-ju and the Voodooism of Lagos and the Gold Coast, and more and more our public is looking to the doctrines and the principles laid down by General Smuts as our only hope.

It is significant that in proportion to our white population of just under three millions we have as many men and women in our army as any of the Allied Nations, including that of Great Britain herself, and it is also of great significance that while nearly half our Afrikaans citizens are standing aloof from our war effort, yet something like 40 per cent, of our army is composed of Dutch descended Afrikaners, and this in a country where all are volunteers who have joined up from a sense of duty and patriotism.

I would wish to say a few words too about our native question in South Africa. I have been Minister of Native Affairs in the Union for a number of years, so I have been in close contact with the problems of race relationship between the European and African peoples. Only two months ago I concluded a lengthy tour of all our native territories in order to meet the numerous chiefs and indunas throughout the country, and everywhere I found them eager to assist the war effort, and everywhere they were taking part in the recruiting campaign.

It is undesirable to publish the figures of natives, that have flocked in to join the South African Army, but they are very large indeed. In the field our native and coloured soldiers have behaved splendidly, and many of them have been decorated for courage under fire.

I venture to say that this spontaneous large-scale enlistment is a proof that, taken by and large, our South African tribes feel that the white man means him well. I do not wish to imply that there are not grave defects in our native policy, but gradually more liberal views are taking root, and gradually matters are improving.

The fact that nearly 100,000 natives per annum voluntarily enter the Union in search of work from as far afield as Nyasaland, Northern Rhodesia, Angola, and elsewhere beyond our borders proves at any rate that they are well paid and well treated. Were this not so word would soon

go forth, and the stream of native immigration would speedily run dry.

None the less with under three million Europeans in South Africa, as against nine million natives, the problem bristles with difficulties, and I cannot say that any of us out there has discovered a ready-made solution as yet, but things are slowly and surely on the mend.

Finally you will probably wish to know what has happened with regard to certain subversive movements that sprang up after the beginning of the war among sections of our Afrikaans-speaking community.

With the hopes of a German victory fading into the distance these mushroom growths have largely petered out. Only one of them ever looked like becoming a serious menace. This was a curious organization that called itself by the curious name of Ossewa Brandwag (the Ox-wagon Outpost).

Its leader was a young civil servant who had studied Nazi doctrines in Germany. He came to the conclusion that we Dutch-speaking Afrikaners were going to the dogs for lack of cohesion and lack of discipline, and he decided that the only way to save us was to stop us from quarrelling and bickering among ourselves, as we have been doing for the last two centuries and more. He decided that the only way to save us was to apply the Nazi technique. He gathered from Zeesen broadcasts and he openly proclaimed that Great Britain was but a twitching corpse, that the British Empire was finished, and that Hitler would dictate victorious peace terms from London in a few weeks* time, and that the Ossewa Brandwag was shortly to proclaim an Afrikaner Republic on Nazi lines.

This movement for a while gained many adherents. Illegal drilling took place on a large scale, and there was considerable uneasiness and unrest.

Time after time well-meaning but nervous people used to

rush up to General Smuts and myself demanding that we should hang the O.B. leaders out of hand, and that we should intern the rank and file at once. Our invariable reply was " Leave it to us: we are Afrikaners ourselves, and we know our own people. They are perhaps the greatest individualists on earth; among them every man & his own Hitler, and they are too level-headed and independent to be carried away for long by theatricals of this kind. In any case in a country like ours it is a mistake to create cheap martyrs."

In the course of time our counsels prevailed, and to-day the Ossewa Brandwag has melted away of its own inherent folly. It has become a mere laughing-stock in South Africa, and, as for the other opposition factions, they are so busy quarrelling among themselves that we no longer take them seriously. Politically the position is that General Smuts is more securely in power than when South Africa entered the war three years ago.

I hope that this short résumé will give some idea of the conditions in a Dominion that has made three outstanding contributions to the war: it has produced that great statesman and thinker, General Smuts; its soldiers have helped to drive the Italians from Abyssinia and the Germans from Libya; and thirdly, and perhaps most important of all,* the majority of its people in the face of very considerable political danger and perplexities stood by their friends and Allies when the war began, thereby preventing what would have been a very grave blow to the morale of the Empire had South Africa deserted the cause in time of danger.

We look hopefully towards the future. After the war South Africa, will probably see enormous industrial expansion. With our vast mineral and other wealth, with our geographical position and unlimited coal measures, coupled with a healthy climate and many other advantages, we believe that great things are awaiting the Union.

APPENDIX III

FROM GENERAL SMUTS'S SPEECH TO THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT¹

i. ON ENGLAND AND THE WAR

AND now I have come back to a country over which the fury of war has swept, a country whose people have had to face in their grimmest mood the most terrible onslaught in its history.

