

**SOUTH AFRICAN-AUSTRALIAN DIPLOMATIC
RELATIONS 1945-1961**

by

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SUMMARY

This is the first study of official relations between South Africa and Australia as conducted through resident High Commissions or Embassies. It reaches the conclusion that, though neither country loomed large on the other's scale of priorities, the relationship was at the outset perceived to be of greater value to Australia than to South Africa. It was initiated by the Australian government in 1945 as was the airlink which connected the two countries in 1952. Then flown by propeller-driven aircraft, the air route led to the expansion of Australian territory when the United Kingdom transferred to Australia sovereignty over the Cocos (Keeling) Islands in the Indian Ocean, eight hours flying time from Perth and an essential refuelling stop en route to Southern Africa.

The first Australian High Commissioner, Sir George Knowles, arrived in South Africa in August 1946. The Smuts government did not attach much value to the relationship. Pleading shortage of staff, and to the embarrassment of the Australian government, it had not reciprocated with its own appointment by the time of its fall in May 1948. On assuming office the following month the new Prime Minister, Dr Malan responded positively to an Australian reminder about the lack of a South African High Commissioner. Dr P.R. Viljoen was appointed to the position and arrived in Canberra in June 1949. The relationship lacked substance and for relatively lengthy periods in the 1950s the High Commissioner's post was left vacant on both sides.

The Australian government had proposed the establishment of relations on grounds *inter alia* that members of the British Commonwealth should be informed about each other's attitudes, policies and problems in the work of the United Nations. Yet it was the United Nations, particularly its composition, which subjected the relationship to its greatest strains.

In focusing on the role and functions of individual diplomats the study throws light on what the profession or occupation of diplomacy encompassed at the time. Also canvassed is the development of the South African and Australian Departments of External Affairs from their beginnings to the early 1960s.

Summary

Key terms:

Australia and South Africa; bilateral relations; diplomatic relations; official relations; diplomacy; diplomats; diplomatic reporting; foreign service; foreign service officers; Embassies; High Commissions; United Nations.

To the new South African Department of Foreign Affairs.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Australian Archives, Canberra
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Commission
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
<i>ADB</i>	<i>Australian Dictionary of Biography</i>
AHPC	Ad Hoc Political Committee
ALP	Australian Labor Party
ANC	African National Congress
ASIO	Australian Security Intelligence Organisation
CA	Canadian Archives, Ottawa
<i>CPD</i>	Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates
CRO	Commonwealth Relations Office
DEA	Department of External Affairs
DFA	Department of Foreign Affairs
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
<i>DSAB</i>	<i>Dictionary of South African Biography</i>
DO	Dominions Office
e-mail	electronic mail
FO	Foreign Office
GA	General Assembly
<i>GAOR</i>	General Assembly Official Records
<i>HA Deb.</i>	House of Assembly Debates
Memo.	Memorandum

Abbreviations

PRO	Public Record Office
PSC	Public Service Commission
PSB	Public Service Board
PUS	Permanent Under-Secretary
Qantas	Queensland and Northern Territory Air Service
SAA	South Africa Airways
SABRA	South African Bureau of Racial Affairs
<i>SCOR</i>	Security Council Official Records
SEA	Secretary for External Affairs
SFA	Secretary for Foreign Affairs
<i>Sen Deb.</i>	Senate Debates
SPC	Special Political Committee
Sup	Supplement
TC	Trusteeship Council
<i>TCOR</i>	Trusteeship Council Official Records
UN	United Nations
UNCIO	United Nations Conference on International Organisation
UN doc.	United Nations Document
UNISA	University of South Africa
USNA	United States National Archives
Wits	University of the Witwatersrand

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PREFACE

W.R. Louis, the historian of international trusteeship, said of his book *Imperialism at Bay: The United States and the decolonization of the British Empire*,¹ 'Surely one of the greatest pleasures of historical research is the opportunity to discuss one's work in progress with friends and colleagues'. A teacher at the University of Texas, he considered the 'treasure trove of colleagues' there to be a 'major advantage'. For one such as myself, employed in a non-academic occupation, who nonetheless hoped to produce something of scholarly value, the lack of such opportunities was a drawback.

This study was a solitary pursuit - no doubt a strange confession about the examination of an occupation characterised by the gregariousness of its practitioners. Diplomacy involves people, people, and yet more people, all interacting busily with each other. Without people, there can be no diplomacy. It is a human occupation. As the Assistant Director of the United States Foreign Service Institute put it fifty years ago, 'the world is populated by people, and ... it is primarily with the ideas, sentiments, anxieties, resentments, aspirations, frustrations, and basic ways of thinking, feeling and behaving of these people that our diplomacy must deal'.² Paradoxically, though, academics often treat diplomacy as if it falls within the ambit of Noel Annan's observation: 'Social scientists have depersonalised acres of human experience so that history resembles a ranch on which herds move, driven they know not why by impersonal forces, munching their way across the prairie'.³ It is time to reintroduce the human factor into studies of diplomacy. To a limited extent I attempt to do so here along the lines of what K.P. Jones calls the 'biographical approach' to foreign policy.⁴

What inspired the study in the first place was the award for doctoral studies of the University of South Africa's Chancellor's Club Scholarship. That was in respect of my MA dissertation, *The 1943 General Election* (1987), which was prepared, as was this thesis, under the *ægis* of the university's History Department. My thanks in that regard to Professor J.P. Brits who was also a midwife for my MA.

¹ Oxford, 1977, Preface, p. viii.

² F.S. Hopkins, 'The Foreign Service Institute Today'. A copy of this paper dated 6 December 1948 is on BTS 24/2, Vol. 2. A condensed version appeared in *The New York Times Magazine* of 5 December 1948 (pp. 32-33) under the title 'Career Classroom'. The quote is from the magazine, p. 32. 'Basic ways of thinking' was rendered as 'basic thinking' in the unpublished version.

³ N. Annan, Introduction to Isaiah Berlin, *Personal Impressions* (London, 1980), p. xiii.

⁴ K.P. Jones, *U.S. Diplomats in Europe, 1919-1941* (Santa Barbara, Ca., 1981), p. x.

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On account of unforeseen circumstances the registered topic underwent a metamorphosis while the research was in progress. If it had not been for my situation when I commenced the study, I would most likely have chosen a topic in the field of South African domestic politics, possibly another election. After all, there is nothing about my MA except indirectly one or two references in the acknowledgments to betray me as a foreign service officer.⁵ On the other hand, unlike some who research similar topics for their MAs and PhDs, drawing perhaps on the same research for both,⁶ I enjoyed the benefit of tackling two vastly different and quite unrelated subjects. In part this is my answer to Burridge Spies's question 'What determines the historian's decision to study a particular aspect of the past?'⁷

Apart from the Chancellor's Club Scholarship, for which students do not apply, the study was self-funded. I did not apply for financial assistance and none was offered. The study is in no sense an official one. It does not reflect the official point of view either in Australia or South Africa, or if it does that is entirely coincidental, and both the direction it took as well as its conclusions are entirely my own. If, as A.J.P. Taylor was reputed to be fond of saying, 'history is a version of events',⁸ this is my version, or at least my approach to diplomatic relations. There are and will be others.

Lacking face-to-face contact with scholars versed in the academic and theoretical side of diplomacy, not to mention with sources possessing first-hand knowledge of the matters I refer to, I fell back on correspondence. That proved most rewarding and I should like to record my thanks to the people whose written responses to my often importunate, and possibly from their point of view inconvenient, requests for information or comment helped relieve the solitariness of the pursuit. Their letters and

⁵ See, eg., J.P. Brits, *Op die vooraand van apartheid: Die rassevraagstuk en die blanke politiek in Suid-Afrika, 1939-1948* (Pretoria, 1994), p. xi and 'Apartheid en die politieke grondverskuiwing van 1948', *Historia*, Vol. 38, No. 1, May 1993, p. 77.

⁶ For example, A.J. Fick and P.W.A. Mulder. Fick's MA and D.Litt et Phil at UNISA dealt with the South African Dominion Party, ie., *Die ontstaan van die Dominiumparty van Suid-Afrika* (Unpublished MA dissertation, 1973) and *Die Dominiumparty van Suid-Afrika 1934-1948* (Unpublished D.Litt et Phil. thesis, 1979). Apart from their dates, the titles of P.W.A. Mulder's MA and D.Phil theses differ by only one word ie., *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Staatsinligtingsdiens, 1936-1975, met Besondere Beklemtoning van sy Binnelandse Doelstellinge en Funksies* (MA thesis, University of Potchefstroom, 1975) and *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Staatsinligtingsdiens, 1936-1977, met Besondere Beklemtoning van sy Buitelandse Doelstellinge en Funksies* (D.Phil. thesis, University of Potchefstroom, 1977). (Underlining added.) Their lengths differ considerably. The MA is 213 pages, excluding appendices, the PhD is 534 pages. To some extent the MA was incorporated in the PhD.

⁷ S.B. Spies, *The Historian's Net* (Pretoria), 1981, p. 5.

⁸ A. Sisman, *A.J.P. Taylor: A Biography* (London, 1994 (1995)), p. 400.

Preface

e-mail messages were among the worthwhile aspects of the study. They are not to blame for the use to which I put the information they supplied.

In Australia

Ms Lisa Gates (Canberra); H. Gilchrist (Canberra), Dr C. Howard (Melbourne), Dr W.J. Hudson (Canberra); Dr B. Kennedy (Melbourne); M.J.S. Knowles (Canberra), Prof A.W. Martin (Canberra); Dr Joan Rydon (Melbourne); Ms Moira Smythe (Canberra); Dr Hugh Stretton (Adelaide); Prof C.M. Tatz (Sydney); R.A. Woolcott (Canberra)

In South Africa

R.F. Botha (Pretoria); A.M. Hamilton (Somerset West); A.J. Oxley (Pretoria); Dr J.P. Rourke (Cape Town); D.B. Sole (Cape Town); C.F.G. von Hirschberg (Cape Town)

In the United Kingdom

Sir Brian Barder (London)

In the United States

the late Dr E.M. Rhoodie (Atlanta, Ga.)

