

SOCIOLOGY, BIOLOGY OR PHILOSOPHY OF A WARRIOR? REFLECTIONS ON JAN SMUTS, GUERRILLA-BEING AND A POLITICS OF CHOICES¹

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Introducing Smuts

This article could have been titled “Feeling our way into the mind of a man formed in guerrilla war more than a century ago.” South Africa produced arguably three statesmen of international stature. These are Shaka-Zulu (militarist, conqueror and Jacobin nation-builder), Jan Smuts (guerilla, military leader, statesman and philosopher) and Nelson Mandela (leader of the struggle for liberation from white minority rule and renowned reconciliatory statesman). Within their own historical epochs these men became known far outside the territory of their birth and carved their names into international history and political discourse.

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Jan Smuts was a thinker *and* a doer. He was a statesman, a military man, a botanist and an intellectual of international standing. Some chose to call him a philosopher. Others referred to him as “a man of letters” versed in communication, correspondence and literary works in various languages (Grimbeek, 2000: 37). He also was a renowned guerrilla. Was he an extremely rare breed or was he through his experience, simply a product of his time? What experience(s) produced the “political” or “later” Smuts? Many noteworthy attempts were made to describe and interpret Smuts. Some works dealt with his military leadership and political prowess such as Hancock (1962, 1968), Van Meurs (1997), or were biographical in nature (Crafford, 1945; Smuts, 1955). Others dealt with certain epochs in his life, i. e. the Anglo-Boer War (South African War) or other limited areas in his life (Spies and Natrass, 1999; Smith, 1999; Grobler, 2000). Some of these works are so monumental that they will stand as classics in their genre for years to come. But do they answer all that there is to say about Jan Smuts?

It is contended that there is a specific, less explored angle on Smuts that may contribute to this dialogue. There is place for an analysis of the close linkage of “military” and “political mind” of Smuts. More so, the deep impact of guerrilla experience on his life and being needs attention. Few – if any of the works on Smuts – embarked extensively on comparing the “military” and the “civil” or “political” Smuts (See for example Beukes, 1994; Crafford, 1945; Grimbeek, 2000; Hancock, 1962 and 1965; Meiring, 1974; Oost, 1956; Smith, 1999; Spies & Natrass, 1994, soft cover - 1999; Van Meurs, 1997). More important and applicable here: even fewer sources try to relate an understanding of the “military mind” of Smuts vis-à-vis his “political mind” and the human, existential and political choices he made as being forged by his early guerrilla experiences during the Anglo-Boer War.

The relatively short, but supremely intense experience of guerrilla war probably reflects the most formative body/mind (existential) juncture for Smuts and many other guerrillas before and after him. Before that he was educated at Victoria College (today University of Stellenbosch) and Cambridge. This may well answer for the intellectual growth of Smuts. It is argued here that his higher learning in isolation of the guerrilla experience does not necessarily answer for the type of persona that Smuts was to become after his guerrilla experience.³

³ An interesting quotation originates from Ernesto Guevara de la Serna (‘Che’): “The more uncomfortable the guerrilla fighter is, the more he is initiated into the rigours of nature, the more he feels at home; his morale is higher; his sense of security is greater... he has learned to risk his life (Sandison, 1997: 66).

Research question

Without dwelling too long on the notes above, let us address the body-being, experience and guerrilla war that led to the research question: can we trace back primarily Smuts' political, and secondary his later military choices, to the somatic experience as a guerrilla soldier and commander during 1900–1902 in such a way that it adds to a greater understanding of Smuts the later statesman, vexed in an enigma?

Methodology

This exploratory article is based on an extensive literary review of various sources on Smuts, guerrilla warfare as well as a range of materials related to existential choices, existential-phenomenology and alternative research (even radical) methodologies. It also touches on hermeneutics, somatic thinking, bodily being and biological influences on individuals and collectives of people. (Examples of such scholarly work include Bleicher, 1980; Feyerabend, 1984; Luijpen, 1980; Peperzak, 1977; Rooney, 1999; Ricouer, 1982; Adrey, 1970; Liebenberg, 1990⁴.) Biological influences here is not to be understood as man's genetic composition, nor his biological and anatomic composition, but his inextricable interaction with the surrounding natural environment (or *habitat*) if you so wish.

Partaking in many debates and an ongoing dialogue with Smuts supporters and antagonists, historians, observers and journalists and their clashing/complementing/contradictory arguments also played a role. So did a variety of impromptu discussions and free-flowing interviews with surviving South African ex-servicemen from World War II as well as Smuts admirers and supporters (United Party members or "Sappe") within and outside the family circle of the author. Literature and scholarly reviews and debate-cum-dialogues were complimentary to each other in this endeavour. Was it not after all Jürgen Habermas philosopher and sociologist that advocated the value of *communicative interaction*? (Bleicher, 1980: 160 – 162, 163 – 164; Kolakowski, 1982:392ff). Pieter Geyl also reminded us that "[h]istory is a discussion without end..." And even if the point of departure – for human beings – is subjective and the methodology deployed here somewhat alternative in that it reflects advocacy, the author makes the conjecture that these reflections contribute to an ongoing dialogue in the chosen field.

Some readers may observe elements of an eclectic approach in this article. This contribution is however not post-modern and by choice (conviction?) not intended so. In this contribution hermeneutics as "the operation of understanding in

⁴ Louis Liebenberg: no relation with the author.

relation to the interpretation of texts” plays some role – simply because the human animal as material being cannot escape this obligation (*Aufgabe*) of (co-) interpreting (Thompson, 1982: 43). The choice to accept to some extent the value of hermeneutics in this enterprise is not by accident. This contribution does reflect some interpretive and philosophical concern (Bleicher, 1980: 3).

Some readers may detect a measure of critical hermeneutics meshed into this work in as far as the researcher attempted to read text and context anew the interaction with nature included (Bleicher, 1980: 3-4). Reading the text afterwards in the context of the “then” does require an attempt at understanding (*Verstehen*); but this time through the material and concrete. The author accepts that interpretation of text and the actions of the human being do relate to reality as summed up by Josef Bleicher. This is done rather than uncritically accepting the argument that semantic signs relate to a ‘quasi-world’ which only indirectly find itself coupled to a perceived reality (Ricoeur in Bleicher, 1980: 5).⁵

The selected research and argumentative approach represent both a personal choice and a choice for an integrative methodology (read also: an interdisciplinary research approach). The subtext here is not underpinned by the primary qualities of realism or idealism as defined by Luijpen (1980: 96ff). Somewhere in the subtext of this essay the reader may detect elements of subjectivity as freedom (*subjectiviteit als vrijheid*), freedom as transcendence (*vrijheid als transcendentie*), freedom as history (*vrijheid als historie*), the mediation of the body (*bemiddeling van het liggaam*), phenomenology of hate (*de fenomenologie van de haat*) and existence as co-existence (*existeren als co-existeren*). The latter represents tenets of existential phenomenology, and also of philosophical anthropology and the theory and practice of somatic beings. (See Luijpen, 1980, as well as Peperzak, 1977. On somatic or bodily beings, consult Hanna, 1977). The above informs the subtext, but neither governs, nor encapsulates it.