Many of its ancient monuments are damaged or gone for ever. The blitz has passed over cities, ports, churches, temples, humble homes and palaces, Houses of Parliament and Law Courts. Irreplaceable treasures of a thousand years of almost uninterrupted progress and culture and peaceful civilization have disappeared for ever. War, the horror people still call war, but in its modern scientific form something very different from what passed under that name before, war has come to this favoured land and attempted its worst. Much has gone which is lost for ever.

But one thing is not lost—one thing, the most precious of all, remains and has rather increased. For what will it profit a nation if it wins the world and loses its soul? The soul remains. Glory has not departed from this land. I speak not of outward glory, of what your Gallic neighbours call "Ia Gloire." I speak rather of that inward glory, that splendour of the spirit, which has shone over this land from the soul of its people, and has been a beacon light to the oppressed and downtrodden peoples in this new martyrdom of man.

Let the enemy say "Gott strafe England." "God bless England" has been the response from the victims of this most fiendish onslaught in history. But for this country,

¹ Reprinted, by permission, from the report in *The Times*.

the stand it made from 1939 onward, its immeasurable exertions since and up to now, its toil and sweat, its blood and tears, this world of ours might have been-lost for a thousand years, and another dark age might have settled down on the spirit of man.

This is its glory—to have stood in the breach, and to have kept the way open to man's vast future. And when, after a long absence, I see to-day this flame of the spirit above the flame of the blitz, I feel that I have come to a greater, prouder, more glorious home of the free than I ever learnt to know in its palmiest days. This is the glory of the spirit, which sees and knows no defeat or loss, but increasingly nerves, nourishes, and sustains the will to final victory.

2. ON THE PRIME MINISTER

His words and foresight, his courage and energy, have been an inspiration to all of us. He remains the embodiment of the spirit of eternal youth and resilience, the spirit of a great undying nation in one of the greatest moments of history. Let us recognize with gratitude that we have been richly blessed with wonderful leadership both in the last war and in this.

3. ON HITLER

He has started a new era of martyrdom for the human spirit, an era of persecution such as mankind has not known since its emergence from the Dark Age. The suffering he has inflicted on Jews and Christians alike, the tide of horrors launched under his Gestapo regime over the fair West, constitute the darkest page of modern history. He has outraged and insulted and challenged the very spirit of humanity and tried to found a new barbarism.

4. ON THE NATURE OF THE WAR

This war is a new crusade, a new fight to the death for

man's rights and liberties, and for the personal ideals of man's ethical and spiritual life. To the Nazi fanaticism we oppose this crusading spirit, which will not sheath the sword till Nazidom and all its works have been purged from this fair world.

5. ON THE POST-WAR WORLD

Health, housing, education, decent social amenities, provision against avoidable insecurities—all these simple goods and much more can be provided for all, and thus a common higher level of life be achieved for all. As between the nations a new spirit of human solidarity can be cultivated, and economic conditions can be built up which will strike at the root causes of war, and thus lay deeper foundations for world peace. With honesty and sincerity on our part it is possible to make basic reforms both for national and inter-national life which will give mankind a new chance of survival and of progress.

6. ON THE LAST STAGE OF THE WAR

We have now reached the fourth year of this war, and the defence phase has now ended. The stage is set for the last, the offensive, phase. Let me set your minds at rest at once; I am not going to discuss the future offensive strategy of the war. The amateur strategists can do that with greater freedom and less responsibility in the Press. I only wish to emphasize that one phase has ended and another has begun.

The final alignments both of the Allies and our enemies have been made. Resources have been developed and mobilized on a very large scale, ours still on the increase, those of the enemy on the decline. Our man-power is still growing, that of the enemy is getting depleted, while he makes ever heavier drafts on his suffering vassal peoples. The spectre of want, hunger, and starvation is beginning to stalk through the subject countries, the spirit of unrest is moving

and rising. The explosive limits of endurance are nearing. We are approaching the point when both on the war fronts and on the home fronts in enemy countries the situation is ripening for far-reaching developments.

So far time has been in our favpur, and has on the whole been kind to us. In spite of heavy setbacks and many disappointments we have had the necessary time to prepare, to parry deadly blows, and to assemble and consolidate the forces and resources on which we rely for the Allied victory. Once the time has come to take the offensive and to strike while the iron is hot it would be folly to delay, to over-prepare, and perhaps miss our opportunity. Nor are we likely to do so—of that I feel satisfied. On this point it would be unwise for me to Say more and thus to set going unnecessary and perhaps harmful speculations.

/*! woujd only point out to you that to-day is Trafalgar Day. It reminds us of that dark hour, the darkest in the Napoleonic War, when your great national hero, the embodiment of the heroic offensive spirit of this people, sought out, the superior naval forces of the enemy, and dealt them that fatal blow which not only saved England frohi invasion but turned the whole tide of war and finally saved Europe from being overwhelmed by the insensate domination of one man. This anniversary is not only a reminder but an inspiration to us to go forward and do likewise. I am sure it will not be lost on us and our gallant allies. For us, too the great offensive moment is ripening..

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