

Botha, Smuts and the Great War

Antonio Garcia & Ian van der Waag

Dedication (Antonio Garcia)

To my dad Jose Manuel Barbon Garcia and my mum Magdalene Phelps Garcia

Dedication (Ian Van Der Waag)

To my parents – J.C.J.M. van der Waag (1922-1993) and J.M. van der Waag-Ellis (1933-2023)

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Introduction

‘Botha’s memory is the shared heritage of all South Africans.’ Smuts on Botha¹

‘Botha is not our hero and cannot be a hero of a democratic South Africa’
Malema on Botha²

The biographies of Louis Botha and Jan Smuts are undeniably intertwined, and their histories are still emotive both in South Africa and abroad. Two historical figures, they survive in dusty books, hardcopy, and digital tomes, kept on the bookshelf, in libraries and the cloud; only to be pulled out when the old debate between the past and the present rears its head; summoning them to answer new questions on historical matters – a Socratic dialogue on South Africa’s contested history. The spate of statue vandalisms in South Africa, the United Kingdom, the United States, and various African countries, is testament to the reopening of the historical conversation and feelings of frustration.

The vandalism of Botha and Smuts’s statues was an outcry to their pride of place in central public spaces in South Africa (see plates 1 and 2) – their prominence no longer chimes with majority South African public opinion, with contemporary politics and with modern heroes. Throughout the 20th century powerful British and South African leaders erected statues to Botha and Smuts and mainly white South Africans and Britons paid homage to their former leaders, their likenesses trapped in their antiquated stone, bronze, and concrete structures.

##Plate 1: Botha’s statue in Cape Town vandalised##.³

##Plate 2: Smuts’s statue at the University of Cape Town defaced.##⁴

0.1 Starting in the present

Following Botha’s death in 1919, Smuts ensured that Botha would not be forgotten - he advocated for the creation and display of Botha’s statues across South Africa. Despite his busy schedule, Smuts kept the position of Chairman of the Louis Botha Memorial Committee. At the unveiling of Botha’s statue at parliament, Smuts gave tribute to his friend stating that Botha was the chief architect of the Union of South Africa and claimed that his memory was the shared heritage of all South Africans.⁵

¹ Smuts quoted in, Louis Botha Album, published by the Louis Botha Memorial Committee for the unveiling of the Botha equestrian statue in 1946 (Pretoria: Wallachs’ & Co, 1946). EA, Box 1/13 Enkelargiefversameling.

² T. Zwane, ‘EFF and ANC at odds over 'offensive' statues’, *Mail and Guardian*, <http://mg.co.za/article/2015-04-08-eff-and-anc-at-odds-over-offensive-statues-1>. (accessed 01 February 2016).

³ L. Hess, ‘Louis Botha statue outside parliament defaced’, *News 24*, <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/Louis-Botha-statue-outside-Parliament-defaced-20150409> (accessed 28 January 2016).

⁴ Anon., ‘Jan Smuts statue 'red faced' during student protests’, *ECNA*, [Jan Smuts statue 'red faced' during student protests | eNCA](#) (accessed 01 May 2023).

⁵ Smuts quoted in, Louis Botha Album, published by the Louis Botha Memorial Committee for the

Smuts unveiled Botha's statues in Durban in 1923 and outside parliament in 1931, the latter one on horseback. Engelenburg quoted Botha who jokingly said that if a statue of him was ever to be erected he would want it on horseback.⁶ The effigy of Botha at the Union Buildings in Pretoria, also on horseback, was erected 27 years after his death and Smuts gave a speech at its unveiling in 1946. Smuts commented that he had to wait a long time to commemorate his friend at the Union Buildings – the Nationalist Party had blocked previous requests.⁷

Smuts has several effigies, including but not limited to statues at Smuts House, the Union Buildings in Pretoria, and a few in Cape Town. An artistic interpretation of Smuts outside the National Art Gallery in Cape Town, unveiled in 1964, was met with considerable protest - the Cape Times referred to it as a monstrosity. This led to a more conventional representation of Smuts, a statue that can be found in Adderley Street in Cape Town.

Smuts was a powerful voice for Botha, but he had even more powerful advocates, in none other than Winston Churchill, who in his second stint as British prime minister requested a statue of Smuts be erected outside parliament. Smuts who claimed to 'belong to antiquity'⁸ was immortalised in London, his hands behind his back looking ahead, appearing to be skating,⁹ searching the horizon for answers to practical and theoretical questions.

John Buchan, who first met Botha and Smuts at Vereeniging and knew both men well, paid homage:

Botha [was] built on lines of a primitive simplicity and wise with the elemental wisdom; Smuts, the acute legal intelligence and the philosophic mind who saw the problems of the day in the light of eternal principles – the two statesmen who between them made the early grant of responsible government to the new colonies a success, when otherwise it might have been a fiasco.¹⁰

Since their statues were first put up, much has changed, and democracy of thought and universal franchise in South Africa has started to re-balance the unequal landscape of Apartheid, and earlier forms of oppressive legislation. The result - we live in a time where the older heroes of some, are fading away, making space for new figures to emerge.

Several universities have statues of Smuts and halls named in his honour, including but not limited to the University of Cape Town, and his *alma mater*, Cambridge University. The University of Cape Town had the name of Smuts Hall changed due to protests, and the new campaign '#Smuts Has Fallen' demands the removal of his statue – this mirrors the '#Rhodes Must Fall' campaign which led to the removal of Cecil's bust in 2015. In 2018 Smuts's portrait

unveiling of the Botha equestrian statue in 1946 (Pretoria: Wallachs' & Co, 1946). EA, Box 1/13 Enkelargiefversameling.

⁶ Engelenburg, *General Botha*, 9.

⁷ Louis Botha, Album published by the Louis Botha Memorial Committee for the unveiling of the Botha equestrian statue in 1946, EA, Box 1/13 Enkelargiefversameling.

⁸ See, A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts* (Johannesburg and Cape Town: Jonathan Ball, 2010), x

⁹ Thanks to Garry Sheffield for this description.

¹⁰ John Buchan, *Memory Hold-The-Door* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1954), 118-119.

and bust at Cambridge University was taken down, and in 2016 and 2022, his statues at the University of Cape Town were defaced; the one in parliament square had ‘BLM’ graffitied to its base— Black Lives Matters.