Notes on guerrilla struggle and the material body

In addressing the above, a variety of sources related to especially guerrilla warfare and the human as bodily being socialized in a specific context, will be referred to. In this case the context is one of guerrilla warfare and its outcomes for the individual as part of a collective of cadres and his/her/their future actions and choices. The “material context” in this analysis also encapsulates nature as part of

⁵ Needless to say that critical theory and critical sociology as a life-long interest of the author play a role in the work presented here (See Held, 1980).

concrete material interaction. I do not intend to make only a materialist analysis or to commit “a philosophy text” *per se*; but if these notions/approaches creep into the analysis, it should be accepted as a needed element of the argument.

At various times, Thomas Hanna’s work, *Bodies in Revolt: A Primer in Somatic Thinking* (1977), is found to be very informative, if not a *tour de force* in body-mind analysis. For Hanna the distinction body and mind is false, because people/persons/individuals are somatic beings or *per se* bodily-beings. Hence experience dictates: the more intense the experience, the more the dictate. This does not for Hanna rule out the capacity to choose. And in choosing, the soma is open to act on the chosen option embedded in the bodily or real-life experience. But making the choice needless to say is deeply influenced by the foregoing bodily experience within a material or concrete context (Hanna, 1970: 308ff).

Hanna links up with existentialist thinkers such as Kierkegaard, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, and even Nietzsche. Hanna indeed chose to refer to these personas or bodily beings as “the first of the somatic thinkers” and he adds Darwin, Freud, Piaget as well as Camus and Marx to his analysis. In short, the intense experience of the human (as part of a/the the collective) within this material life becomes a primary medium: a “to be” and “to be-come”. With this Hanna provides a potential heuristic tool to analyse Jan Smuts and guerrillas before and after him.⁶ However in the course of this discussion authors on warfare and guerrillas will also speak their mind and experience in complimenting the above perspectives.

From Paul Virilio, architect and philosopher, in discussion with Lotringer, comes an important qualitative distinction between modern conventional war and the earlier understanding of war (Virilio, 1983: 2, 4). Ever since Sun Tzu, speed mattered in war. Modern wars and the Anglo-Boer War as one of the first modern resource wars espoused the idea of speed. The logic of quantity, speed, logistics and “war economy” became driving forces for war. It is argued by Virilio that “[t]he knowing power is set in motion through logistics” (Virilio, 1983: 5, 6). Note that “knowing power” could equal “speeding force” in this context.

“In ancient warfare, defence was not speeding up, but slowing down. The preparation for war was the fort, the wall, the rampart, the fortress...” Organisation of war space moved from the earlier passive, static, to speeding up through an

⁶ The distinction revolution-evolution becomes more problematic as a result of Hanna’s approach. This, however, seems to have no negative impact when analysing Smuts and his formative guerrilla experiences. In fact in Smuts’ own writings the two terms seemed to be holistically meshed into the evolution or growth of (even volatile) parts into a whole.

accumulation of logistics (Virilio, 1983: 3ff, 12 ff). In the ages of globalisation⁷, modern conventional warfare became the continuous flow chart of increasing mass logistics. In looking at Smuts' guerilla experience we have to keep in mind that Smuts in the early phases of the Anglo-Boer War clearly favoured newer doctrines like speed, maneuverability; thus mobility versus siege or holding ground. "My humble answer goes by taking the offensive, and doing it before the British force... (at this moment we will be) strengthened." He also argued that (it is) more "advantageous to take offensive than to act defensively" (Hancock & Van der Poel, 1966: 324). This preference was to be strengthened later due to his guerilla experience.

Guerrilla warfare is substantially and qualitatively different from (modern) conventional warfare. Some authors noted that partisan or guerilla experience represent energy that is needed to repel an invasion by a superior force and as a spontaneous arising of a body politic. Laqueur (1977: 1) argues: "In actual fact guerrilla warfare is as old as the hills and predates regular warfare. Throughout history guerrilla wars have been fought by weaker people's against invading or occupying armies, by regular soldiers operating in the enemy's rear, by landless peasants rising against landowners, and by bandits, social and asocial." He notes that the Spanish resistance against Napoleon produced the term "guerrilla" (Laquer, 1977: 1). Examples of guerrilla wars are manifold: partisans against Napoleon in Spain, Southern Italy and Russia; guerrilla activities during the Franco-Prussia War (1870-1871); Lawrence of Arabia's activities; Lettow-Vorbeck in German East Africa; guerrilla activities in China before and during the communist take-over; the South African War; pre-and-post independent Africa and later South Africa; Latin America and Cuba. Moreover... guerrilla organisations and movements, and women (participating) in struggles well before those led by Mao and Fidel... were commonplace" (Laqueur, 1977: 5). What about the qualitative difference ascribed to guerilla warfare?

Guerrillas have to counter a superior enemy in order to attain victory over a stronger hegemonic power. It becomes an inversion of the ruling logic of conventional/mass war – in strategy, tactics and experience. While perceiving and understanding defeat, the guerrilla acts against a vastly superior force with the conviction of victory. Guerrilla war, as such is de-accumulation of equipment and limitation of complex logistics through necessity. It attacks the war economy of the

⁷ Anthony Giddens, a sociologist, reminds us that globalisation is not new (Giddens, 1993). Like war it just exponentially spread over the globe in an impllosion of time and space since the 1700s.

stronger with the known limitations of “whatever is available”. Naturally, guerrilla war is waged on the continuum of speeding up and slowing down. (Derived from Sun Tzu, Part II: 72ff; Part VI: 85ff; Part IX).

This inversed body of logic penetrates both the action and thought-processes of the guerrilla. It could be argued, this experience, deeply etched as it is in the bodily-being of revolutionary leaders and cadres, will remain.