Special thanks to

Mr Martin Boswell of the South African Embassy (now High Commission) in Canberra for information about the South African official residence in that city;

Mr Mervyn Knowles for supplying me with cinematic footage of the South African State funeral accorded his father Sir George Knowles, Australia's first High Commissioner to South Africa, as well as of the 16 mm film he shot during the fifteen months he spent in this country. The Australian Film and Sound Archive converted the 16mm colour film to video and Mr Knowles provided a written commentary on the scenes depicted;

Preface

Ms Sylvia Mackay for the copies of article material and other items held by the National Library of Australia, as well as the press reports and books that she sent me, and for acting as my liaison of the first instance *inter alia* with the Australian Archives and the Historical Records Branch of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade;

Prof A.W. Martin, the Menzies biographer, for the inscribed copies of Volume 1 of *Robert Menzies: A Life* (Carlton, Vic., 1993) and of *Dark and Hurrying Days: Menzies' 1941 Diary* (Canberra, 1993) which he co-edited;

Dr Janet Phillips (née Robertson) for the inscribed copy of her book *Liberalism in South Africa 1948-1963* (Oxford, 1971);

Dr J.M. Siracusa, Reader in Diplomacy at the University of Queensland, who generously donated essential texts including *Cadogan's Diaries* and W.J. Hudson's *Billy Hughes in Paris* and *Australia in the League of Nations*;

Ms Moira Smythe, now of the Historical Documents Branch of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Canberra, who supplied me with voluminous quantities of relevant documents, especially over the past year;

The diplomatic bags section of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade which permitted Ms Smythe to send the documents to me in the bag;

Ms Ann Tothill for helping me comprehend the intricacies of the word processing programme with which I wrote the thesis and for other assistance in the world of cyberspace.

The advice and assistance of archival staff was indispensable:

Australian Archives, Mitchell, ACT, Australia

Ms Anita Brake, Ms June Chick, Ms Angela Greig, Ms Gillian M. Redmond, Ms Moira Smythe [until January 1995], John Pepper, Ms Deanne Zeller

Preface

**Historical Documents Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade,
Canberra, ACT, Australia**

Chris Taylor, Ms Moira Smythe [from January 1995]

South African Archives, Pretoria

Ms Laetitia Coetzee

'Tussenbelaar', Union Buildings, Pretoria

Martin Meintjes, Pieter Human and Leon Jordaan; and C.J. (Neels) Muller of the official history project.

I am also glad to have the opportunity to say how much I enjoyed working in the National Library of Australia. I count the time I spent in its reading and newspaper rooms among the highlights of my four year five month stay in Canberra. That the reading room was open on Saturdays and Sunday afternoons and the newspaper room all day on Saturdays was most helpful.

On the technical side, I wrote the thesis with two personal computers - an Amstrad 2386/65, 20 MHz and a Compaq Contura 3/20 Notebook, 20 MHz, using the programmes Word for Windows 2 and Microsoft Windows 3.1. I printed it on an IBM 4019E laser printer, the basic five page per minute model. Such are the advances in computer technology that the equipment and programmes, acquired in 1990 and 1992, are now somewhat antediluvian or worse. After all, 'computer hardware' is said to be 'guaranteed to become obsolete within five years of purchase'.⁹

On that basis the equipment, word processing programme (WordStar 3.3) and footnote programme¹⁰ with which I prepared my MA eight years ago were quite primitive. So was the disk operating system - CP/M - of the Kaypro II computer on which I commenced that dissertation before switching to an IBM PC. At three minutes per page, printing time on a daisy-wheel printer consumed some twenty-two hours spread over a week. Including pauses for paper refills, my IBM printer disposed of the present work in some four-and-a-half hours. If upgraded it could process ten pages per minute.

⁹ S. Weinstein, 'MBAs Via the Internet: Too Soon?', *International Herald Tribune*, 30 May 1995.

¹⁰ *Footnote*, Pro/Tem Software, Inc., Walnut Creek, California, 1984.

Preface

A hold-out against technology, Shelby Foote, author of the massive *The Civil War: A Narrative*, provides a contrast. He is said to savour 'the autumnal pleasure of writing with a dip pen - not even a fountain pen' and 'sees the digital age as a "nightmare. There's no telling what's going to come of this. Maybe a new kind of literature," he says. "And it ain't gonna be my kind".¹¹ A.J.P. Taylor was another who claimed his equipment influenced his style: 'With a pen you write words. With a typewriter you write sentences. With an electric typewriter ... you write paragraphs. In military terms: bow and arrow, musket, machine gun.'¹²

I used dBase III Plus to record information about my collections of Australian archival documents and of Australian newspaper reports. The programme enables the user to design a form into which required data can be fed - names, dates etc. - thence to sort the entries by category. There is also provision for brief comment. More recently, it came in handy for tabulating the activities of members of the South African High Commission in the 1940s and 1950s from information given in the *Canberra Diary* section of *The Canberra Times*.

I prepared the statistical tables in Chapter Eight by feeding data into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The calculate and sort facilities of Word for Windows 2 were also useful.

That some of my interlocutors in Australia and elsewhere were on that other marvel of the computer age, e-mail (CompuServe or Internet), helped speed the communications process. The Australian Archives and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) came online during the final year of the study.

Shelby Foote called his monumental work 'my rock and my companion through two decades'.¹³ I feel the same about this thesis though it was completed within a more modest time-frame.

F.D. Tothill
PRETORIA
November 1995

¹¹ *Newsweek*, 27 February 1995.

¹² Sisman, *A.J.P. Taylor*, p. 361.

¹³ S. Foote, *The Civil War: A Narrative*, Vol. 3, *Red River to Appomatox* (New York, 1974), p. 1065.

INTRODUCTION

A generation after one-time South African Ambassador S.F. du Toit wrote that 'Foreign service and diplomacy are terms which are either surrounded in mystery or looked upon with too much deference by the public',¹ there is still 'a serious gap between the popular image of diplomacy and the reality'.² If they think about it at all, many white South Africans perceive foreign service to be a glamorous and well-paid profession revolving around luxury cars, palatial residences and socialising with the elite at cocktail parties³ but are hard put to say what it is that foreign service officers, known colloquially as diplomats,⁴ actually do.

Citizens of other countries have the same difficulty. In 1956 R.G. Casey, then Australia's Minister of External Affairs, sought to inform the 'average Australian' of the country's foreign service. 'The diplomatic officer of today', he wrote, 'has little time for cocktail parties and old-world elegance. His is a practical, down-to-earth, hard-working job'.⁵ The 'average Australian' remained uninformed and unimpressed. Three decades later a retired permanent head of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs was lamenting that the 'popular perception of Foreign Affairs being devoted to social pursuits of doubtful value, calling for very little by way of actual work, remains alive and flourishing'.⁶ At least one of his predecessors was of the same opinion.⁷

Even that paragon of British diplomacy, Sir Nicholas Henderson, encountered similar misconceptions: 'I have found much mystification on the subject and no little misrepresentation. An Ambassador, as I have learnt, is apt to be subjected to alternating currents of awe and hostility, curiosity and contempt; and like some strange creature who has escaped from a zoo he is rarely handled as a normal human being.

¹ *Home and Abroad*, Cape Town, 1969, p. 171. Presumably he was not aware that Lord Strang, one time British Permanent Under-Secretary of State (PUS) at the Foreign Office, had already used that title for *his* memoirs, published in 1956. Despite the usual disclaimer, Du Toit seems to have been the principal model for the Ambassador in André P. Brink's Afrikaans-language novel of that name, *ie. Die Ambassadeur*. Cape Town, 1963. D.B. Sole, letter, 30 June 1994.

² Z.S. Steiner, ed., *The Times Survey of Foreign Ministries of the World* (London, 1982), p. 30.

³ On this aspect, see E. Clark, *Corps Diplomatique* (London, 1973), pp. 100-01. See also my article 'Practising Diplomacy: A Working Diplomat's View', *World Review* (Australia), Vol. 29, No. 1, March 1990, pp. 20-28. For a popular Australian view of the early 1960s, see A. Reid, 'What diplomats do to Canberra', *The Bulletin* (Australia), 5 April 1961, pp. 7-10.

⁴ More correctly, if pompously, diplomatists.

⁵ R.G. Casey, 'Modern Diplomat Is Hard Worker', *The Canberra Times*, 26 September 1956.

⁶ P.G.F. Henderson, *Privilege and Pleasure* (North Ryde, NSW, 1986), p. 134.

⁷ *Australian Diplomat: Memoirs of Sir Alan Watt* (Sydney, 1972), p. 315.

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Yet this is what he must remain if he is to discharge adequately his calling of go-between.⁸

A measure of public confusion is inevitable because foreign service officers themselves like to project an air of elitism besides propagating the view that they are engaged in the mysteries, their own role being akin to that of vestal virgins.⁹ That follows in the tradition of Sir Eyre Crowe of the British Foreign Office in the early years of the present century who 'rather looked down on Secretaries of State than up to them and regarded Foreign Office clerks as the really important people'.¹⁰ Perhaps this lends perspective to G.M. Young's 'casual insult'¹¹ that 'the greater part of what passes for diplomatic history is little more than the record of what one clerk said to another clerk',¹² as does Steiner's observation:

Had these remarkable *clerks* not taken so exalted a view of their mysteries, had they not gone so far in insulating themselves from the community at large, the arts of diplomacy would not have been so drastically discredited when the lights went out in Europe.¹³

South African newspaper practice of referring to members of sports teams pursuing their sports abroad as 'Ambassadors' or 'Envoys' compounds the confusion. Besides, it is based on a misunderstanding: diplomats represent their governments in the first instance and only indirectly their countries.¹⁴ In the years of his illustrious

⁸ N. Henderson, *Mandarin: The Diaries of an Ambassador, 1969-1982* (London, 1994), p. 1.

⁹ G. Moorhouse, *The Diplomats: The Foreign Office Today* (London, 1977), pp. 46-47, gives a useful account of the foreign service mystique.

¹⁰ Quoted by Z.S. Steiner, *The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy, 1898-1914* (Cambridge 1969), p. x. That feeling may have contributed to the insubordination and insolence he displayed to the Foreign Secretary in the last quarter of 1914 which is said to have prevented his promotion to the Permanent Under-Secretaryship at that time. E.T. Corp, 'Sir Eyre Crowe and the administration of the Foreign Office, 1906-1914', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. XXII, No. 2, 1979, p. 453, fn. 69. However, he became PUS in 1921.

¹¹ R.A. Jones, *The British Diplomatic Service 1815-1914* (Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire, 1983), p. 1.

¹² G.K. Clark, ed., *G.M. Young, Portrait of an Age: Victorian England* (London 1977 (1936)), p. 110. B.D. Tennyson's *Canadian Relations with South Africa: A Diplomatic History* (Washington, DC, 1982) puts one in mind of this. A recent view of Young's 'dictum' is that it 'is as dated as Chamberlain's umbrella'. D.C. Watt *et al*, 'What is Diplomatic History?', *History Today*, Vol. 35, July 1985, p. 35.