Botha’s statues in Cape Town, Durban and Pretoria were defaced in a spate of vandalisms starting in 2015 and going on to 2022, at the time of completing this book. Julius Malema, the leader of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), said:

Louis Botha is not our hero and cannot be a hero of a democratic South Africa ... The statue of Botha outside this Parliament must go down, because it represents nothing of what a democratic South Africa stands for.¹¹

Contemporary comments from EFF members, in 2022, reinforce the position, ‘It’s not a misnomer to call for any of these statues to be removed.’¹²

A number of scholars and politicians reflected on the statue debate. In October 2018, Pretoria Executive Mayor, Solly Msimanga, commented that the people of South Africa should remember its history both good and bad and that the youth should be encouraged to participate in such debates. He went on to say, ‘If you go to the Union Buildings, you’ll find the statue of Louis Botha and in front you’ll find the statue of Nelson Mandela. You can actually have a perpetual discussion around them...’¹³ In 2018, the South African Minister of Arts and Culture, Nathi Mthethwa, worked towards creating a national consciousness of shared symbols,¹⁴ and in 2022 his attempts to push forward the so-called statue ‘Flag Project’ was met with public and political disapproval. The 100-metre statue of the South African flag, was apparently designed to promote social cohesion, but received significant backlash for wasteful spending of public funds.¹⁵ The cost of new statues is certainly a constraint and something that needs consideration during the cost of living crisis.

A key point in the debate are the values linked to the figures represented in statues. A report from the Department of Arts and Culture recommended that certain statues which did not represent constitutional values should be removed.¹⁶ Values are subjective and need to be considered in their historical context, however there are situations where values are almost universally regarded as unethical, an example being Nazism. S. Marschall, professor of cultural

¹¹ T. Zwane, ‘EFF and ANC at odds over ‘offensive’ statues’, *Mail and Guardian*, <http://mg.co.za/article/2015-04-08-eff-and-anc-at-odds-over-offensive-statues-1>. (accessed 01 February 2016).

¹² J. Evans, ‘Parliament’s Louis Botha statue targeted with spray paint and an angle grinder’, *New 24*, [Parliament’s Louis Botha statue targeted with spray paint and an angle grinder](http://www.new24.com/Parliament's-Louis-Botha-statue-targeted-with-spray-paint-and-an-angle-grinder) | *News24*. (accessed 25 September 2022).

¹³ J. Mahlokwane, ‘Remember History, Good and Bad, Msimanga says as Church Square reopens’, *IOL*, (accessed, 25 May 2019).

¹⁴ Editorial Leader, ‘Transforming Pretoria’s heritage landscape’, *IOL*, <https://www.iol.co.za/pretoria-news/opinion/transforming-pretorias-heritage-landscape-13490847> (accessed 25 May 2019).

¹⁵ Anon, ‘Nathi Mthethwa’s 100-metre R22m flag monument still on department’s agenda’, *IOL*, [Nathi Mthethwa’s 100-metre R22m flag monument still on department’s agenda](http://www.iol.co.za/nathi-mthethwa-s-100-metre-r22m-flag-monument-still-on-department-s-agenda) (*iol.co.za*). (accessed 28 September 2022).

¹⁶ S. Stuurman, ‘Report Recommends that Colonial Statues must Fall’, *SABC News*, <http://www.sabcnews.com/sabcnews/report-recommends-colonial-statues-must-fall/> (accessed 25 May 2019).

and heritage tourism at the University of KwaZulu Natal, said, ‘for the majority of South Africans, Botha remains first and foremost a white oppressor’.¹⁷ She added that Botha had freed King Dinizulu – there is nuance in South African history, and the statues of Botha and Dinizulu in Durban, similar in style and size, represent contested histories and their positioning also cleverly shows their friendship.¹⁸ S. Ngubane, professor of African languages at the University of KwaZulu Natal, commented that it was not about replacing one symbol with another but rather placing different statues together, adding ‘that is what will make history come alive’.¹⁹

History has certainly come alive, and it remains an emotive topic. Who could blame South Africans who are offended by these statues – who could blame those who want to see a change in art and sculptures in public spaces. Equally we cannot fault many South Africans and the government who want a more balanced response to the statue debate. Answers are hard to come by, where norms, politicisation of grievances, historical links to the past, and law and order must be considered - in the age of social media, organising protests, mobilising political messages, and spreading information has become easier. For those suffering, learning about the link between older leaders, reflected in bronze busts, and the poverty caused by the Land Act, could only make matters worse.

Until perhaps the impact of older politicians, generals and leaders are no longer felt on contemporary society – when the historical record, within reason, no longer offers offense to people in the present, when past decisions no longer directly touch the food, and purse of South Africans; and when our oppressive past is no longer in living memory – then maybe the heroes of old will have a re-discovered place in South African memory – perhaps like those from the classics, whose distance from the current moment is so detached, their main purpose is only ancient inquiry.

Like all leaders, Botha and Smuts have points in both sides of their narrative ledger, credit and debit. But when they made mistakes, they were massive – the Native Land Act of 1913, is a case in point. Their victories too were colossal – facilitating the formation of Union,

¹⁷ S. Marschall, ‘What South Africa’s Monument Debate Taught Us About Our History, And Ourselves’, *Huffington Post*, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/south-africa-charlottesville-monument_b_599ef3c9e4b0821444c18516?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAAC6D8_9-HeiP2llkareTPky-TVjkMleaBRZv07OH6CNgdJ7MdiYE5RTxmo_8p-C96w85loZ1IC4TL_NWY02xw-jTcUjgyLE1F1ugRyo-JuF41_I9PtkeyAS8GqGCOjBSwvgeWmDd1xdSkwnT1PXqCTz9U5hmXCsp5zllpff_TAPp. (accessed 25 May 2019).

¹⁸ S. Marschall, ‘What South Africa’s Monument Debate Taught Us About Our History, And Ourselves’, *Huffington Post*, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/south-africa-charlottesville-monument_b_599ef3c9e4b0821444c18516?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAAC6D8_9-HeiP2llkareTPky-TVjkMleaBRZv07OH6CNgdJ7MdiYE5RTxmo_8p-C96w85loZ1IC4TL_NWY02xw-jTcUjgyLE1F1ugRyo-JuF41_I9PtkeyAS8GqGCOjBSwvgeWmDd1xdSkwnT1PXqCTz9U5hmXCsp5zllpff_TAPp. (accessed, 25/05/2019).

