Jan Christian Smuts at the Paris Peace conference, 1919

Naomi Howerton Coryell

University of Nebraska at Omaha

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JAN CHRISTIAN SMUTS AT THE PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE, 1919

by

Naomi Howerton Coryell

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty of the Department of History
University of Omaha

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

June 1963
PREFACE

Jan Christian Smuts of South Africa was one of the most remarkable and interesting personalities of the past century. Although he came from a small, and in some ways, backward country, his influence spread throughout much of the world. In his lifetime of eighty years, 1870-1950, he had several careers. Although his profession was the law, he was also, at various times, a soldier, a statesman, a diplomat, a scientist, and a philosopher. He served as a general officer in three wars and helped to found two world peace organizations: the League of Nations and the United Nations.

Many aspects of Smuts's life and work are worthy of detailed study, but his role at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference was chosen for this paper for several reasons. First, the Peace Conference has been extensively examined from almost every angle, but no one has written specifically of Smuts's role at the Conference. Second, this one episode in his life is a reasonably compact unit which can be fully treated in a work of this length, and yet it serves well to illustrate the kind of man Smuts was and his impact on world events.

This work would never have been attempted, much less completed, without the constant help and encouragement of Professor A. Stanley Trickett, Chairman of the
Department of History at the University of Omaha. I hereby express my gratitude for his encouragement not only in the preparation of this thesis but also throughout my graduate and undergraduate years at the University of Omaha.

NAOMI HOWERTON CORYELL

Omaha, Nebraska
March 4, 1963
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CHAPTER I

JAN CHRISTIAN SMUTS

Jan Christian Smuts was born a British subject, in 1870, in Cape Colony, South Africa, where his ancestors, who were predominantly Dutch, had lived since before 1692. As a second son he received no formal education until the death of his elder brother in 1892 made him the heir of the family's hopes. He then entered his first school and completed its eleven year course in four years. His mother had previously taught him at least the rudiments of reading and writing the English language. At the age of sixteen Smuts went on to Victoria College in Stellenbosch, Cape Colony, where he spent five of the happiest years of his life. He there met and fell in love with Sybella Margaretha Krige. She was to be the only love of his life, although he was not able to marry her until 1897. Their marriage

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proved to be a very successful and happy one, producing nine children, six of whom survived infancy. He took his degree in 1891 in science and literature, winning honors in both. His high scholastic standing won him a scholarship for overseas study; he used it to study law at Cambridge.3

Smuts's record at Cambridge was brilliant. He did both parts of the Law Tripos simultaneously and gained distinction in both—a feat unique in the history of the University. While in England he also found time to write a lengthy treatise called "Walt Whitman—A Study in the Evolution of Personality." This essay, which he unsuccessfully attempted to have published, set forth the beginnings of a system of philosophy, which he later called "Holism" and expressed more fully in his book Holism and Evolution.4

Upon his return to South Africa in 1895, Smuts set himself up to practice law in Capetown. He also became interested in politics, his first political action being a speech in support of Cecil Rhodes, who was then Premier of Cape Colony. To Smuts at that time Rhodes appeared as a great idealist. In fact Rhodes's vision of a great united British Africa was one which Smuts never repudiated as he.

4Ibid., pp. 18-20; Hancock, op. cit., pp. 33-51.
later did Rhodes himself. The Jameson Raid of December 29, 1895, turned Smuts against Rhodes and even for a time against all the British in South Africa. He left Capetown and moved to the Transvaal and to the support of Paul Kruger, the patriarchal president of that small Boer republic.

In 1898, Kruger appointed Smuts to the post of state attorney. In that capacity he worked with Kruger for the next year and a half to avoid a war with the British. Their efforts were unsuccessful, Smuts believed, because Sir Alfred Milner, the British High Commissioner, was determined to incorporate the Transvaal as well as the Orange Free State into the British Empire even if it took a war to do it. Although the two men later became friends and worked together in the interests of the British Empire, Smuts never changed his opinion of Milner's role in South Africa.

When war broke out late in 1899, Smuts remained at his political post until the fall of Pretoria, in the summer of 1900, ended the more formal phase of the war.

6 Ibid., pp. 53-62; Smuts, Jr., op. cit., pp. 27-28. The word Boer, which means farmer, refers to the inhabitants of South Africa of Dutch or Huguenot descent.
7 Ibid., pp. 32-39.
8 Ibid., pp. 42-54.
The Boers, however, did not surrender. They began a long period of guerilla warfare which failed to preserve their independence, but which preserved their honor and self-respect and provided a mass of heroic legends to be passed on to their children. Smuts, too, became a commando leader. He led an extensive raid into Cape Colony and harried the British unmercifully for over a year. Smuts's successful exploit, his first excursion into the more active pursuits of life, developed him both physically and intellectually. He was now ready to "shoulder untold responsibilities. He had left his youth behind." 9

Smuts was present when peace was made between the British and the Boers at Vereeniging in May 1902. The two small republics lost their independence, but Smuts found a new vision in the midst of defeat. Lord Kitchener, the British military commander, told Smuts, in a private talk, that the Liberals were likely to come to power in Britain in the near future and that they would in all probability grant a constitution to South Africa. This talk erased the majority of Smuts's anti-British feelings and won him over to the British terms of peace. "Thus with a few simple words Kitchener had sown a seed of Empire in the heart of Smuts." 9

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9 Kraus, op. cit., p. 110. See also Smuts, Jr., op. cit., pp. 55-72, 76; Hancock, op. cit., pp. 133-45.
Smuts, with what results the world knows."\textsuperscript{10}

Kitchener's prophecy proved correct; the Liberals took office in 1905. Smuts then went on a "private" visit to England to see what he could make of the half-promise he had received at Vereeniging. The climax of his visit was his talk with Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. Such were Smuts's persuasive powers that he induced the new Prime Minister, who in turn persuaded the Cabinet, to give the former Boer republics self-government within the Empire. "The feeling for the English that swept into him when Campbell-Bannerman so trusted the Boers in 1906 has been the strongest influence in Smuts' life."\textsuperscript{11} Smuts himself said, "'They gave us back in everything but name, our country. After four years. Has such a miracle of trust and magnanimity ever happened before? Only people like the English could do it. They may make mistakes, but they are a big people.'\textsuperscript{12}

In the new government of the Transvaal, Smuts became both Colonial Secretary and Minister of Education. His closest friend, General Louis Botha, became Prime Minister. Smuts worked very hard during this period, "running

\textsuperscript{10}F. S. Crafford, Jan Smuts (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1944), pp. 53-54. See also Smuts, Jr., op. cit., pp. 75-76; Kraus, op. cit., pp. 118-19; Hancock, op. cit., p. 158; Sarah Gertrude Millin, General Smuts (2 vols.; Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1936), I, 169.

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., I, 197-99.

\textsuperscript{12}Smuts, Jr., op. cit., p. 91.
not only his own portfolios but those of most of the other
members of the Cabinet as well, since many of the ministers
were as yet inexperienced in the tasks of government. "13

Meanwhile, a movement for a closer union of the
four colonies in South Africa developed, and Smuts took a
leading part in the movement. 14 Representatives of the
four colonies met in a National Convention in 1908. Smuts
headed the delegation from the Transvaal. Long before the
Convention convened, however, Smuts had been developing
his own ideas for a constitution for all South Africa. He
was the only delegate who had a definite plan on paper,
complete to the last detail, when he arrived at the con­
vention. 15 Because of his advance preparation, his large
and able staff, and his own energy and drive, Smuts was
able to exert a tremendous influence. The final Act of
Union followed his ideas very closely. 16 Smuts always re­
garded his work at the National Convention as the greatest
single contribution he made to his homeland. 17 In the new
Union government Smuts held three portfolios from 1910-1912,

13Smuts, Jr., op. cit., p. 94.
14L. M. Thompson, The Unification of South Africa,
15Ibid., pp. 152-64.
16Ibid., passim; Smuts, Jr., op. cit., pp. 97-103.
17Ibid., p. 104.
those of Mines, Interior, and Defence; and two portfolios, those of Defence and Finance, from 1912-1919. 18

When the World War broke out in 1914, there was no doubt in Smuts's mind where South Africa's duty lay; she would support the Empire against Germany. Prime Minister Botha agreed with his friend and told the British government that it could withdraw its troops; South Africa would be responsible for her own security. Seven thousand British troops left at once. At the same time, the British government requested that South Africa send troops to invade German South West Africa in order to capture its two wireless stations. When the South African ministers took steps to comply with this request, it became apparent that not all South Africans agreed with Smuts and Botha. Many had never reconciled themselves to their defeat by the British. They looked upon the war as their opportunity to reverse the decision of 1902. Many hated Smuts and Botha for what was considered their treacherous cooperation with Britain. These malcontents rose in rebellion, and their leaders prepared to join forces with the Germans in South West Africa. For a time Botha and Smuts showed infinite patience with the rebels. They warned; they begged; they appealed. Neither wished to move against their former comrades-in-arms. When it became evident that no appeals would dissuade the rebels, 

18 Smuts, Jr., op. cit., p. 473.
General Botha himself took the field against them, using loyal Boer troops as much as possible. The rebellion was put down rather easily, but it engendered much bitterness which has not yet fully abated.  

After the rebellion had been overcome, Botha and Smuts moved against German South West Africa. Their conquest of this sparsely-populated, almost-desert area, "executed with clockwork precision, was the first Allied success in the First World War."  

Early in 1916, Smuts was offered a larger field in which to exercise his military talents. He was given the command of the campaign in East Africa with the rank of lieutenant general in the British army, thus becoming Britain's second youngest general. In this campaign Smuts "showed himself a brilliantly efficient, resourceful and energetic Commander-in-Chief." In less than a year, he had almost cleared the Germans from East Africa, but they then turned his own Boer-war game of guerilla warfare against him. In fact, some German bands were still roaming

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19 Smuts, Jr., op. cit., pp. 121-33; Hancock, op. cit., pp. 377-94.
20 Kraus, op. cit., p. 242. See also Hancock, op. cit., pp. 394-400.
21 Smuts, Jr., op. cit., p. 146.
East Africa when the Treaty of Versailles was signed. 23

In January 1917, Smuts was recalled to South Africa and from there sent to England to attend the first Imperial War Conference as a deputy for Prime Minister Botha, who felt he could not leave his post at that time. 24 Smuts was not to return to South Africa until after the war was over and the treaty with Germany signed. To England Smuts brought

... an atmosphere of other-worldly calm. He was unhurried, unapprehensive, reflective and serene. In a moment which seemed to many in England the darkest in her history he spoke cheerfully and optimistically of the power of the British Empire, which in a happy inspiration he rechristened the British Commonwealth of Nations. ... He insisted that the war was a war of ideals and that it must be fought until it ended in a victory of the spirit. And the nation ... cheered the speaker with something of the religious enthusiasm with which over a year later Europe was to greet the oracular pronouncements of President Wilson. 25

Smuts not only attended the Imperial Conference but was also included in the Imperial War Cabinet which met at the same time. The latter body was composed of the British Cabinet with representatives of the Dominions and India added. David Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister,

\begin{itemize}
  \item 23 Kraus, op. cit., p. 256.
  \item 24 Smuts, Jr., op. cit., p. 163.
\end{itemize}
was immediately impressed by Smuts's character and ability. He wrote:

Smuts is one of the most remarkable personalities of his time. He is that fine blend of intellect and human sympathy which constitutes the understanding man. . . . His rare gifts of mind and heart strengthened those finer elements which are apt to be overwhelmed in an hour of savage temper and pitiless carnage. Of his practical contribution to our counsels during these trying years, it is difficult to speak too highly.²⁶

Sir Robert Borden, the Prime Minister of Canada, who himself played a very vital role at the Imperial Conferences and later at the Peace Conference, met Smuts for the first time in London in 1917. The two men developed an intimate friendship. Borden recorded that the "wonderful intellectual powers, wide vision and astonishing career" of Smuts "gave him a commanding place in our deliberations."²⁷

Smuts did not return home at the conclusion of the Imperial Conference. Lloyd George explained why:

So deep was the impression that General Smuts made at this time upon his colleagues, nay, upon the nation, that we would not let him leave us when the Conference was ended. We insisted on keeping him here to help us at the centre with our war efforts. In every aspect of our multifarious tasks he was a valuable helper. He took his full share of the numerous committees set up to investigate, to advise, and subject to Cabinet assent, to direct action on vital issues of policy and strategy. He

²⁶Lloyd George, War Memoirs, IV, 17.
became and remained until the end of the War, an active member of the British Cabinet for all the purposes of war direction. 28

During the last year and a half of the war, Smuts carried out a number of diplomatic and organizational assignments for the War Cabinet. He assisted Lloyd George at an Inter-Allied Conference in Paris in June 1917; he surveyed the war front in 1918 and brought back a report on the condition of affairs there; and, after the Caporetto disaster, he accompanied Lloyd George to Italy to meet with the Italian Premier. One of Smuts's most noted services was the organizing and setting up of an effective Air Ministry for Britain. 29

Prior to the 1919 Peace Conference, Smuts had become a world-renowned figure, honored for his roles in both peace and war. He attracted attention and comment on three continents. A noted American professor wrote in the Atlantic Monthly that Smuts was "one of the ablest public men of our day. . . . Liberty and Freedom are words that have not lost their savor for him. . . . He is, above all, a philosopher and has learned to unify philosophy and

28 Lloyd George, War Memoirs, IV, 36. An interesting record of the work of the Imperial War Conferences and Cabinets of 1917 and 1918 from the point of view of a Dominion Prime Minister is contained in Borden, op. cit., II, 664-96, 806-45.

29 Lloyd George, War Memoirs, IV, 91-93, 147, 149, 189, 118-21. See also Crafford, op. cit., pp. 130-32.
When Colonel House was in England in 1917 as a personal emissary for President Wilson, he recorded in his diary for November 13:

Nearly everyone I have met has asked me to be certain to see Smuts. He has grown to be the lion of the hour. . . . My expectations were unusually high; it was not alone what I had heard of him, but I have been impressed by his speeches and statements which I have read from time to time. . . . I have confidence in his opinion. He is one of the few men I have met in the Government who do not seem tired. He is alert, energetic, and forceful.

At the Peace Conference many, especially among the British and American delegations, recorded favorable impressions of Smuts. Bernard Baruch wrote:

Smuts represented the kind of reasoned idealism upon which Wilson hoped to build the postwar world. In his effort to be fair to Germany, and in his support of a League of Nations, Smuts spoke for the most liberal and enlightened sentiment at the Conference.

Winston Churchill recorded that Lloyd George felt he could turn to General Smuts when he needed an "exponent of the Liberal creed in international affairs" and that Smuts could meet Wilson "on his own ground and speak his language to


Wilson's surprise and gratification." Colonel House wrote that some men at Paris "towered above their fellows, and these became centres of groups from which policies and opinions radiated." He classified Smuts with Wilson, Clemenceau, Lloyd George, Orlando, Paderewski, Venizelos, Makino, and Wellington Koo as "among the statesmen having distinct and enthusiastic followers." Clive Day, of the American team of experts at the Conference, named Smuts, as well as Lord Robert Cecil of England and Leon Bourgeois of France, as one of the recognized intellectual and moral leaders of the day. Harold Nicolson, the young British diplomat who accompanied Smuts on his mission to Hungary, recorded in his diary an admiration for Smuts that was just short of adoration. One of the most interesting appraisals was recorded by Ray Stannard Baker, the director of the American press at Paris:

General Smuts was one of the two or three world leaders developed by the Peace Conference. An


extraordinary man, scarcely fifty years old; one of the youngest leaders at the Conference. . . . He developed early as a thoroughgoing idealist. . . . His knowledge of world conditions was extensive and realistic. . . . He was one of President Wilson's strongest supporters. Personally, he was a rather taciturn and unapproachable man, with a high forehead, steely eyes, straight brows depressed in a habitual half frown, tightly closed lips, and a powerful chin; he was a man who looked the part of the leader. He was always at hand when there was difficult work to do.37

There were, on the other hand, a few men at the Conference who were not favorably impressed by Smuts. Georges Clemenceau, the Prime Minister of France, in his catalogue of the men at the Conference, referred to "Smuts of South Africa, with his forced smile, who made the mistake of leaving papers about in which he vented his spleen against the French."38 Herbert Hoover thought Smuts "had full knowledge of Old World Diplomacy, an independent mind and often real statesmanship." He made it clear, however, that he did not trust the South African. He thought Smuts's stand on mandates was mere trickery and so suspected his motives in other areas.39 Robert Lansing, the American Secretary of State, credited Smuts with "intellectual


honesty," as well as "kindliness and consideration." In another work, however, the most he would concede to Smuts was a creative mind, while identifying him with those reformers whose peculiar vanity is that they must invent something new and different, not being willing to accept methods which have been tested by experience. This judgment was in connection with Smuts's work on the mandates system.

Smuts had gained a wealth of experience in various fields prior to 1919 and had attained to a position of high esteem in the eyes of his fellow men. Therefore, being excellently prepared and equipped for the task of negotiating a peace, he was able to play a prominent part at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference.