¹³ Steiner, *The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy*, p. x.

¹⁴ A South African official wrote in October 1995: 'Overseas, a diplomat's duty does not require [him] to defend the policies of whichever government is currently in power, but to explain the entire reality of the whole, complicated rainbow nation. Diplomats represent their country, not some narrow political agenda'. *The Star* (Johannesburg), 23 October 1995. (Letter: E.J. Joubert, 'South Africa's diplomats far from being party lapdogs'). This view is uninformed. After all, governments do not pay diplomats inflated salaries just to have them follow their own agendas.

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international career the golfer Gary Player was probably South Africa's best-known 'Ambassador' of that type and before him that other champion golfer, Bobby Locke.

South African universities, at least their administrations, know little more than members of the public about the nuts and bolts of the country's inter-governmental relations and of the foreign service created to manage them. The present writer was a South African Ambassador on three occasions: to the European Office of the United Nations (1975-80), to Argentina (1980-84) and to Australia (1988-92) for a total of thirteen years. Yet when listing his occupation on the form registering him for this degree, the best the University of South Africa (UNISA) could come up with was 'Technical Worker (Other)' and that against the background of long experience with a great variety of occupations of its students!¹⁵

Among the limited number of those who have heard of them, there is a tendency to assume that the wisdom of the writers of the classic texts, the Abraham de Wiqueforts, François de Callièreses, Ernest Satows and Harold Nicolson, some of whose works are still in print,¹⁶ is relevant to modern conditions. Steiner is one who believes so.¹⁷ It often is but the later twentieth century has produced circumstances those writers never dreamed of. While the required personal attributes they identify may not in theory have changed since the 17th century, the nature of the work and the standing of the workers has. G. McDermott, a former Minister in the Foreign Office with ambassadorial status, lists among 'the kinds of attitude which will prove positively unhelpful', harkening back to 'Harold Nicolson and Lord Strang and talk about the eternal verities of diplomacy and some inflexible form of apparatus'.¹⁸ That is not to say, however, that intelligent reading of their works will not prove instructive.

¹⁵ A 1994 profile of registered students indicates that 1358 or 1.08 per cent enjoy this listing. Presumably very few are foreign service officers. A list of occupations recognised by the university is given in *Instructions for completing the beige registration Form for 1995*, UNISA P. 1781 (B), pp. 21-22. See also *UNISA News*, Vol. 21, No. 4, Sept-Dec 1994, p. 1. ('We are growing, growing, growing ...')

¹⁶ A. de Wiquefort, *L'ambassadeur et ses fonctions* (1679); F. de Callières, *De la Manière de Négocier avec les Souverains* (1716); E. Satow, *A Guide to Diplomatic Practice* (1917); and H. Nicolson, *The Evolution of Diplomatic Method* (1954); *Diplomacy*, (1939) and other texts. See also G.A. Craig, 'On the Nature of Diplomatic History: The Relevance of Some Old Books' in P.G. Lauren, ed., *Diplomacy: New Approaches in History, Theory, and Policy* (London, 1979), pp. 21-42 and M. Keens-Soper, 'François de Callières and diplomatic theory', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. XVI, No. 3, 1973, pp. 485-508.

¹⁷ Steiner, ed., *The Times Survey of Foreign Ministries of the World*, p. 31.

¹⁸ G. McDermott, *The New Diplomacy and its Apparatus* (London, 1973), p. 183.

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The politician Blaar Coetzee gave this account of his duties as South African Ambassador to Italy for six months in 1972-73, a post to which he was appointed when he was replaced as Minister of Community Development and of Public Works in a cabinet reshuffle:

I slowly had to discover what exactly the work of an ambassador is, and I still don't know what the work of an ambassador is. All I know is that he has very, very little to do. He has great difficulty in keeping himself occupied. You have correspondence and you make at the most one or two visits a day. For the rest of the day you read newspapers and try to keep yourself informed.¹⁹

There are different ways of looking at this. On the one hand it is, and was at the time, grist to the mill of those, usually journalists and opposition politicians, who for their own purposes criticise the appointment of government-supporting politicians to diplomatic posts. On the other, if Coetzee was accurately reported and if he was giving a true account of his average day, the Department of Foreign Affairs, particularly its permanent head, could be held at fault for not briefing him on what was expected. But that would be to overlook the awe in which white South African public servants of the time held their country's politicians, especially former cabinet ministers. Even to hint that a man on whom the Prime Ministerial choice had fallen was somehow deficient because he needed to be briefed about his new tasks (and by *public servants* at that) would smack of *lèse majesté*.²⁰ There again Coetzee could have asked to be briefed.

White South Africa was not alone in appointing ill-suited politicians to diplomatic posts. Almost forty years after the event, J.K. Waller recorded having told his External Affairs Minister, R.G. Casey, in 1952 that the Australian High Commissioner in London, T.W. White, a former cabinet minister, was not capable of handling a crisis and that if one arose he would go to White's wife, Ivy, a daughter of Australia's second Prime Minister, Alfred Deakin, and ask her to explain it to her husband! ('Casey made some comment which indicated that he well understood the position.')

²¹

¹⁹ D.J. Geldenhuys, *The Diplomacy of Isolation: South African Foreign Policy Making* (Johannesburg, 1984), p. 270, footnote 126, quoting *Rapport*, 1 April 1973.

²⁰ There's a hint of this in the senior ANC Minister's description of South African civil servants as 'obsequious'. *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg), 12 June 1994. (Hogarth's column.)

²¹ J.K. Waller, *A Diplomatic Life: Some Memories* (Nathan, Qld., 1990), p. 25. White had been a candidate for the Prime Ministership in April 1939. P.G. Edwards, *Prime Ministers and Diplomats: The making of Australian foreign policy 1901-1949* (Melbourne, 1983), p. 122.

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Diplomacy is a nebulous occupation and those familiar with it can sympathise with Coetzee's predicament. An adviser to a former leader of the Australian Labor Party, now (1995) Governor-General of Australia,²² called Foreign Affairs 'a bullshit portfolio' in relation to domestic ones²³ and the truth of that is self-evident. Paul Hasluck, himself a Governor-General of Australia, contrasted his own experience as an official in the war-time Australian Department of External Affairs with his earlier occupation of newspaper sub-editor:

In an old-fashioned newspaper office I had been accustomed to being given a defined job, having my own job to do, and getting down to it at once in order to meet a rigid deadline. One never thought of doing someone else's work and one was never uncertain about what to do on one's own.²⁴

The view expressed by an Italian diplomat is complementary: 'The thing today is to find a justification. With most people's jobs you can see what they do; there's something tangible at the end of it. With diplomacy, mostly there is not.'²⁵ It is also impossible to calculate a diplomat's value. If 'relations with another country are bad, would they have been even worse if the diplomat had not been active?'²⁶

Perhaps Coetzee would have benefited from the views of a later British Ambassador to the Soviet Union, Sir Rodric Braithwaite:

being an ambassador primarily involves managing communications between your country and their country ... To do that effectively you need to know a very large number of people and you need to be talking to a very large number of people all the time in order to have an idea of what's going on, both what events are happening and what people's moods are, because you have to be able to tell your government: the mood in this country is good or bad or whatever it is or people are getting nervous or rebellious or whatever. ... Cocktail parties are very useful from that point of view ... because you can get round [and] meet a lot of people fairly regularly and very quickly.²⁷

²² William George Hayden. Australian Labor follows the American spelling.

²³ J. Stubbs, *Hayden* (Melbourne, 1990), p. 272.

²⁴ P.M.C. Hasluck, *Diplomatic Witness: Australian Foreign Affairs 1941-1947* (Melbourne, 1980), p. 5.

²⁵ Quoted by Clark, *Corps Diplomatique*, p. 15.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

²⁷ *Extraordinary And Plenipotentiary*, BBC World Service Radio Programme, 15 May 1994. (The second of a series of three broadcast on 8, 15 and 22 May. Put together to mark the 500th anniversary of the beginnings of modern diplomacy, the programme is further evidence of the on-going fascination with this subject.) Former Australian diplomat Alan Renouf gives an account of a normal working day in *The Champagne Trail: Experiences of a Diplomat* (Melbourne, 1980), pp. 147-49.

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Of course, the role of a British Ambassador is not identical to that of a small country's representative. Individual circumstances need to be taken into account. The Australian Henderson's experience of the 'diplomatic social round' was that it provided 'an opportunity to talk to people whom it might otherwise be very difficult, if not impossible, to see' thereby enabling information 'to be extracted from, and business to be done' with them.²⁸

In 1995 a South African journalist reproached the newly restructured Department of Foreign Affairs:

South Africa no longer needs a bunch of well-paid lizards, spending their time on an endless round of cocktail parties and social events, trying to sell an ideology or merely doing a 'rah-rah, apartheid is dead' routine. It needs people with solid expertise and knowledge of, among other things, how business operates, where to find markets for exports, how to authoritatively advise people wishing to invest capital and how to promote trade.²⁹

That is known as commercial diplomacy and there is nothing new about it. The prospect of commercial diplomacy lay behind the establishment of the South African Department of Foreign Affairs (then External Affairs) in the first place. General Hertzog told the House of Assembly in 1932 that the department's role was 'to facilitate and assist the operation connected with the offices of the trades commissioners'.³⁰ Complaints about perceived South African inadequacy in the field of commercial diplomacy are also not new. In 1947, apparently 'finding themselves at a disadvantage in the struggle for Continental markets', South African businessmen were complaining about inadequate commercial representation at the country's missions abroad and of having to appeal to British Legations for assistance.³¹

For decades the British have focussed their diplomacy on the promotion of exports.³² United States diplomacy is now doing the same.³³ Indeed, commercial

²⁸ Henderson, *Privilege and Pleasure*, pp. 134-35. See also Lord Strang, *The Diplomatic Career* (London, 1962), pp. 17-18.

²⁹ B. Cameron, 'Let's have no more lizards lounging on cocktail circuit', 'Business Report', *The Star/Pretoria News*, 23 May 1995.

³⁰ *HA Deb.*, Vol. 15, 10 April 1930, Cols. 3018-19.

³¹ AA, A4231/2, Pretoria 1-91 1947, No. 9/47, 20 January 1947.

³² There may be an element of pandering to domestic political opinion in this. See Clark, *Corps Diplomatique*, p. 15.

³³ See D.E. Sanger, 'How Washington Inc. Makes a Sale', *The New York Times*, Section 3, *Business*, 19 February 1995 and 'USA, Inc.', *Newsweek*, Vol. CXXV, No. 10, 6 March 1995, pp. 10-17.