¹⁹ L. Rondganger, ‘#KnowYourLand: Dick King is here, but where is Ndongeni?’, *IOL*, <https://www.iol.co.za/dailynews/knowyourland-dick-king-is-here-but-where-is-ndongeni-16822664>. (accessed 25 May 2019).

contributing to the First World War and helping to form the League of Nations are examples of such immense achievement.

This book was conceived as a comparative study and an inquiry into the lives of the two main characters, Botha and Smuts. We placed the current debate upfront, and we call out the errors of our subjects. The manuscript finds its place in the historiography as a comparative biography focusing on the First World War, it is anything but a hagiography, it is also not a full life reflection of the two generals – what we offer is a fresh view of Botha and Smuts and their role in the First World War, through significant archival research. The primary material provided the bulk of the evidence, but our methodology was formed by asking ourselves a few key questions.

0.2 We start with three questions

When we, the authors, decided to write this book, we discussed ideas for the project. Initially it was to be a biography on only one of the two generals. Then we considered how difficult it would be to understand the role of one without the other, especially in the First World War. We decided that we needed both Botha and Smuts. We zoomed in on their lives and considered why a historical subject should be studied. We asked three key questions: one, did they play a significant role in the history of South Africa? Secondly, is there in fact a story to tell? Or rather do we have something new to add? And lastly, does the subject or subjects interest us or is there a fascination? The answers to all three questions needed evaluation.

The answer to question one was critical– did Botha and Smuts play an important role in South Africa’s history? It was Botha and Smuts’s leadership during the First World War that put South Africa’s footprints on the global stage. They in fact decided on much of the key domestic and international policy questions facing a young South Africa. The difference between the South Africa into which they were born, and the one they helped create was striking. They grew up in a mixture of British colonies and Boer republics, a mixed bag of competing interests, and contested spaces. The unlikely pair came from very different backgrounds and were not similar in appearance or personality - Botha a big built farmer, born in 1862 in the Natal Colony, and Smuts, a bookish boy, who joined the world in 1870, in the Cape Colony. The fact that they found each other and forged the relationship they did, was in part due to coincidence – both coming to serve in Paul Kruger’s Transvaal government. They strengthened their bond during the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902, which forever changed the South African political landscape. It was in war that their relationship was forged, and it was in politics that their partnership would find its ultimate expression.

Following the Anglo-Boer War, they played a critical role in the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910. Botha had the vision – he gave the ‘what’ – a united British and Boer South Africa (no Black, Coloured or Indian franchise), and Smuts provided the ‘how’ – the constitutional democratic mechanism and the constructive ways of achieving change. By first securing the independence of the Transvaal and then the Free State, they attempted to bring together British and Boer interests, while Black, Coloured and Indian voices remained unheard. It was their revolutionary experiment – a united white South Africa, a change for republican Afrikaners, and Imperial Britons that showed Botha as a visionary for his time. His idealism was backed up by his credentials as the former commandant-general of the Transvaal, his

disarming charm and the undisputable intellect of Smuts, the talented former Transvaal State Prosecutor-cum-general, whose genius underpinned the whole initiative.

The two generals were on a roll – they worked night and day to create the Union. It was an amalgamation of its component parts; historic Boer republics and British colonies, each with different cultures, demography, and distinct political and military establishments. Botha became prime minister in 1910, and Smuts, true to his ability, took on triple ministerial portfolios, defence, mines, and interior – a sure way to wrest control of the military, finance and home affairs, thereby controlling all bases of power. It would become a trend with the powerful pair directing key areas and only delegating to those in their inner circle. The newly formed Union, which had historic debts, and informal cultural, financial, and familial networks required an army – of course two Boer generals could not rule a dominion without an army, and in 1912 the Defence Act provided the legislative base to unite the various military organisations. Botha and Smuts were quick to commit the newly formed Union Defence Force to an active role in the First World War.

The war aims were without a doubt imperialist, something that is worth reflecting on – to Botha and Smuts it was clear – *realpolitik* – it was the world that they inherited and the world they helped create. South African expansionism was not a foreign idea to Boer republicans and the commandos of old. In that fashion but donning, new and khaki uniforms, Botha and Smuts led campaigns in German South West, German East Africa, and supported fighting in the Senussi campaign, and on the Western Front. Smuts uniquely went on to serve on the Imperial and British War Cabinets, holding the highest levels of office, influencing policy at the administrative heart of the Great War.

At the start of the First World War, in 1914, republican minded Afrikaners rebelled. Botha and Smuts used the Union forces to quell this uprising, but it indicated a deep dissatisfaction. Rebel grievances which combined, political, historic, and personal issues, found violent expression. Our book shows how Botha and Smuts created a system that would give Boer republicans the political means to express their choice, and after 1914, there was no need to take up arms again. This was one of the central reasons that a second rebellion did not take place. It was Botha and Smuts's Union of South Africa - a dominion, with political franchise, at least for White South Africans – a constitutional democracy, with a constituency system. It was in fact this system that allowed Botha and Smuts to decide to join the war in an active way, and facilitated increased participation in the campaigns in Africa, and the Western Front. It was these decisions, that disadvantaged South Africans with a stronger pigment make up; these policy decisions also helped shape the modern world, resulting in South Africa finding a role on the international stage, colonising Namibia in all but name, influencing the Treaty of Versailles, and contributing in no small part to the formation of the League of Nations. This answers the first question as to whether Botha and Smuts played a key role in South Africa's history, and the First World War.

The above discussion, begs the question, 'so what?' – and we asked ourselves the second question – do we have something to add? At first, we thought 'maybe we do but we need more evidence', and we scanned the historiography. We started to consider the combined role of Botha and Smuts in the First World War. The various books, chapters, articles, and papers

addressed a wide range of areas, but the political and military Botha and Smuts in the First World War was not covered in a comprehensive fashion. A gap in the historiography started to emerge. We did further research on each of the generals. In their individual capacities, they both have a considerable historiography. On Smuts in particular, biographies, studies, and histories abound.²⁰ On Botha there is a more select reading list, but only six biographies have emerged.²¹ Of these the only study involving extensive primary research²² was by one of the authors, Antonio Garcia, who wrote his PhD thesis on Louis Botha's life, supervised by no less than another one of your authors, Ian Van Der Waag.²³ Our personal biographies date back to the South African military, Stellenbosch University Faculty of Military Science, and a professional relationship and friendship that is founded on the deep reading of military history, and a never-ending dialogue, often over coffee, on South Africa's fascinating past.

