



# Jan Smuts: Unafraid of Greatness

*Richard Steyn*

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## **Jan Smuts: Unafraid of Greatness** Richard Steyn

Jan Smuts: Unafraid of Greatness is a re-examination of the life and thoughts of Jan Smuts. It is intended to remind a contemporary readership of the remarkable achievements of this impressive soldier-statesman. The author, a former editor of The Star, argues that Smuts's role in the creation of modern South Africa should never be forgotten, not least because of his lifetime of devoted service to this country. The book draws a parallel between Smuts and President Thabo Mbeki, both architects of a new South Africa, much lionised abroad yet often distrusted at home.

This highly readable account of Smuts' eventful life blends fact, anecdote and opinion in an examination of his complex character - his relationships with women, spiritual and intellectual life and role as advisor to world leaders. Politics and international affairs receive the most attention, but Smuts's unique contributions in a variety of other fields, including botany, conservation and philosophy, also receive attention.

Jan Smuts: Unafraid of Greatness does not shy away from the contradictions of its subject. Smuts was one of the architects of the United Nations and a great champion of human rights, yet he could not come to terms with the need to include the African majority in the politics of his own country.

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