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diplomacy extends much further back than the twentieth century. When Jean-Baptiste Colbert was Minister of Finance and Trade in seventeenth century France, 'Ambassadors were instructed to do everything within their power to foster French commerce'.

The Levant trade was regarded as of such special value that the ambassador to the Porte [*ie.* to the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire] was often appointed, not by the Foreign Secretary, but by the Minister of Finance and Trade. He was expected, before leaving France, to consult with the Chamber of Commerce at Marseilles and to pay full attention to their demands and recommendations.³⁴

On the analogy of Geoffrey Blainey's 'Three Cheers view of history',³⁵ and connected to the perceptions of a glamorous and well-paid profession, there is in Australia and South Africa what might be called a Three Cheers or gung-ho view of diplomacy and its practitioners. Lost sight of, certainly attention is not drawn to it, is the dark side of divorce, alcoholism and even suicide.³⁶ The strains on family life are severe and the children of foreign service parents are not infrequently sacrificed to career exigencies.³⁷ While some do, not many foreign service children care to follow their fathers (or their mothers these days) into the profession. An anonymous Australian put it this way in the 1950s:

No one ever seems to think of the disadvantages of diplomatic life. A diplomat gives up his country, his friends and his opportunities for other employment. He moves his home continually ... he and his family are plagued with illness in tropical posts., he has to spend a great amount of time at boring social functions and in addition his children's education is a constant worry.³⁸

³⁴ H. Nicolson, *The Evolution of Diplomatic Method* (London, n.d. (1954)), p.59.

³⁵ A patriotic notion of the past - meaning in effect that Australia was seen as 'a success'. G. Blainey, 'Drawing Up a Balance Sheet of Our History', *Quadrant*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 298, July-August 1993, p. 11. He points out that the Three Cheers view has been displaced in some circles, including official ones, by the Black Armband view which emphasises Australia's shortcomings rather than its achievements.

³⁶ Alcohol is more freely available to foreign service officers and at a lower price than in practically any occupation. Unusually for a South African journalist, Francois Lötter, diplomatic correspondent of the newspaper *Beeld* (Johannesburg), acknowledged the dark side in his article 'Uncertainty about diplomats must be cleared up'. *Beeld*, 16 November 1994. (Original in Afrikaans). Yet he displayed the usual ignorance of what it is diplomats actually do besides commencing with a relatively lengthy and not entirely facetious description of the common perception of the diplomatic life.

³⁷ See Clark, *Corps Diplomatique*, p. 98.

³⁸ *The Canberra Times*, 17 October 1958, letter ('Observer'). Katy Rhodie refers to this aspect in *Agter 'n Marmerskans* (Johannesburg, 1982), p. 11.

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Bruce Lockhart, a consular officer who did not stay the course, referred to the 'meanness of what is, in effect, a belittling and narrow existence'.³⁹ More recently, a foreign diplomat told a BBC interviewer:

You get used to a country and then you make friends there. It becomes your society. And then suddenly you are transferred, and all that is gone. Suddenly. So you have so many lives. Short lives. I worked in seven or eight posts and [it is] as if I've lived seven or eight lives and then that is finished. That is the sad side of diplomatic life...⁴⁰

The appointment of so-called high fliers, especially in Australia, to head other public service departments may seem to compensate for such aspects. But most career officers are not high fliers. The retired Australian diplomat, Francis Stuart, put it well:

I spent 40 years in my profession: I played no prominent part in the diplomatic world myself but I often watched those who did from close at hand, and I had access to much information: I suppose I could use a term common at international conferences to describe my role in public affairs - I had Observer Status.⁴¹

The best such people can expect after forty years of foreign service is a fund of memories they would be hard put to match in other occupations and a rather better pension than that payable to teachers. (See Chapter Two.) In Britain and Australia their pensions are indexed against inflation, which is low there; in South Africa they are not and it is not. Alan Renouf's thirty-six year career took him to the top of Australia's foreign service - at various times he was Ambassador to France and to the United States and Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Therefore, he reached the pinnacle of his profession. Yet he said in his memoirs that 'the advantages of the diplomatic life are much outweighed by the disadvantages'.⁴² If so high a flier is of that opinion, where does it leave the rest?

At least initially, what may have attracted them to foreign service was the prospect of living a good part of their lives in relatively affluent circumstances abroad - the upside - interspersed with periods of service at head office - viewed by many as the downside and described by a retired South African Ambassador, J.B. Mills during one

³⁹ R.H. Bruce Lockhart, *Retreat from Glory* (New York, 1934), p. 84. See also Clark, *Corps Diplomatique*, pp. 91-93.

⁴⁰ *Extraordinary And Plenipotentiary*, 15 May 1994.

⁴¹ F. Stuart, *Towards coming-of-age: A foreign service odyssey* (Nathan, Qld., 1990 (1989)), p. i.

⁴² Renouf, *The Champagne Trail*, p. 153.

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of his three terms of short duration at head office in a thirty-seven year career as 'a study in ritual humiliation',⁴³ an aphorism as valid as the day it was made. On the other hand, what was said in response to the plaintive letter quoted on the previous page is applicable also to South African diplomats: 'It is well known that our diplomats tend to be in a rather morose frame of mind when they first return for a period of duty in these backwoods'.⁴⁴

During the second of his three head office postings the same J.B. Mills prepared a Public Service Commission (PSC) recruiting memorandum which, in treating of foreign service work abroad, identified three of its core aspects.⁴⁵ Even today, if all three are not present whoever is doing whatever abroad is not engaging in diplomacy as it is traditionally conceived. The diplomat, Mills said, 'Must at all times strive to build up friendly connections with the people of the country concerned, not only with officials but also with prominent representatives of business, intellectual and social circles, and so conduct himself as to encourage friendly feelings towards his country.' That side of the work was known as 'Representation'. Then, the diplomat was 'the defender of the interests of his own nationals in the country concerned. He must see to it that they are not unjustly treated, and should in cases of difficulty serve as an intermediary between them and the local authorities'. That was 'Consular' work. Lastly, there was the 'Political' side in terms of which 'he is the eyes and ears of his Government in the country in which he is stationed. A large portion of his time, especially when he reaches senior status, will be spent in preparing economic and political reports so that his Government may be kept promptly and fully informed of local developments'.

A few years later these core concepts were rendered succinctly in the *Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations*:

The functions of a diplomatic mission consist inter alia in:
(a) representing the sending State in the receiving State;

⁴³ A remark reported to the writer around the time it was made. Mills was Ambassador to Australia from 1971 to 1977, succeeding J.K. Uys. After retiring in 1983 he settled in Australia and became an Australian citizen.

⁴⁴ *The Canberra Times*, 21 October 1958, letter ('Hill-Billy'). See also Clark, *Corps Diplomatique*, p. 99.

⁴⁵ BTS, 24/2, Vol. 3, 'The South African Foreign Service', 1955. This of course is applicable to what is called 'bilateral' diplomacy which has to some extent been overtaken by 'multilateral' diplomacy or that attaching to the work of international organisations.

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- (b) protecting in the receiving State the interests of the sending State and of its nationals, within the limits permitted by international law;
- (c) negotiating with the Government of the receiving State;
- (d) ascertaining by all lawful means conditions and developments in the receiving State, and reporting thereon to the Government of the sending State;
- (e) promoting friendly relations between the sending State and the receiving State, and developing their economic, cultural and scientific relations.⁴⁶

Although it is an occupation which obliges those engaged in it to spend an inordinate amount of time in the company of people 'for whom, in the ordinary course of events, they would have very little time',⁴⁷ foreign service is perhaps also the only career where quite junior officers associate on a footing of equality with leading citizens of the countries where they are stationed. That may be part of its attraction. Bruce Lockhart writes interestingly on this aspect.⁴⁸ A.A. Roberts, then South African High Commissioner to Canada, said this of H.H. Woodward,⁴⁹ a member of his staff, on the latter's return to Pretoria after a fourteen year absence:

Shortly before he left he went on a long canoeing trip through wild country with five well-known men, including Tony Lovink, the Dutch Ambassador to Ottawa,⁵⁰ Omond Solandt, one of the greatest scientists produced by Canada, and Eric Morse, the Organizing Secretary of the Federation of Canadian Clubs. These three are men of high standing whom I know well and whose opinion I value. Each independently spoke to me about Woodward. They were high in their praise of his readiness to shoulder more than his share of the burdens, his quiet and unassuming good humour and cheerfulness in trying circumstances and his good companionship. ... These ... were all ... people who appear to be among Woodward's friends...⁵¹

Even more than associating with them on an equal footing, the best officers can become confidants and unofficial advisers to a receiving country's political leaders, thereby exercising in effect a domestic political role. That perforce is veiled. The history of diplomacy has many examples to show of it including Papal Nuncios in

⁴⁶ Art. 3(1). See UN Doc. A/Conf. 20/13, 16 April 1961, pp. 2-3. P. Cahier analyses the provisions of the Vienna Convention in his article 'Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations', *International Conciliation*, No. 571, January 1969, pp. 5-40.

⁴⁷ J.D.B. Miller, *The Shape of Diplomacy* (Canberra, 1963), p. 1. (Inaugural lecture, 17 September 1963.)

⁴⁸ Bruce Lockhart, *Retreat from Glory*, Book Two, pp. 45-162.

⁴⁹ High Commissioner and Ambassador to Australia 1961-1964.

⁵⁰ Dutch Ambassador to Australia during A.M. Hamilton's term there.

⁵¹ BTS, Woodward, Vol. 2, Roberts/Forsyth, 13 September 1951.

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Catholic countries where the Nuncio is *ex-officio* Dean of the Diplomatic Corps. Some British Ambassadors have been particularly influential,⁵² as have American Ambassadors where the receiving country was an American client. At the United Nations some Ambassadors (Permanent Representatives) are influential far beyond the size and importance of their countries. A few South Africans, notably A.M. Hamilton in Australia between 1957 and 1961, have been on an intimate footing with the head of government, but in Hamilton's case there is no evidence that he counselled Menzies on domestic political matters.

The converse is that the people with whom foreign service officers associate abroad tend to believe that they are influential in their own societies which is hardly the case, at least not in a democratic country and certainly not South African or Australian career officers on a home posting. (Thus Mills's 'study in ritual humiliation'.) When one of his South African interlocutors, Laurence Gandar, Editor of the *Rand Daily Mail*, asked him to put in writing what he had expounded verbally before his return to Australia in January 1959, Hugh Gilchrist, who had acted as Australian High Commissioner to South Africa from July 1957, was obliged to backtrack. His reluctance is apparent:

it would perhaps be inappropriate for me, at this stage and from this distance, to formulate in writing a personal recipe for solving some of South Africa's major domestic problems.