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CHAPTER II

SMUTS AND THE CONFERENCE ORGANIZATION

For an understanding of the role played by Smuts at the Paris Peace Conference, some knowledge of its organization and procedure is necessary. First, the Conference was not planned in advance; it grew out of the organizations which the Allies had set up to conduct the war.\(^1\) Second, it was not a static body, but changed from time to time both in structure and procedure to conform to the needs of the moment.\(^2\) Third, the Conference was an extremely large body. Long before the war was over, information-gathering organizations had been set up in France, Great Britain, and the United States.\(^3\) Many of the experts who had served with these organizations were included in the delegations which went to Paris. For example, the British Empire delegation consisted of more than two hundred persons.\(^4\)


\(^4\) Marston, *op. cit.*, p. 223.
Altogether, seventy plenipotentiaries, or one hundred and four counting substitutes, and at least 1,037 other delegates represented twenty-seven states and five British dominions at the Peace Conference.5

The Council of Ten, which consisted of the Heads of the five great powers, France, Great Britain, the United States, Italy, and Japan, and their Foreign Ministers, acted as the steering committee for the unwieldy Conference from January 12 until March 24. Although it met almost daily throughout this period, it had no definite program to follow and merely worked from day to day. As a result, it entirely failed to solve or even to tackle most of the major problems facing the Conference.6 Four months after the Armistice, only the military, naval, and air terms of the treaty with Germany had been decided upon.7

Before this body

... each special interest, each minor nationality, had a chance to come forward and state its case, usually at considerable length. Whatever was said in French was translated into English, and vice versa. The sessions grew long and tiresome, and progress was slow.8

The slowness of progress was not entirely due to the proce-

6Marston, op. cit., p. 99.
7Temperley, op. cit., I, 262.
dupe adopted. The Council of Ten had inherited from the Supreme Council of the war period a heavy burden of problems of an economic nature. Moreover, the Europe of 1919 was a hungry Europe, and the Council feared that anarchy might follow in the wake of hunger. Therefore, it was concerned with feeding the defeated peoples, which involved problems of the blockade, of rationing, and of the transport of materials.9

On March 21, the Heads of the British, American, French, and Italian delegations withdrew from the Council of Ten and began to meet as the Council of Four. At last the directing body of the Conference had assumed a form which enabled it to make rapid progress. In the next six weeks, it had settled many of the problems with which the Council of Ten had been unable or unwilling to deal. By May 7, it had a treaty ready to present to Germany, and it continued to be the real heart of the Conference until the Treaty of Versailles was signed on June 28.10 After the withdrawal of the Big Four, the Foreign Ministers continued to meet as the Council of Five. An indication of the importance of the various Councils of the Conference can be inferred from the frequency of their meetings. The Council

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9Haskins and Lord, op. cit., p. 5; Temperley, op. cit., I, 256; Marston, op. cit., p. 104.
10Ibid., p. 164.
of Ten met seventy-two times; the Council of Five met thirty-nine times; but the Council of Four met one hundred and forty-five times.\footnote{11}{Tardieu, op. cit., p. 97; Day, op. cit., p. 33.}

In addition to the Councils, the Conference also met in plenary sessions. These sessions were formal in nature; the program was thoroughly planned in advance and rigidly controlled by Clemenceau as president of the Conference. There were only six plenary sessions before the treaty with Germany was signed, and the only one of these to be of real interest was that of February 14, when the Covenant of the League of Nations was presented by Woodrow Wilson.\footnote{12}{Temperley, op. cit., I, 249-50; U.S., Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1919, The Paris Peace Conference (13 vols.; Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1942-1947), III, 203-39. Cited hereafter as For. Relts. of U.S., Peace Conference.}

Other important bodies at the Conference were the special commissions or committees which were set up as the need arose and to which questions were referred for preliminary study and report. Five important territorial commissions were organized, as well as commissions on the League of Nations, on reparations, on finance, on waterways, and on many of the other problems of the peace. A commission usually consisted of one or two members from each of the
five great powers, plus a few other members from some of the smaller powers. According to Tardieu, before peace was made with Germany, there were fifty-eight of these bodies which held a total of 1,646 sessions. Some of the best work of the Conference was done by the commissions. On the other hand, some questions were never referred to them but were held to be the exclusive province of the Big Four. The commissions did not frame treaty articles. They gathered and sifted all available information on the problem with which they were dealing and reported their findings to the Supreme Council, which used the information to arrive at a final decision as to how the treaty article should be written. The decision of the Council was then referred to the Drafting Commission which rendered valuable service by "clothing often loosely-worded decisions in concise and explicit phrases, which could be inserted directly into the Treaty." This unplanned, empirically-organized body of men, representing the victors in the war, managed to get a


\[14\] Prior to March 24th, the Supreme Council was the Council of Ten; after that date, it was the Council of Four.

\[15\] Temperley, op. cit., I, 266.
treaty together by May 6. On that day it was presented to a plenary session of the Conference, and on the following day it was presented to the German delegation. The Germans signed the treaty at Versailles on June 28. Between May 7 and June 28 the Allies and the Germans did not meet; all communications concerning the treaty were carried on in writing.

How did Smuts fit into the organization of the Peace Conference? The answer to this question involves first of all the problem of the representation of the British dominions at Paris in 1919.

The dominions, by declaring war instantly on the decision of the mother country in 1914, had proclaimed their belief in the rightness of that decision. Fully as they approved, it was, however, a decision which they had had no formal share in framing, and to which they were formally bound, whether they liked it or not, by the existing legal state of the imperial constitution.

Once committed to the war, the dominions, especially Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, supported it whole-heartedly, as did India to a lesser extent. The contributions of the

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17 Ibid., III, 413-20.
18 Ibid., III, 421-23.
19 Marston, op. cit., p. 192.
dominions named above were, in proportion to population, as great as that of any of the European nations and was far greater than that of the United States. The dominions felt that their contributions to the war effort had earned them complete nationhood and a right to control their own foreign policy. They insisted, therefore, on the right to participate in the Peace Conference, apart from Great Britain, and on an equality with at least the smaller nations represented. Such insistence began at the first Imperial War Conference in 1917 when Sir Robert Borden moved and Smuts seconded a resolution to that effect. The following year, the dominion representatives again pressed for separate representation at Paris. On the last day of 1918, the Imperial Cabinet adopted a proposal submitted by Borden.

Under this proposal each Dominion was to have the same representation as the smaller allied nations and, in addition, representatives of the British Empire were to be drawn from a panel on which each Dominion Prime Minister would have a place. The representation of India was to be on the same basis.

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23 Borden, op. cit., II, 667-76.
24 Ibid., II, 866-95.
25 Ibid., II, 894-95. See also Lloyd George, Peace Treaties, I, 206-209.
In this struggle, Borden recorded that he had the full backing of the other dominion representatives as well as of the British Prime Minister and his colleagues.²⁶

When the Council of Ten began to meet on January 12, the first question taken up was that of the representation of the various nations. It was at once agreed that the main duty of drafting the treaties would remain in the hands of the great powers. The Council then decided which other countries could have delegates and how many each could have. When the problem of the dominions was raised, Lloyd George pressed for the plan accepted by the Imperial Cabinet. President Wilson entered a mild protest against this increase in the representation of the British Empire. The solution finally arrived at, on Wilson's suggestion, was that Canada, South Africa, Australia, and India were each to have two representatives and New Zealand, one. Newfoundland was not to have separate representation.²⁷ Under this arrangement Smuts became a plenipotentiary from South Africa along with Prime Minister Louis Botha.

²⁶Borden, op. cit., II, 394.

²⁷Lloyd George, Peace Treaties, I, 211-17; Temperley, op. cit., I, 217-18; VI, 314-15; For. Rel. of U.S., Peace Conference, III, 432-39, 531-33. Other representation was as follows: the five great powers had five delegates each; Belgium, Brazil, and Serbia had three each; China, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Persia, Poland, Portugal, Rumania, and Siam had two each; most of the Latin American countries had one delegate each. Temperley, op. cit., I, 493.
The dominion representatives also formed a panel from which the fifth member of the British delegation was drawn. In this way, all of the dominion delegates served on one or another of the important conference commissions. General Smuts was appointed to the one which drafted the League of Nations Covenant.28

The British Empire delegation, consisting of six separate delegations, also continued to function as a unit. It held regular meetings throughout the Conference, usually under the chairmanship of A. J. Balfour, the British Foreign Minister, although Lloyd George led the group on several important occasions. At these meetings questions of policy were discussed, and Lloyd George generally took to the Supreme Council the views of the entire British Empire rather than just those of the United Kingdom. As was his wont, General Smuts spoke seldom, but when he did speak, he was listened to with respect and his views often modified the final decision.29

The most important body of the entire Conference was the Council of Four, composed of Vittorio Orlando, the Prime Minister of Italy, Clemenceau, Lloyd George, and President Wilson. Because of his special relationship with

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28 Temperley, op. cit., VI, 345.

two of the Big Four, Smuts was able to exercise an important influence on the Conference. Orlando was the least important member of the Big Four. Partly because he could not speak English, he did not take as active a part in the general discussions of the Supreme Council as did the other three, who used English freely among themselves. Instead, he and the other Italians at the Conference concentrated their entire efforts on the advancement of Italy.\textsuperscript{30} Clemenceau dominated the Conference. As Prime Minister of the host nation, he presided at the plenary sessions as well as at the meetings of the Ten or Four. He was shrewd, clever, completely realistic in his approach to the problems of peace, and passionately devoted to France.\textsuperscript{31} Much that was in the final treaty could be traced to him. There is no evidence that Smuts influenced either Orlando or Clemenceau in any way.

Lloyd George was above all a politician. He was a bluff and hearty opportunist whose behavior was sometimes rather erratic as he tried to fit his actions to public opinion.\textsuperscript{32} He and Smuts had worked together from the time of the Imperial Conference of 1917, and each had formed a


\textsuperscript{31}Ibid., p. 102; Lansing, \textit{Big Four}, pp. 10-36.

\textsuperscript{32}Ibid., pp. 77-78.
warm appreciation for the other. It was not until 1943 that Smuts ranked Churchill as high as Lloyd George as a leader of the British people. Lloyd George said of Smuts: "It is difficult to overrate the importance of the contribution General Smuts made to our peace preparations. . . . I have no hesitation in saying that Smuts was the ablest man that came to help us from the outside Empire." Of Smuts's influence on Lloyd George there can be no doubt. One writer remarked:

From a talk with General Smuts he would go to a meeting of the "Big Four" with proposals which made M. Clemenceau wonder (sometimes aloud) whether the Allies were to ask Germany's pardon for having taken the liberty of beating her.

President Woodrow Wilson was the fourth of the Big Four. Volumes have been written about his character and personality and about his role at the Peace Conference—much of it contradictory. Smuts thought Wilson was a greater man than Lincoln. He praised Wilson's idealism but thought he was not practical enough for the rough and tumble of the Conference. Unlike many, however, Smuts believed Wilson was right to come to the Conference personally.

"Only Wilson could have put through the League and did. The other statesmen weren't concerned about the League

33 Smuts, Jr., op. cit., p. 203.
34 Lloyd George, Peace Treaties, I, 260-61.
except as an instrument for their own ends—that is to say their country's ends: Wilson put the League above this greedy squabbling. It was for the League he compromised on other things.\textsuperscript{36}

Nor did Smuts believe that Wilson was "bamboozled" as Keynes wrote in his classic caricature of the President.\textsuperscript{37} When Smuts and Wilson met at the Conference, each discovered a kindred spirit in the other. Because of their common devotion to the League of Nations, they easily developed a mutual friendship. The President had a sincere esteem and affection for Smuts that surpassed his regard for any of his American colleagues except Colonel House.\textsuperscript{38} Smuts's influence on Wilson affected the final treaty in at least three areas: the League of Nations, the mandates system, and reparations.\textsuperscript{39}


\textsuperscript{37} John Maynard Keynes, The Economic Consequences of the Peace (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Howe, 1920), p. 55; Smuts, Jr., op. cit., p. 205; Millin, op. cit., II, 162.


\textsuperscript{39} See below, Chapters III, IV, and V. See also George Curry, "Woodrow Wilson, Jan Smuts, and the Versailles Settlement," The American Historical Review, LXVI (July, 1961), 968-86.
CHAPTER III

SMUTS AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Undoubtedly, the most important work done by Smuts at the Paris Peace Conference was his part in formulating the Covenant of the League of Nations. As early as May 14, 1917, Smuts had supported the League of Nations idea in a speech in the Central Hall, Westminster. He said in part:

In some form or other we must bring about a league or a union of nations with some common organ of consultation on all vital issues. . . All the schemes that I have heard of so far have failed to carry conviction to my mind that they are practical and that they will achieve the objects we have in view. I would favour something more elastic, something more flexible, something which will be capable of adapting itself to the very complex circumstances which arise from time to time in our complex European relations.

I think it would be the proper course that the peace treaty which is concluded after this war shall contain as an integral part of it the fundamental provisions, not in detail, but in principle, which will safeguard the future peace of the world.¹

A month after the Armistice, Smuts published, on December 16, 1913, a pamphlet entitled The League of Nations: A Practical Suggestion.² This publication proved to be very important as many of the suggestions embodied

¹Smuts, War-Time Speeches, p. 55-60.

in it eventually were incorporated into the Covenant of the League. This was due in part, no doubt, to the universal rule enunciated by Miller that "any definite detailed draft prepared in advance by one of the parties /meeting to prepare an agreement/ will to some extent appear in the final text, not only in principle but even in language," but it was also due to the inherent excellence and practicality of the document. Students of the League of Nations have been generous in their praise of this work. One writer said that it was the first plan for a League of Nations to be "deeply tinged with the idealism for which the post-war world was waiting." Lord Robert Cecil, who was one of the most influential men in the history of the League in his own right, praised Smuts's pamphlet as a brilliant performance. Another writer called it a "most remarkable pamphlet" and one "which can never be too often consulted by those who would understand the origin and development of the League." Still another student of the League of Nations wrote:

3 Miller, Covenant, I, 3.
This great paper, expressed in cogent and moving language, immediately had a profound effect. It crystallized ideas and aspirations which had been held in many quarters, and made deep impression on both Lord Cecil and President Wilson.7

Another writer commented:

General Smuts rendered a service to the advocates of a realistic League by supporting them with the whole weight of his authority as soldier, statesman and philosopher, and it may be added, with the persuasive power of his pen.3

The appreciation of Smuts's pamphlet has grown with the years. A historian of the League of Nations, writing in 1952, said of it:

Smuts's work was from every point of view the climax of all the thought and labour expended on the League idea before the Paris Conference. . . . It was . . . the first plan put out to the world by one who held a pre-eminent official position, had played a prominent part in the conduct of the war, and possessed unique experience in military and political affairs. But the contents of the pamphlet were even more remarkable than its source. Here at last was a work worthy of the greatness of its subject. Here, in language worthy of Milton or of Burke, were high idealism, acute political insight, a profound understanding of the hopes and sentiments of the rank and file of soldiers and civilians, clear and practical administrative planning. The purpose, and to a great extent the consequence, of Smuts's proposals was to raise the discussion on to a new plane.9


Smuts's pamphlet is composed of twenty-one short articles which are interspersed throughout a much more lengthy argument in favor of his proposals. These comments are "written in a moving and appealing style; tending indeed to disarm criticism of the text of the Articles suggested."

In the first article, Smuts suggested that the setting up of a League of Nations should be considered the primary task of the Peace Conference. The organization which Smuts envisioned, however, went beyond the idea of a mere league to preserve peace. He saw it as

... a great organ of the ordinary peaceful life of civilization. ... It is not sufficient for the league merely to be a sort of deus ex machina, called in in very grave emergencies when the spectre of war appears; if it is to last, it must be much more. It must become part and parcel of the common international life of states, it must be an ever visible, living working organ of the polity of civilization. It must function so strongly in the ordinary peaceful intercourse of states that it becomes irresistible in their disputes; its peace activity must be the foundation and guarantee of its war power.

Professor Rappard commented on these lines: "This conception of the League as an agency of peaceful cooperation, ... came step by step to be shared also by the other members of the Crillon Commission." The earlier drafts

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10 Miller, Covenant, I, 31.
11 Ibid., II, 27.
12 Ibid., II, 24-25.
13 Rappard, Uniting Europe, p. 263.
of Phillimore, House, and Wilson\textsuperscript{14} had pictured the League as an international judge and policeman only. It was due to General Smuts that a broader view of the role of the League was taken. The League continued to develop along the lines first suggested by Smuts. By 1929, its "cooperative activities" had "completely eclipsed its coercive functions."	extsuperscript{15}

Articles 2 through 9 contain Smuts's plan for a mandates system. The development of this idea deserves a separate chapter and will not be dealt with here.\textsuperscript{16}

The next major section of Smuts's plan, articles 10 through 11, contain the General's ideas on the constitution for the League. On the one hand, he emphatically rejected the idea that the League should become a super-state, but on the other hand, he just as emphatically believed that it should be more than an ineffective debating society. Smuts thought that the scheme he had worked out would avoid both of these extremes. First, he believed that the division of powers into legislative, executive, and judicial, was a natural division and should

\textsuperscript{14}See Miller, Covenant, II, for these plans: Phillimore Plan, Document 1, pp. 3-6; House Plan, Document 2, pp. 7-11; Wilson's first draft, Document 3, pp. 12-15.

\textsuperscript{15}Rappard, Uniting Europe, pp. 263-65.

\textsuperscript{16}See Chapter IV below.
The legislative branch he called the General Conference.