Apart from other irritations and suffering, the lack of equipment and sophisticated communication technology, of a chain of logistics and frequently a chain of command, worsened by bodily suffering, the guerrilla has to continue the struggle – even in areas where ideology has lost its powers of persuasion. There seem to be little doubt that (in accordance with the quote from Mao Tse Tung (a guerrilla himself) at the beginning of this article) that biology, experience and exposure to the material world are closely related. Guerrillas attack the war economy of the stronger under the dictum of “whatever is available”. *Have little, do much, attain victory against all odds*, is no easy dictum to live through and will leave deep imprints on the participants of such wars. This inverse body of logic saturates the action and thought processes of the guerrilla war participants on individual, collective and (social) identity levels. Robert Adrey on his part suggests that human behaviour can be traced back to animal origins, so also the struggle for resources (Adrey, 1970). In his remarkable work *The Art of Tracking: The Origin of Science*, Louis Liebenberg, integrates anthropology, botany, the history and philosophy of science and cognitive psychology and argues that the art of tracking (in nature) may present a crucial step in transition from Early to Modern Humans (Liebenberg, 1990). Such transition presumably will include the theatre of war. Relate this to the quote by Mao and guerrilla struggle. The expert tracker must be able to “read between the lines”. They cannot read everything *in* the sand... rather they must be able to read *into* the sand (Liebenberg, 1990: v). This reminder by Liebenberg is worth keeping in mind as we, in this article, “keep tracking into the mind of the guerilla”.

Von Decker and others prove to be informative here: “In the case of a special mission, it is the mission itself which should be paramount to the partisan above all other considerations. He ought never to deviate from his purpose, never, above all, at the expense of his mission, whatever inviting opportunities may tempt him. In short, the partisan should be a man of absolute reliability. When he has no special mission, the partisan should take as his sole aim the infliction of appreciable losses on the enemy. A partisan will avoid contact with the enemy insofar as the object of his expedition can be achieved without fighting for no other reason than

that he is not always his own master in providing for the needs of the wounded, nor can he count on anyone to replace his losses. However, if a free corps cannot avoid an engagement, each man must be inspired by the greatest bravery. No partisan should ever dream of laying down his arms, if only because he must consider himself and his men as outlaws.⁸ If a partisan band is scattered, each man must know the general meeting place and do his utmost to reach it. In such warfare, the permutations are infinite and each has its variants. Ruse, surprise, force, boldness, chance, and, above all, luck – these are the vantage. Sometimes one, sometimes another will lead to his object. His salvation of today may destroy him tomorrow. Here all rules fall short and theory is of no avail.⁹ Almost always the partisan is weaker than the enemy he confronts: method, therefore, no longer applies, for all method is based on some equality of forces (Von Decker in Laqueur, 1970: 60ff).

Debray points out another relevant linkage: "... whenever armed struggle is the order of the day, there is a close tie between biology and ideology. However absurd or shocking this relationship may seem, it is nonetheless a decisive one. Physical aptitude is the prerequisite for all other aptitudes; a minor point of limited theoretical appeal, but the armed struggle appears to have a rationale of which theory knows nothing..." (Debray, 1977: 215).¹⁰ It is worth noting and reflecting on these words of Debray because it is closely intertwined with the argument here. Some of the references to (and direct quotations from) Guevara echoes Debray. The references later made by the author – and others reflecting on Smuts' persona – are also closely tied into the argument.

Che Guevara stated: "There are three conditions for the survival of the guerrilla movement that begins its development under the situation just prescribed: constant mobility, constant vigilance and constant distrust. Without the adequate use of these three elements of military tactics, the guerrilla will survive with difficulty. It must be remembered that the heroism of the guerrilla warrior at this moment consists in the extent of his establishment ends and the enormous sacrifices he must make to achieve them. These sacrifices will not only be the daily combat, or face-to-face fighting with the enemy. They will take forms that are subtle and more difficult to resist for the body and mind of an individual who is in the guerrilla movement. These guerrillas will perhaps be severely punished by the enemy armies. Sometimes they will be divided into groups; those who have been made prisoners, martyred;

⁸ Guevara puts it in stark terminology: "It matters little to the individual guerrilla whether or not he survives" (Sandison, 1997: 66).

⁹ The reader may now understand why the author chose to start this paper with a quotation from Paul Feyerabend's *Against Method*.

¹⁰ Once again the above statement and its implications apply.

persecuted like hunted animals in those areas where they have been chosen to operate, with the constant worry of having the enemy one step behind; with the constant distrust of everyone since the frightening peasants will hand them over, in some cases, to be rid of the repressive troops; with no other alternative but death or victory, at times when death is an ever present thought, and victory is the myth about which only a revolutionary can dream... If the military situation will be difficult at first, the political will be no less ticklish. And if one single military error can liquidate the guerrilla movement, a political error can stop its development for long periods. This is how guerrilla war must be... understood” (Guevara in Laquer, 1977: 209ff). To bring the guerilla environment and resultant knife-edge choices closer under focus, the following may be enlightening: “Partisan war requires special talents in the commander and unusual qualities in men.” Also, “...[the partisan] will maintain strict discipline in his band... true courage in an officer is founded on blameless morality”. Perhaps more important:

“A leader is no man’s master; he is a leader in order to give commands, but no man is his slave. Discipline and respect work both ways, from lower to higher and from higher to lower. Our armed forces [guerrillas] must recognize the principle of economy, economy of human life and of supplies and weapons. We live off the land and our numbers are few; thus the principle of unceasing initiatives, boldness, courage, heroism, and the principles of mobility, speed and swiftness are essential to armed forces struggling for their country’s liberation” (Cabral, 1977: 242).

Thus, small wars have always been and will continue to be supported and nurtured from among the ranks of the people (Von Decker, 1977: 55). No wonder then that in such a tightly knitted group within the above context the argument is made by Cabral that if a man is ordered to attack and he runs away, and so unsettles his group, the group has a right to kill him (Cabral, 1977: 239).¹¹

One may choose to highlight the words mentioned above. It impresses the notion that guerrilla warfare as a form of “in-between warfare” has had (and will do so in future) formative influences on guerrilla commanders and soldiers. Consider the following persons and their role in semi-conventional and unconventional

¹¹ Che for example was criticised by Regis Debray for his absolute and “simplistic black or white fever which never allowed him to be – or more important – perceived as being weak in any way. Che ordered the summary execution of a number of men who were revealed as traitors and spies... (He) could never bring himself to apologize for such executions” (Sandison, 1997: 58). Sandison here points towards an aspect of guerrilla-leader being that also marked to some smaller degree the persona of Smuts.