You will appreciate, I am sure, that for an Australian in an official position to send out such a formulation incurs the risk of provoking the criticism from, someone, sooner or later, that Australia is interfering in a purely South African matter, even if my interest were admitted to be motivated by the best of feelings towards the Union.⁵³

Later that year another of Gilchrist's South African interlocutors, J.P. Duminy, the Principal of the University of Cape Town, wrote that the battle for the open universities had been lost. He ended on a personal note:

⁵² Sir William Clark, the British High Commissioner in South Africa at the beginning of the Second World War, was one. A.J. van Wyk sketches his role in bringing South Africa into the war in *Vyf Dae: Oorlogskrisis van 1939 - 'n spanningsverhaal uit SA se geskiedenis* (Cape Town, 1985), pp. 107, 121-22. For background on Clark see N. Hillmer, 'A British High Commissioner for Canada, 1927-28', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. I, No. 3, May 1973, pp. 352-53.

⁵³ AA, A1838/1, 201/1/2, Pt. 3, Gilchrist/Gandar, 18 March 1959 and Gandar/Gilchrist, 27 February 1959.

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I must stop for the present. We had the pleasure of entertaining Sir MacFarlane and Lady Burnet here at Glenara a few weeks ago; their visit was a most thrilling and rewarding one. Give our regards to the MacDermotts [sic] and the Hamiltons. We miss Libby and you, but like your successor (the Davises) very much. They are coming to dinner with us tomorrow. We are also glad to have Lionel Phillips as a friend. What are you doing about Tommy Boydell?⁵⁴

A copy of the Gandar letter, Gilchrist's reply and an extract from the Duminy letter were placed on a departmental file.⁵⁵ The department approved the Gandar correspondence and passed it to the High Commission in Cape Town shortly afterwards 'as background to any informal conversations which you may have with Gandar or other South Africans on this general subject'.⁵⁶

Then there is the collegial aspect. If not most, as Hambloch says, then many diplomats have met before and 'usually find one or two acquaintances among their foreign colleagues at a new post'.⁵⁷ B.G. Fourie was one such for C.T. Moodie, Australian Ambassador to South Africa in the early 1970s: 'I had been received most cordially by the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Mr. B. Fourie, who remembered me from days at the UN in New York in 1950 and spoke with great goodwill of number of the Australians whom he had dealt with at the UN. He was obviously pleased to get messages of goodwill from Shann and Hill, which he reciprocated'.⁵⁸ For David Kelly that was one of the advantages of the old diplomacy: 'these men spoke the same language ... they shared a common code of behaviour, a common training, and because they got to know each other well both at their posts and when they met again in other

⁵⁴ For biographical details of Duminy see *Dictionary of South African Biography*, Vol. 5, (1987), pp. 211-12. Sir Macfarlane Burnet, a virologist, was, with the British immunologist, Sir Peter Medawar, joint winner of the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 1960. *The Australian Encyclopaedia*, Vol. Two (Sydney, 1983 (1925-26)), p. 128; J. Shaw, ed., *Collins Australian Encyclopaedia* (Sydney, 1984), pp. 105-06. He was also Australian of the year in 1960. Burnet and his wife were visiting South Africa at the invitation of the Department of Health. AA, A1838/2, 201/10/10/1, Pt. 1, I. 4555, 13 March 1959. Burnet maintained a high public profile in Australia in the 1950s on, for example, relaxing the White Australia policy, and the connection between smoking and lung cancer. MacDermot and Hamilton were respectively the Canadian and South African High Commissioners to Australia, the former having previously been High Commissioner in South Africa. Gilchrist's successor was Phillips not Davis, who was on a higher level. Boydell's third visit to Australia had already run into trouble and was on the point of being aborted. (See Chapter Five.)

⁵⁵ AA, A1838/1, 201/2/5, Pt. 7, Gilchrist/Dexter, 4 June 1959. Duminy's letter was dated 24 May 1959. Dexter commented that its apartheid aspect made 'very depressing reading'.

⁵⁶ AA, A1838/1, 201/1/2, Pt. 3, Hill/Australian High Commission, Cape Town, 1 April 1959.

⁵⁷ E. Hambloch, *British Consul: Memories of Thirty Years' Service in Europe and Brazil* (London, 1938), p. 130. See also D. Kelly, *The Hungry Sheep* (London, 1955), p. 41.

⁵⁸ AA, A9241/1, 201/1, Pt. 1, C.T. Moodie, 'Record of conversation with Prime Minister and Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. B.J. Vorster, on 27 September, 1972', p. 3, para. 12.

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appointments, they developed a kind of common opinion about Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Ambassadors who were tricky and unreliable'.⁵⁹

Harold Nicolson and Eric Clark both cite de Callières to the effect that an incoming Ambassador should cultivate his colleagues in the diplomatic corps: 'Since the whole diplomatic body labours to the same end, namely to discover what is happening, there arises a certain freemasonry of diplomacy, by which one colleague informs another of coming events which a lucky chance has enabled him to discern'.⁶⁰ Any serving Ambassador will confirm that this is good advice. In 1959 the diplomatic corps in South Africa numbered around ninety-five spread over twenty-one missions. The corps' small size was found to make 'for informality in ordinary diplomatic contacts'.⁶¹ Australian diplomats in South Africa enjoyed the additional advantage of operating under the Commonwealth umbrella. O.L. Davis, High Commissioner/Ambassador from 1959 to 1962, was instructed to keep in close touch with his United Kingdom and Canadian colleagues and 'speak frankly with them in confidence'.⁶² The record shows that he did. In fact, the British High Commissioner/Ambassador, Sir John Maud, was probably his best source.

What the anonymous reviewer said of science is true of diplomacy: 'Perhaps the easiest way to show clearly how science works is through biographies'.⁶³ There exist a multitude of British biographical or autobiographical works which give a flavour of what foreign service was about for British diplomats at a given time.⁶⁴ Of a recent one (1994) a reviewer wrote: 'Sir Nicholas has brilliantly revealed [in his own words] "what members of the Foreign Service do in their lives abroad in the modern age - the

⁵⁹ Kelly, *The Hungry Sheep*, p. 41.

⁶⁰ Nicolson, *The Evolution of Diplomatic Method*, p. 68 and Clark, *Corps Diplomatique*, p. 18. They would have drawn the quotation from H. Whyte's 1919 translation of de Callières. This was republished in 1963 by the University of Notre Dame Press under the title *On the manner of negotiating with princes; on the Uses of Diplomacy; the Choice of Ministers and Envoys; and the Personal Qualities necessary for Success in Missions abroad*. A form of the quotation appears at p. 113. It is, however, omitted from the more recent and definitive H.M.A. Keens-Soper & K.W. Schweizer edition *François de Callières: The Art of Diplomacy*. New York, 1983. The editors of this claim (p. 53) that Whyte 'not only omitted entire chapters and rearranged the sequence of others, he also suppressed portions of the text and inserted material of his own'. That was presumably how the quotation came into being which does not, of course, invalidate the point made.

⁶¹ AA, AA, A1838/1, 1348/5, 'Post Report: South Africa (Pretoria and Cape Town) February 1959', pp. 3-4.

⁶² AA, A1838/2, 201/11/1, Pt. 3, Casey/Davis, 29 May 1959. Gilchrist drafted this letter.

⁶³ 'Post Prospero', *The Economist*, Vol. 331, Number 7864, 21 May 1994, p. 93.

⁶⁴ Informative ones are David Kelly's *The Ruling Few: or the Human Background to Diplomacy* (London, 1952) and Humphrey Trevelyan's *Diplomatic Channels* (London, 1973). See Appendix II for a further listing.

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obligations, responsibilities and hazards that are incurred as well as the much-publicised glitter".⁶⁵ There are also many works which illuminate the evolution and workings of the Foreign Office,⁶⁶ so much so that, ironically, South Africans know more, or at least have the opportunity to know more, about the Foreign Office and some of its luminaries such as Sir Eyre Crowe and Sir William Tyrrell than they do about their own Department of External Affairs and its officials. Australians too have not been loath to record their personal roles in the conduct of their country's foreign relations along the lines perhaps of what Hasluck said of his memoirs up to the age of thirty-five, that if he had not written them 'the record would have disappeared with the going down of the sun'.⁶⁷

For one reason or another, possibly to do in part with the long time ruling political party's sensitivity towards public servants or former public servants writing for publication, retired South African foreign service officers maintain a degree of reticence which their retired British colleagues would find surprising. That may also say something about the type of South African once preferred for foreign service - white males who were already in the Public Service - who reached memoir-writing age in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. An element of self-censorship may also be part of the South African public service culture. In a way, it is regrettable that these retired officials are not impelled to follow Hasluck's example. Ordinarily, it may not seem important that knowledge of their experiences should vanish with their passing. But that may well be so in circumstances where the South Africa they represented is as 'gone with the wind' as ever was the Old South immortalised in Margaret Mitchell's novel and the 1939 movie of that name. To them is applicable Canadian historian Carl Berger's 'dictum', viz., 'our knowledge of the outcome makes it difficult to enter into the minds of men

⁶⁵ D. Cannadine, 'What Ambassadors Are For: Memoirs of a conspicuously stylish and brilliant diplomat', *The New York Times Book Review*, 2 April 1995, p. 12. Review of Sir Nicholas Henderson's *Mandarin: The Diaries of an Ambassador, 1969-1982*. London, 1994. The fragment quoted appears at p. 9. The book was also published in the United States (North Pomfret, Vt.) in 1995.

⁶⁶ See Appendix II for examples. This is, of course, not to say that there do not exist in languages other than English a considerable volume of published material about other countries' foreign services and foreign service officers. A fine study in English of the pre-First World War German foreign service is Lamar Cecil's *The German Diplomatic Service, 1871-1914*. Princeton, 1976. Also in English in respect of the French Foreign Office is M. Hayne's article 'Change and Continuity in The Structure and Practices of the Quai d'Orsay, 1871-1898', *The Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol. 37, No. 1, 1991, pp. 61-76.

⁶⁷ P.M.C. Hasluck, *Mucking About: An autobiography* (Melbourne, 1977), p. 287. For the benefit of South African readers, Hasluck, the son of Salvation Army parents, was at one time or another a newspaper sub-editor, temporary Foreign Service officer, history lecturer, Cabinet Minister (including External Affairs) and Governor-General of Australia.