In this body all the states may be considered equal and should vote as states. . . . The conference . . . may become a most powerful and influential factor in moulding international public opinion. . . . With that public opinion behind it, the league may go confidently forward with its great tasks; deprived of that support, all its power for good will be neutralized and nullified. . . . The enlightened public all over the world will have to be taught to think internationally, to look at public affairs, not merely from the sectional national point of view, but also from a broad human international point of view. And the debates periodically taking place in the general conference might well become of immense importance in this great task of forming and educating a strong body of international opinion behind and in support of the league and its work. . . . The Powers should not grudge strong representation to the smaller states, as in any case the resolutions will only be in the nature of recommendations to the national Parliaments.13

In 1929 Professor Rappard wrote:

These lines, written two full years before the first Assembly met, give an astonishingly true picture of what that remarkable body is and seems likely ever more to become. Its periodic meetings, its consultative character, its main function as a focus of what has come to be called the spirit of Geneva and as an educator of national opinion, the publicity and parliamentary tone of its debates, and the relatively important part played in it by the representatives of the minor states, all these traits, which subsequent history has gradually revealed, General Smuts foresaw with a truly prophetic eye. For once . . . it was the statesman with the boldest imagination and the highest ambitions who was right in his provisions. Coming from a minor state, General Smuts naturally did not share his British, American, and French colleagues' rather contemptuous views of the

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13 Ibid., II, 39-41, 45.
international role of small countries. . . . And coming from a free and from a new state, with no diplomatic service and no diplomatic traditions, he naturally and very rightly placed the political importance of parliamen­tary and of public opinion above that of ambassadors and ministers.19

Because he believed that the General Conference would be too large to do any real work, Smuts suggested a Council of nine or ten members as the executive body of the League. He thought the great powers, which he named as the United States, the British Empire, France, Japan, and Germany, "as soon as she has a stable democratic Government," should be permanently represented on the Council. Two additional members of the Council should be chosen from a panel of the intermediate powers and two from a panel of the smaller powers. A minority of three should be able to veto any action of the Council. Smuts explained:

The advantage of this constitution is that the Great Powers obtain a majority—although only a bare majority—representation on the council and could not therefore complain that their interests run the risk of being swamped by the multiplicity of small states. On the other hand the intermediate and minor states receive a very substantial representation on the league, and could not complain that they are at the mercy of the Great Powers.20

Horley commented that in these articles "devoted to the constitutional organization of the League, the Smuts plan

19Rappard, Uniting Europe, p. 207.
20Miller, Covenant, II, 41.
came closer than any of its predecessors to the ultimate arrangement." In fact, in a few years' time the composition of the Council came to follow the Practical Suggestion more closely than it did the Covenant, for Smuts had suggested the system of regional representation which, although not embodied in the Covenant, was later put into practice. Furthermore, almost everyone who had suggested a plan for a League of Nations had envisioned a body such as the General Conference, but fewer had seen the need for a smaller executive body such as Smuts called the Council.

Smuts next recommended three ideas which he thought would go far toward outlawing war: the abolition of conscription, the limitation of armaments, and the nationalization of munitions factories. He did not claim that these proposals were original with him, nor did he minimize the difficulties inherent in them. He realized that, if they were to be carried out, a fundamental change would have to take place in the realm of international relations. It was just such a change that he hoped the League would bring about. He wrote: "The psychological and moral

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21 Morley, op. cit., p. 21.
22 Ibid.; Miller, Covenant, II, 41-42; Walters, op. cit., I, 335.
23 Miller, Covenant, I, 36; Morley, op. cit., pp. 21-22.
24 Miller, Covenant, II, 52.
conditions are ripe for a great change. The moment has come for one of the great creative acts of history."25

The final section of Smuts's pamphlet, including articles 13 through 21, is concerned with the settlement of international disputes. It was not original with him, but was taken largely from a plan prepared by a committee advised by Lord Robert Cecil and headed by Lord Phillimore, one of the "most learned and high-minded" of the judges of the High Court in England.26 Smuts did not outlaw war altogether, but merely provided that it should not be allowed except as a final resort, after the dispute had been thoroughly investigated and reported upon. He believed that states would not agree to anything more drastic at that time, but he expressed the hope that:

... if such a period of deliberation and delay is established, there will be time for extreme war passions to cool down, and for public opinion to be aroused and organized on the side of peace. And in view of the enormous force which public opinion would exert in such a case, the general expectation is that it will prove effective, and that the delay, and the opportunity thus given for further reflection and the expression of public opinion, will in most cases prevent the parties from going to war.27

Smuts further suggested that, if any member of the League attacked another member of the League, the offending

25 Miller, Covenant, II, 47.
26 Lloyd George, Peace Treaties, I, 505-606.
27 Miller, Covenant, II, 53.
party should "ipso facto become at war with all the other members of the League, which shall subject it to complete economic and financial boycott." Although the last four articles of his plan were incorporated into articles 12, 13, 15, and 16 of the Covenant, Smuts does not deserve the credit for them as they were not original with him.

President Wilson received a copy of Smuts's plan shortly after his arrival in Europe in December 1913. Lloyd George told a friend that Wilson "swallowed it whole" and that much of his plan was borrowed from Smuts. R. S. Baker said, "The Smuts plan especially impressed the President as being well thought out, and convinced him that his own draft needed revision." Wilson acknowledged his debt to Smuts on at least two occasions: once, before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on August 19, 1919, and earlier, before the Council of Ten on January 21, 1919, when he explained how his own plan for a League of Nations had been formulated. He had taken the Phillimore report, which had been sent to him in May of 1913.

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23 Miller, Covenant, II, 55.


30 R. S. Baker, op. cit., I, 224.

and had asked Colonel House to rewrite it for him. He had then rewritten the draft prepared by Colonel House. After his arrival in Europe, he had studied the plans prepared by General Smuts and Lord Robert Cecil and had talked with Leon Bourgeois, the foremost French advocate of a League of Nations, after which he had completely rewritten the draft he had brought with him from America.\(^{32}\) R. S. Baker explained in more detail how President Wilson used Smuts's suggestions.

From Smuts he took over a whole new scheme of organization, establishing a smaller Council in addition to the general conference of the League. \dots All this constitutional machinery was lifted bodily from Smuts's plan by Wilson. \dots Smuts's recommendations on the subject of arbitration and the guarantees surrounding it were also taken over, partly in substitution for former clauses, partly in addition to them. \dots

The article on reduction of armaments was expanded by two paragraphs taken from Smuts—one on the abolition of conscription, the other on the establishment of scales of equipment and war material corresponding to actual forces.

The most considerable section of new material incorporated in Wilson's new draft from the Smuts

The project was a set of four supplementary agreements defining the mandatory system.33

The Council of Ten decided on January 21 that a commission to draw up a constitution for a League of Nations should be appointed. Wilson suggested that the commission be formed of those men who had already studied the question. Lloyd George agreed and at once named Smuts and Cecil as the representatives of the British Empire.34

The following day the Council further decided that the League of Nations should be created as an integral part of the general treaty of peace.35 This, of course, had been Wilson's goal for at least a year,36 and it had also been favored by Smuts.37 On January 25, a plenary session of the Conference gave formal approval to the two suggestions adopted earlier in the Council of Ten by agreeing that the League of Nations should be created as an integral


35 Ibid., III, 677-78.


37 See above, pp. 23 and 31. Rappard, Uniting Europe, p. 250, said that Smuts "with Wilson did most to tie up the League and the peace."
part of the peace treaty, and by appointing a commission to draw up a plan for the League. 33

The Commission on the League of Nations was the most distinguished of any of the various commissions at the Conference. Initially, it was composed of two members from each of the five great powers plus one member each from Belgium, Brazil, China, Portugal, and Serbia. The smaller powers, however, asked for more representation which was later granted to them by adding to the Commission one member each from Poland, Greece, Rumania, and Czechoslovakia. President Wilson served as chairman with Colonel House as his second; Smuts and Cecil represented the British Empire; Bourgeois was there for France and Orlando for Italy; Baron Makino and Viscount Chinda represented Japan. Other distinguished members were Hymans of Belgium, Wellington Koo of China, Venizelos of Greece, and Dmowski of Poland. 39

Although the Commission did not begin to meet until February 3, during January, Wilson, House, Cecil, and Smuts held many informal conferences to discuss the League. On

38 For. Rels. of U.S., Peace Conference, III, 201, 203-204.

39 Seymour, op. cit., IV, 303; Webster and Herbert, op. cit., pp. 12-13; P. Baker, op. cit., p. 22, Miller, Covenant, II, 263. The other members of the Commission were Larnaude of France, Scialoja of Italy, Pessoa of Brazil, Reis of Portugal, Vesnitch of Serbia, Diamandy of Rumania, and Kramar of Czechoslovakia.
January 31, after bringing their differences almost to a vanishing point, they decided that D. H. Miller and C. J. B. Hurst, the legal advisors to the delegations from the United States and Great Britain, should draw up one final draft, representing as nearly as possible what had been informally decided upon in the previous weeks. The resulting document, known as the Hurst-Miller draft, was used as the basis for discussion in the meetings of the League Commission. Because of the high caliber of the British and American delegates and their advance preparation, "it was inevitable that the Covenant of the League should be mainly an Anglo-Saxon document." Both the French and the Italians had presented plans for a League of Nations, but these were almost completely ignored in the discussions of the League Commission.

In ten meetings, from February 3 to February 13, the Commission hammered out a Covenant of a League of Nations for presentation to a plenary session of the Conference. It would have been impossible to have accom-

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11 Miller, Covenant, II, 231-37.

12 Webster and Herbert, op. cit., pp. 33-39.

13 Miller, Covenant, I, 130-32.
plished such a task if the basic outlines of the scheme had not been agreed upon beforehand. Smuts spoke very little in these meetings. According to his latest biographer, "He kept himself deliberately in the background so that other people more influential than he was (he meant President Wilson) could take the credit for bringing the League to birth and thereby feel all the more committed to making a success of it." Stephen Bonsal, who was an American interpreter for the League Commission, said: "His best work was done in committees and in missionary work with recalcitrant delegates when he could play ... a 'lone hand.'

Smuts served on a sub-committee which drafted the article defining the composition and the powers of the Council. The final text of this article retains much the same form that Smuts had originally conceived for it in articles 12, 13, and 14 of his Practical Suggestion. Smuts also served on the sub-committee which chose Geneva as the site for the permanent headquarters of the League.

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1 Full accounts of all these meetings are in Miller, Covenant, I, 130-271, II, 230-335.

2 Hancock, op. cit., p. 507.

3 Stephen Bonsal, Unfinished Business (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1944), p. 34. See also Seymour, op. cit., IV, 309; P. Baker, op. cit., p. 25.

4 Miller, Diary, I, 110, 356.
The only other city that received serious consideration was Brussels, but the members of the sub-committee, which included House, Orlando, and Makino, thought it important that the League have its headquarters in a neutral country if it was to be associated with peace rather than war in the minds of the people of the world.148

An example of Smuts's missionary work among the other delegates has been preserved in as intimate a picture of Smuts at work as can be found. The Japanese delegates on the League of Nations Commission proposed a definite racial equality clause and constantly urged its inclusion in the League Covenant. The clause was continually watered down until it became completely meaningless, but it was a matter of "face" with the Japanese. Most of the delegates on the Commission were personally willing to accept the statement, but Hughes, the obstreperous Prime Minister of Australia, proved the stumbling block. He would hear of no clause which might infringe upon Australia's long-standing "whites only" policy. He threatened to bring the whole problem before a plenary session of the Conference if any racial equality clause were put in the Covenant, and the Japanese threatened to do the same if it were left out.

148Seymour, op. cit., IV, 11,; Bonsal, op. cit., p. 163; Miller, Covenant, I, 34. The most thorough discussion of the choice of a site for the League headquarters is in Rappard, Uniting Europe, pp. 229-128.
On March 29, at House's suggestion, Smuts talked with Makino in the presence of Bonsal, who recorded in his diary:

This gave me an excellent idea of the style and technique of the South African when negotiating on delicate ground. He was exceedingly friendly to the formal Japanese delegate, but he made quite plain what course he would pursue if Makino insisted upon bringing the matter before the whole Conference in a Plenary Session as it is rumored he proposes doing.\(^{49}\)

Smuts told Makino that he would have to fall in line and vote with Hughes and the other dominion representatives even though he was personally sympathetic to the proposal. He left the Japanese delegate with a warm handshake and Bonsal drew the conclusion: "Kind words may butter no parsnips but they certainly softened Makino's attitude toward the white world."\(^{50}\) In the end the racial equality clause was not inserted, and the Japanese swallowed their pride and accepted it, along with Shantung and the North Pacific Islands.\(^{51}\)

Although Smuts spoke rarely in the meetings of the Commission, when he did speak, it was usually to the point and often cleared up some matter that was causing disagree-

\(^{49}\)Bonsal, op. cit., p. 169.

\(^{50}\)Ibid., pp. 169-70. See also Seymour, op. cit., IV, 309-14; Borden, op. cit., II, 926-23; P. Baker, op. cit., p. 25.

ment. An example occurred at the third meeting of the Commission on February 5. President Wilson proposed that only self-governing states and colonies be admitted to the League. A lengthy discussion followed as to what the term "self-governing" meant. Wilson himself admitted that he had lectured for twenty years on self-governing states and still could not define one. Lord Robert Cecil thought India should be a member of the League, even though he admitted that it was not self-governing. Wilson agreed that India should be a member, but indicated that he could not reconcile such admission to his proposal. At this point Smuts spoke briefly and reminded all that there was really no problem. The Covenant, he said, would provide that all signers of the treaty were to be members of the League, and, since India would sign the treaty, membership would follow automatically. This cleared up the situation to the apparent relief of all. A minor incident, perhaps, but it illustrates the clear thinking and sharp insight of Smuts. 52

When the first phase of the negotiations on the drafting of the Covenant was drawing to a close, Smuts attempted to change the proposed constitution of the League as it was then developing, even though the ideas

52 Miller, Covenant, I, 164-67; Seymour, op. cit., IV, 311.
he had expressed in his **Practical Suggestion** had very largely been followed. On February 13, at the ninth meeting of the Commission, he offered an amendment to provide for what Miller called a "Representative Assembly," in addition to the Council and Assembly already decided upon. He wanted this body to be composed of "representatives chosen out of the legislative assemblies or political parties of the states." The idea behind this suggestion was that, inasmuch as the Assembly would be composed of delegates appointed by the various governments, there should be provision made for a representation of the people as distinct from their governments. The result would be a "league of peoples" rather than a "league of governments." Governments were supposed to be "conservative" whereas the people were "liberal." This suggestion was very vague and hardly in keeping with the practicality so frequently displayed by Smuts. No other member of the Commission favored such a proposal; it was never put to a vote, but simply disappeared in the ensuing discussions.⁵³

There is no indication in the minutes of the League Commission that Smuts ever pressed this idea very far. In his **Practical Suggestion** he had included the sentence:

"Both the Governments and Parliaments of the states might send delegates, and perhaps even parties could be repre-

⁵³Miller, Covenant, I, 231, 272-75.
sented by the selection of members on the principle of proportional representation," but the idea is not embodied in his twenty-one articles. Neither did Smuts at the Peace Conference or later express any disappointment in the way the Covenant was drafted; quite the contrary was true. It seems then that Smuts did not really believe very strongly in this rather vague and impractical plan. It is possible that he introduced it at the insistence of his liberal following. 55

The completed Covenant was presented to a plenary session of the Conference by President Wilson on February 14. "A living thing is born," he said of the document of which he was so rightfully proud. 56 It was then deposited with the Bureau of the Conference for examination and discussion by all the interested powers. No vote on the Covenant was taken at that time. 57 This draft was "really submitted to the world for comment; and comment came in a

51 Miller, Covenant, II, 41. Italics mine.

55 An indication that this might have been the case can be found in Seymour, op. cit., IV, 313.

56 For. Rels. of U.S., Peace Conference, III, 212. Sir Robert Borden was disappointed in Wilson's speech. He wrote: "Wilson should have expressed appreciation of General Smuts' work upon which the proposals reported were very largely based; as a matter of fact the only concrete proposals placed before the Committee emanated from the British Delegation." Borden, op. cit., II, 913.

flood of criticism and suggestion of all kinds and from all quarters, friendly and hostile, important and unimportant." 58

President Wilson was away from Paris from February 14 to March 14. When he returned, the Covenant was re-drafted in the light of the suggestions received. Smuts contributed nothing significant to this phase of the drafting. In fact, he was absent from three of the five meetings held in March and April; on the two occasions when he was present, he did not enter into the discussions. 59

The final draft of the Covenant was presented to a plenary session of the Conference on April 23; President Wilson again presided. In the voting which followed, the Covenant was accepted unanimously. 60 After the meeting, Smuts joined House and Bonsal, who recorded Smuts's reactions on that historic occasion:

The Afrikander was torn with doubts as to the justice and even the efficacy of the Treaty in its present incomplete form. For several weeks now hardly a day had passed without a suggestion of changes coming from him. He seemed very tired. Certainly he was not sharing the exultant mood that shone on the faces of at least a majority of the delegates. He shrugged his shoulders in answer to an unspoken inquiry from the Colonel and then, "The Peace Treaty may fade into oblivion—and that would be, I sometimes think, a merciful

53 Miller, Covenant, I, 276.
dispensation of a kind Providence—but the Covenant will stand—as sure as fate. It must and shall succeed because there is no other way to salvage the future of civilization."

Of his own role in the founding of the League of Nations Smuts said:

"All else I have done in my lifetime is as nothing and as dust and ashes compared with the small effort I have been able to contribute towards the building up of this new organization for the future government of the world." 62

Smuts continued to believe in the League of Nations throughout his long life. He even wove it into the system of philosophy which he set forth in a book published seven years after the Peace Conference. He wrote:

The creation of wholes, and ever more highly organized wholes, and of wholeness generally as characteristic of existence, is an inherent character of the universe. . . . Holism is not confined to the biological domain but reaches its highest expressions and results on the mental and spiritual planes of existence.