“guerrilla” warfare: Gueseppe Garibaldi, Lettow-Vorbeck, Mao Ze Dong, Che Guevara, Regis Debray, Vo Nguyen Giap, Josiah Tongogara (Zimbabwe), Samora Machel, Chris Hani, Raul and Fidel Castro.

Getting ‘into’ Smuts’ head

In conventional war Smuts favoured attack rather than defence; movement rather than siege (Hancock & Van der Poel, 1966: 324; Judd & Surridge, 2002: 93; Scholtz, 1999: 20–21; Nasson, 1999: 51).¹² That Smuts already seemed ready to advocate such military-strategic approach at the time when war broke out in 1899 is clear.

Did previous guerrilla experience play such an informative and active role in Smuts’ attitudes and deeds? This question begs an answer.

The Boers were beaten back. A second stage of war was to follow, namely guerrilla war (Scholtz, 1999: 126ff). Now an acid test would come for Smuts the uninitiated guerilla: an experience that could be called a fundamental break in everyday somatic experience – perhaps the greatest somatic experience of Smuts the “me-bodily-being” and of guerrillas before and after him. A long march/commando raid in winter through the Cape Colony, comparable with Che Guevara’s and Fidel Castro’s march from the Santiago de Cuba through the Sierra Maestro’s to Havana. A raid seemingly comparable with that of the constant irritation wrought on French forces by Spanish *guerrilleros* against Napoleon in Spain.¹³ A raid that covered considerable distances covering areas nearly as vast as the Russian partisans covered earlier on against Napoleon in the latter’s disastrous attempt to defeat Russia and the subsequent French retreat from Moscow during 1812.¹⁴

¹² Scholtz makes it clear that seemingly only two of the Boer leaders had some knowledge of then military-theoretical nature. They were Smuts and JBM Hertzog (Scholtz, 1999:20). Hancock & Van der Poel in the *Selections from the Smuts papers* (Vol.I) , Memorandum (4 September 1899) quote Smuts: “De beste militaire schrijvers van deze eeuw hebben bewezen hoeveel voordeeliger het is om aanvallenderwijze op te treden dan defensief te handelen” (Hancock and Van der Poel, 1966: 316). Scholtz correctly remarks that it was/is unclear to which such authors Smuts was referring (Scholtz, 1999: 21).

¹³ For more detail on the Spanish Sore or “Ulcer” see Davydov (1977: 49 – 52) and Espoz y Mina in Laqueur (1977: 46 – 48).

¹⁴ Following the failure of the Barbarossa invasion and attempted but unsuccessful subjection of the Soviet Union and crushing victories by the Soviets over German forces such as the battles of Stalingrad and Kursk, the German *Wehrmacht* was to increasingly experience the sharp end of partisan activity. It is estimated that about 6 000 partisan units of various strengths operated behind German lines between 1942 – 1944 (Sharashkin, 2005). These activities bled the German operations, men and material to death and defeat. Indeed such partisan activities in Russia, France, Italy, Greece and the Balkans played no small role in the German and Italian defeat.

Smuts here had his first real contact with the enemy. Two of his compatriots killed, he alone survived the reconnaissance trip (Erasmus, 1999: 89).¹⁵ Before, “contacts” with the enemy was at a level of strategic or tactical planning at an object distance, like modern wars tend to be. Now it was for real and the bodily being had to cope with the real experience, the somatic interruptions/ruptures/continuities in the physical war theatre. This happened in the interface between somatic being, material context and nature. Soma and biology and earth and constant movement/flux met. Threatened by food poisoning and death, the sick and fatigued guerrillas were hounded mercilessly by the enemy during rainstorms. The guerrillas under his command were on the move in unknown territory, while they suffered an ever-present lack of food and his comrades died of wounds and illnesses. The execution of an informer (*impimpi*), named Lemuel Colaine in Van Rhynsdorp at the unwavering command of Smuts deserves mentioning (Reitz, 1999: 162–163).¹⁶ Smuts stuck to his decision despite protestations by some onlookers, acting in principled intolerance towards what was seen by him as treason. The dictum that Cabral stated earlier and the intolerance that Sandison (1997: 58) mentioned in Che Guevara’s dealings with traitors reflects here the guerilla commanders’ action. One observes an approach in dealing with treason that seemed to be shared in thought and action by Smuts, Cabral and Guevara.

Smuts: the link between somatic beings, bodily experience, movement, modern/mass/conventional war and the (inverse) logic of guerrilla-action

The Anglo-Boer War was one of the first modern conventional wars. For some it was also the first of modern resource wars (Pritvorov & Liebenberg, 2000: 75ff). Others, such as Cuthbertson saw it as the last of the colonial wars.¹⁷ Bottomley refers to it as one of the first Total Wars.¹⁸ Speed, quantity and mass

¹⁵ Smuts and his fellow guerrillas were under the impression at that stage that both his compatriots were killed. [Extract from the diary of A G Boshoff quoted by Erasmus (1999: 82)]. It later transpired that one was wounded and captured and one killed in the contact.

¹⁶ Some sources refer to Colijn, the Dutch spelling rather than Colaine as used by Reitz. The former spelling is perhaps more likely. The *Dictionary of South African Biography* does not include a reference to Colhaine or Colijn. (DSAB, Vol. V: 914).

¹⁷ Personal discussion on the topic between the author and Greg Cuthbertson, historian (07/04/2005).

¹⁸ Andrew Porter took another view. Maybe somewhat controversial but well worth reflecting on: “For most people in the (British) metropole, neither the war nor other South African issues ever captured their attention in such a lasting way... rapid displacement of South African issues by others with far more domestic resonance revealed just how shallow had been the impact of the war and how limited had been its capacity to redefine the boundaries of political action” (Porter, 2002: 300).

logistics became not only dictums but also axioms in furthering the objective of victory over the smaller Boer Republics with their rich resources – as was to happen in all large wars afterwards.

Guerrilla warfare maybe described as anarchic. Rooney refers to “mavericks in military”. He includes some conventional military commanders in analysis. Guerrillas, like mavericks (without adding pejorative value to the term) are forced to invert the logic of conventional/modern/industrial/high-tech warfare. Differently put: “An unexamined action is not worth doing.” Hodgkinson (1983: 279), an authority on the philosophy of leadership, derived the above from the Socratic notion: “An unexamined life is not worth living.” Likewise unexamined (read: inexperienced and reflective/reflexive), subversive action is not worth undertaking. Guerrilla experience for the soma or bodily being tends to enforce this without pre-reflection. Simply put: there is limited opportunity to read a textbook before. Experience is the daily teacher.

