

The Society has undergone considerable change in its one hundred years but little has altered its essentially anglo-saxon, white settler orientation. Until recently the dominions and the expatriate white colonial communities were of more concern to the Society than India or Africa. This is perhaps not unexpected in a body which traditionally drew its membership from the peerage, the nobility, the clergy and the ex-colonial service. Only in the sixties have Africans and Indians frequented the Society in any number, but not yet in sufficient strength to alter the racial imbalance. The Society has always been of Conservative hue with little appeal to Labour and so it remains today. It is, as Dr Reese points out, 'a middle class organisation with a strong leavening of the well-born'. Hopefully this will change if the Society wishes to remain an important private focal point in London for citizens of the Commonwealth. Perhaps its best work in the future can be done, as Dr Reese argues, in the fields of education and scholarship. The Society already possesses the largest private library on the Commonwealth in the world. This in itself is a significant step toward the creation of a major research institute.

To this reviewer one of the more important and interesting of the Society's activities has been the publication of its journal, variously titled *Proceedings, United Empire* and, today, the *Journal of the Royal Commonwealth Society*, in which colonial officials, retired civil servants and military and naval officers, British cabinet ministers, colonial and Commonwealth politicians and Prime Ministers have allowed their thoughts to escape into print. These volumes are a rich source for the student of the empire-commonwealth and it is regrettable that Dr Reese in his otherwise splendid book did not exploit them more fully. For surely the attitudes and assumptions revealed in those pages are crucial to our understanding of the Commonwealth's development. If Dr Reese had explored this intellectual dimension of the Society and thus of the Commonwealth he might have thrown some much needed light on why rather than how people acted, or perhaps even more important, why they did not act. But this is no place to suggest the book Dr Reese might have written. He is to be congratulated for the one he has produced; it should find its place in the library of every Commonwealth historian.

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*Smuts, II: The Fields of Force 1919-1950.* By W. K. Hancock. Cambridge University Press, 1968. xiii, 529 pp. U.K. price: 70s.

IN HIS PREFACE to the second volume of *Smuts Vol. II: The Fields of Force, 1919-1950* Hancock points out that these years of South African history have been 'little illuminated by historical study'. In concluding his biography of Smuts, Hancock has offered his own outstanding contribution to a process of enlightenment. Rejecting the labels conventionally and inaccurately applied to Smuts, he has recreated a figure more complicated, more credible and more interesting than the one recreated by Smuts's earlier biographers. The scope of the study is wide, reflecting the different 'fields of force' in which Smuts was active, most notably those of imperial statesmanship and Union politics. The focus of attention is properly Smuts

himself, the man 'in his times', as Hancock puts it: the illumination extends to what were previously dark corners and shadows of South African history.

When the National Convention (1908-9) discussed the form of the prospective union of the South African colonies, they had been faced with two distinct racial problems: the white race question regarding the future relations between Boer and Briton, and the colour question. Most delegates finally agreed with Smuts that the white racial issue was of paramount importance. This over-riding concern with the reconciliation between Boer and Briton was to govern Smuts's political faith and action in domestic politics until his death in 1950. But he outlived all the other delegates to the National Convention, and thus had to confront both racial questions in new and more complex forms.

As Hancock demonstrates, Smuts played a key role in the negotiations for the Fusion of the National Party and his own South African Party after the economic crisis of 1933. The United Party which emerged in 1934 signified the high-water mark of Boer-British reconciliation. Such a reconciliation had been partly dependent on the South African Party's acceptance of the Nationalists' colour policy which was segregationist. To many of the party, this had not been a major concession; as Smuts knew, a number of his supporters, both Afrikaners and English-speakers, sympathised with the Nationalists' views on colour. They had, in fact, threatened the unity of the South African Party on this issue in the twenties.

After 1934, the colour question threatened the cohesion of the new United Party. The major crisis occurred over Prime Minister Hertzog's proposed native settlement; the central feature of the Hertzog legislation, approved in its final form in 1936, was the removal of the African voters in the Cape from the common roll. These limited political rights for non-whites had been earlier entrenched in the South African constitution.