Thus the League of Nations, the chief constructive outcome of the Great War, is but the expression of the deeply-felt aspiration towards a more stable holistic human society. And the faith has been strengthened in me that what has here been called Holism is at work even in the conflicts and confusions of men; that in spite of all appearances to the contrary, eventual victory is serenely and securely waiting, and that the immeasurable sacrifices have not been in vain. 63

61 Bonsal, op. cit., p. 214.
62 Millin, op. cit., II, 30.
63 Jan Christian Smuts, Holism and Evolution (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1926), pp. 99, 314. Smuts coined the word "holism" from the Greek word for whole.
Smuts did not lose his faith even when a second world war seemingly killed the League. When the representatives of fifty nations met in San Francisco in 1919 to draft another constitution for another international organization, which they hoped would be better than the first, Smuts was again among the delegates. As an elder statesman he was appointed president of the General Assembly, one of the four major commissions at the Conference. He was also largely responsible for the wording of the preamble to the United Nations Charter. "The charter itself was a cold legalistic document, but the preamble was a warmer human document which set out plainly world hopes and aspirations. By it, perhaps more than anything else, the charter will one day be remembered." 61

In San Francisco the League which Smuts helped to form in 1919 was reborn and lives today in the United Nations. 65 If the United Nations, or some succeeding organization of states in some future age, eventually brings about perpetual peace on this globe, Jan Christian Smuts of South Africa will rank among those whose vision made that peace possible.

61 Smuts, Jr., op. cit., p. 337.
CHAPTER IV

SMUTS AND THE MANDATES SYSTEM

Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations provided for a system of mandates for administering the former German colonies and certain parts of the defunct Turkish Empire. General Smuts played a leading role in the creation of this system. In his pamphlet on the League of Nations, Smuts devoted articles 2 through 9, or about one-third of the total work, to the exposition of his idea that the League of Nations should become the "reversionary in the most general sense" of the "peoples and territories formerly belonging to Russia, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey." The administration of these territories, Smuts believed, should be the exclusive function of the League of Nations. He rejected, however, direct exercise of that control by the League because he believed such international control had never worked in the past. He suggested instead that the League appoint one of its members as its agent or "mandatary" for each of the territories under its control. He further suggested that the League set forth in a special act or charter for each mandated territory the policy which the League expected the mandatary to follow in that territory. Although the charters would vary according to the state of development of the territory and its people, they would all contain certain
basic provisions, such as the maintenance of the open door policy in economic matters and the restriction of military forces to those necessary for internal security. Furthermore, Smuts believed that the mandated territory should have the right of appeal to the League in case the mandatory abused its responsibilities. The League, in such cases, should have the power to remove the controlling state and replace it by another. Also, each mandatory should furnish periodic reports to the League with respect to the territory under its supervision.\footnote{Miller, Covenant, II, 26-37. Smuts used the spelling "mandatory," but in the English language text of the Covenant the spelling "mandatory" was adopted.}

A comparison of Smuts's ideas, as expressed in his Practical Suggestion, with Article 22 of the Covenant will show many similarities. The greatest difference is in the territories to which Article 22 applied. None of the former Russian and Austro-Hungarian territories were ever administered under the League of Nations. On the other hand, the former German colonies in Africa and in the Pacific were included as mandates even though Smuts had specifically excluded these areas because they were "inhabited by barbarians, who not only cannot possibly govern themselves, but to whom it would be impracticable to apply any idea of political self-determination in the European..."
sense." This difference was due almost entirely to President Wilson.

It has been shown above\(^3\) that Wilson was much impressed by Smuts's pamphlet, and that he revised his own plan after seeing it. The draft he brought from America did not include anything comparable to Smuts's mandates system.\(^4\) The three drafts which he prepared after arriving in Europe, however, all contained, in a number of supplementary agreements, a plan for a system of mandates, which he took over from Smuts's pamphlet. From the first, Wilson included the German colonies and excluded any mention of Russia in his suggestions, and in his last draft he mentioned only the German colonies and certain former Turkish territories. These were the territories that eventually were included under Article 22.\(^5\)

It must not be supposed that the idea of a mandates plan was entirely new to Wilson when he saw it in Smuts's pamphlet. In fact, on December 10, 1913, while en route to Europe on the George Washington, Wilson said to some of his advisors that "the German colonies should be declared the

\(^2\) Miller, Covenant, II, 23.

\(^3\) Chapter III, pp. 37-39.


common property of the League of Nations and administered by small nations." Also, the official commentary on Wilson's fourteen points, prepared under the direction of Colonel House and accepted by Wilson, suggested something like the mandatory scheme, although the word itself was not used. At least two writers have suggested that, prior to his seeing Smuts's pamphlet, Wilson had not thought of incorporating his ideas on the colonial settlement into the League of Nations Covenant, but had thought of that settlement as a matter to be dealt with prior to and apart from the League of Nations. One of these writers credited Smuts with having much the same idea concerning the settlement of the colonial claims, which accounts for his not mentioning the German colonies in his discussion of his mandates proposal.

Smuts, of course, had very definite views on the disposition of the German colonies. He and Botha had conquered German South West Africa and they meant to keep it. They also hoped to exchange part of German East Africa,

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6Miller, Covenant, I, 43. Italics in original.
7Seymour, op. cit., IV, 156.
9Ibid., p. 576.
which Smuts had conquered, for Delagoa Bay in Portuguese East Africa. Smuts expected Great Britain to keep the rest of German East Africa. Under no circumstances was Germany to be allowed to keep that strategically located colony.

One of the few things upon which the Allies were in complete agreement at the Peace Conference was that none of Germany's former colonies were to be returned to her. Such had been the decision of the Imperial War Cabinet late in 1913. Such also was the unanimous decision of the Council of Ten on January 24, 1919; almost no discussion was needed to arrive at that decision. What should be done with the German colonies was not decided so easily. In fact, that problem proved to be the first major controversy of the Conference. The dominion representatives in the Imperial War Cabinet had supported the claims of South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand to the colonies which their respective armies had conquered. Lloyd George was perfectly willing to abide by their

10 Hancock, op. cit., p. 437.
12 Lloyd George, Peace Treaties, I, 115-16.
14 Lloyd George, Peace Treaties, I, 115-16.
decision, but, before the matter was settled, it came up against the strong opposition of Wilson.

The Council of Ten spent the week of January 21 to January 30 discussing the problem of the German colonies. At the first of these meetings Smuts put in a claim for South West Africa on behalf of the Union of South Africa; Prime Minister Massey claimed German Samoa on behalf of New Zealand; and Prime Minister Hughes asked for German New Guinea on behalf of Australia. These men based their requests not only upon the fact that their respective armies had conquered the territories in question but also upon the fact that the territories were of strategic importance to their future security. They did not want a repetition of the threat that had been inherent in the German possession of these lands. 15 In subsequent meetings the Japanese claimed the North Pacific islands, 16 and the French claimed Togoland and the Cameroons. 17 Against all these claims Wilson fought persistently, but alone. He advocated instead the mandates plan of Smuts as modified by himself. When pressed closely, however, he admitted that there was little administrative difference between

16 Ibid., III, 733-40.
17 Ibid., III, 753-63.
his idea of a mandate and outright annexation. Lloyd George was willing to accept the mandatory scheme on behalf of Great Britain, but he could not speak for the dominion representatives, nor could he persuade them to accept it.

Meanwhile, Smuts had been busy behind the scenes trying to effect a compromise acceptable to both Wilson and the dominion representatives. On January 29, Miller and House both saw a draft of a compromise resolution prepared by Smuts. Later that day, in a meeting of the British Empire delegation, the dominion representatives were persuaded to accept the Smuts resolution. This resolution provided that the former German colonies and parts of the Turkish Empire should be administered as mandates under the League of Nations. The compromise worked out by Smuts divided the mandates into three classes. The first class applied to the former Turkish possessions which were almost ready to stand alone. The second class applied to the territories of central Africa where the


20 Seymour, op. cit., IV, 293; Lloyd George, Peace Treaties, I, 530.
people

... are at such a stage that the mandatory must be responsible for the administration of the territory subject to conditions which will guarantee the prohibition of abuses such as the slave trade, the arms traffic and the liquor traffic and the prevention of the military training of the natives for other than police purposes, and the establishment of fortifications or military and naval bases, and will also secure equal opportunities for the trade and commerce of other members of the League of Nations.

The third class applied to those

... territories, such as South-West Africa and certain of the Islands in the South Pacific, which, owing to the sparseness of their population, or their small size, or their remoteness from the centres of civilization, or their geographical contiguity to the mandatory state, and other circumstances, can be best administered under the laws of the mandatory state as integral portions thereof, subject to the safeguards above-mentioned in the interests of the indigenous population.21

On January 30, after a lengthy and heated discussion, the Council of Ten adopted the Smuts resolution. Hughes and Massey made it clear that they still preferred outright annexation, but, in order not to hold up the entire Peace Conference, they would accept the compromise if the clause providing for the third class of mandates remained intact.22

In the week of discussions which led to the acceptance of the mandates principle, the mandates themselves...

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21 Miller, Covenant, I, 109-110. Lloyd George, Peace Treaties, I, 538-41, prints this resolution but says nothing of Smuts's role in preparing it.

were not specifically distributed. This was not done until May 7 and not until 1920 in the case of the Turkish territories. Nevertheless, the ultimate distribution of the mandates was understood by everyone present. The dominion representatives would not have agreed to the solution unless they had known that they were to receive the territories they desired as "C" mandates. Nor would Clemenceau have agreed to the mandates principle without the tacit understanding that France was to receive certain mandates in central Africa.23

The Commission on the League of Nations considered the question of mandates on February 3. When the mandates article of the Hurst-Miller draft was read, General Smuts presented as a substitute a resolution almost identical to the one accepted by the Council of Ten on January 30.

Bonsal recorded the scene:

This was a field day or rather night at the Peace table, and for once General Smuts, as chairman of the committee charged with the difficult task of drawing up the mandate provisions of the Covenant, held the center of the stage, and the general opinion is, including the President's, that he performed his job superbly.

Blushing profusely, the South African opened his speech of explanation and apology in a very modest strain. And if this was tactics it was very wise. "It is true," he began, "that I present this article to your careful and, I hope, prayerful consideration, with some misgiving, because I would be less than frank if I did not tell you that I am

23Miller, Covenant, I, 114-15.
ashamed of it; and, as I have abundant reason to know, all the gentlemen who worked with me upon it, each and every one of them, are also disappointed at the result of our labors. But do not misunderstand me; distressing to our pride as is this confession and falling far short, as does our plan, of the objective which we hoped to attain, the article that we place before you is the best we can do now. In this belief we are all united.

"If you give your sanction to our work you will demonstrate that world public opinion is in favor of the ultimate self-government of all peoples, without distinction as to race, religion, or color, or previous condition of servitude. It also provides for a careful supervision and scrutiny as to the way in which the mandates are exercised and how the officers who shall be responsible for this great task are to be appointed.

"Now I shall close on a word of warning, based on the knowledge which has come to me as the result of many a long, weary, and at times bitter discussion in the committee. You will see many things you would like to change—just as I do, but I beg of you if our plan is pointed in the right direction, let it stand. It is not as responsive to your ideals, or to mine, as we had all hoped to make it, but hold your hand, restrain your natural disappointment, for if our edifice, poor as it is, is touched, I firmly believe it will fall to the ground, not to be raised again I fear in your day and mine."

Smuts's manly confession and frank warning against permitting the Committee battles to be fought over again in the Commission won out, and the mandate provisions on both the first and second readings were accepted, rather than approved without any substantial changes.

It was a great triumph for Smuts, and the President quite visibly was pleased.21

Of course, the best argument for not tampering with the article presented by Smuts was that it had already been accepted by the Supreme Council of the Conference as had

21 Bonar, op. cit., pp. 34-35. See also Miller, Covenant, II, 275.
no other article of the Covenant. From this meeting on February 8 until its final incorporation in the Covenant and the treaty, the mandates article changed scarcely at all.

Although Smuts was the first to suggest a system of mandates under the League of Nations and was also the chief author of Article 22 of the Covenant, it must not be supposed that the idea was entirely a product of his own creative brain. He had received inspiration from many sources—the chief of them being the British Empire. He explained in his *Practical Suggestion* that the United Kingdom, the dominions, and India were like the members of a League of Nations, whereas the minor parts of the Empire, such as the crown colonies and protectorates, were like the mandates. He believed that "where the British Empire has been so eminently successful as a political system, the league, working on somewhat similar lines, could not fail to achieve a reasonable measure of success."25 R. S. Baker suggested that Smuts borrowed the mandate idea from the Inter-Allied Labour and Socialist program of February 1918. This program set out a scheme for a League of Nations and for the administration of Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Arabia, as well as the colonies

of tropical Africa, under League supervision. Furthermore, Smuts was influenced by the Round Table group, which included such men as Philip Kerr, Lionel Curtis, F. S. Oliver, and Lord Robert Cecil. Smuts frequently met Kerr during the war years and could easily have received ideas from him and from the others of the group through him.

George Louis Beer of the United States may also have influenced Smuts's ideas on the mandates system. In the years before the war, Beer had spent much time in London where he too became acquainted with the Round Table group and became the American correspondent for its magazine. He was later appointed the colonial expert of Colonel House's Inquiry. In his report on Mesopotamia for the Inquiry, finished January 1, 1918, Beer suggested that backward regions be entrusted "by international mandate" to one state subject to safeguards for the natives.

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26 R. S. Baker, _op. cit._, I, 227; Temperley, _op. cit._, I, 217.


28 Butler, _op. cit._, p. 65.


30 _Ibid._, p. 424.
The editor of Beer’s papers said that this was the first use of the word "mandate" in the sense in which it came to be used in the League of Nations Covenant. Another paper prepared by Beer, probably between January 1 and 21, 1919, contained in summary form recommendations for the disposition of the former German colonies. Beer’s memorandum read:

The administration of the derelict territories and peoples freed from German and Turkish rule must, in general, be entrusted to different states acting as mandates of the League of Nations. These mandates cannot, however, be uniform, but must vary with the circumstances of the different cases.

As this was a private memorandum for the use of the American negotiators, Smuts certainly did not see it, but the ideas contained therein may have reached him through some member of the Round Table group either before the publication of his original plan, or at least before his preparation of the resolution adopted by the Council of Ten on January 30. Of course, it is equally possible that it was Smuts who influenced Beer. It is interesting to note that Beer recommended that German South West Africa be incorporated into the Union of South Africa and that German New Guinea be added to the Australian section of New Guinea. In Beer’s

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31 Beer, op. cit., p. xix.
opinion, the mandatory principle was "not advisable and would serve no useful purpose" in either of these territories.\(^{34}\)

It seems clear from the above that Smuts played a major role in the creation of the mandates system. To evaluate that role, it is necessary to evaluate the system. At first there were a good many men who definitely did not like the idea of mandates. Secretary of State Robert Lansing thought it was too revolutionary; it left unsolved too many legal questions concerning sovereignty. Furthermore, it was a way to take enemy territory without appearing to do so; it was just a "subterfuge which deceived no one."\(^{35}\)

An American scholar, writing in 1921, held a similar opinion. He said that the mandatory scheme was adopted by European statesmen as a scheme to disguise under a cloak of "virtuous self-abnegation" their annexations of German property.\(^{36}\)

A noted British colonial administrator, writing in 1923, said that at one time he and many others had thought that a more effective way could have been found to settle the colonial question, but he now thought that, in view of the difficult situation facing the Allies at the Peace Confer-

\(^{34}\)Deer, op. cit., pp. 143, 157-58.

\(^{35}\)Lansing, Peace Negotiations, pp. 34, 156.

ence, the mandates system offered the best possible solution. 67 Herbert Hoover did not like the idea in 1919 and apparently never changed his opinion. He wrote in 1956:

General Smuts' formula, thus introduced in the Covenant, was one of the most monumental attainments in the history of Old World diplomacy. . . .

No one since has been able to find any practical difference between these mandated areas and the other British, French, Italian or Japanese colonies or imperial possessions. 36

In his last statement Hoover was certainly wrong, for many opinions can be found in favor of the system. As early as 1925 it was said that the mandates system was not the veiled form of annexation claimed by its critics but a symbol of a new and progressive imperialism; the system had surpassed all former attempts at international control over colonies. 39 Birdsall wrote that Wilson made great concessions when he accepted Smuts's compromise, "but it was an accomplishment to have extracted an unwilling assent to the universality of the trusteeship principle . . . and to have endowed the League of Nations with rights of supervision." 40 A very cautious American scholar said that


38 Hoover, op. cit., p. 221.


40 Birdsall, op. cit., p. 73-74.
the system had proved a practical method for administering backward areas, more satisfactory than others that had been tried from the standpoint of the natives and the world in general. He observed that British methods in the mandated Tanganyika were preferable to those in Kenya, and French methods in Togoland and the Cameroons were better than those in French West and Equatorial Africa. He further observed that the system had developed policies favorable to native health, agriculture, education, and security. Miller's opinion was:

Even in the "C" mandates . . . the principle of trusteeship is firmly established. . . . And as to the other territories in Africa and those formerly in Turkey, the world took a very long step forward when Article 22 of the Covenant came into force.

Professor Rappard, who served for many years as a member of the permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations, wrote in 1926 that, except for the Japanese mandate, the mandates system was the most successful of the various innovations introduced into the law and practice of nations by the League.

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2Miller, Covenant, I, 105.