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who lived in another age and who did not know that they worked in vain for a cause that would never be realized'.⁶⁸

That is not to say some of them did not give thought to the matter. In October 1958 P.R. Killen recorded W.C. Naude's hope that the experiences of the pioneer generation of foreign service officers could be preserved. Naude was then acting as head of department in the absence abroad of the permanent head, G.P. Jooste:

the men who joined the Department in its early pioneering days, are beginning to reach retiring age - some have already retired, and others are within a few years of doing so. It seemed to him that a great deal of material concerning the early days of the Department is locked up in the memories of these men - and might be lost forever unless some attempt is made to have it put in writing.

Naude contemplated circularising the officers concerned and 'asking them to commit to writing their memories of Departmental incidents' which could then be collated and preserved 'for posterity in some suitable form'. Such material 'would be valuable in building up an esprit de corps among new entrants to the service'.⁶⁹ Nothing came of that but shortly thereafter, in belated response to a request received earlier that year from the editor of the Nasionale Pers *Ensiklopedie van Suid-Afrika (Encyclopædia of South Africa)*,⁷⁰ a fourteen page outline of the history of the department was drawn up focussing particularly on the department's expansion from the time of its creation in 1927.⁷¹ Missions were asked for their comments.⁷²

In 1964 missions were sent three pages of 'Highlights from the History of South Africa's Department of Foreign Affairs'. Presumably in accordance with Naude's earlier feeling that such material would foster *esprit de corps* among new entrants, the covering circular held that younger officials would particularly benefit by reading it.⁷³ Some years later the department supplied Nasionale Pers with the list of representa-

⁶⁸ C. Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the ideas of Canadian imperialism 1867-1914* (Toronto, 1970), p. 6.

⁶⁹ BTS, 4/1/14, Vol. 1, Killen/Dunn, 7 October 1958.

⁷⁰ BTS, 4/1/14, Vol. 1, Potgieter/SEA, 4 February 1958; also Potgieter/Naudé, 19 January 1959. (Originals in Afrikaans.)

⁷¹ 'Die Geskiedenis van die Departement van Buitelandse Sake', December 1958.

⁷² BTS, 91/8/1, Vol. 10, Circular Minute A.2 of 1959, 20 January 1959. (Original in Afrikaans.)

⁷³ BTS, 4/1/14, Vol. 1, Unnumbered circular minute, 31 August 1964. Inasmuch as both this memorandum and the 1958 one were entirely lacking in personal interest, their entertainment value was minimal and few officials could have derived any inspiration from them.

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tives that the foreign editor of *Die Burger*, J.J.J. Scholtz, appended to the thirteen page entry on Foreign Affairs he contributed to the *Standard Encyclopædia of Southern Africa*,⁷⁴ besides checking the entry for accuracy. This gave the bare bones of the history of South Africa's international relations rather along the lines of the 'Three Cheers' view adverted to above and it lacked those personal details which breath life into institutional histories.

Testifying to continuing personal and official interest in the subject, and on the suggestion of a retired official, D.B. Sole (who had someone else in mind), at a departmental gathering in Cape Town in February 1990, the one-time head of the UNISA History Department, Professor (emeritus) C.J.F. Muller, was commissioned to write a departmental history. On Professor Muller's death in late 1992, two historians and two political scientists, including his daughter Marie Eloise of the Political Science department at UNISA, were appointed to continue the work.⁷⁵ This was still in progress in mid-1995.

As in the case of Czarist and Soviet Russia, the foreign policy objectives of the old and the new South Africa will have their areas of coincidence. Even so, Hedley Bull's point is apposite: 'A country's interests or objectives in foreign policy are not objective and permanent, but are simply what they are perceived to be by the ruling groups at any one time.'⁷⁶ Before South Africa's April 1994 election ANC foreign policy spokesmen were calling for the foreign service, considered a country's window on the outside world, better to reflect the composition of South Africa's population.⁷⁷ President Mandela has often done so since the election. By its nature a Department of Foreign Affairs lends itself to 'affirmative action'. As a first step, a comprehensive merger was initiated in late 1994, early 1995 between the personnel of the existing department, the ANC's Department of International Affairs, and the Departments of Foreign Affairs of the so-called TBVC states.⁷⁸ The Public Service Commission called the product 'essentially a new department' as indeed it was, dependent only peripherally on the old one's conventions and traditions.

⁷⁴ (Cape Town, 1971), pp. 617-31.

⁷⁵ The historians were Drs A.J. van Wyk, formerly of the UNISA History Department, and F.J. Nöthling of that department.

⁷⁶ H. Bull, 'International Relations as an Academic Pursuit', *Australian Outlook*, Vol. 26, No. 3, December 1972, p. 260.

⁷⁷ See, eg., the section 'The Diplomatic Service' in the ANC's policy document *Foreign Policy in a Democratic South Africa*, December 1994.

⁷⁸ Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei.

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As a further step, the Minister for the Public Service announced after consultations with the Minister of Foreign Affairs in late July 1995 that *all* departmental posts would be advertised 'to ensure that candidates that will apply will not only be drawn from the public service (including the TBVC state public services), but also from outside the service'.⁷⁹ (Italics added.) Not all serving officials will be reappointed *inter alia* because the mergers have drawn into the department many more personnel than there were posts. In such ways most of those who managed the *ancien régime's* foreign policy are following it into oblivion, a development which makes them, the department they served as well as the foreign policy they managed, legitimate fields of study.⁸⁰ For at least two years before the announcement there was already an exodus of white diplomats from the department, a popular route being premature voluntary retirement at the request of the individual officer.

A similar process is under way in the public service at large.⁸¹ Hence the previous pattern of public service development since Union is being repeated but at an accelerated rate. The preserve of English-speaking white males in 1910, the public service was gradually Afrikanerised as the century developed, in part in terms of National Party policy, until on the eve of the ANC's accession to office (1994) it was more than 90 per cent Afrikaans-speaking. Pursuant to the new measures, black people are on their way to exercising a degree of preponderance in public service managerial positions similar to that enjoyed by Afrikaners until recently and in much less time than it took the latter.

The aforementioned D.B. Sole is the exception to the reticent South African foreign service officer. Choosing not to publish his 'let-it-all-hang-out' testimony - *"This Above All": Reminiscences of a South African Diplomat* - based on forty years of letters to his parents and other family members,⁸² he presented photocopies of the manuscript *inter alia* to the Africa Institute, the South Africa Foundation⁸³ and the

⁷⁹ 'Press statement by Dr Zola Skweyiya, Minister for the Public Service and Administration, on the restructuring of the Department of Foreign Affairs', 25 July 1995. See *ia. The Pretoria News*, 27 July 1995. It seems what he had in mind were managerial posts only.

⁸⁰ As legitimate as would be studies of White Algeria, the Confederate States of America and Ancient Greece and Rome.

⁸¹ See, *eg.*, *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg), 6 August 1995, Business Times. (S. Lünsche, 'Silent coup changes the public sector's face'.)

⁸² *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg), 24 November 1991.

⁸³ The Foundation seems to have supplied photocopies to foreigners on demand. Then a Federal Public Servant in Western Australia, J. Elsegood told the writer that he saw the manuscript referred to in the Foundation's newsletter, applied for a copy and in due course received one through the mail.

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South African Institute of International Affairs. The Africa Institute copy came to the attention of Dr A.J. van Wyk, formerly of the History Department at the University of South Africa, who published an article about it in *The Pretoria News* of 6 November 1991, thereby triggering considerable publicity in other newspapers. The *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg), for example, published excerpts from the *Reminiscences* in three consecutive editions - 10, 17 and 24 November 1991.

Lengthy, detailed and quite uninhibited judging by the extracts he quotes, Sole's family correspondence, in effect and immediacy akin to contemporary diary entries, is of considerable significance. Inventing a new category of political role-player, that of 'ethnic agent in place', G.R. Berridge put Sole among English-speaking South African public servants whose supposed devotion to the British connection worked against the interests of the National Party government of the day.⁸⁴ Although to this writer it is ridiculous that Sole should be the target of such a charge, on the basis of some of the extracts quoted in his memoirs, it seems not unlikely that his seniors, if they had known what he was doing, would have been horrified by the nature of the information he was conveying more or less weekly to his parents by means of the public mails! Apart from Sole, the handful of former South African diplomats who have written (and published) memoirs have either been political appointees who had carved out a career for themselves in other fields before entering foreign service,⁸⁵ or else they were heads of department.⁸⁶ Sole, a career official, was never a head of department.⁸⁷

Testifying to his training as an historian, to the excellence of his principal primary source and of his memory, not to mention his intellect, his unpublished work far outstrips the others in interest not to mention as an historical source. Even in its

⁸⁴ G.R. Berridge, 'The Ethnic "Agent in Place": English-speaking Civil Servants and Nationalist South Africa, 1948-57', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 4, No. 2, April 1989, pp. 261-62.

⁸⁵ Such as A.L. Geyer (*Vier Jaar in Highveld: Diplomatieke ervarings - soms sonder dorings - as Hoë Kommissaris in Londen 1950-1954*. Cape Town, 1969); Leif Egeland (*Bridges of Understanding: A personal record in teaching, law, politics and diplomacy*. Cape Town/Pretoria, 1977); S.F. du Toit (*Home and Abroad*. Cape Town, 1969); and W.C. du Plessis (*Die Goue Draad: 'Op die Trekpad van 'n Nasie'*. Johannesburg, 1970 and *'n Mens vir die Mens*. Johannesburg, 1972). Du Plessis had been an official for twenty-one years. He was also the first head of the Department of Information (1961-63) then Administrator of South West Africa. All of these books, as do the two referred to in the next footnote, suffer from the South African publishing weakness of having no index.

⁸⁶ G.P. Jooste (*Diensherineringe*. Johannesburg, 1977) and B.G. Fourie (*Brandpunte: Agter die skerms met Suid-Afrika se bekendste diplomaat*. Cape Town, 1991).

⁸⁷ He was an Under-Secretary and Deputy-Secretary in Pretoria from 1962 to 1968. His last two posts before retirement in 1982 were Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany (1968-77) and to the United States (1977-83).

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present form his work rivals some of the best of the genre. His experiences and abilities are not, however, representative of those of his foreign service colleagues as a whole.