Not only does the subject of military history fascinate us but also that of the discipline of biography. It was in this area that Ian cut his teeth, writing his PhD thesis, a biography on Hugh Wyndham. He was a contemporary of Botha and Smuts, but perhaps a secondary figure.²⁴ Ian's doctoral study made a greater body of historical knowledge available. The eminent historian and biographer John Cooper says that he learned the trade of life writing by studying 'lesser' luminaries, before moving on to the central figures in early 20th century American history, Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt. Taking a page out of Cooper's book, this work is built on our previous studies, and is an attempt to fill a gap in the historiography.²⁵

²⁰ See, (not an exhaustive list) F.S. Crafford, *Jan Smuts: A Biography* (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1944); W.H. Hancock, *Smuts: Study for a Portrait* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965); C. Danziger, *Jan Smuts* (Cape Town: MacDonald, 1978); J.C. Smuts, *Jan Christian Smuts* (London: Cassell, 1952); T. Cameron, *Jan Smuts: An Illustrated Biography* (Cape Town: Human and Rousseau, 1994); Z. Friedlander, *Jan Smuts Remembered: A Centennial Tribute* (London: Wingate, 1970); O. Geysler, *Jan Smuts and his International Contemporaries* (Johannesburg: Covos Day, 2001); H.C. Armstrong, *Grey Steel, J.C. Smuts: A Study in Arrogance* (London: Arthur Barker, 1937); A. Lentin, *Jan Smuts* (Johannesburg and Cape Town: Jonathan Ball, 2010); N. Levi, *Jan Smuts: being a Character Sketch of Gen. the Hon. J.C. Smuts*, (London: Longmans, 1917); K. Ingham, *Jan Smuts: The Conscience of a South African* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1986); R.H. Kiernan, *General Smuts* (London: Harrap, 1943); R. Kraus, *Old Master: The Life of Jan Christiaan Smuts* (New York: E.P. Dutton 1944); S.G. Millin, *General Smuts* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1936); J. Joseph, *South African Statesman: Jan Christiaan Smuts* (New York: J. Messner, 1969); F. van Damme, *Jan Smuts* (Antwerp: Standaard Boekhandel, 1956); B. Friedman, *Jan Smuts: A Reappraisal* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976); P. Meiring, *Smuts the Patriot* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1975); R. Steyn, *Jan Smuts: Unafraid of Greatness* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2015); P. Beukes, *The Holistic Smuts: A Study in Personality* (Cape Town: Human and Rousseau, 1989); G. Natrass and S.B. Spies, *Jan Smuts: Memoirs of the Boer War* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1994); T.J. Haarhoff, *Smuts the Humanist: A Personal Reminiscence* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1970); and W.F. Burbidge, *Smuts, Soldier and World Statesman* (London: W.S. Coswell, 1943).

²¹ E.H. Spender, *General Botha: The Career and the Man* (London: Constable & Co., 1916); S.C. Buxton, *General Botha* (London: Hazel, Watson & Viney, 1924); Engelenburg, *General Louis Botha* (an English version of the book was subsequently published in 1929); J. Meintjes, *General Louis Botha* (London: Cassell & Co., 1970); and R. Steyn, *Louis Botha: A Man Apart* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2018).

²² F. Pretorius, 'General Louis Botha's Role in the South African War, 1899–1902', *War and Society*, 2022, 2.

²³ See, A. Garcia, 'General Louis Botha: Farmer, Soldier, Statesman, 1862–1919', PhD thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2019.

²⁴ See, I. van der Waag, 'Hugh Archibald Wyndham: His Life and Times in South Africa,' 1901–1923, PhD thesis, University of Cape Town, 2005.

²⁵ See, J. M. Cooper Jnr, 'Conception, Conversation and Comparison', in, *Writing Biography: Historians and their Craft*, L.E. Ambrosius (ed).

The authors build on their previous works but also the broader historiography - Antonio, wrote a number of papers, later published as a book *The First Campaign Victory of the Great War*,²⁶ whereas Ian covered the First World War and South Africa in his considerable scholarship and his book *A Military History of Modern South Africa*.²⁷ The historiography shows a rich variety of books, papers and articles covering South Africa's First World War, including campaign, strategic, and military histories.²⁸

²⁶ See, A. Garcia, *First Campaign Victory of Great War: South Africa, Manoeuvre Warfare, the Afrikaner Rebellion and the German South West African Campaign* (Warwick: Helion, 2019), 31; A. Garcia, 'Manoeuvre Warfare in the South African Campaign in German South West Africa during the First World War', MA thesis, University of South Africa, 2015.

²⁷ See, I. van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2015); I. van der Waag, 'The Battle of Sandfontein, 26 September 1914: South African Military Reform and the German South West Africa Campaign, 1914–1915', *First World War Studies*, 4, 2 (2013), I. Van der Waag, 'Smuts's Generals: Towards a First Portrait of the South African High Command', *War in History*, 18, 1 (2011).

²⁸ See for example, J.J. Collyer, *Campaign in German South West Africa, 1914–1915* (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1937); Anon., *Union of South Africa and the Great War, 1914–1918: Official History* (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1924); W.W. O'Shaughnessy and W.S. Rayner, *How Botha and Smuts Conquered German South West* (London: Simpkin, 1916); G. L'ange, *Urgent Imperial Service* (Rivonia: Ashanti, 1991). Regimental histories which address tactical and lower-level aspects of SA's participation in the First World War, include B.G. Simpkins, *Rand Light Infantry* (Cape Town: Timmins, 1965); N. Orpen, *The History of the Transvaal Horse Artillery, 1904–1974* (Johannesburg: Alex White, 1975); A.C. Martin, *The Durban Light Infantry, Volume 1, 1854 to 1934* (Durban: Hayne & Gibson, 1969). Sources on the Union's First World War efforts which cover the Afrikaner Rebellion of 1914, include T.R.H. Davenport, 'The South African Rebellion of 1914', *English Historical Review*, 78 (1963); S. Swart, 'The "Five Shilling" Rebellion: Rural White Male Anxiety and the 1914 Boer Rebellion', *SAHJ* 56, 1 (2006); Anon., *Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Causes and Circumstances on the recent Rebellion in South Africa* (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1916); K. Fedorowich, 'Sleeping with the Lion? The Loyal Afrikaner and South African Rebellion of 1914–1915', *SAHJ*, 49, 1 (2009); Anon., *Report on the Outbreak of the Rebellion and the Policy of the Government with Regard to its Suppression* (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1915); P.J. Sampson, *The Capture of De Wet: The South African Rebellion 1914* (London: Arnold, 1915); S. Swart, 'Desperate Men': The 1914 Rebellion and the Politics of Poverty', *SAHJ*, 42, 1 (2000); and A. Grundlingh and S. Swart, *Radelose Rebelle: Dinamika van die 1914–1915 Afrikaner Rebellie* (Pretoria: Protea Bookhouse, 2009). Nasson, *Springboks on the Somme*; T. Couzens, *The Great Silence* (Johannesburg: Sunday Times, 2014); A.M. Grundlingh, *Fighting their Own War: South African Blacks and the First World War* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1988); J. Stejskal, *The Horns of the Beast: The Swakop River Campaign and World War I in South West Africa, 1914–1915* (Solihull: Helion, 2014); I. Gleeson, *The Unknown Force: Black, Indian and Coloured Soldiers through Two World Wars* (Rivonia: Ashanti, 1994); D. Williams, *Springboks, Troopies and Cadres: Stories of the South African Army 1912–2012* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2012).