Further proof that the system was not just the old imperialism camouflaged was that by 1962 all of the "A" and "B" mandates had become independent states. The worst failure of the system was Japan's use of its "C" mandated North Pacific islands as bases for aggression against the United States in 1941. The other failure was in Smuts's own South Africa. The Union, in 1962, still held South West Africa and had virtually incorporated it into its own territory.43

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CHAPTER V

SMUTS AND REPARATIONS

When the war ended in November 1918, much of France and Belgium lay in ruins. The Allies had expended unprecedented sums to defeat the Central Powers and now staggered under the burden of tremendous public debts. A large percentage of the merchant shipping of the world had been destroyed by Germany's unrestricted use of submarine warfare. The total wealth expended in prosecuting the war was almost unbelievable to the people of that day, but the human misery caused by the war was even greater than the material damage. Millions of young men had been killed and millions more had been crippled for life. As a further consequence of the war, there were thousands upon thousands of widows and orphans who had to be partly or wholly supported by their governments. The question naturally arose: who is going to pay for all this death and destruction? The answer as naturally given was: Germany. In the view of the Allies, Germany alone was responsible for the war.¹ All the suffering and destruction had been caused by Germany's unprovoked attack upon helpless Belgium and then upon France.

How much Germany should pay, how much she could pay, and how these payments should be divided among the Allies were subjects which demanded a tremendous amount of study and debate at the Peace Conference. Indeed, "the subject of reparations caused more trouble, contention, hard feeling and delay at the Peace Conference than any other point of the Treaty of Versailles." Although General Smuts was not assigned to the Reparations Commission of the Conference, he exerted an important influence on the final claims presented to Germany. To understand that influence, the development of the reparations clauses of the treaty must be at least partially traced.

The idea of demanding reparations from a defeated enemy was not invented at Paris in 1919; it is as old as war itself. Whereas reparations were once collected by means of loot and pillage and the annexation of conquered territory, by the nineteenth century, a money payment was usually demanded of the vanquished by the victor. The most recent example before the negotiators of 1919 was Prussia's exaction of an indemnity from France in 1871 which far exceeded the total cost of the Franco-Prussian war. From the earliest days of the 1914-1918 war, both the Allies and

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3 Lloyd George, Peace Treaties, I, p. 39.
the Central Powers had thought of reparations as part of
any final settlement. The German Chancellor Bethmann-
Hollweg admitted, in a speech in the Reichstag on August
4, 1914, that Germany had wronged Belgium and stated that
the Imperial government would seek to make good that wrong
as soon as Germany's military objectives had been attained.4
A few months later, Prime Minister Herbert Asquith promised
that Great Britain would never "sheathe the sword . . .
until Belgium recovers in full measure all and more than
all that she has sacrificed."5 As the war continued and
damage and destruction mounted, two distinct attitudes de-
veloped among the Allies with regard to how much Germany
was to pay in the event of an Allied victory. The French
were in the forefront of those who thought Germany should
pay for the entire costs of the war. On the other hand,
President Wilson led the Americans in advocating that
Germany should pay only for material damage caused by the
war.6

When the Germans began negotiating for an armis-
tice in October 1918, they specifically accepted as a

4Philip Mason Burnett, Reparation at the Paris
Peace Conference from the Standpoint of the American
Delegation (2 vols.; New York: Columbia University
Press, 1940), I, 354.

5Lloyd George, Peace Treaties, I, 140.

basis for peace negotiations Wilson's fourteen points, given in an address to Congress on January 8, 1918, and his subsequent speeches, especially the one of September 27, 1918. The only references to reparations in Wilson's fourteen points were the statements in points VII, VIII, and XI that Belgium, France, Rumania, Serbia, and Montenegro should be "evacuated and restored." The following month Wilson added his famous statement: "There shall be no annexations, no contributions, no punitive damages." These then were Wilson's rather vague and somewhat contradictory pronouncements on reparations which the Germans wished to accept as the basis of a peace settlement. It was necessary, of course, for all the Allies to agree to this basis before the negotiations for an armistice could proceed. Accordingly, representatives of the Allied and Associated Powers met in Paris on October 29, 1918. There they agreed to accept the fourteen points provided that the reparations statements were clarified. Therefore,
when the final note of November 5, the Lansing Note, was communicated to Germany, it contained the following statement:

Further, in the conditions of peace laid down in his address to Congress of January 8, 1913, the President declared that invaded territories must be restored as well as evacuated and freed, the Allied Governments feel that no doubt ought to be allowed to exist as to what this provision implies. By it they understand that compensation will be made by Germany for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allies and their property by the aggression of Germany by land, by sea, and from the air.  

The above statement made by the Allies and accepted by Germany thus constituted the basis for the reparation discussions at the Peace Conference. Note that it was restricted to damage to the civilian population only. Nevertheless, between the Armistice and the Conference, French public opinion and the French press continued their demands for total reparation of war costs. The French Parliament hesitated to pass tax bills in the hope that payments from Germany would balance the French budget.  

In Great Britain Lloyd George called for a general election in December 1913 in order to obtain a "mandate" from the people for making the peace.  

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12Ibid., I, 9.
13Lloyd George, Peace Treaties, I, 157-59.
campaign, the Prime Minister was careful to point out that reparations would have to be limited by Germany's capacity to pay, which would certainly be less than the public was hoping for. On the other hand, other campaigners were not so careful, and British public opinion was certainly aroused to hope that their own tax burdens would be eased by a heavy contribution from Germany. In contrast to public opinion in France and Great Britain, there was never any demand for a large indemnity in the United States, which had suffered but slightly in comparison with the European Allies. With such various public opinions influencing the delegates, it was inevitable that a clash on reparations would occur at the Conference.

At the plenary session of January 25 a Commission on the Reparation of Damage was appointed. It was instructed to examine and report on how much the enemy countries ought to pay in reparations, on what they were capable of paying, and on how and when payment should be made. The first

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14 Lloyd George, Peace Treaties, I, 462-69. See also Nicolson, op. cit., pp. 19-21; Tillman, op. cit., pp. 62-65; Birdsall, op. cit., pp. 36-38. Keynes, op. cit., pp. 136-45, wrote a lurid account of this election. It naturally made a deeper impression than the more conservative accounts of others.
15 Burnett, op. cit., I, 13.
16 For. Rel. of U.S., Peace Conference, III, 202, 205-206. The American delegates on the Reparations Commission were Bernard M. Baruch, Norman H. Davis, Vance C. McCormick, and later Thomas W. Lamont, with John Foster
The task of the Commission, which began to meet on February 8, was to decide on the general principles to be followed in demanding reparations from the defeated enemy. To this end each delegation was asked to file a statement of principles. When the statements were compared, it was found that every delegation except that of the United States believed that Germany should pay for the entire cost of the war.

The first major debate in the Commission then began over the inclusion of war costs. The American delegation, often through its brilliant young legal advisor, John Foster-Dulles, argued that the wording of the Lansing note accepted by both Germany and the Allies could not possibly be construed to cover remuneration for war costs. On the other hand, the argument for including

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Dulles as legal advisor. The French delegates were Louis-Lucien Klotz, Albert-Francois Lebrun, and Louis Loucheur. Great Britain was represented by Prime Minister William M. Hughes of Australia, Lord Cunliffe, and Lord Sumner. (In spite of Lloyd George's protestations of moderation, he appointed to the Reparations Commission men whom he knew were in favor of exacting a large sum from Germany.) Other states represented on the Commission were Belgium, Greece, Poland, Portugal, Italy, Japan, Rumania, Serbia, and Czechoslovakia. Burnett, op. cit., I, 13, II, 230-31.


18 Burnett, op. cit., I, 20, II, 313-17.

19 Ibid., I, 570-75; Baruch, Reparation, p. 20.
such costs was advanced vigorously by the British delegation. This was a natural position for the British to take, for if reparation was limited to physical damage only, the continental countries would receive the lion's share, whereas Britain and the dominions would receive almost nothing.\textsuperscript{20} France, Italy, Serbia, and Japan followed the British lead.\textsuperscript{21} Only Belgium argued that to demand a large total from an emeny unable to pay it all would reduce proportionately the claims of those countries which had suffered the most material damage. Thus Belgium was for excluding war costs, that is, for all other countries. Belgium's right to reparation for such costs had been recognized by the Allies because the invasion of Belgium had been a breach of international law.\textsuperscript{22}

After weeks of argument it became clear that the delegates on the Reparations Commission were never going to come to a decision by themselves. It was decided, therefore, to refer the matter to the Supreme Council. At that time President Wilson was en route to the United States, so a long message was dispatched to him explaining the dilemma and asking his advice. The President sent back his

\textsuperscript{20} Baruch, Reparation, pp. 20-21; Burnett, op. cit., I, 553-57.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., I, 539-91, II, 330-31; Baruch, Reparation, pp. 316-22.
approval of the stand of the American delegation, saying in part that the inclusion of war costs "is clearly inconsistent with what we deliberately led the enemy to expect and cannot now honorably alter simply because we have the power." With Wilson's support the American delegates in informal conferences were able to persuade Lloyd George, Clemenceau, and Orlando to accept the American point of view on the exclusion of war costs. It must be said, however, that it was not Wilson's stand alone that decided the issue. The French delegates soon realized, as had the Belgians earlier, that the exclusion of war costs was to the advantage of France if Germany could not pay all that was morally her duty to pay. Another significant factor was the concession on theoretical responsibility advanced by Dulles. He suggested that a clause be inserted in the treaty saying that Germany was in principle liable for the whole cost of the war, but, due to her inability to pay it all, a lesser amount would be demanded. This became Article 231, the "war guilt" clause of the Versailles Treaty, which

23 Burnett, op. cit., I, 614.
25 Burnett, op. cit., I, 25-26; Tardieu, op. cit., pp. 291-92. With war costs included France would have received 24.2%, the British Empire, 40%, Belgium, 1.7%, and the United States, 25% of the total reparations. With war costs excluded the percentages would have been France, 1.3%, the British Empire, 19%, Belgium, 24%, and the United States, less than 1%. Baruch, Reparation, pp. 21-22.
was so hated by the Germans and so exploited by Hitler. 26

The next major debate in the Reparations Commission was over the categories of reparation to be demanded from Germany. Each delegation submitted a memorandum on the subject to a special sub-committee of the Commission. The memoranda were then consolidated into one list of thirty-one categories, which were gradually reduced to ten. On these ten categories there was general agreement except for the inclusion of pensions and separation allowances. 27 The British and French delegations particularly urged the inclusion of pensions and allowances. With the rejection of war costs, the British had to find some formula that would assure Great Britain and the dominions a fair share in the reparations payments. 28 France also had a tremendous pension burden which the French hoped to transfer to Germany. 29 Again the delegates from the United States opposed their European Allies on the grounds that pensions and allowances were part of war costs and not an item of


27 Baruch, Reparation, p. 26, 32-34; Burnett, op. cit., II, 391-423, h.26-32. "By separation allowances is meant pay by the governments to families and relatives who normally depended for their support upon persons in military service." Baruch, Reparation, p. 26, note.

28 Lloyd George, Peace Treaties, I, h.91.

29 Tardieu, op. cit., p. 292.
civilian damage. Lord Sumner prepared a lengthy exposition of the British viewpoint, which he read to the American delegation on March 27. He argued for the inclusion of pensions and separation allowances on the grounds that the soldier is "simply a civilian called to arms in the cause of justice; his uniform makes no difference. ... I think that history will not find in his case anything to deprive him of civilian rights." President Wilson rejected Lord Sumner's arguments as being too legalistic. It was then that Lloyd George asked General Smuts, whom the President greatly admired, to give his opinion on the subject.

On March 31, 1919, in a short, clear, well-written paper, Smuts supported the inclusion of pensions and separation allowances. He took as his starting point the reservation of the Allies in the Lansing note. The Germans, by accepting this note,

... acknowledged their liability to compensation for all damage to the civilian population or their property wherever and however arising, so long as it was the result of German aggression. The President's limitation to restoration of the invaded territories only of some of the Allies was clearly abandoned.

Smuts then explained his understanding of the phrase

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30 Burnett, op. cit., I, 758-62.
31 Ibid., I, 722-23.
32 Ibid., I, 63.
"civilian population" not by any legalistic or involved reasoning but by a simple example.

A shopkeeper in a village in northern France lost his shop through enemy bombardment, and was himself badly wounded. He would be entitled as one of the civilian population to compensation for the loss of his property and for his personal disablement. He subsequently recovered completely, was called up for military service, and after being badly wounded and spending some time in the hospitals was discharged as permanently unfit. The expense he was to the French Government during this period as a soldier (his pay and maintenance, his uniform, rifle, ammunition, his keep in hospital, etc.) was not damage to a civilian, but military loss to his Government, and it is therefore arguable that the French Government cannot recover compensation for such expense under the above reservation. His wife, however, was during this period deprived of her bread-winner, and she therefore suffered damage as a member of the civilian population, for which she would be entitled to compensation. In other words the separation allowances paid to her and her children during this period by the French Government would have to be made good by the German Government, as the compensation which the allowances represent was their liability. After the soldier's discharge as unfit, he rejoins the civilian population, and as for the future he cannot (in whole or in part) earn his own livelihood, he is suffering damage as a member of the civilian population, for which the German Government are again liable to make compensation. In other words the pension for disablement which he draws from the French Government is really a liability of the German Government, which they must under the above reservation make good to the French Government. It could not be argued that as he was disabled while a soldier he does not suffer damage as a civilian after his discharge if he is unfit to do his ordinary work. He does literally suffer as a civilian after his discharge, and his pension is intended to make good this damage, and is therefore a liability of the German Government. If he had been killed on active service, his wife as a civilian would have been totally deprived of her bread-winner, and would be entitled to compensation. In other words the pension she would draw from the French Government would really be a liability of the German Government under the above reservation, and would have to be made good by them to the French Government.
He concluded his argument by saying:

The plain, commonsense construction of the reservation therefore, leads to the conclusion that . . . disablement pensions to discharged soldiers, or pensions to widows and orphans or separation allowances paid to their wives and children during the period of their military service are all items representing compensation to members of the civilian population for damage sustained by them, for which the German Government are liable.33

Smuts's argument was not very different from Sumner's, but it was of vastly greater importance because it persuaded President Wilson to allow the inclusion of pensions in the reparations demanded of Germany. Lloyd George said, "General Smuts was recognized to be a man of tolerant views, detached from the intensities of European feeling about the Germans, and in consequence his conclusions on this matter carried great weight."34 Baruch said that Smuts was well-known as "one of the most liberal and courageous men at the Peace Conference" and that his note won the "unanimous consent of . . . the Big Four."35

According to Hancock, Smuts's memorandum on reparations did "more damage to his reputation than any-

33Burnett, op. cit., I, 773-75. See also Baruch, Reparation, pp. 29-32.
34Lloyd George, Peace Treaties, I, 496-97. See also Burnett, op. cit., I, 775-76.
35Baruch, Reparation, p. 29. See also Tillman, op. cit., p. 246.
thing else he ever wrote."36 Keynes called it a "masterpiece of the sophist's art,"37 and Baruch later agreed with this indictment.38 On the other hand, Dulles challenged Keynes's statement. He said that, although he had himself concluded that pensions and separation allowances were not chargeable to Germany,

... many people whose intellect and sincerity command the confidence of the world reached a contrary conclusion. ... Whatever one's personal views may be, anyone who considers this subject in a spirit of fairness can hardly deal in a contemptuous and offhand way with the sincere and reasoned judgment of men such as General Smuts.39

Another writer said soon after the Peace Conference:

It is of interest to observe that the most generally assailed provision in the treaty, that making Germany responsible for pensions and allowances, was proposed by General Smuts, whom no one can accuse of vindictiveness towards Germany. While there were many who condemned the policy of including pensions in reparation, and it is unquestionably the largest financial item in Germany's indebtedness, it is also well not to forget that there were some high-minded men who supported it.40

Smuts gave this explanation of his stand on

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36 Hancock, op. cit., p. 515.
37 Keynes, op. cit., p. 53.
38 Baruch, Public Years, p. 105.
40 Temperley, op. cit., II, 11. That Smuts "proposed" the inclusion of pensions and allowances is, of course, not true; he merely supported the inclusion proposed by others.
reparations to the South African Parliament four years after
the Peace Conference.

"Both in the British Empire delegation and out of it in other sections I used every scrap of such influence as I possessed to get the reparation figures down to a fair moderate fixed amount. It is perfectly well known to those who took part in the conference that I was probably the most active protagonist at the conference for fixing the reparation amount at a reasonably low figure. I incurred odium and obloquy at the conference because of the energy with which I pushed my view on the dangerous subject. The view I consistently advocated was that, whether pensions were or were not included—indeed, whatsoever items or valuations of damage were accepted as between the Allies—as regards the Germans the amount due should be definitely fixed in the Peace Treaty, and that it should be such as Germany could reasonably pay without dislocation of her economic life. Unfortunately this view did not prevail. The actual result of the reparation procedure has been brought about against my advice, and in the teeth of my strongest opposition, and I disclaim all responsibility for the result."\(^1\)

He also said that if he had known so much would depend on his opinion, he would not have given it so readily.

"I assumed at the time . . . that I was only one of the many who were giving opinions about reparations. . . . There was the feeling among the more moderate delegates that Germany would pay no more than a fixed amount; that what faced us now was only a matter of distributing this fixed amount; and that "civilian damages" could be interpreted either narrowly or widely, but a narrow interpretation would give France and Belgium almost everything and England almost nothing and a wide interpretation would result in a just award."\(^2\)

\(^1\) Millin, op. cit., II, 205-206. On June 1, 1919, Smuts suggested that $5,000,000,000 might be fixed as the total reparation figure, although he thought that figure was probably not high enough. Lloyd George, Peace Treaties, I, 693.