The guerrilla “state” (self-chosen and/or enforced) is perhaps the more social (natural?) state. The modern conventional state of war brings about an ever-present, nearly omnipotent variable, namely quantity, speed and mass logistics.¹⁹ In fact, it is actually immaterial whether mass-logistics in modern war is the assumption or the outcome. The conventional state (of war) thus rests on speed and power. It is a war state. In contrast the guerrilla state is qualitatively different. It inverts the logic of the war state. Hence, it also inverts the logic of “body” and “state”.

Smuts: Reading mind or *soma*?

In the East African campaign (World War I) some said that Smuts “made his men suffer unnecessarily by driving them too hard in the terrible conditions” (Crafford, 1945: 124). Or it is said that Smuts endured hunger and thirst with his followers. “He ate the same food... Tired and pale and washed out, he remained upon his feet, working and planning when bouts of malaria assail him. He went about his duties in the ordinary way with drawn face and fevered brow” (Crafford, 1945: 126). As in the *Boer War* days, “he constantly went out to reconnoitre, taking unnecessary risks and being the source of continuous anxiety to his staff officers who remonstrated with him in vain” (Crafford, 1945: 124, 125, 129).

¹⁹ Usually against smaller or surprised opponents (and with by implication aged – if not obsolete – armed forces); The German *Blitzkrieg* against The Netherlands, Belgium and Poland, Operation Barbarossa against the unsuspecting Soviet Union and more recently the two Gulf Wars against Iraq being examples. It is at times like this that the guerrilla/partisan activities started cutting the heels of the invader/oppressor...

“Although still somewhat detached and unapproachable, he was much more human in the field, in most respects, than he had been at home, and by many a kind act he stole the hearts of his men... Men and officers alike respected and admired him because he was willing to live as they lived and to face danger, sickness, and death, even as they did.” (Crafford, 1945: 129). Similar arguments have been raised by his son (Smuts, 1952: 169-173).

Smuts faced organised conventional war and later some resemblance of guerrilla war in *Deutsch West Afrika* (Namibia) during World War I and mobile (some would say guerrilla) war in *Deutsch Ost Afrika* (German-East Africa or Tanganyika). In the latter for all practical purposes the German General von Lettow-Vorbeck engaged Smuts for years without victory. Rooney argued that: “Against this criterion, Lettow-Vorbeck succeeded where Smuts failed...” (Rooney, 1999: 109). Another military analyst suggested that Smuts “was a bad tactician and strategist, an indifferent general, but a remarkable soldier in the East African theatre” (Military observer quoted by Rooney, 1999: 110).²⁰ For the most part, some may argue Smuts battled against the country rather than against Lettow-Vorbeck. But then, there is little new about this, both in conventional and unconventional warfare. Some may even choose to make this argument with regards to the recent less-than-vaguely “efficient American Blitzkrieg” or “precision war” against the small Iraqi Republic, its obsolete army and its people, infrastructure and economy weakened by a dozen years of sanctions (Scholtz, 2004: 27, 28).

After the East-African campaign Smuts corresponded with Lettow-Vorbeck and his impoverished family. He even started sending money to – by then retired – Vorbeck. Had a person with ample acumen and somatic experience gained in the guerrilla phase of the South African War met his match in guerrilla/mobile war in German East Africa? Did he develop a healthy respect, even admiration for an erstwhile foe? And reciprocated in kindness? Perhaps yes...

In the remainder of the article some areas will be highlighted where the contention of the author is that the “inculcated logic through intense somatic

²⁰ Gen. Roy Alexander SANDF provided another perspective, during a conference held at the Military Academy Saldanha (2001). He argued that Smuts in close duels performed better/more effective being the “hunted” than being the “hunter” – in other words as a guerrilla, rather than conventional military leader in a conventional war. Alexander’s argument strengthened the observations made by Robert Ardrey (1970), Laqueur (1977) and Louis Liebenberg in *The art of tracking: The origin of science*. (1990). This argument is worth considering as a heuristic tool in attempting the understanding of guerrilla, nature, war and movement in territory.

guerrilla experience influenced the later Smuts' choices and actions. Rather than weighing up personal conjectures here against other interpretations amply written and well presented from their specific perspectives, the remainder of the article departs from a more reflective approach. The rest of the article will deal with the following: pre-empting the potential victory of an opponent or the possibility of a drawn-out (guerrilla) war by contestants; regrouping and (re-) accommodation following the battle/struggle; and being guerrilla, the human experience, nature and holism.

Pre-empting the potential victory of an opponent or the possibility of a drawn-out (guerrilla) war by contestants

With much compassion and understanding – even solidarity – Smuts acted towards Lettow-Vorbeck after the East African campaign in World War I. Compare this to his actions against one of his kinsmen (*stamgenote*) during the Anglo-Boer War. Lemuel Colijn (Lambert Colyn or Colijn) served as an informer for the British Colonisers. After Colijn was caught he was summarily sentenced to death and executed by firing squad on Smuts' orders despite protestations from Colijn and the tearful daughters of the man on whose farm this took place (Reitz, 1999: 163–164; Oost, 1956: 16; Smuts, 1952: 79).

Smuts abided by the inculcated logic of guerrilla war. During the 1914 Rebellion when Afrikaners rose against British rule, a similar incident occurred. Smuts's reaction in the case of Captain Jopie Fourie can be traced back to the earlier ethos developed in guerrilla struggle. (Note also my previous references to Cabral and Guevara in this regard). Fourie was a captain in the Union Defence Forces (UDF). Without resigning from the UDF, Fourie joined rebel forces north of Pretoria. He was captured, court-martialled and executed by a firing squad.

Smuts firstly reacted to the fact that an old comrade-in-arms treacherously rose against him. Fourie fought in the Anglo-Boer War together with Smuts and others. He did not resign from the UDF or the rank he held. He gave no warning of his intent to fight against Smuts during the rebellion. Fourie broke an unspoken, strict code of guerrilla honour and the extra-ordinary chain of command that are installed through socialised guerrilla action. His punishment was swift and non-debatable. Some would argue that Smuts as head of state could have acted the same way under ruling legal conditions. After all this is also the military justice dispensed by conventional forces. The author's argument in contrast is that the “first instinct of the guerrilla” regarding treason played the primary role in Smuts' decision. Furthermore, knowing how exhaustive a successful guerrilla campaign as part of a

civil war could be, Smuts pro-actively made a bludgeoning cut in the potential development of a new guerrilla chain of command by removing Fourie.