The East African campaign is covered by, R. Anderson, *The Forgotten Front: The East African Campaign* (Stroud: Tempus, 2004); Anon., *The Union of South Africa and the Great War* (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1924); J.J. Collyer, *The South Africans with General Smuts in East Africa* (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1939); A. Samson, *Britain, South Africa and the East African Campaign* (London: Tauris, 2006); F.B. Young, *Marching on Tanga: With General Smuts in Africa* (London: W. Collins, 1917); P.E. von Lettow-Vorbeck, *My Reminiscences of East Africa* (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1920); T.J. Stapleton, *No Insignificant Part: The Rhodesia Native Regiment and the East Africa Campaign of the First World War* (Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University, 2006); J.R. Sibley, *Tanganyikan Guerrilla: East African Campaign 1914–1918* (London: Pan, 1973); E. Paice, *World War 1: The African Front* (New York: Pegasus 2008).

The Senussi campaign and operations on the Western Front is covered in J. Buchan, *The History of the South African Forces in France* (London: Nelson, 1920); I. Uys, *Rollcall: Delville Wood Story* (Johannesburg: Uys, 1991); Anon., *Union of South Africa and the Great War*; P.K.A. Digby, *Pyramids and Poppies: The 1st SA Brigade in Libya, France and Flanders, 1915–1919* (Johannesburg: Ashanti,

This book is not a campaign or strategic history – these have a strong historical base. One of the areas that needed attention was Botha and Smuts. We could not find a book length comparative biography of Botha and Smuts in the First World War – this was the gap in the historiography that slowly started to crystallise in our minds. Of course, we do not presume that this topic has not been explored, at least in part by other historians, and let us add, by very good historians. But their works, brilliant in many cases, have often been on broader areas, and not completely focussed on the First World War. We found political, cultural and or social historical studies, with some military papers, mostly in the form of shorter academic articles or book chapters.²⁹ Other academic manuscripts and articles, many of excellent quality have some cross over, but often with a limited thematic focus for example, concentrating on a campaign such as East Africa, or a capability such as air power, or a particular discipline, such as political history.³⁰ The closest similar work we could find was that of Basil Williams, one of Milner’s ‘kindergarteners’ and later a history professor. Williams had made use of the comparative element, but his focus was on a much wider remit, and included Botha and Smuts’s early lives, the Anglo-Boer War (South African War), through the First and Second World Wars.³¹ This was the background that led to this work - a book length academic biographical study with a thematic focus on the First World War. By drawing on little used archival material the book highlights how our central characters interacted with people of all races, the mechanics of setting up the Union and the Union Defence Force, and how they overcame obstacles to achieve their objectives. The above exposition answers the second question, that yes something new can be added. Linked to the second question, is the critical subject of sources.

We assume that all or most academic historians and biographers ask themselves the question – do we have sufficient primary material to conduct our study? Our subjects Botha and Smuts

1993); and G.W. Warwick, *We Band of Brothers: Reminiscences from the 1st S.A. Infantry Brigade in the 1914–1918 War* (Cape Town: Howard Timms, 1962).

Further sources on the First World War and the role of the Union of South Africa include, E. Dane, *British Campaigns in Africa and the Pacific, 1914–1918* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1919); H. Strachan, *The First World War, Volume 1: To Arms* (Oxford: OUP, 2001); J.M. Brown and W.R. Louis (eds.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Volume 4: The Twentieth Century* (Oxford: OUP, 1999); H. Strachan, *The First World War in Africa* (Oxford: OUP, 2004); R.C. Warwick, ‘The Battle of Sandfontein: The Role and Legacy of Major General Sir Henry Timson Lukin’, *Scientia Militaria*, 34, 2 (2006); I. van der Waag, ‘Smuts’s Generals: Towards a First Portrait of the South African High Command, 1912–1948’, *War in History*, 18, 1 (2011); I. van der Waag, ‘The Battle of Sandfontein, 26 September 1914: South African Military Reform and the German South-West Africa Campaign, 1914–1915’, *First World War Studies*, 4, 2 (2013); Grundlingh, *Participation and Remembrance: South African Black and Coloured Troops in the First World War*; T. Couzens, *The Great Silence* (Johannesburg: Sunday Times, 2014); B. Nasson, *World War 1 and the People of South Africa* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2014); and I. van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2015). And for a more recent campaign history, A. Cruise, *Louis Botha’s War: The Campaign in South West Africa* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2015)

²⁹ See for example, A.J. van Wyk, ‘Botha en Smuts: Tweeling’, in K. du Pisani, D. Kriek and C. de Jager (eds.), *Jan Smuts: Van Boerseun tot Wêreldverhoog, ’n Herwaardering* (Pretoria: Protea, 2017); S.B. Spies, ‘The Outbreak of the First World War and the Botha Government’, *South African Historical Journal*, 1, 1 (1969).