\(^2\) Millin, op. cit., II, 207.
Smuts's son gave a similar explanation:

My father's point in insisting on the inclusion of allowances and pensions was to ensure that the war-ravished countries of Europe did not get the lion's share while financially exhausted England was left in the cold. It was only later when France swelled her reparation amount to fantastic proportions, my father said, that it became not only a farce but "one of those things that are responsible for the Germany of today."\

It can be seen that Smuts believed at the time that Germany's liability for reparations would be stated in the treaty as a definite, fixed sum. Wilson believed the same. "Both Wilson and Smuts . . . were almost certainly convinced at the time that they were making a decision as to the distribution of a fixed sum and not as to the size of that sum." Smuts's memorandum on pensions was his sole contribution to the reparations section of the treaty. Lloyd George later asked him to serve on the Commission on Austrian Reparations, but he refused.\

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3 Smuts, Jr., op. cit., p. 207.

4 Tillman, op. cit., p. 246. Thomas A. Bailey, Woodrow Wilson and the Lost Peace, in Wilson and the Peace-makers (New York: Macmillan Co., 1947), pp. 240-43, contended that the decision to include pensions was morally wrong, because against the spirit if not the letter of the pro-Armistice agreements. He agreed, however, that Wilson, as well as Smuts, was sure a moderate fixed sum would be included in the treaty. Wilson was opposing France on everything and perhaps thought he should give in on something which he thought at the time was of minor importance. Birdsall, op. cit., p. 251, agreed generally with Bailey.

5 Millin, op. cit., II, 211-14; Hancock, op. cit., pp. 526-27.
Had a fixed sum of moderate proportions been decided upon at Paris, Germany might have paid, and the effect which Smuts desired might have taken place, with Britain receiving a share in reparations in proportion to her contribution to the war. As it actually happened, after weeks of debate and deliberation, the Allies failed to decide upon either a fixed sum to demand of Germany or a definite time limit in which to collect it.  

The final solution was to write into the treaty a provision for a Reparation Commission to settle all such matters. The Commission in 1921 set the sum to be paid by Germany at approximately £33,000,000,000, about two-thirds of which was for pensions and allowances. This sum was never paid. It was scaled down by the Dawes Plan and the Young Plan and finally canceled altogether in 1932.

Because of foreign loans to Germany in the meantime, mostly from the United States, Germany actually made a profit out of the reparations scheme. That Germany could not pay was disproved by the vast sums Hitler spent on armaments in the years immediately after the ending of reparations. Reparations were not paid because Germany, as was quite natural, did not want to pay them.

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48 Mantoux, op. cit., pp. 133-55, 156.
CHAPTER VI

SMUTS AND THE MISSION TO HUNGARY

While the representatives of the victorious nations were pondering in Paris over the future fate of Europe, events were occurring in central Europe which they could not ignore. One series of events was important to the story of Smuts in 1919 for it was to take him away from Paris on a diplomatic mission to Hungary.

An armistice had been concluded on November 3, 1918, between the representatives of the Italian Supreme Command and the Supreme Command of what still called itself the Austro-Hungarian Army, even though there was no longer in fact an Austro-Hungarian Empire.¹ The Poles, Czechs, Yugo-Slavs, and Magyars had all declared their independence of Habsburg power and had set up independent states. Less than a week before the armistice, on October 31, Count Michael Karolyi had been entrusted with forming a government for Hungary which was to be linked with Austria only by a common monarch.² Then on November


Charles IV, the last Habsburg emperor, relinquished the Austrian throne, and on November 13 he did the same with the Hungarian throne. On November 16 the Hungarian People's Republic was proclaimed with Karolyi as Premier.3

Because the November 3 armistice had treated Austria-Hungary as a single entity, it was necessary for the Allies to draw up a military convention to regulate conditions under which the terms of the armistice were to be applied to Hungary; it was signed at Belgrade on November 13, 1918. This convention provided for the occupation of a specified zone of Hungarian territory, the right to extend that occupation wherever it might be thought necessary, and the demobilization of almost all of the Hungarian forces.4

As the convention of November 13 did not draw definite lines of demarcation along the entire Rumanian-Hungarian border, friction soon developed between the troops of the two countries. Rumania protested to the Paris Conference that Hungarian forces were terrorizing the Rumanian parts of Hungary which they still occupied.


As a result, in February of 1919, General Franchet d'Esperey, Commander-in-Chief of the allied forces in southeast Europe, proposed and the Conference agreed to set a more definite line of demarcation and to provide a neutral, unoccupied zone between the Rumanian and Hungarian troops. Colonel Vix, the French officer at the head of the military mission in Budapest, accompanied by representatives, both official and unofficial, of all the Allies, presented this plan to Count Karolyi and his government on March 19. Captain Nicholas Roosevelt, the unofficial American representative, reported the scene to the Conference. According to Roosevelt, Karolyi interpreted the note to mean that the Rumanians were to advance one hundred kilometers into Hungarian territory while the Hungarians withdrew two hundred kilometers. He declared that any government which accepted such a plan would not last a day. Furthermore, if the note were signed, the communists in Hungary would increase from a few thousand to two hundred thousand or more. For all these reasons he could not possibly agree to the plan.

Colonel Vix, and the note itself, made it clear that the lines established by the note were only temporary military lines for keeping the peace and had nothing to do with the

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6 Ibid., XII, l.13-16.
Karolyi chose to disbelieve these assurances because the lines closely followed the ethnic boundaries between Romanians and Hungarians. He was certain that the Allies had already decided upon the boundaries for his country.\(^7\) Karolyi, refusing to accept the Allies' demarcation plan, resigned his office on March 21 and handed over the government to a group of People's Commissars, whose first action was to declare Hungary a Soviet Republic.\(^8\)

The leader of the new government was Bela Kun, who was admirably equipped for his job. He had been an instructor in a university before the war, then an officer in the Austro-Hungarian army. He was captured by the Russians in 1915 and had remained in Russia imbibing communist doctrine until the revolution. Under Kerensky he became the head of a bureau of propaganda and later came into contact with both Trotsky and Lenin. When the war ended, he returned to Hungary to preach communism among disaffected soldiers and idle workmen. In time he was arrested by Karolyi's government and remained in prison until Karolyi's resignation. Immediately upon the fall of the Karolyi government, Bela Kun was released from prison and

\(^7\)Temperley, op. cit., I, 353, IV, 159; For. Rel. of U.S., Peace Conference, XII, 4117.

\(^8\)Sinor, op. cit., p. 233; Deak, op. cit., p. 57.
made People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, and "became the idol of the Budapest proletariat."  

The new communist ministers openly proclaimed their desire to further the domination of the proletariat by every means at their disposal. They also announced that they had made an alliance with the Soviet government of Moscow. The revolution, however, had been bloodless and was interpreted by Captain Roosevelt as having been primarily the result of national feeling. The Hungarians did not want their country further decreased in size and were willing to accept communism to prevent such a disaster. Roosevelt believed the Hungarian revolution was very important because it represented open defiance to the first major public decision of the Paris Conference with regard to one of the Central Powers; the encouragement this action would give to Germany might prove disastrous.

Bela Kun naturally was eager to have his government recognized by the victorious Allies. Consequently, only three days after coming to power, he delivered a note to the Peace Conference in Paris by way of the Italian minister in Belgrade. The note was read to the Council of Four by

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10 Temperley, op. cit., I, 353.

Orlando on March 29. The message declared that the new government of Hungary accepted the armistice of November 3, 1918, and did not think that the rejection of the Vix note had infringed that agreement. Further, the alliance with Russia was not a formal alliance but merely an entente cordiale. Hungary wished to live in peace with her neighbors and the western Allies. The note continued:

The Hungarian Socialist Party has been driven by the force of the events to take hold of the executive power. It wishes to organize a new social State, a State in which every man will live of his own work, but this social State will not be hostile to other Nations. It wishes on the contrary to co-operate for the great human solidarity.

Furthermore, Hungary was ready to "negotiate territorial questions on the basis of the principle of self-determination of the People." The note concluded by saying that the government of Hungary

[...]

would gladly welcome a civil and diplomatic mission of the Entente in Budapest and would guarantee to it the right of extraterritoriality and undertake to provide for its absolute safety.12

After the Big Four heard Kun's message, "a proposal was made that, without sending a formal diplomatic mission, some discreet and confidential person should be sent to ascertain the real position." Lloyd George at once suggested General Smuts for the mission.13 With a party of fourteen

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13 Ibid., V, 16. The minutes of this meeting record that no final decision concerning the mission or the person
Smuts left Paris the evening of April 1. His instructions were:

... to examine the general working of the Armistice of November 3rd, 1918; the Military Convention of November 13th, 1918; the status of the new government; economic conditions; and, in particular, the arrangements about the neutral zone. He was to explain to the Hungarian Government that this zone had only the purpose of stopping bloodshed: it would not affect the eventual disposition of boundaries under the Peace Treaty; and he was himself to make the adjustments he thought desirable in the present boundaries.

He was further to investigate the progress of Bolshevism, and, in general, for the purposes of his mission, to go wherever he chose in Hungary, and do anything.

The following morning Harold Nicolson, a young British diplomat in the party, had a long talk with Smuts in which he gained the impression that the real idea back of the mission was "to see whether Bela Kun is worth using as a vehicle for getting into touch with Moscow." Years later Smuts denied that there was any such hidden purpose behind the trip. Nevertheless, his biographer said:

If anyone, in those days, saw in Smuts' mind the thought of Moscow it was with good reason. He had Moscow on the brain: he saw everywhere, and particularly in the future, the red hand of Moscow; even his pleas on behalf of Germany were largely grounded in his fear of Moscow. It must have been

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11 Millin, op. cit., II, 137.
15 Nicolson, op. cit., p. 293.
with the feeling of going to see an ugly fascinating sight that he was now on his way to make contact with an actual Soviet Government. 16

The morning of April 3 the party arrived in Vienna. Nicolson recorded the pinched, yellow look of the fat-starved people and the unkempt, littered appearance of the once-gay city. They were met at the British Embassy by Sir Thomas Cunningham, head of the military mission there, to whom Smuts took an instant dislike. Cunningham took them to lunch at Sachers, where they were served a huge and expensive meal. Smuts was furious and dressed Cunningham down for his "'gross error in taste.'" He decreed that from then on his party would eat only their own army rations and would take nothing from the starving countries they were visiting. The youthful Nicolson added, "It was a good luncheon all the same." 17

On the morning of April 4 the party arrived in Budapest, which looked even sadder and more bedraggled than Vienna. Smuts decided that the entire party would remain on the train; they would not enter the city. Accordingly, Bela Kun was sent for and came to the train, not once, but three times that day to confer with Smuts. Nicolson described him as:

A little man of about 30: puffy white face and

16 Millin, op. cit., II, 133.
17 Nicolson, op. cit., pp. 293-94.
loose wet lips; shaven head; impression of red hair; shifty suspicious eyes: the face of a sulk and uncertain criminal.  

Smuts talked with this unprepossessing individual "as if he were talking to the Duke of Albercorn: friendly, courteous but not a touch of any surrender of his own tremendous dignity." The only result of that day's negotiations was that Bela Kun signed a paper promising to release all British subjects whom he had imprisoned.

Throughout the day and evening Smuts had several visitors besides Kun. Professor Brown, "one of President Wilson's 'enquirers,'" took a "Wilsonian," that is, an "unpractical view" of the situation. He spoke of the good order Kun was maintaining and of the need for "'natural social evolution.'" In contrast, the Spanish and Swiss Consuls told Smuts that Kun had not shown moderation; the prisons were packed with people. "They confirm what everybody says, namely, that Bela Kun is just an incident and not worth treating seriously."

Before the long day ended, Smuts telegraphed a report to Paris. He had explained fully to Kun, he reported,

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18 Nicolson, op. cit., p. 293.
19 Ibid., p. 301.
20 Ibid., p. 301.
21 Ibid., p. 297.
22 Ibid., pp. 301-302.
that the line suggested by Colonel Vix was not to be a permanent political frontier but was only to maintain peace and order. Kun gave two reasons why he could not order the Hungarian troops to retire behind the proposed line. First, to do so would cause his government to fall even as the mere demand had caused Karolyi's to fall. Second, such an order would not be obeyed as he had little hold over the troops occupying the territory in question. Bela Kun further said that if his government fell, chaos would result as no other party was capable of forming a government. Kun added that if the Allies insisted on their present policy, they would have to come and run Hungary themselves. Smuts further reported that Bela Kun had made a counter-proposal of his own. He suggested that representatives of the Hungarian, German, Austrian, Bohemian, Serbian, and Rumanian governments should meet to settle among themselves the whole question of their frontiers. Furthermore, the economic position of the new states might also be dealt with at the meeting, since, as Kun said, the question of food was more important at the moment than frontiers. Smuts concluded his report by urging the acceptance of Kun's suggestion. Such a meeting could be easily arranged, he thought, inasmuch as most of the nations were already represented at Paris and delegates from Hungary, Austria, and Germany would have to be called
there in any event to sign the Peace Treaty. 23

The next morning, April 5, Bela Kun returned to Smuts's train for more negotiations. Nicolson recorded in his diary:

Smuts hands him a draft agreement providing for the occupation by the Great Powers of a neutral zone between him and the Rumanians. If he agrees to this we shall raise the blockade. It is clear that Bela Kun longs to accept it. The signature of such a document would imply official recognition of his regime, which he desires passionately. But he is suspicious and afraid. Clasping the document he leaves us--saying he must consult his Cabinet. That means he must consult Moscow. He promises us a reply by seven. 24

At seven Kun duly returned with several comrades. He agreed to accept Smuts's terms but added a clause of his own: that the Rumanian army was to withdraw behind the Maros River; that is, the line laid down in the military convention of November 13. "'No, gentlemen,'" Smuts said, "'there must be no reservations.'" He made a final appeal to them to accept his terms as being in their own best interests. The communists evidently expected Smuts to bargain further, but he had come to the conclusion that Bela Kun was of no importance and was not capable of giving effect to any treaty. As the Hungarians were still standing on the platform, Smuts gave the order for the train to start; it pulled out of the station leaving some very astonished

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23 For. Rel. of U.S., Peace Conference, V, 1.1-1.3.
24 Nicolson, op. cit., p. 302.
comrades staring after it.\textsuperscript{25} Nicolson continued his account: "We then dine. Smuts is delightful, telling us stories of the Veldt with a ring of deep homesickness in his voice. A lovely man."\textsuperscript{26}

Smuts again telegraphed a report to Paris on the day's negotiations. He described the line which he had proposed as "running further east than Colonel Vix's line, but nevertheless well to the west of the territory which the Roumanian Committee of the Conference assigned to Roumania in their Report." The Hungarian officials, Smuts reported, refused to accept this line as it would, in their opinion, have resulted in civil war in the neutral zone and the fall of their government. Smuts had rejected the line proposed by the Hungarians on the grounds that trouble with Roumania would have immediately followed. He was convinced that there was no hostility towards the great powers on the part of Bela Kun's regime. It was, however, weak and would likely fall at an early date. Smuts concluded that the wisest course to follow would be "not to provoke a conflict over the armistice terms which may be unnecessary, but, after hearing the Hungarians' statement in Paris or some other place, to settle the final political frontiers." Meanwhile, he recommended that the trainload of fats

\textsuperscript{25}Nicolson, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 303-304.

\textsuperscript{26}Ibid., p. 304.
already bought and paid for by the Hungarians should be allowed to enter the country although the blockade itself should not yet be lifted.  

Smuts returned to Vienna and from there went to Prague, where he had an hour-long private interview with President Thomas Masaryk. The two men discussed the problem of the boundaries to be established between Czechoslovakia and Hungary, although their discussion had no effect on the final solution. They also discussed the advisability of a conference of central European states as suggested by Bela Kun. Masaryk was in favor of some sort of economic union between Hungary, Austria, and the neighboring countries, supervised by the League of Nations. Such a union, Masaryk thought, might be the saving of Europe, and he was willing to participate in conferences leading to that end. Smuts also approved of some such plan, seeing in it a variation of his mandates idea. After seeing Masaryk, Smuts returned to Paris, by way of Vienna, arriving there on April 9.

Nicolson concluded his account of the mission in the following words:

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29 Millin, op. cit., II, 193-94.
The papers say that the Smuts mission has been a 'fiasco.' I think it was in a way, but then our whole purpose was obscure and illogical. Yet we have gained the following: (1) A conviction that Bela Kun and Hungarian Bolshevism is not a serious menace and cannot last. (2) A valuable talk between Smuts and Masaryk. (3) A conviction that Austria-Hungary is an economic unit and that these trade barriers are fatal, (4) negatively—Smuts refrained from using Kun as a liaison with Moscow. His sense and dignity were superb.30

Smuts also realized that the trip was not a diplomatic triumph.31 In fact, it is possible that the immediate effect of the mission was the opposite of what Smuts intended. The recognition of the communist government in Hungary by the Peace Conference, although not formally stated, probably weakened conservatives and strengthened revolutionaries throughout Europe.32

Smuts espoused Kun’s suggestion for a conference of the central European states and, back in Paris, tried to interest others in the idea. Colonel House and President Wilson were interested, but the Italians were hostile, and Lloyd George was indifferent. The conference was never held.33

As for Bela Kun, he lasted longer than Smuts had

31 Bonsal, op. cit., p. 139.
33 Bonsal, op. cit., pp. 1:1-1:2; Millin, op. cit., II, 19h.
While the Supreme Council of the Allies did nothing, Kun built up an army and fought both the Czechs and the Rumanians. When the Rumanians were within sight of Budapest, which they occupied on August 3, 1919, Bela Kun fled to Russia. There he dropped out of sight—a victim of the purges of the thirties.34

Although diplomatically unsuccessful, the trip to Hungary was for Smuts a refreshing interlude away from the depressing atmosphere of Paris.35 Upon his return, he "joined in the wrangling" with the other delegates.36 His efforts after his return were largely directed toward revising the terms of the nearly-completed treaty with Germany.