Taking a cue from the guerrilla experience and *soma* of Smuts, it could be argued that the above two reasons for Fourie's punishment was uppermost in the mind of Smuts rather than the legalities of a regimental code of discipline or legal issues pertaining the loyalty of citizens to the existing state. The death of Fourie finally effected a break between Smuts and the Afrikaner Nationalists. What was a perfectly consistent decision in terms of guerrilla logic was a less than optimum political choice. Repercussions of this choice were to haunt Smuts afterwards, just as Guevara was criticised for his rash taken against traitors. For Smuts however the consequences went further than mere criticisms by fellow political comrades. It was to impact negatively on his immediate and future political career.

A second example – the 1922 Mineworkers Revolt: Smuts reacted swiftly and brutally after his personal political intervention failed – or rather were denied to him by the strikers and their leaders. The militant and the communist oriented strikers took their revolution seriously. Smuts took the cutting of the umbilical cord of a potential revolutionary war (and foreseeable urban guerrilla action) equally seriously. The strike was broken within days by police, soldiers and the air force. Once again the argument goes, the choice was informed by Smuts's guerrilla experience.

His commitment of superior forces prevented a potential drawn-out resistance resembling the reincarnation of a new classic guerrilla march of (urban) resistance against the state. Realising in his tactical calculus that strong military intervention (for a limited time) was necessary, he acted. He made use of the dictum of scarcity of human and military resources on his own side that guerrilla war taught him. He knew that the strikers were more hamstrung by the same *economics of scarcity*. Smuts was not a guerrilla anymore; however the somatic experience of the tactical approach of a guerrilla commander remained with him – the guerrilla (a persona formed in guerrilla warfare) tends to a purist and unwavering in his/her decisions while working within an *economy of human and material scarcity*. Thus the guerrilla acts decisively if the opportunity arises.

The revolutionary strikers' committee and the strikers-commandos made the rather serious mistake of preparing for defence rather than attack and there was a lack of effective leadership and a strategy of armed revolutionary struggle on their

side.²¹ In the course of a few days a potential revolution was quelled. Smuts's son argues that: "Once he (Smuts) had assumed personal command matters sped to a swift conclusion... Once more he had revealed his brilliance as a military tactician" (Smuts, 1952: 257). Matters did end swiftly after Smuts took control of the situation, but it was not necessarily brilliance that brought it about. It was a firm unwavering decision inculcated through guerrilla experience.

A third example is the Bondelswarts Revolt in the erstwhile South West Africa. Smuts, through JH Hofmeyer, administrator of South West Africa, tried to negotiate when tension arose between the authorities and the Bondelswarts on the issue of dog tax. Failing this and knowing the area, he pre-empted any escalation of the civil unrest (and a real danger of rural guerrilla war) through speedily cutting off access to water, using deliberate and concentrated force to subdue an enemy that had the potential to undermine the administration of South West Africa. He again had cut through the potential future development of a new guerrilla nucleus or "core" through a pre-emptive strike. Politically, Smuts survived the Bondelswarts *affaire* despite international and national criticism. The longer-term political consequences however were less than amicable for Smuts; which happened to suggest that being conditioned in being a guerrilla does not guarantee perfect post-guerrilla leadership in politics.

This time around his innate guerrilla action (the primary military-somatic being) prevented the spreading of a rural revolt. He acted without much warning, with mobility, surprise and speed using conventional military means (i.e. the newly formed South African Air Force)²² in choosing to repress the revolt. In doing so he (as an old-guerrilla) prevented timely the potential spread of rural rebellion that would be difficult to quell.²³

²¹ The strikers acted rather old-stylish. Defend rather than attack was their chosen approach, something that Virileo warned against.

²² See Maxwell and Smith (1970) for the role that air force operations played in the suppression of the revolt.

²³ Forty years or more later the Apartheid government would be faced with revolt in Namibia (rural unconventional warfare) and inside South Africa (urban and peri-urban guerrilla and some rural activity) continuing for nearly three decades. Eventually Namibia became independent after the forced withdrawal of South African forces. The ideal that the Bondelswarts and Witboois could not achieve became a reality for Namibian people when the South African flag was lowered and the Namibian flag raised in the Windhoek stadium. Similarly Scholtz argues about the South African situation in the 1990s: "Wat die Boere om verskeie redes in 1900 – 1902 nie kon regkry nie, het vir die ANC wel gewerk" (Scholtz, 2000: 269). See also Leopold Scholtz (1999): *Waarom die Boere die oorlog verloor het*.

One may add he was to lose the political contest later because of these actions. He would pay a costly political price for his actions. He was seen as being paw-in-glove with capitalist exploiters, to be insensitive towards (white) workers, acting harshly against indigenous people and as being authoritarian. Others saw in his approach colonialism and racism. The Bulhoek massacre, where religious insurgents made exactly the same mistake as the Bondelswarts and the strikers, also contributed to Smuts's eventual political downfall.

The "early" Smuts was known for his pro-active approach. He argued for the appointment of young African born persons (*Afrikaanders*) in the state bureaucracy of the Transvaal Republic rather than Dutch expatriates intent on status and moneymaking (Armstrong, 1939: 51, 55; Theron, 2000: 133, 135, 136–138). In this sense he was an early advocate of "affirmative action" in South Africa. He fought corruption in the *Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek* (ZAR) openly despite Kruger's inaction against persistent white-collar crime (Armstrong, 1939: 55). He established a secret service for the ZAR before the Anglo-Boer War.

In military conflict he argued for a rapid deployment of Boer forces in South Africa at the advent of the Boer War. In this sense Smuts was the harbinger of *blitzkrieg*, rather than *sitzkrieg*, which the older Boer leadership opted for (Spies & Natrass, 1999: 24–26). In conventional war Smuts was ready to adopt warfare to be more mobile and aimed at rapid deployment. He was, in effect, a thorough modernist in his time. This type of "modernist intellectualism" was later to be moulded, refined and honed in guerrilla war. Through enforced experience Smuts became more persistent, tactically always on the move and deploying hit-and-run tactics on different levels – yet remained a "purist". He was forced to understand and act on various strategies and tactics simultaneously as somatic being in a natural-material context.