³⁰ E. Kleyhans, ‘A Critical Analysis of the Impact of Water on the South African Campaign in German South West Africa, 1914 1915’, *Historia*, 61, 2, 2016. S. Dubow, South Africa’s Racist Founding Father Was Also a Human Rights Pioneer, *New York Times*, [Opinion | South Africa’s Racist Founding Father Was Also a Human Rights Pioneer - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/25/opinion/south-africa-racist-founding-father-was-also-a-human-rights-pioneer.html). (accessed 25 September 2022; T. Dederling, ‘‘Avenge the Lusitania’: The Anti-German Riots in South Africa in 1915’, *Immigrants & Minorities Historical Studies in Ethnicity, Migration and Diaspora*, 31, 3 (2013).

³¹ B. Williams, *Botha, Smuts and South Africa* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1946),

were very different men. In some ways, Smuts wrote his life story while he was alive. He was educated at university and excelled at academics, he loved books, and wrote prolifically, on everything from military and political matters to philosophy and botany. Smuts's scholarship took different forms, and there exists an absolute treasure trove of published sources in libraries, bookstores, and online, as well as hordes of archival materials in repositories in South Africa and the United Kingdom. In many ways the work on Smuts involved finding tidbits from his colleagues and contemporaries, bringing out new ideas, thoughts, and motivations. This brings into focus the importance of official documentation, and the papers of his contemporaries.

This last point, the personal papers of colleagues, was important for Smuts, but was absolutely critical for the study of Botha, who, when it came to putting pen to paper, was the opposite of Smuts. Botha no doubt had a tremendous work ethic, but he did not keep diaries, and much of his correspondence is kept in the archival papers of his contemporaries, Gustav Preller, Sydney Buxton, Frans Engelenburg and Willem Leyds. Lack of primary sources is often a challenge for historians, and we would like to mention the obstacles faced by South African biographers looking to put forward new life sketches, of key Black, Coloured and Indian personalities, where there exist fewer primary sources.³² Our work was dependent on the archivists who gathered Botha and Smuts's correspondence, official papers, and personal papers. In the case of Botha, Preller and Engelenburg, kept an incredible selection of newspaper articles often quoting the general. These proved critical.

At some points the two generals worked together, and at other points they served in different places – for the most part Botha and Smuts spent time apart during the Afrikaner Rebellion, GSWA campaign, the GEA campaign and during Smuts's time in London. Their correspondence provides insight into their relationship. Perhaps conversations that they would normally have had face to face are captured in letters that mostly were not intended for public consumption; but are now on record.

The final question asks whether we have an interest or fascination with Botha and Smuts. Historians and biographers allow themselves this luxury - a personal, professional, or quirky interest in their subject. This is important to keep up the motivation and perseverance, but again if we are completely honest, writers, historians and academic biographers know the truth – the need to learn and uncover more and get to the 'bottom of matters' provides a never-ending source of motivation.

The danger with a personal interest in a topic, is that it sometimes lends itself to bias. Going into this project we acknowledged this issue, and in order to mitigate it we have done our best to provide a balanced view of the two generals, and importantly our interpretations are supported by evidence. It is sometimes the case when one starts a book project that, despite

³² See, B. Willan, *Sol Plaatje: A Life of Solomon Tshekisho Plaatje* (Johannesburg: Jacana, 2018); Pixley. Willan and Plaaje for a famous Black South African with a wealth of primary materials, and a well written biography. H. Hughes, *First President: A Life of John Dube, Founding President of the ANC* (Johannesburg: Jacana, 2011). There are a number of significant biographies of South African leaders – some examples include, *F.A. Mouton, Prophet Without Honour: F.S. Malan: Afrikaner, South African and Cape Liberal* (Pretoria: Protea, 2011); A. Grundlingh, *Slabbert: Man on a Mission* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2021).

telling oneself not to have preconceived notions, one finds some existing and sometimes well entrenched thoughts. In as much as the main characters of this story are flawed, so too are its authors; and biographers are limited by the selection and interpretation of the source material. This was true for us, and we tried as far as possible to use evidence to underpin our work.

After writing this book, we are not sure whether we ‘like’ the generals more or less; what we can say is that through the added research, their successes seem even more pronounced, and their failures, staggering. Although we must add that we are agreed, that if Botha and Smuts called us from the past, and asked us to go to a dinner party, we would undoubtedly accept. The reasons for this thought experiment are threefold: one, it would be to continue the historical debate between the present and the past; two in order to interview our subjects for the book; and thirdly, and almost most importantly, is the tantalising search for what we could not find in-between the words, the lines, and the books – what remained hidden despite processing reams of paper that hold the historical code of these figures. A quirk, a smile, an engaging anecdote about Smuts’s farming that surprises Botha? Basil Williams claims that he was successful,³³ although Botha was clearly the master farmer – writing to Smuts in April 1918:

Your farming is also doing well, except that I think Krige makes it unnecessarily difficult and hard for Mrs Smuts. I am sure it would be better if he were no longer your manager; and, from what I see, I think you should even cancel the contract for tree-planting and any other contract between you. Then the contract cannot be renewed at the end of the year. I do not much want to intrude upon your affairs, but as a friend, and in view of your absence, I have definitely come to this conclusion—put an end to it. For the rest things are going well there. My own farming has also progressed beautifully, except that we have had far too much rain this year.³⁴

Perhaps some further unexpected themes would be discussed. At the dinner Botha would perhaps surprise us and quote Spinoza while Smuts listens on. We found evidence of Botha making a note in the Transvaal Volksraad referencing Machiavelli and Spinoza.³⁵ Maybe Smuts would add some depth to Botha’s quote or draw on classical sources. The two seem to have parts of the other. They were both brilliant and loved each other, they were like brothers.

We would ask them if the idea of a united British and Boer South Africa, was in fact Botha’s , or if it was a practical consideration given the end of the Anglo-Boer War. Smuts saw to the legislative part, but Botha provided the vision; ‘he was the heart of the movement, but Smuts was the brain.’³⁶

At the dinner, we would look for evidence of the traditional conception of both men. Botha the loving, insecure, capable, and practical farmer, and commander, and Smuts, the intellectual, ‘slim’ (shrewd), confidant, philosopher warrior. Both romantic figures, the charming yet

³³ Williams, *Botha, Smuts and South Africa*, 200.

³⁴ Botha to Smuts, 26 February 1918, W. Hancock and J. van der Poel (eds.), *Selections from the Smuts Papers, Volume III* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 610.

³⁵ Botha’s notes in the First Volksraad, 4 May 1895, NARSSA, Preller Collection, A 787, 11.

³⁶ Hancock and Van der Poel (eds.), *Selections, Vol II*, 3.

rugged Boer general, and the polished philosopher warrior- they inspired trust and captivated the Empire – would we be taken in?