35 Smuts, Jr., op. cit., p. 211.
36 Millin, op. cit., II, 194.
CHAPTER VII

SMUTS AND THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES

General Smuts worked as hard as anyone to defeat Germany as long as the war continued, but, once the fighting stopped, he, almost alone, retained no bitterness against the former enemy. In fact, only two men at the Peace Conference felt any genuine sympathy for the defeated nation: Smuts and his colleague, General Botha. Of the two, Smuts was by far the more vocal. In his opinion it was Prussian militarism which had been the enemy—not the German people. A few days after the Armistice, in pleading the "sheer practical necessity" of a League of Nations, he said:

"Now as we organised the world for victory, let us organise it against hunger and unemployment. Not only the liberated territories of our Allies, not only our small neutral neighbors, but the enemy countries themselves, require our helping hand. Let us extend it in all generosity and magnanimity."  

Later, at the opening of the Conference he asked that Germany be treated with '"pity and restraint,' pointing out that 'civilization is one body and we are all members of

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2 Millin, op. cit., II, 156; Smuts, Jr., op. cit., p. 197; Crafford, op. cit., p. 133.
The words "pity and restraint" expressed Smuts's ideals, from which he never departed, as to the spirit in which the peace should be made. As the weeks went by and lesser ideals began to prevail at the Conference, Smuts protested to everyone who would listen. One writer said, "By March he had already earned the reputation of being not only a moralist but a gadfly into the bargain."¹

Smuts based his pleas for Germany on two main premises which he expressed in a letter to Lloyd George on March 26. The first was his own experience in South Africa.

> My experience in South Africa has made me a firm believer in political magnanimity, and your and Campbell-Bannerman's great record still remains not only the noblest but also the most successful page in recent British statesmanship."²

The second was his fear of Russia and communism. He suggested that, even though the enormity of their crimes ought to be brought home to the German people, Germany should be left strong enough to act as a bulwark against communism.

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³Smuts, Jr., op. cit., p. 206; Crafford, op. cit., p. 153.

¹Kraus, op. cit., p. 27⁴. Hancock, op. cit., pp. 503-509, recorded that Smuts was absent from Paris from February 15 to March 23 and was ill in London for most of that time. There he brooded over the reports from Paris. On his return, he intensified his campaign against the treaty.

⁵Ibid., p. 512. See also Millin, op. cit., II, 197, 245, 263; Lloyd George, Peace Treaties, I, 256; Crafford, op. cit., p. 15⁴; Kraus, op. cit., p. 27⁰.
The self-respect of the German people should also be built up so that they might continue to believe in their own civilization and reject that offered by Russia. He summed up his arguments this way:

1. We cannot destroy Germany without destroying Europe.
2. We cannot save Europe without the cooperation of Germany. . . .

My fear is that the Paris Conference may prove one of the historic failures of the world. 6

Lloyd George was also disturbed by the way the treaty was developing; in fact, his views were very similar to those expressed by Smuts. 7 In order to clarify the position of the British delegation, Lloyd George retired from Paris for a few days with some of his advisors, including General Smuts. 8 The result of this conference was the Fontainebleau memorandum, dated March 25. 9 Although this document was written in the first person as if it expressed the views of Lloyd George only, it closely resembled some of the writings of Smuts both in language and in ideas, particularly in the general opening statement.

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6 Hancock, op. cit., pp. 510-12. See also Millin, op. cit., II, 196-98; Smuts, Jr., op. cit., p. 206; Kraus, op. cit., pp. 271-72.
7 Hancock, op. cit., p. 513.
8 Lloyd George, Peace Treaties, I, 403.
9 Ibid., I, 404-16. R. S. Baker, op. cit., III, 149-57, printed part of this document but credited it to General Tasker H. Bliss, one of the plenipotentiaries from the United States.
One memorable sentence of this document was quoted by three of his biographers as being Smuts's own words:

You may strip Germany of her colonies, reduce her armaments to a mere police force and her navy to that of a fifth-rate power; all the same in the end if she feels that she has been unjustly treated in the peace of 1919 she will find means of exacting retribution from her conquerors.\textsuperscript{10}

On May 6 the full text of the treaty with Germany was assembled and presented to the delegates at a plenary session of the Conference.\textsuperscript{11} The worst fears of Smuts and other liberals were confirmed upon hearing the entire treaty. During an early morning walk on May 7, Smuts and Keynes met Herbert Hoover, who also thought the treaty was too severe. The three agreed that the "consequences of many parts of the proposed Treaty would ultimately bring destruction." They decided to work among their colleagues in an attempt to have the treaty revised.\textsuperscript{12}

When the treaty was submitted to the German dele-

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\textsuperscript{10} Lloyd George, Peace Treaties, I, 405; Crafford, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 153-54; Smuts, Jr., \textit{op. cit.}, p. 206; Millin, \textit{op. cit.}, II, 198. Hancock, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 513-15, wrote that Smuts was not present at Fontainebleau when this memo was prepared. The fact that he wrote the letter quoted above to Lloyd George on March 26 supports Hancock's view. On the other hand, Lloyd George named Smuts as the first of the advisors he took with him. The fact that some of the very words of the memo were credited to Smuts supports the view that he did help prepare the document. Certainly, it expressed his ideas.

\textsuperscript{11} For. Rel. of U.S., Peace Conference, III, 33\textsuperscript{1/4}-79.

Each delegate received a printed copy of the treaty.

\textsuperscript{12} Hoover, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 23\textsuperscript{1/4}.
\end{flushright}
gation on May 7, the head of the delegation, Count Brock-
dorff-Rantzau, read a prepared statement in which he said
that the German people could never admit that they alone
were guilty of the war, although they admitted a degree of
guilt and a willingness to restore the territory of Bel-
gium and France. He recalled the pre-Armistice agreement
and said that the German delegation would examine the
treaty in the light of that agreement. Finally, he asked
that Germany be allowed to join the League of Nations at
once.\textsuperscript{13}

After the presentation of the treaty, Smuts intensi-
sified his efforts to have it revised. In the middle of
May he told the British Empire delegation:

"If the Germans are prepared to swallow this Treaty,
I still consider its provisions such as to make fu-
ture peace and goodwill in Europe unlikely; . . . .
the fires will be kept burning and the pot be kept
boiling until it again boils over, either in a new
war, or in the breakdown of the European system under
the onslaught of social and industrial anarchy."\textsuperscript{14}

A few days later he wrote identical letters to President
Wilson and Lloyd George asking each to use his "\textquote{power and
influence to make the final Treaty a more moderate and
reasonable document.}" He criticized especially the

\textsuperscript{13}For. Rels. of U.S., Peace Conference, III, \textquote{13-20;}
Lloyd George, Peace Treaties, I, 675-62; R. S. Baker, \textit{op.
cit.}, II, 500-505; Borden, \textit{op. cit.}, II, 962-63.

\textsuperscript{14}Millin, \textit{op. cit.}, II, 215; Smuts, Jr., \textit{op. cit.},
p. 211.
territorial, reparation, and occupation clauses. "'Under this Treaty Europe will know no peace,'" he feared.\textsuperscript{15} Wilson answered in the most friendly way, signing himself "Cordially and sincerely yours." He agreed with Smuts that the treaty should be just, but he called to mind the "very great offense against civilization which the German State committed and the necessity for making it evident once for all that such things can lead only to the most severe punishment."\textsuperscript{16}

On May 22 Smuts again sent identical messages to the President and the Prime Minister. This document\textsuperscript{17} was the most detailed prepared by Smuts on his objections to the treaty. In it he said:

I think the two cardinal errors in policy of this Treaty are the long occupation of the Rhine, and the enlargement of Poland beyond anything which we had contemplated during the war. These two errors are full of menace for the future peace of Europe, and I urge that every means be taken to remove them before it is too late.\textsuperscript{18}

He criticized the reparation clauses as being unworkable, but he did not ask that pensions and allowances be removed.

\textsuperscript{15}Millin, \textit{op. cit.}, II, 216-17; Hancock, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 522; Tillman, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 347.

\textsuperscript{16}Hancock, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 523; Millin, \textit{op. cit.}, II, 217-18; Kraus, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 281.

\textsuperscript{17}See R. S. Baker, \textit{op. cit.}, III, 453-65 for the full text.

\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., III, 461.
He objected also to certain of the military and air clauses and to the internationalization of Germany's internal waterways. Furthermore, he thought the treaty was

... full of small, comparatively unimportant provisions which serve no useful purpose, but must be unnecessarily galling and wounding to the feelings of a defeated enemy. ... We should be careful to eliminate from it all trace of petty spite and ill-feeling, which cannot serve so great a cause as ours, nor promote the interests of future goodwill and peace.\(^{19}\)

Smuts concluded his letter with a paragraph suggesting a procedure to be followed in revising the treaty. As it was very important that the "treaty should not be capable of moral repudiation by the German people hereafter," the Allies should confer with the Germans concerning their objections. He recommended that a committee of three minor delegates be chosen for this conference. The committee would report to the Supreme Council, which alone would take the responsibility for actual changes. Smuts thought such a method would remove all taint of dictation from the treaty and bring the public opinion of the world to accept it, while at the same time the Supreme Council would avoid direct negotiations with the Germans. After all, "the final sanction of this great instrument must be the approval of mankind."\(^{20}\)

\(^{19}\) R. S. Baker, op. cit., III, 463-64.

\(^{20}\) Ibid., III, 464-65. See also Hancock, op. cit., pp. 525-26.
The Germans submitted their formal observations on the peace terms to the Conference on May 29. In this lengthy document the Germans protested against the occupation clauses; asked that all nations agree to reduce their armaments to the same extent as Germany was being asked to do; asked that they be admitted to the League of Nations at once and that they be named the mandatory under the League for their former colonies; renounced their rights to Alsace-Lorraine but asked for a plebiscite there; and protested many of the other territorial settlements, especially the loss of Upper Silesia to Poland. The Germans also made some counter-suggestions. They offered to pay as reparations something like $25,000,000,000, without interest, if concessions were made in other parts of the treaty. They also asked that a neutral inquiry be made to determine actual responsibility for the war, as they refused to accept full blame. Finally, they contended that the treaty did not conform to the pre-Armistice agreements—that it was not a "Wilson peace." 21

Smuts's reaction to the German proposals was embodied in a letter written to Wilson on May 30. The Germans were right in their contention that the treaty did not conform to Wilson's principles, he said. Such a

breach of faith on the part of the Allies would have very
grave consequences in the future. He explained:

This war began with a breach of a solemn international
undertaking, and it has been one of our most important
war aims to vindicate international law and the sanc-
tity of international engagements. If the Allies end
the war by following the example of Germany at the
beginning, and also confront the world with a "scrap
of paper," the discredit on us will be so great that
I shudder to think of its ultimate effect on public
opinion.

There will be a terrible disillusion if the peoples
come to think that we are not concluding a Wilson
Peace, that we are not keeping our promises to the
world or faith with the public. But if in so doing
we appear also to break the formal agreement deliber-
ately entered into (as I think we do), we shall be
overwhelmed with the gravest discredit, and this Peace
may well become an even greater disaster to the world
than the war was.22

The British Empire delegation held a special meeting
on June 1 and 2 to consider what reply should be given to
the German note. After a brief summing up by the Prime
Minister of possible concessions to the Germans, the meeting
was turned over to the other delegates. General Smuts led
off with a very severe criticism of the treaty. His prin-
cipal objections, as in his previous letters, were to the
occupation and reparation clauses, the eastern boundaries
of Germany, and the internationalization of German rivers.
He urged that Germany be admitted to the League of Nations
at once, "it being essential to carry her with us and re-

22R. S. Baker, op. cit., III, 466-68. See also
Smuts, Jr., op. cit., pp. 211-12; Millin, op. cit., II,
213-20; Hancock, op. cit., p. 523.
move the possibility of another combination through Germany and Russia joining hands in misfortune." He further said that "Poland was an historic failure, and always would be a failure, and in this Treaty we were trying to reverse the verdict of history." He thought that a definite sum should be fixed as Germany's liability in the matter of reparations. He suggested the sum of $5,000,000,000, although that was probably not high enough. He also reiterated his belief that the treaty constituted a breach of a legal contract because it was not in accordance with Wilson's fourteen points as provided by the pre-Armistice agreement.

Although there was some support for Smuts's views among the other delegates, a very reasonable answer to his objections was given by Balfour, who thought

General Smuts treated the matter in rather a too legal a manner. . . . It was only necessary to read the Fourteen Points to see that they were incapable of being treated in a strictly legal manner.

It was a wrong attitude to fix the mind on the lamentations of the Germans, upon their misfortunes, when in fact the Germans were responsible to the whole world. . . . Germany was no unhappy victim of circumstances; she was suffering, and ought to suffer, for her crimes; and there was no sign whatever that Germany was repentant.

At the conclusion of this meeting the "unanimous"

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23 Lloyd George, Peace Treaties, I, 633-93.
24 Hancock, op. cit., p. 529.
decisions of the delegation were embodied in a draft resolution for Lloyd George's use in his talks with the other members of the Council of Four. Smuts was incensed at the use of the word "unanimous," as the resolution did not recommend the drastic changes he desired. He wrote to Lloyd George protesting the resolution and demanding that the treaty be entirely recast. "'We are endeavouring,'" he wrote, "'to make a Peace of the twentieth century which might have been in place in the seventeenth or eighteenth, but which is entirely opposed to the spirit of the times, and may well prove disastrous from every point of view.'"26

As much as Lloyd George admired Smuts, he was above all a practical politician who knew that expediency often had to take precedence over idealism. Furthermore, he alone of the Big Four had honestly been willing to make concessions to the Germans and had been trying to persuade his colleagues to revise the treaty.27 Smuts's lofty pronouncements from his position of lesser responsibility goaded the fiery Welshman into replying with what was very nearly a taunt:

"Are you prepared to forgo the claims for pensions and so confine compensation to material damage? The Germans repeatedly request the return of the

26 Millin, op. cit., II, 222. See also Hancock, op. cit., pp. 530-31.
27 Tillman, op. cit., p. 343; Seymour, op. cit., IV, 473-74.
colonies. Are you prepared to allow German South-West Africa and German East Africa to be returned to Germany as a concession which might induce them to sign the peace?"28

In answer to the questions asked by the Prime Minister Smuts wrote:

"With regard to reparation, I consider the sum of five thousand million mentioned both by us and the Germans as reasonable though high. . . . We should . . . apportion a lump sum, say two thousand million, to restoration, and leave the rest as the amount divisible among the Allies in respect of the other claims, such as pensions. . . .

"With regard to the German colonies, I do not for a moment contemplate their return to Germany as one of the concessions we should make. No doubt in future, when a new atmosphere has grown up, the German claims to colonial mandates will come to be viewed in a different light and that contingency has to be kept in view in whatever arrangements we make now. But please do not have the impression that I would be generous at the expense of others, so long as the Union gets South-West Africa. In this great business South-West Africa is as dust compared to the burdens now hanging over the civilized world. . . .

"When you are up against a position so terrible in its possibilities for good and evil, you can only do one thing, . . . the thing you can justify to your conscience and that of all other reasonable fair-minded people. This Treaty breathes a poisonous spirit of revenge, which may yet scorch the fair face—not of a corner of Europe, but of Europe."29

In spite of the vigorous campaign carried on by Smuts and other liberal-minded delegates, the last minute revisions in the treaty were of slight importance. The decision to hold a plebiscite in Upper Silesia, instead of

29Ibid., II, 226-23.
giving the territory to Poland outright, was the most important. 30

Smuts was so dissatisfied with the treaty that he decided, sometime in May, not to sign it. 31 Although he shared Smuts's misgivings about the treaty, Botha, as Prime Minister, had to sign in order to bring South Africa into the League of Nations and into the position of being recognized as an equal to all other nations in the world. The two life-long friends, reluctant to part company over so vital an issue, brought their problem to Lloyd George, who advised Smuts to sign under protest and to criticize the treaty as much as he liked afterwards. This advice Smuts decided to follow. 32

The brief ceremony of the final signing of the German treaty was held in the Hall of Mirrors of the Palace of Versailles on June 28, 1919. 33 Smuts signed but published a vigorous protest the same day. His statement looked not so much to the past as to the future:

"The real work of making peace will only begin after this Treaty has been signed..."

"The spirit of the new life, the victory of

30 Seymour, op. cit., IV, 473.
31 Ibid., IV, 466; Hancock, op. cit., p. 531.
32 Crafford, op. cit., p. 162; Kraus, op. cit., p. 232; Millin, op. cit., II, 252-54.
the great human ideals, for which the people have shed their blood and their treasure without stint, the fulfillment of their aspirations towards a new international order, and a fairer, better world, are not written in this Treaty, and will not be written in treaties. 'Not in this Mountain, nor in Jerusalem, but in spirit and in truth,' as the Great Master said, must the foundations of the new order be laid. A new heart must be given, not only to our enemies, but also to us—a contrite spirit for the woes which have overwhelmed the world: a spirit of pity, mercy and forgiveness for the sins and wrongs which we have suffered. A new spirit of generosity and humanity, born in the hearts of the people in this great hour of common suffering and sorrow, can alone heal the wounds which have been inflicted on the body of Christendom.