Smuts deliberately moved into the Cape Colony to mobilise political support for the Boer/Republican/anti-colonialist cause. His incursion added value by distracting the imperial enemy and forcing them back into already "conquered" (even "safe") territory. Smuts aimed at establishing "liberated" zones. He aimed to mobilise and recruit new guerrillas, establish new bases and if at all possible, create the conditions for "popular insurrection" as part of the political plan. He used the media (*popular and armed propaganda*) by informing foreign newspapers about his progress while in the field. (The author submits that Smuts was more provocative and farsighted in his guerrilla strategy than Christiaan de Wet at the time – even if many would disagree with this conjecture).

Looking at Smuts' actions during this phase some questions remain in retrospect. He could not have deluded himself and must have known that mass-revolt was problematic – even unlikely. Or did he – as Che Guevara did in his fateful Bolivian campaign? He perhaps had a fair idea of reliable locals and their support structures (even access to arms).²⁴ His invasion had perhaps a better chance at success as Guevara's last expedition in Bolivia, where Che was advised beforehand to expect little support from the local population and moving with his band in territory unknown. There was even more of a chance of success one may argue, than was afforded Guevara in Africa due to the limitations of men, material and the impositions of a foreign populace and unknown/unfriendly territory (Gleijeses, 2003). Smuts succeeded and hung on in his deep penetration of enemy territory.

The classic examples of lessons learned (read: conditioning) through exposure to guerrilla warfare remained with the persona of the later Smuts.

Regrouping and (re-) accommodation following the battle/struggle

Dealing with defeat and/or contemporary setbacks with the hope of rescuing (some) building blocks for future use – both military and political – is at stake here.

This article deals with the guerrilla experience and the effects thereof in one's personal life and the longer-term impact of guerrilla war on commanders and men/women involved in such a struggle long after the intensity of the guerrilla experience took place... and yet lingers on like a smouldering coal.

Geyser typifies Smuts as a “philosophical strategist rather than a military commander” (Geyser, 2001: III). One has to disagree. Smuts was a strategist, but his commanding capabilities were those of the “guerrilla-commander-in-action”. The author also have to disagree Herman Charles Bosman's and Penny Grimbeek's earlier analysis that Smuts was (only) a “man of letters” (Grimbeek, 2000: 37ff). The guerrilla experience of Smuts did leave existential marks (“conditioning” – if one likes) that stayed with him. And the guerrilla-body conditioning, the soma moulded through the being of guerrilla in nature/the material and concrete more than the sophistry of letters created the later political Smuts. His physical encounters with nature and enemy inculcated a primary thought pattern (reaction – if one wishes)

²⁴ Compliments to the fact that Smuts and a Captain Van Tonder took an earlier initiative before the war to establish a *ZAR Geheime Dienst* with a network of informers over South Africa. Like elsewhere in the world military intelligence though could not answer fully the question of “how much support exactly do we have”. Military intelligence over decades seems to consistently confuse “sympathy for a cause” with “willing militant support for a cause”.

with regard to regrouping after crises or defeat. [See Von Decker on regrouping as a guerrilla “drill” (1977: 610)].

The effect of the guerrilla war on Smuts: “[He] found satisfaction in physical expression and achievement, in hardships and in really intimate association with his fellow men... In those long months in the open air he formed a philosophy of life and an understanding of the world that he followed ever after” (Smuts, 1952: 84–85). Intimate comradeship and harsh experience inculcate the natural urge to regroup in order to continue the struggle.

His “mentality” or existential predisposition gained in the guerrilla theatre became a permanent and prominent feature with Smuts. He acted as guerrilla forced by an ever-changing flow of events to be pragmatic in the guerrilla phase of the Anglo-Boer War. If he learnt to be “hard” and “soft” at the same time, that also remained with him. Regrouping after failure or partial failure – even defeat – became “first nature” for Smuts and guerrillas before and after him.

Smuts knew that guerrilla war asked for speeding up and slowing down war in a pragmatic – even balanced – fashion. This impacted on his later political life. In guerrilla wars, principles are seldom absent. Devising ways (strategy) and means (tactics) to attain or uphold the principle may differ. Smuts lived this and experienced this. In his later political life, regrouping seemed to re-assert itself. In political terms he tried to recapture lost territory by involvement with the *Volkspartij* established by Gen. Louis Botha. Much later on joining up in government with an old comrade-yet-adversary, Gen. J B M Hertzog, even if they did not see eye to eye on everything, he demonstrated this again. He abundantly tried to show that he forgave old clashes/ skirmishes/battles. (See him in and out of coalition with Hertzog, see him giving back civil-rule to *Duitswes* and his later relationships with Alfred Milner and Lettow-Vorbeck.) It is argued here that the notion of regrouping played a major, if not primary role.

Central to his mind (even if unconsciously) was “regrouping” and “starting again”. He lost an election, stayed on in opposition, won elections again, lost again. He received honours from former enemies and allies. He even attended the inauguration of the Voortrekker Monument (1948). Was that an act of holism or selfish opportunism? Was it perhaps an act of many pathways lead to victory? Or – even – a defeat could be a pathway to a new victory (regrouping)? Or was it reconciliation with Afrikaner Nationalism? The latter seems unlikely. Most of the former actions are compatible with guerrilla being and regrouping after every

operation/defeat/victory. Thus Smuts represents the dictum of “live to fight another day”, rather than the modern war manoeuvre or mass attacks.

To add a bold conjecture as interlude: The inculcated natural logic of regrouping played a role in Smuts’ later philosophy of holism, which will be discussed below in more detail. The author’s contention is that “perceived defeat can turn into victory” or at least “after battles and skirmishes – even failed – one regroup”. And this relates to the guerrilla experience that integrated itself in the actions of the political Smuts. Scattered parts (of a guerrilla band) can come together again as a greater whole. Holism would develop in Smuts’ philosophy in much the same way.

Like a Che Guevara – and that happened to be a personal weakness – it seems in retrospect that Smuts trusted too much in the long-term wisdom of followers. Then, like many a time earlier, personal defeat can come through the ballot box (as in Smuts’ case) or the bullet (as in Che’s case).

Being guerrilla, the human experience, nature and holism

Let the argument speak: dependency on nature is a primary learning experience in guerrilla warfare. The somatic body-nature interdependence is the required minimum for survival – and eventually success. With it comes the knowledge that nature can re-act (retaliate?) almost voluntarily if you act unknowingly. The effect of the interactive-interdependence with a voluntary/involuntary nature during the guerrilla phase could have influenced Smuts’ later holistic and botanic interests. While the sources that invited holism in the thought of Smuts may have been many and scientifically varied (perhaps even eclectic), the real-life experience of guerrilla war was material and concrete and played a major role.