Not excluding Sole, there is no South African Renouf who was among the first intake of diplomatic cadets into the Australian Department of External Affairs in 1943 and rose through the ranks to head the department (1974-76) before serving as Ambassador to Washington for two-and-a-half years until his retirement at the age of sixty in 1979. In addition to his memoirs (*The Champagne Trail: Experiences of a Diplomat*, Melbourne, 1980), Renouf has written several works in retirement including a doctoral thesis in history on Dr Evatt's foreign policy which was published by the University of Queensland in 1983.⁸⁸ Nor, obviously, is there a South African Nicholas Henderson who has published best-sellers about his time as Private Secretary to five British Foreign Secretaries and on his thirteen years as an Ambassador.⁸⁹

South Africa likewise lacks an Alan Watt, Secretary of the Australian department from 1950 to 1954. While Director of the Australian Institute of International Affairs in retirement in the 1960s, he published the pioneering study *The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy 1938-1965* (Cambridge, 1968). Apart from his memoirs (*Australian Diplomat: The Memoirs of Sir Alan Watt*, Sydney, 1972), he also published articles in academic journals (eg., 'Australia and the Ambassadorial Issue')⁹⁰ and contributed chapters *ia.* to G. Greenwood and N. Harper's *Australia in World Affairs 1961-1965*⁹¹ ('The Australian Diplomatic Service 1935-1965') and to Z.S. Steiner's *The Times Survey of Foreign Ministries of the World*⁹² ('The Department of Foreign Affairs'.)

The nearest South African equivalent to Watt is C.J.A. Barratt, also an Oxford graduate, who was a foreign service officer from 1954 to 1967. Barratt served in a junior capacity at South Africa's Mission to the United Nations between 1958 and 1965 then at head office before resigning in 1967 to become Director of the South African Institute of International Affairs. He worked as such from 1 August of that

⁸⁸ A. Renouf, *Let Justice Be Done: The Foreign Policy of Dr H.V. Evatt*. St Lucia, Qld., 1983. Other of his titles are *The Frightened Country*. Melbourne, 1979 and *Malcolm Fraser & Australian Foreign Policy*. Sydney, 1986.

⁸⁹ N. Henderson, *The Private Office: A personal view of five Foreign Secretaries and of government from the inside* (London, 1986 (1984)) and *Mandarin: The Diaries of an Ambassador, 1969-1982*.

⁹⁰ *The Australian Quarterly*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 4, December 1964, pp. 11-18.

⁹¹ Melbourne/Canberra/Sydney, 1968, pp. 134-81.

⁹² London, 1982, pp. 34-48.

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year until his retirement early in 1994 contributing many articles, book chapters, and papers as well as editing or co-authoring several books, to the study of South Africa's international relations.

Much the same as with the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House), an offshoot of the Foreign Office and partly funded by it, there was in Watt's day up to the present a symbiotic relationship between the Australian Department of External Affairs and the Australian institute. The latter, described by T.B. Millar, Watt's successor as Director, as 'a respectable and useful part of the Australian cultural establishment', has also been dependent on annual subventions from the department.⁹³ In at least one case an officer of the institute embarked upon a successful career with the department. W.D. (Bill) Forsyth, had been a part-time research secretary at the institute's Victorian Branch in 1938, full time in 1940, before joining the Commonwealth Public Service. He joined External Affairs in 1942, occupying several Ambassadorial posts, including that of Permanent Representative to the United Nations in the 1950s. He retired in 1969 and died in 1994.⁹⁴

For political reasons the relationship between the South African institute and the South African department has been less close, especially in the last decade of white rule, the institute wanting to demonstrate independence of the department. There was never, until recently, a financial tie between the two, the institute being funded by the business community. Ironically, now that post-27 April 1994 political developments render a closer relationship acceptable to the institute, it is regarded in some circles close to government as unacceptable precisely because of its association with business.

Continuing on the theme there is not, so far as is known, even a South African Hugh Dunn who, in his second career as an academic (he was then honorary Professor of Asian and International Studies at Griffith University, Brisbane, Queensland), published about his service as Australian Ambassador to various Latin American countries in the 1970s.⁹⁵ Nor is there a South African Dick Woolcott in the sense that

⁹³ See T.B. Millar, 'The Role of the Institute', *Australian Outlook*, Vol. 30, No. 1, April 1976, pp. 3, 9, 10. Millar was Director of the Institute from 1969 to 1976. Thus H.V. Roberts, then General Secretary of the South African Institute, was not quite correct when he wrote in 1955 that institutes received 'no aid from their country's Government'. 'The South African Institute of International Affairs', *The Forum*, Vol. 3, No. 12, March 1955, pp. 29-30.

⁹⁴ See his 'The Pre-War Melbourne Group of the AIIA: Some Personal Recollections', *Australian Outlook*, Vol. 28, No. 1, April 1974, pp. 44-49.

⁹⁵ H. Dunn, 'Reflections on service in Latin America 1973-76', *World Review* [Australia], Vol. 28, No. 1, March 1989, pp. 4-15. A China scholar, Dunn was at different times Ambassador to both the

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(without penalty) at least one of his despatches found its way into print in a popular magazine.⁹⁶

T.B. Millar, has said:

The role of a foreign office is never easy to determine, and books or articles on it are usually factual without being very informative. They tell us how it functions; they do not tell us how it *works*, lives, palpitates; what alternatives to existing policy it puts up; which members are listened to and which are not; how reliable are its methods for collecting and assessing information; what are its continuing myths; what effect the office has on its minister and through him on the government. Important as these aspects are, the study of the 'family tree' of the department can only hint at them. The problem usually is that only the serving foreign service officer really knows what is happening and he is forbidden from reporting it.⁹⁷

Of course, practical experience of foreign service does not necessarily qualify one to write about foreign relations academically. Not even serving and former foreign service officers necessarily possess what D.P. Heatley called 'the habit of mind that is required for appreciating questions of foreign policy'.⁹⁸ Nor do they necessarily understand the nature of the diplomatic process. Both qualities, Craig feels, are essential for historians of international relations.⁹⁹ Millar holds that in Britain and Australia 'we try to keep in separate groups the people who study or write about foreign relations or foreign policy and the people who are engaged in making or administering them. It is a rare bird who flies successfully between the two groups'.¹⁰⁰

Republic of China (Taiwan) (1969-72) and the People's Republic of China (1980-84). In 1991 he was Paul Martin Professor of International Relations at the University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada. *The International Year Book and Statesmen's Who's Who 1994/95*, 42nd Edition (East Grinstead, Eng., 1994), p. 181.

⁹⁶ His humorous despatch on a Tubman presidential inauguration that he attended on his government's behalf in the 1960s. *The Bulletin* (Australia), Vol. 95, No. 4858, 9 June 1973, pp. 12-15. Woolcott was then High Commissioner to Ghana, apparently a penalty for having offended the then Australian External Affairs Minister, Hasluck, by his progressive but premature views about recognising the People's Republic of China. C. Hollis MP, oral communication, 20 July 1995.

⁹⁷ T.B. Millar, 'On writing about foreign policy', *Australian Outlook*, Vol. 21, No. 1, April 1967, p. 78.

⁹⁸ Quoted by G.A. Craig, 'On the Nature of Diplomatic History: The Relevance of Some Old Books' in P.G. Lauren, ed., *Diplomacy: New Approaches in History, Theory, and Policy* (London, 1979), p. 22.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ T.B. Millar, 'Academics and Practitioners in Foreign Affairs', *The Round Table*, No. 319, July 1991, p. 275. Renouf would be one. A better general example is E.H. Carr, for twenty years a member of the British Foreign Office. Then there is Adam Watson, author of *Diplomacy: The dialogue between states*. London, 1984 (1982). Alan Watt is probably a better Australian example but there are others such as Hugh Dunn of Griffith University, Nathan, Queensland. Nonetheless, most of these people turned to academia only after their retirement from foreign service. A junior member of the

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G.C. Olivier is probably the only South African to transfer from a senior level in academia to diplomacy. Once Professor of Political Science and International Politics at the University of Pretoria, he entered the Department of Foreign Affairs in the mid-1980s at Director level and was until recently (November 1995) Ambassador to the Russian Federation.¹⁰¹

South African foreign affairs studies lack an Edwards who has written extensively about aspects of the field in Australia, producing in the early 1980s under the auspices of the Australian Institute of International Affairs an historical examination of the making of Australian foreign policy concerned 'not so much ... with what the policy was as with how and by whom it was shaped'.¹⁰² Cecil's 1976 study of the German Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service is of a similar nature: 'This is a book about diplomats, not about diplomacy. In investigating the German Foreign Office from 1871 to 1914 I have examined the men who conceived and executed German diplomacy rather than the policies and stratagems through which they attempted to advance the Fatherland's interest.'¹⁰³

That is a sophisticated approach because foreign affairs is a field where the 'who' is more easily ascertained than the 'what' or the 'why'. However, the natural tendency is to reverse the sequence, thereby landing the enquirer in a morass of the ephemeral and short lived. South African foreign policy studies will have reached maturity only when articles such as E.T. Corp's 'Sir Eyre Crowe and the administration of the Foreign Office, 1906-1914',¹⁰⁴ his 'The Problem of Promotion in the Career of Sir Eyre Crowe 1905-1920'¹⁰⁵ and his 'Sir William Tyrrell: The Éminence Grise of the British Foreign Office, 1912-1915';¹⁰⁶ P. Gronn's 'Schooling for ruling: The social composition of admissions to Geelong Grammar School, 1930-1939'¹⁰⁷ and Zara Steiner's 'The Last Years of the old Foreign Office 1898-1905'¹⁰⁸ as well as Steiner's and Gosses' longer

Department of Foreign Affairs for some eighteen months in 1963-64, the South African historian Hermann Giliomee does not write on foreign policy.

¹⁰¹ His doctoral thesis on South Africa's foreign policy was published as *Suid-Africa se Buitelandse Beleid*. Pretoria & Cape Town, 1977. He also contributed the chapter 'South African Foreign Policy' to D. Worrall, ed., *South Africa: Government and Politics* (Pretoria, 1971), pp. 285-331.

¹⁰² Edwards, *Prime Ministers and Diplomats*, p. vii.

¹⁰³ Cecil, *The German Diplomatic Service*, Preface, p. ix.

¹⁰⁴ *The Historical Journal*, Vol. XXII, No. 2, 1979, pp. 443-54.

¹⁰⁵ *The Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol. 28, No. 2, 1982, pp. 236-49.

¹⁰⁶ *The Historical Journal*, Vol. XXV, No. 3, 1982, pp. 697-708.

¹⁰⁷ *Australian Historical Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 98, April 1992, pp. 72-89.

¹⁰⁸ *The Historical Journal*, Vol. VI, No. 1, 1963, pp. 59-90.