But would a romanticised view of the past limit us, and ultimately disappoint the authors. Would we see Botha and Smuts through the eyes of their critics - an overweight, smiley, tubby cattle herder who by coincidence led a Boer force, and came to power; with his sidekick, a slight, scheming lawyer who condescendingly preached his lordly plans?

Our last question would be about oppression in modern South Africa, and if they had any way of knowing that things were going to go as bad as they did? Botha and Smuts's reshaping of South Africa's political system gave them the power to join and lead the Union in the First World War; but by giving this political power to Afrikaner constituents, it ultimately led to the National Party's victory in the 1920s, and the victory of extreme Afrikaner nationalists in the 1950s which formalised the Apartheid state.

The African National Congress, at the head of the liberation movements, fought for franchise for the second half of the 20th century, which eventually led to free and fair elections in 1994. In a similar way questions will be asked about every South African government including those in the post 1994 landscape. The modern South Africa, the Rainbow Nation, is perhaps also due for historical re-examination, but this falls outside the scope of this book and will be on the shoulders of other contemporary and future historians and biographers.

Botha and Smuts would of course never be able to answer these questions, it is also doubtful that they could understand the depth of our questions, as they, like us, are trapped in the confines of the norms of the times. The thought experiment excites the mind, but it is of course limited by the life and times we live in and the norms of the past – we could never completely understand their frame of reference, nor could we ask them to extrapolate the destruction and deprivation caused by their decisions. That being said, the passage of time does not absolve Botha and Smuts of their guilt, or their achievement.

They are historical figures who loom large on the South African historical landscape; with their colossal achievements and failures, we have laid out their narratives in the chapters of this book.

0.3 overview of the book

The various chapters address different elements of the lives and experiences of Botha and Smuts. There is overlap. In equal measure the discussion is respectively based on the viewpoint of Botha and Smuts, from wherever they were at the time. For example, a few chapters overlap several years of the Great War; in 1916, Smuts had left to command the force in German East Africa, see Chapter 7, and Botha remained in South Africa, see Chapter 6. Botha writes to Smuts from South Africa, and likewise Smuts responds, Botha also visits Smuts in the field.

We have tried as far as possible to make sure that each chapter can be read as part of a cohesive narrative on the two generals, but also that the chapters can be read as standalone expositions – this may be of assistance to readers who have a particular interest.

At times historical words are used which are not intended to cause offense. For example, when the term 'native' is quoted, it is not meant as a pejorative term. It is only reflected as was written in the source. One final point on this, is that in South Africa, there are a number of racial groups, and Black, White, Coloured and Indian groupings are official demographic categories. The term Coloured is not an offensive term in South Africa. The above-mentioned groupings are referred to throughout the book.

Chapter 1: The road to 1914, gives an overview of the context of the formation of the Union, and the road to the First World War, 1902-1914. It was a time where everything was in flux - a time of uncertainty. Botha's vision gave direction, a point marked on a future political map, while Smuts adapted the compass and put together the navigation plan.

Chapter 2: A bad beginning, 1914, addresses the landscape of the Union and the politics of participation, in 1914. We explore the new moment, how Union brought together a range of different people with various interests – and the resulting conflict and cooperation. Lastly, we touch on Botha and Smuts's commitment to the First World War which brought matters to a head.

Chapter 3: Gambits and Crises, 1914, deals with the fall out of the decision to go to war, the 1914 Afrikaner Rebellion and the Battle of Sandfontein. We evaluate the Union Defence Force's first military test, and the results, which led to the reinvasion of South West Africa.

Chapter 4: The conquest of German South West Africa, 1915, gives a detailed account of the GSWA campaign, in 1915. Botha and Smuts combined political and military roles, holding office, and commanding in the field. It was a quick campaign with considerable logistical challenges, but a good re-invasion plan that was well executed.

Chapter 5: Domestic Politics, 1915, proceeds with an account of the political campaign, which followed Botha's return from South West Africa, which culminated in the pivotal 1915 elections. The results, disappointing to Botha and Smuts, marked a change in the tide, but the two generals pushed back.

Chapter 6: Local polemics, Public Opinion and Foreign policy, 1915-1916, provides an overview of the local context in the Union from the viewpoint of Botha, and an interesting section on early attempts at forming an intelligence service in South Africa. It goes on to show Botha's mounting worries and frustrations, as Smuts took over command of the British force in East Africa.

Chapter 7: Campaigning in Africa and Europe in 1916, explores Smuts's strategic role in the German East Africa campaign. Taking over from a flailing British force, Smuts reinvigorated the campaign, his concept of operations and mobile attacks, drove the Germans into the field, liberating large swathes of territory. An overview of the operations in Europe is also provided.

Chapter 8: Not a serial fairy tale, 1916-1918, provides an analysis of the machinery and politics of war from the viewpoint of the Union. Addressing some broad and important themes, this chapter discusses matters of supply, disease, and recruitment 1916-1917.

Chapter 9: High Politics, 1917-1918, evaluates Smuts's role in London in the Imperial and British War Cabinets. He was uniquely placed to influence policy, he had the ear of Prime Minister Lloyd George, and was the star problem shooter. The chapter also provides a lens into Botha's experience in South Africa, during the challenging period, 1917-1918.

Chapter 10: A better ending? describes Botha and Smuts's role at the end of the war, and the Paris Peace Conference. This chapter deals with Botha's death in 1919, and some final thoughts on the legacy of the two generals.

0.4 Conclusion

Although lionised during the war by a British public hungry for heroes, there is a different side to Botha and Smuts. Shunned by Afrikaner nationalists at the time, they have remained divisive figures. Responsible for the enactment of the Land Act of 1913, which disadvantaged the majority of South Africans and shaped South Africa's socio-economic and political landscape, there are fresh calls (2015-2022 at the time of writing this book) for Botha and Smuts's statues to be removed. It is the unending dialogue between the present and the past that bring up these issues, and rightfully so.

Our aim with this book is to compare Botha and Smuts, in a biography focussed on the First World War. We seek to understand these two generals: Botha's charm, charisma, and magnetism; as well as Smuts's stoicism, and intellectualism – what was façade and were there two very human, imperfect, and sometimes inconsiderate, men? Together they provide a wonderful lens to understand South Africa's policy decisions which impacted 20th century Southern African. They fought insurmountable odds, and achieved great victories, at home and abroad, but also made startling errors, and, ultimately, in classical fashion were crushed by the world they tried to create.