Shall one relate the following about the guerrilla commander? “The more uncomfortable the guerrilla fighter and the more initiated into the rigours of nature, the more he/she feels at home; his/her morale is higher; his/her sense of security greater... it matters little to the guerrilla whether he or she survives or not” (Sandison, 1997: 66. See also various essays in Laqueur, 1977).

This experience played an important – if not crucial – role in the later life of Jan Smuts. He abided by the “moral law” lived as “bodily-being” along the lines of imposed human survival and excellence in nature. In a very real sense it is experience that matter(s) encapsulate(s) experience [Speaking of Taoism, nature can be a contradictory/opposing force (enemy) or complimentary force

(partner/respectful fellow)]. And for the same amount of pain, survival could be translated into survival by excellence. But these are material for future discussions].

It is argued here that earlier guerrilla experience impacted deeply on Smuts's later political and philosophical thinking. Thus "holism" had as source the material experience. Material experience, on its part was informed/moulded by the guerrilla experience and experiences lived through in a giving and unforgiving nature. The more intense the experience, the more likely it will influence the choices made by the bodily (or existential) being – even years afterwards. Needless to say: The latter statement brings us back to the quotes at the beginning of the article.

For someone with daily guerrilla-experience in close contact with nature, the term *science* includes and encompasses the material and physical world.²⁵ Whereas Che and his comrades shot hawks for food and ate donkeys (their own riding animals), Smuts and his comrades enjoyed amongst others the tortoise and its yet unborn, as a meal notwithstanding his/their love for nature. Che retained his day-to-day interest in medicine, which in essence means to save, conserve and nurture life while having to kill (Guevara's Bolivian Diary published by Pimlico, 2000).

Erasmus in quoting from her father's diary referred to the guerrilla band under Smuts having to live on prickly-pear leaves, honey, drought-starving cattle and even considered eating some of their riding animals (Erasmus, 1999: 81ff). In survival the guerrilla depending on nature lives through and is educated by, sustained through, but also disciplined by nature. Consider the following experiences by Che Guevara's guerrillas in Bolivia and what we know about Smuts: "Day of intermittent marching until five in the afternoon... We advanced a little (during a march). We only shot a small parrot, which we gave to the rear party. Today we ate palm hearts with meat... only three scant meals left."

A later entry: "We shot four hawks for our meal; everything has got soaked and the weather continues to be very wet. The few men's morale is low; Miguel has swollen feet and some of the others suffer from the same condition... we decided to eat the horse as our swelling is alarming... The situation became agonising, the machete men (pathfinders) were fainting, Miguel and Dario were drinking their own urine, so was Chino. And the results were horrible diarrhoea and cramps..."

²⁵ It is at this point that a whole new area of research is opened up that cannot be entertained here. It pleads for and implies the need for future research in this area.

Smuts grew simultaneously as a botanist notwithstanding the fact that some of the insurgents and he himself nearly died as a result of eating bread-tree fruit (*broodboom-vrugte*) at the wrong time of the year. The story of this is well described. His son, Jan Christian Smuts, amongst others, in some detail refers to this. In the vicinity of the Zuurberge and the Great Fish River after living on a sub-optimum diet (that is going hungry to the point of starvation, some would say) they came upon what the younger Smuts describes as “boesmans brood” (*Encephelartos Altensteinii*) and proceeded to feast on it. “Soon all were overcome by acute abdominal pains and writhing on the ground” (Smuts, 1952: 75). Smuts amongst others were tied to his horse in order to remain saddled while they had to escape the enemy amongst cold and torrential rain.

Smuts and those with him experienced the dependency on nature for the guerrilla. So did thousands of other guerrillas after him. Also, they experienced physically that nature will or can re-act (retaliate?) almost voluntarily if you act unknowingly: The effect of the interactive-interdependence with a voluntary/involuntary nature during the guerrilla phase could have had formative influence on Smuts’ later botanic interests and holistic philosophy. The junction between materialism (the real world), the tension – if not contradiction – between human and nature’s power and the tension between “history running its course” and the “human as historical agent” in the broader context of an evolving material world is pertinent here.

Taking note and reflecting on other authors on the sources of the holist philosophy of Smuts (and these arguments are indeed eloquent), it is suggested that the guerrilla experience as a (proto-) source or holism cannot be discarded. In fact, it should be taken seriously.

Conclusion

It is argued here that Smuts’ guerrilla experience in contrast to a variety of other analyses was essentially formative of his later military, political and philosophical life. Earlier interpretations undoubtedly greatly contribute towards understanding Jan Smuts. The perspective offered here, it is trusted, is another useful contribution.

The guerrilla experienced intimately marked the later Smuts. Smuts himself remained an “immense and brooding” (spirit) in and of Southern Africa. Unlike Rhodes, the coloniser-tycoon, who never was an African or guerrilla, Smuts as guerrilla and African opted out of “final solutions”. He made it clear that for example the “race question” demanded too much energy to conquer, while showing

towards Ghandi ambiguously animosity (hate?), grace and respect – and later recognition – that perhaps pointed beyond apartheid and exclusion.²⁶ This holds true of his reaction after the Marabastad rebellion in Pretoria in the 1940s where he publicly expressed his regret for the lives lost through anxious and premature police and military action. This action demonstrates some measure of greatness. This is something for example that the (New) National Party and Afrikaner (Broeder) Bond, capitalist institutions and the Liberals (read: PFP/DP/DA) and their cohorts up to know have never done – or in very subdued terms in the aftermath of Apartheid and capitalist excesses.

Did we arrive at an answer on whether we can interpret Smuts through sociology, social history, identity theories, somatic interaction of people with nature, material philosophy or biology? It may be or may be not. But we know that new vistas of interpretation are open within this material world where humans interact consistently in war and peace – even where the weak resists the powerful in the inverted logic of war; thus turning guerrilla.

Taken from the above arguments offered there are pressing reflections remaining for social theorists, military sociology students (guerrilla and conventional) and political leaders by “(re) considering Smuts” and the formative experience described above through new lenses. And such reflections are becoming more pertinent in our modern – some would say “global” – world.

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²⁶ Historians such as Iain Smith commented on his views regarding race relations in time and context (Smith, 1999: 175). The Rhodes memorial lecture delivered by Smuts in 1929 makes for interesting reading. In it Smuts oscillates between rationales for separateness, future equality yet difference – in fact not providing an answer for the “native policy” of the time or the future (“Native policy in Africa” in *Plans for a better world*, 1942:52ff). Some observers could easily see in this speech a proto-rationale for apartheid.

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