"And this new spirit among the people will be the solvent for the problems which the statesmen have found too hard at the conference. There are territorial settlements which will need revision. There are guarantees laid down which we all hope will soon be found out of harmony with the new peaceful temper and unarmed state of our former enemies. There are punishments foreshadowed over most of which a calmer mood may yet prefer to pass the sponge of oblivion. There are indemnities stipulated, which cannot be enacted without grave injury to the industrial revival of Europe, and which it will be in the interests of all to render more tolerable and moderate. There are numerous pinpricks which will cease to pain under the healing influence of the new international atmosphere. The real peace of the peoples ought to follow, complete, and amend the peace of the statesmen.

"In this Treaty, however, two achievements of far reaching importance for the world are definitely recorded. The one is the destruction of Prussian militarism; the other the institution of the League of Nations. I am confident that the League of Nations will yet prove the path of escape for Europe out of the ruin brought by this war. But the League is as yet only a form... The new creative spirit which is once more moving among the peoples in their anguish must fill the institution with life and with inspiration for the pacific ideals born of this war, and so convert it into a real instrument of progress. In that way the abolition of militarism, in this treaty unfortunately confined to the enemy, may soon come as a blessing and relief to the Allied peoples as well. And the enemy peoples should at the earliest
possible date join the League and, in collaboration with the Allied peoples, learn to practice the great lesson of this war, that not in separate ambition, or in selfish domination, but in common service for the great human causes, lies the true path of national progress. This joint collaboration is especially necessary to-day for the reconstruction of a ruined and broken world."

After more in the same vein, the protest ended with an appeal to the Germans to make an honest effort to live up to their obligations under the treaty and to the Allies to use their God-given victory not for selfish ends but for the furtherance of great human ideals.34

One of Smuts's biographers said:

No formal declaration of protest in human memory has been more significant than was the Smuts document. Its chief value lay in the hope, the glowing promise with which, despite the Treaty, it furnished mankind.35

Another writer, however, speaking not of this protest alone but of Smuts's continued denunciation of the Treaty of Versailles through the years, said:

Indeed, his very blunder /his protest of June 28, 1912/ catapulted him to world fame. The great moralist, the purest of the pure was for the Germans! For years his hard-hitting phrases of condemnation of Versailles were quoted by the Germans, whose chief witness he was to remain for many years. For years the appeasers and the defeatists claimed Smuts as their man, although he was, despite his one grave error, the very opposite of the yellow crowd. . . .


35 Crafford, op. cit., p. 163.
Throughout the ensuing ups and downs of his political fortunes, Smuts' moral authority grew. His shadow loomed large over the globe, which his vision embraced as a whole. The testimony of such a man was worth more to Germany than the secretly built Luftwaffe.  

The same writer also said:

He was wrong, entirely and definitely wrong, in taking Germany to his heart. He believed in that fallacious difference between Prussian militarism and the German people that for twenty years confused the minds of world democracy, and he was foremost in creating that perverted guilt-complex, prevailing, above all, among English-speaking peoples, that made the victors of Versailles throw away their bitterly won supremacy, and allowed a charlatan to plunge the world into the gravest catastrophe of all time. If Versailles erred, it erred on the side of leniency.  

Although the protest of June 28 was Smuts's last pronouncement as a Peace Conference delegate, his farewell message upon leaving England for South Africa in July belongs to Peace Conference history. He spoke of other matters, such as Russia, the British dominions, and the Irish problem, but the treaty was also in his thoughts. The treaty, he said, should be accepted as a fact; mankind should look to the future in hope. All bitterness to Germany should be forgotten and all should work together for the good of Europe and the world. He continued:

You cannot have a stable Europe without a stable,

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36 Kraus, op. cit., pp. 282-83.

37 Ibid., p. 269. "It should always be remembered that the principal beneficiary of the phrase 'the errors of Versailles' has been Hitler and Germany." McCallum, op. cit., p. vii.
settled Germany, and you cannot have a stable, settled, prosperous Great Britain while Europe is weltering in confusion and unsettlement next door. I see salvation for us and the world only in a more human spirit and outlook all around. Let us move forward with courage and in faith and let us not fall back into the hopeless enmities, the sterile and blasting bitterness of the past.  

Smuts indirectly influenced the subsequent history of the treaty in another way. John Maynard Keynes, the chief representative of the British Treasury in Paris and an admirer of Smuts, was so sure the treaty was all wrong that he resigned his post and left Paris in June before the treaty was signed. Soon afterwards he wrote Smuts, asking the older man's advice as to what he could do about the treaty. Smuts answered at once:

"I think it would be very advisable for you as soon as possible to set about writing a clear connected account of what the financial and economic clauses of the Treaty actually are and mean, and what their probable results will be. It should not be too long or technical, as we may want to appeal to the plain man more than to the well informed or the specialist."  

Keynes took up the suggestion with alacrity and the result was, of course, The Economic Consequences of the Peace. The book was an immediate sensation in both Britain and the United States. Keynes proved to be not only a brilliant polemicist but also a master of sarcasm. His caricature


of Wilson became so well known that even today it is often the accepted picture of Wilson at the Peace Conference. Keynes portrayed Wilson as a dull-witted, strait-laced Puritan who was "bamboozled" by Lloyd George and Clemenceau into giving up his ideals for a peace of the old world type.\textsuperscript{40} Keynes's book was used in the United States Senate to help defeat the Versailles Treaty, which included the League of Nations.\textsuperscript{41} Without the cooperation of the United States neither the treaty nor the League had a chance of success. Thus, ironically, Smuts's influence on his friend helped bring about the crippling of the League and the very state of affairs in Europe which Smuts had predicted would be the result of the treaty.\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{40}Keynes, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 50-55.


\textsuperscript{42}McCallum, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 39-42; Willin, \textit{op. cit.}, II, 239; Crafford, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 152-53.
CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS

Jan Christian Smuts exerted an influence at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 out of all proportion to his official position as a member of the delegation from the Union of South Africa. His influence on the Treaty of Versailles can be read with certainty in the League of Nations Covenant and in the reparations settlement.

Smuts's work on the League of Nations Covenant has rightly earned almost universal praise. It has been said that "Wilson, whose great reputation is deservedly based on his vision and sponsorship of the League of Nations, owes much in this regard to the political concepts and acumen of his friend Smuts."1 Both Wilson and Smuts were idealists, devoted to the idea of an international organization for peace. Partly because of the close affinity between these two men, Smuts was able to play the prominent role that he did in the creation of the League of Nations. A more important reason for his influence, however, was the fact that he brought to Paris a more complete and more practical plan for an international organization than did any other delegate. The excellence of Smuts's plan assured him a seat on the League of Nations

1Curry, op. cit., p. 986.
Commission at the Conference, and many of the ideas expressed in his plan found a place in the League of Nations Covenant as finally drafted and accepted.

The system of mandates established under the League of Nations was also influenced by Smuts. Here it was the realistic rather than the idealistic side of Smuts's character which prevailed. Smuts, the practical man of affairs, was able to produce a compromise solution to the problem of the German colonies that was accepted as being in harmony with both the ideals of Wilson and the annexationist schemes of some of the other delegates. Smuts's role in the mandates controversy has not always been commended, but, under the circumstances, it is hard to conceive what better solution could have been found than the one Smuts suggested. The system worked, on the whole, rather well and was less severely criticized during the years ahead than at the Conference itself.

Smuts's role in the reparations settlement has frequently been assailed by his critics, but it too can be defended. The single act of Smuts with regard to reparations was his writing of the memorandum on pensions and allowances,² which seems to have been the deciding factor in Wilson's decision to include pensions in reparations. Here again it was the similarity in the idealism

²See above, pp. 78-80.
of the two which caused Wilson to accept Smuts's opinion in a field far removed from the realm of ideals and the matter of international organization. It should be emphasized that Smuts believed, when he wrote his memorandum, that a fixed sum for reparations would be stated in the treaty and that his suggestions would influence only the distribution of such a fixed amount. Smuts's mistake was that of allowing himself to be drawn into the reparations controversy at all, as it was not an area with which he was thoroughly familiar. Pensions would probably have been included without Smuts's intervention, and he could have avoided much calumny in the future by refusing to become involved in the matter. It was not, however, Smuts's nature to sidestep an issue out of mere self-interest.

Smuts's mission to Hungary accomplished little of a positive nature. Nevertheless, the fact that he was selected to represent the Conference on a delicate diplomatic errand showed the respect and confidence he enjoyed among the other delegates.

Smuts attracted more attention at Paris by his campaign to have the German treaty revised than by any of his other actions. His efforts to create a just but merciful peace were completely sincere. It must be remembered, however, that he was not one of the Big Four and did not have the same degree of responsibility for decisions as did Wilson, Clemenceau, and Lloyd George. It is
doubtful whether he could have made a better treaty if he
had been a member of the Supreme Council. There were, in
1919, too many conflicting claims to be resolved and far
too many recent and deep wounds to be healed.

Although many writers have criticized the treaty
with Germany, others have contended that it was the best
treaty that could have been written under the circumstances.
It contained provisions for revision, under the League of
Nations, although such revision was little used by the
statesmen of the next two decades. Smuts deserves nothing
but praise for following the dictates of his conscience
during the period when the treaty was under discussion.
Once the treaty was finally drafted and signed, however,
the situation was entirely different. Smuts then might
have served humanity better had he used his great moral
influence to uphold the Versailles settlement rather than
to attack it. This latter action helped establish the
guilt-complex, widely held by the English-speaking peoples
in the post-war years, and did much to create the atmos­
phere which Hitler used to such advantage in his rise to
power during the decade of the thirties. Had the Allies
maintained a solid front in peace as they had in war, the
treaty might have been better enforced and, as hoped by
many in 1919, gradually revised. Reparations might have
been scaled down and other harsh features of the treaty
eliminated or softened. At the same time, Germany would
have been prevented from capitalizing on the disunity and defeatism of the former Allies.

These conclusions, of course, go beyond Smuts's work at Paris in 1919. There he showed himself a wise, honest, sincere, practical negotiator. The most important outcome of the Conference may well have been the League of Nations. For his work on the Covenant, above all else that he accomplished at Paris in 1919, Jan Christian Smuts deserves to be remembered and revered.
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A. PUBLIC DOCUMENTS

U.S. Congressional Record. Vols. LVI, LVIII.


B. BOOKS


Generally defends Wilson's role at the Paris Peace Conference, but criticizes the inclusion of pensions in the reparations settlement.


An early study of the Paris Peace Conference based on Wilson's papers. Baker's bias in favor of Wilson must be remembered in using this work. Volume 3 contains a valuable collection of documents.


The second volume of Baruch's autobiography. Deals briefly with his memories of the Paris Peace Conference.


A valuable work by one who represented the United States on the Reparations Commission of the Paris Peace Conference.

A collection of papers prepared for Colonel House's Inquiry by his advisor on colonial questions.


A thoughtful appraisal of the Paris Peace Conference and the Treaty of Versailles. Birdsall concludes that the treaty contained both Wilsonian and Carthaginian features.


The second volume of this work contains valuable accounts of the Imperial Conferences and of the Paris Peace Conference from the point of view of a dominion Prime Minister.


A recent survey of the British Empire and Commonwealth.


An indispensable work on reparations at the Paris Peace Conference. Includes a vast amount of otherwise unpublished source material from the papers of Bernard Baruch, Norman H. Davis, Edward M. House, and John Foster Dulles.


A biography of the eleventh Marquis of Lothian, who as Philip Kerr was, from 1916 to 1921, a private secretary and advisor on foreign affairs to Lloyd George.

A short history of the League of Nations by one of the most important men in the history of the organization.


Contains a short section on the Paris Peace Conference, including shrewd estimates of some of the Conference participants.


The somewhat bitter memoirs of the great French statesman who believed that France had been betrayed in the post-war years.


A war-time biography of General Smuts written by an Afrikaans-speaking South African. Contains nothing original on Smuts's role at the Paris Peace Conference.


Useful for the history of Hungary in 1918-1919 and for a brief treatment of Smuts's mission to Hungary and central Europe.


A discussion of the history and government of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the succession states during and after World War I. A selection of documents on the new governments of central Europe is included.


The first volume in the official biography of Smuts, based on his private papers. It is particularly good on Smuts's early life. The treatment of Smuts's role at the Paris Peace Conference is rather brief.
A series of lectures delivered in January 1920 by two of the American experts who served at the Paris Peace Conference. It is especially helpful on the organization of the Conference.

Includes more about Hoover's activities at the Paris Peace Conference than about Wilson's. Hoover was not altogether favorably impressed by Smuts.

A series of talks given in Philadelphia in 1920 and 1921 by men who had served at the Paris Peace Conference.


This war-time biography of Smuts contains some original interpretations of his life and work.

Wilson's Secretary of State gives his impressions of some of the chief participants at the Paris Peace Conference. Smuts is discussed briefly.

An attempt by Lansing to vindicate his own role at the Paris Peace Conference by showing how everyone else was wrong.

A brief, up-to-date history of Hungary written in a readable, journalistic style.

The personal recollections of the Paris Peace Conference by the British member of the Big Four. It is especially valuable for its account of the workings of the British Empire delegation. It must be used with caution because of its obvious bias in favor of Lloyd George.


Volume I contains the British Prime Minister's account of Smuts's service as a member of the British War Cabinet.


A patriotic and intelligent young Frenchman charges that Keynes ignored the facts in his assessment of the Treaty of Versailles and that his book helped in the development of the mental attitudes which led to World War II.


An excellent study of the organization of the Paris Peace Conference. The author concludes that the lack of advance planning seriously hampered the delegates in the making of peace.


McCallum believes that, on the whole, the settlement of 1919 was a fair one, but that the execution of the treaties by lesser men than those who had written them left much to be desired. Public opinion, swayed by such men as Keynes, helped to bring on World War II.


Contains many invaluable documents as well as Miller's personal diary. Many of the documents have been reprinted elsewhere in a more accessible form.


The one indispensable work in any study of the making of the League of Nations Covenant.
A biography by one who knew Smuts personally and who had access to the General's personal papers. It contains the most complete account of the Paris Peace Conference of any of Smuts's biographies.

An account of the organization and constitutional development of the League of Nations. It contains a good evaluation of Smuts's role in the founding of the League.

Contains both Nicolson's diary kept during the Paris Peace Conference and his reflections on the Conference made two decades later. He was a great admirer of Smuts.

A Swiss professor who was closely associated with the League of Nations for many years writes about international cooperation after World War I. He praises Smuts's role in the founding of the League.

Contains an interesting description of the relationship between Smuts and Lloyd George.

Contains intimate glimpses of Lloyd George and others at the Paris Peace Conference.

Contains the diary and many of the important papers of President Wilson's "right-hand man" at the Paris Peace Conference. The editor, in a narrative connecting and explaining the papers, tends to interpret events at the Conference in a light favorable to House.

A day to day account of the Paris Peace Conference by the Chief of the History Division and Librarian to the Delegation from the United States.


A very condensed, but up-to-date, history of Hungary by a Cambridge University historian.


A short history of the League of Nations written in the breezy style of a journalist.


Smuts expounds and explains the system of philosophy which he devised.

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A collection of some of the more important speeches of the great South African.

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A collection of Smuts's speeches made in Great Britain in connection with the session of the Imperial War Cabinet and Imperial War Conference of 1917.


A laudatory biography of Smuts written by his son.


Perhaps the best book in English on the French point of view at the Paris Peace Conference. It is especially good on the organization of the Conference and on reparations.


One of the earliest attempts to tell the complete story of the Paris Peace Conference. Although it is now somewhat out of date, it contains much information which is still of value.
A monumental work on the unification of South Africa that deals fully with Smuts's role in such unification.

An excellent recent study of the relations between the American and British delegations at the Paris Peace Conference and the effect such relations had on the Treaty of Versailles.

A very good complete history of the League of Nations. Smuts's role in the writing of the Covenant of the League is praised very highly.

This history of the League of Nations contains a good discussion of Smuts's plan for a League of Nations.

Contains a very good account of the role of the dominions in World War I.

A very cautious scholar traces the origin and development of the mandates system of the League of Nations.

This work includes a long section on various historical schemes to enforce peace. It contains very little on the actual drafting of the League of Nations Covenant.
C. ESSAYS IN COLLECTIONS

Contains a good account of Smuts's role as a member of the League of Nations Commission of the Paris Peace Conference. Baker maintains that the Covenant of the League of Nations was a work of true human genius.


D. ARTICLES IN PERIODICALS

Praises the mandates system as surpassing all former attempts at international control over colonies.

A good recent study of the influence of Smuts on Wilson at the Paris Peace Conference.

Feis concludes that Keynes's revolt against the Treaty of Versailles was partially justified but that he went too far. Keynes's book contributed to the eventual breakdown of the 1919 peace settlement.

The farewell message issued by General Smuts on the eve of his departure from England for South Africa after the Paris Peace Conference.


An American scholar thinks the mandatory scheme was just annexation under another name.


An excellent study of the compromises involved in the acceptance of the mandates system in 1919.


A noted colonial administrator examines the mandates system and finds it satisfactory.


The text of General Smuts's protest upon signing the Treaty of Versailles, June 28, 1919.


A brief review of Smuts's career and an appraisal of his character and of his fitness to serve in helping to make peace.


Potter traces the development of the trusteeship idea behind the mandates system. He gives Smuts credit for playing a major role in formulating the system.


A Swiss scholar concludes that the mandates system was the most successful aspect of the League of Nations.
General Smuts tells why German East Africa must not be returned to Germany.

General Smuts praises Wilson's work at the Paris Peace Conference: only Wilson could have secured the acceptance of the League of Nations Covenant as an integral part of the treaties of peace.