According to Sir James Rose-Innes, the Chief Justice of South Africa during the Great War, 'there has been a marked tendency for South African political leaders to run in couples, in an association so close as to be almost double-barrelled.'³⁷ This is an interesting observation. The pair has normally comprised a prime minister and a close colleague. Rose-Innes mentions several instances: Molteno and Saul Solomon, and their struggle to gain self-government for the Cape Colony; Sprigg and Upington, Rhodes and Hofmeyr, Merriman and Sauer, Botha and Smuts, and Hertzog and Havenga. But, of these duumvirates, Rose-Innes believed the Botha-Smuts consortium the most significant. Their political collaboration started at a crucial period in South African history and their governments – stretching from 1907 through to 1924 – dealt with significant problems: the weight, meaning, and spirit of the Treaty signed at Vereeniging that ended the Anglo-Boer War; the relationship between Dutch and English-speaking South Africans; and the bitter, persistently difficult legacies of the Anglo-Boer War and the wider political struggles in South Africa. Theirs was a David-Jonathan relationship.³⁸ It is difficult –

³⁷ B.A. Tindall, ed., *James Rose Innes, Chief Justice of South Africa, 1914-27, Autobiography* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1949), 273.

³⁸ A close, powerful, intimate and platonic friendship often between soldiers.

even impossible – to understand the life of the one without an examination of the other. A “double-barrelled” biography is the only course.

Botha died in 1919, shortly after the Paris Peace Conference – his heart gave in; a confluence of physical and emotional maladies. On the passing of Botha, and his legacy, Smuts said:

In time, no doubt, and with the lapse of years and the passing of this generation, the larger Botha will emerge... His colossal figure will then appear in its true historic proportions, and new biographers will arise to tell of the wonder of it all.³⁹

Smuts earmarked a space for the telling of Botha’s story, but he was not best placed to do it. J.X. Merriman suggested that Smuts write a fuller biography, but after taking office as the new prime minister, Smuts declined to do so because of his heavy workload. Smuts went on to suggest that Professor L. Fouché, who assisted him with the writing of the ‘Report on the Outbreak of the Rebellion’,⁴⁰ write the biography on Botha.⁴¹ He declined. A steady stream of biographers would volunteer to write Botha’s story, not to mention that Harold Spender, an author and friend of Lloyd George, wrote Botha’s story while the general was still alive - the book was published in 1916.⁴²

Engelenburg, a contemporary and biographer, later wrote that that Botha was destined to have a niche in the national memory.⁴³ Smuts ensured that the memory of Botha was enshrined in statues, marking his place in South Africa’s public spaces. Now former president Nelson Mandela’s statue towers over other statues at the Union buildings in Pretoria, and King Dinizulu’s bust is prominent in Durban – Botha’s niche in the South African memory remains contested, but whether in open or closed public displays, the colossal figures of South Africa’s past provides a mental and physical space for historical discussion.

Smuts too, was famous during his lifetime and Naphtali Levi wrote his biography, while the general was alive and even consulted with him. Although Smuts was not entirely encouraging of the book asking, ‘I wonder what is in it because he really knows nothing of my life or private history!’⁴⁴ Smuts would come to terms with his fame; he received recognition in philosophic, political, military, and academic circles and the Smuts Memorial Committee would ensure his effigies remained present in South Africa. Winston Churchill, a contemporary and friend, paid respect to Smuts, reflecting on his, ‘prolonged harmony of mind and body... healthy practical common sense, which guided him in daily action... his far-ranging outlook over the world

³⁹ F.V. Engelenburg, *General Louis Botha* (Pretoria: J.L. Van Schaik, 1928), 15.

⁴⁰ Letter of request and acceptance from the Secretary of Defence and Prof. L. Fouché with regard to the writing of the history of the Afrikaner Rebellion, 16 March 1916 and 28 August 1916, DOD Archives, Diverse 1, Box 1.

⁴¹ Smuts to Merriman, 14 October 1919, Hancock and Van der Poel, *Selections*, 15.

⁴² E.H. Spender, *General Botha: The Career and the Man* (London: Constable & Co., 1916);

⁴³ Engelenburg, *General Louis Botha*, 7. History writing as a discipline is also a form of public memory in the view of J. Tosh (ed.), *Historians on History* (London: Routledge, 2014), 14. This dissertation may also be a form of public memory as interpreted by the worldview of the reader.

⁴⁴ Smuts to Isie, 21 December 1916, Hancock and Van der Poel, *Selections*, 435.

scene....”⁴⁵ In recognition for his services Churchill advocated for a statue of Smuts in London – it still stands in Parliament Square.

Churchill went on to write a letter of condolence to Isie, Smuts’s wife,

‘Please accept my deepest sympathy in your sorrow and deprivation... a warrior-statesman and philosopher who was probably more fitted to guide struggling and blundering humanity through its sufferings and perils towards a better day than anyone who lived in any country during his epoch.’⁴⁶

In South Africa and the UK, statues of many South African heroes have emerged. Statues of Nelson Mandela and Mahatma Gandhi (an adopted Indian South African) are also present in Parliament Square London and allow for a broader historical discussion of change in South Africa.

Chapter I continues with the road to the First World War, and we end the introduction with a vignette. Botha and Smuts were guilty of self-promotion in their time. They did not have social media, and followers in the modern sense, but statuettes of the two generals were created which promoted their image and built a narrative of their position in society – it was also used to comfort friends and family. While Smuts was in German East Africa, Botha wrote to Isie, keeping her abreast of events, and keeping up her spirits - he said he would, ‘send you one of Jannie and my statuettes.’⁴⁷

⁴⁵ P. H. Courtenay, ‘Great Contemporaries: Jan Christian Smuts’, *The Churchill Project, Hillsdale College, Winston Churchill’s Great Contemporaries: Jan Christian Smuts (hillsdale.edu)* (accessed 27 September 2022).

⁴⁶ P. H. Courtenay, ‘Great Contemporaries: Jan Christian Smuts’, *The Churchill Project, Hillsdale College, Winston Churchill’s Great Contemporaries: Jan Christian Smuts (hillsdale.edu)* (accessed 27 September 2022).

⁴⁷ Botha to Isie, 4 May 1917, Hancock and Van der Poel, *Selections* 493.