Smuts was in a cleft stick. On the question of political rights for non-whites he had consistently been 'an evolutionist'. He had already shown some degree of adaptation on the colour question in a liberal direction. In 1913 he had believed parallel development was still possible; but by the 1920s he admitted the intractable difficulties caused by the extent of economic integration. In 1936, however, he saw the price of an uncompromising defence of the existing African franchise as the destruction of the newly-won Boer-British unity; he was not prepared to pay such a price. Because of this he was regarded with hostility by those who opposed Hertzog's legislation. In privately pleading his defence, he sounded the pragmatist: 'Politics is the art of the possible and the practicable.' But he later stressed: 'I have had to sit tight and save the work in national up-building for which I have been mainly responsible these five years.' It was clear where his priorities lay.

Ironically, it was Smuts's decision to enter the European war in 1939 which destroyed Fusion, and destroyed too, the reconciliation of Boer and Briton. South Africa's entry into the war, together with other factors, facilitated the resurgence of an exclusivist Afrikaner nationalist movement. And in the forties Boer-British hostility once again gathered intensity. But by the forties the colour question has assumed paramount importance. And in the postwar election of 1948 the United Party lost political power to the Afrikaner Nationalists, who had pledged themselves to implement apartheid.

Smuts missed the significance of his defeat. It was, as Hancock says, 'the end of an epoch; of his epoch'. In the years which followed, the Nationalists steadily increased their electoral strength. And Boer-British unity was not achieved, as Smuts had hoped, through the common exercise of freedom and the use of liberal institutions, but by the support of both white races for Nationalist colour policy. Moreover it was a colour policy which meant the gradual loss of liberty for whites as well as nonwhites.

Smuts did not foresee this: he had no sense of urgency about the solution of the colour question. Always a gradualist and generally an optimist, he had hoped, as late as 1946, to progress with 'practical social policy away from politics'. He had thought there was plenty of time. He had, however, acknowledged the existence and the strength of colour prejudice in South Africa. 'South Africans cannot understand. Colour bars are to them part of the divine order of things . . . I sometimes wonder what our position in years to come will be when the whole world will be against us. And yet there is so much to be said for the South African point of view who fear getting submerged in black Africa. I can watch the feeling in my own family which is as good as the purest gold.'

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*Capitalism, Primitive and Modern. Some Aspects of Tolai Economic Growth.* By T. Scarlett Epstein. Canberra, Australian National University Press, 1968. xxiv, 182 pp., illustrations, maps. Australian price: \$6.50.

THE TOLAI live in the Rabaul hinterland of New Britain. The book under review is firstly concerned with their traditional economy and the way it has expanded after the first Europeans settled in the area in 1872. Secondly, it examines the contemporary economy, which the author illustrates by reference to the Rاپitok, a Tolai community of about 650 people among whom she lived and worked for about fifteen months during the years 1959-61, and by an analysis of the Rabaul market as it operated in 1961. In a concluding chapter she discusses the theoretical implications of the way in which the Tolai economy has expanded.

The book is an interesting case study of the initial stage of economic growth in rural communities. It is clearly written and the argument is supported by a wealth of quantitative data. The extensive material concerning the economy of the Rاپitok is especially impressive. Given the orientation of this journal I will focus the review on the author's account of Tolai economic history.

In 1872 the Tolai had a static economy based on farming and fishing. Their technology was extremely simple but their rich volcanic soils yielded abundant harvests. Regional economic specialisation and the use of shell money promoted extensive trading between the many Tolai communities. Shell money was in great demand among the Tolai, since a person's status and power tended to be higher the more shells he possessed or controlled. The expression 'primitive capitalism' refers to the fact that in traditional Tolai society control over productive resources, primarily land and shell money, was to some extent concentrated in the hands of a small number of individuals. These men had to achieve their position through industry