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works,¹⁰⁹ not to mention Edwards's book, prove possible. (See also the other articles and books listed in Appendix II.)

Focusing as it does to a limited extent on the diplomats of two countries, South Africa and Australia, in the context of those countries' diplomatic relations with each other over the sixteen year period 1945-61, the present study is influenced by such works. Dr W.J. Hudson (see below) has broken down the postwar personnel of the Australian Department of External Affairs into different factions: 'Masons, Marxists (meaning left wing theorists, rather than Communists), Catholics and a sort of professional faction headed by [Alan] Watt'.¹¹⁰ That is another indication of the advances in foreign policy studies in that country. Being a pioneer in the field, the present writer was not in a position to dissect the South African department so minutely.

Moorhouse says that few professions 'have produced as many writers as diplomacy. Not many professions provide such a variety of stimulating experiences, or appear to leave a man with as much spare time and energy to write in'.¹¹¹ He was referring to the British service and not to writers of memoirs but to 'publication by people still on active service'. That recalls the nineteenth century when, as has been written about the French, diplomacy 'was still something of a leisurely hobby and was related to literary pursuits, horse-riding, hunting, and the establishment of fine literary and musical studios'.¹¹² Of mid-nineteenth century Foreign Office clerks did Lord Palmerston say that like the fountains on Trafalgar Square they played between ten and four with an interval for lunch!¹¹³

Times had changed by the 1920s when new recruits were required to sign an undertaking that they were aware of the FO's hours of business and willing to work

¹⁰⁹ Steiner, *The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy*, F. Gosses, *The Management of British Foreign Policy before the First World War, especially during the period 1880-1914*. Trans. E.C. Van der Graaf. Leiden, 1948.

¹¹⁰ Ms Moira Smythe, letter, 23 May 1995.

¹¹¹ Moorhouse, *The Diplomats*, p. 49. That accords with Bruce Lockhart's view. He said of his time in Prague in the early 1920s: 'I had ample spare time in which to write my books'. Bruce Lockhart, *Retreat from Glory*, p. 113.

¹¹² Hayne, 'Change and Continuity in The Structure and Practices of the Quai d'Orsay, 1871-1898', *The Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol. 37, No. 1, 1991, p. 70.

¹¹³ Cited by R.H. Bruce Lockhart in *British Agent* (New York, 1933), p. 44. (This had been published in England the previous year under the title *Memoirs of a British Agent*.) Others, including Tilley and Gaselee (J. Tilley and S. Gaselee, *The Foreign Office* (London, 1933), p. ix) and Steiner (*The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy*, p.12) quote this without identifying Palmerston as the source.

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under such conditions. 'The hours of attendance are ordinarily seven, from Monday to Friday inclusive, with a half-day on Saturday, but the conditions of public business peculiar to the Foreign Office make it impossible to guarantee that these limits shall be rigidly observed, and in emergencies the staff must be prepared to work longer or later hours.' They certified at the same time that they had read the Official Secrets Acts of 1911 and 1920 and appreciated that they came under their provisions.¹¹⁴

In the leisurely tradition of the nineteenth century the French diplomat J.J. Jusserand wrote several scholarly works in his spare time. Serving as French Minister/Ambassador to the United States from 1902 to 1925, he was awarded the first Pulitzer Prize for history in 1917 for his *En Amérique jadis et maintenant (With Americans of Past and Present Days)*. In the 1920s he was President of the American Historical Association, chairing its committee on the writing of history. He contributed the opening chapter 'The Historian's Work' (pp. 3-32) to the committee's report, *The Writing of History* (New York, 1926). His diplomatic achievements included helping to bring the United States into the First World War.¹¹⁵ While working as a Counsellor in the French Embassy in London he had earlier made a name for himself as a scholar of Middle English literature, publishing such works as *Le Roman au Temps de Shakespeare* (1887) and *Les Anglais au Moyen Âge* (1884). Both appeared later in translation, the first as *The English Novel in the Time of Shakespeare* (1890) and the second as *English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages (XIVth Century)* (1889).

Translated by Lucy T. Smith, *English Wayfaring Life* had achieved eight editions by 1926. None other than George Macaulay Trevelyan cited it in support of a point in his *English Social History: A Survey of Six Centuries; Chaucer to Queen Victoria*.¹¹⁶ Indicative of their quality, several of Jusserand's books were republished in English in the 1960s, more than thirty years after his death in 1932 at the age of seventy-seven and in one case almost eighty years after it first appeared in translation.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ BTS, S4/5/1/1, Vol. 1, 'Memorandum' to be signed by new appointees.

¹¹⁵ For brief biographical details see *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed. (Chicago, 1986 (1974)), Vol. 6, *Micropaedia*, p. 661 and *Webster's Biographical Dictionary*, First ed. (Springfield, Mass., 1960), p. 799.

¹¹⁶ London, 1945 (1941), p. 44, footnote.

¹¹⁷ *A Literary History of The English People*, 3rd ed., New York, 1969 (1895-1909); *The English Novel in the Time of Shakespeare*, New ed., London/New York, 1966; and *The School for Ambassadors and other Essays*. Freeport, NY., 1968 (1925).

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Jusserand's colleague Maurice Paléologue, the last French Ambassador to Imperial Russia, was another who 'found time to produce a substantial number of important books'. His *Memoirs* and a biography of Cavour secured his election to the French Academy in 1928.¹¹⁸ In the English-speaking world Harold Nicolson is perhaps the best-known scholar-diplomat. In the second of the two decades he spent in diplomatic service before resigning at the end of 1929 to take up a career in journalism, he published the biographies *Paul Verlaine* (1921); *Tennyson* (1923); *Byron: The Last Journey* (1924); and *Swinburne* (1926); the novel *Sweet Waters* (1921); and the semi-fictional memoirs *Some People* (1927). He had also completed work on the biography of his father, *Sir Arthur Nicolson, Bart: First Lord Carnock: A Study in the old diplomacy*, which was published in 1930.

Robert Vansittart, for eight years Permanent Under-Secretary of State (PUS) at the Foreign Office (1930-38) then Chief Diplomatic Adviser to the British Government (1938-41), was also a writer of some distinction. As a Third Secretary at the Embassy in Paris in 1905 he wrote a successful play in French which enjoyed a six week run at the Théâtre Molière.¹¹⁹ His biographer calls *The Singing Caravan* (London, 1919) 'his most celebrated literary achievement'.¹²⁰ It was the product of his years in Teheran (1907-09) and reads like 'a kind of Persian Canterbury Tales'. Including *The Singing Caravan*, his *Collected Poems* were published in 1934.¹²¹

In the South African Department of External Affairs officers could not, without permission, write for publication and what they wrote was expected to be vetted departmentally. No South African would have dared emulate Bruce Lockhart who, without permission, supplemented his income as British vice-consul in pre-1914 Moscow by writing newspaper articles under a pseudonym. By such means he averaged between £25 and £30 per month, a not inconsiderable sum for the times.¹²² Though even now the British have 'Diplomatic Regulations which require severe caution of a man who wants to rush into print'¹²³ in the case of the South Africans such obstacles may have put the seal on an ingrained reluctance to do so. In A.J. Oxley's

¹¹⁸ L.B. Schapiro, Introduction to M. Paléologue, *An Ambassador's Memoirs 1914-1917* (London, 1973 (1923-25)), p. xi.

¹¹⁹ N. Rose, *Vansittart: Study of a Diplomat* (London, 1978), pp. 22-23. The play was called *Les Parias*. Like Bruce Lockhart, Vansittart seems to have been motivated by financial considerations.

¹²⁰ Rose, *Vansittart*, p. 25. His memoirs, *Mist Procession: The Autobiography of Lord Vansittart* (London, 1958), are also not without literary merit.

¹²¹ *Collected Poems of Robert Vansittart*. London, 1934.

¹²² Lockhart, *British Agent*, p. 77.

¹²³ Moorhouse, *The Diplomats*, p. 49.

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case, though, it was not reluctance but departmental opposition. In 1990 he gave this account of the reaction to his desire to publish forty years earlier:

I have not done any writing of my own on Foreign Affairs matters - having been severely chastised and rebuked for the one attempt I made in the early 1950s. I had addressed a Summer School in Athens on the subject of the Commonwealth, and Longmans Green wanted to use my talk in a schools text-book on current affairs. Correctly (but perhaps stupidly) I sought the Department's permission for publication. The reaction was horrendous and could hardly have been worse if I had murdered the King of Greece and/or burned down the Legation there! I was threatened with all sorts of punishment!¹²⁴

Apart from the occasional (unpublished) thesis, and R.F. Botha who wrote short stories for an Afrikaans-language newspaper and magazines when he was a Cadet,¹²⁵ few South African foreign service officers have written anything other than what they had to do for their job. It is not clear whether their attitude was inspired by the environment in which they worked - the fiction that officers devoted all their time and attention to the Public Service - or whether it derived from the personal characteristics of those accepted for employment in the Department of External Affairs.¹²⁶ Perhaps a bit of both because the old style foreign service officer was never burdened with the reputation of being a reader (let alone a writer) of books, a trait which the old style Australian foreign service officer may have shared. The Oxford-educated Walter Crocker remarked as recently as 1981 that he was struck repeatedly 'how few of our officers had any real interest in or grip on international relations, and how little they read on anything at all'.¹²⁷

¹²⁴ A.J. Oxley, letter, 9 October 1990.

¹²⁵ Botha says he obtained departmental permission to do so. Examples of his work are contained in *Die Byvoegsel tot Die Burger*, 19 June & 30 October 1954; 14 May, 8 & 22 October 1955; 31 March, 25 August, 15 September & 24 November 1956; and *Die Huisgenoot*, 24 September, 9 October & 31 December 1954; 29 August, & 14 November 1956; and 5 & 12 March 1956.

¹²⁶ As mentioned above, there was also the matter of the National Party's sensitivity about public servants or former public servants writing for publication.

¹²⁷ W.R. Crocker, *Travelling back: the memoirs of Sir Walter Crocker* (South Melbourne, 1981), p. 193. The Australian-born Crocker commenced his career in the British Colonial Service. He was an Assistant District Officer in Nigeria before joining the League of Nations Secretariat. After the Second World War he became a member of the United Nations Secretariat. He was the first Professor of International Relations at the Australian National University, then joined the Australian diplomatic service at the invitation of the Minister of External Affairs, R.G. Casey. He served as an Ambassador for eighteen years. He retired from the diplomatic service in 1970, later becoming Lt Governor of South Australia. His *Australian Ambassador: International relations at first hand* (Melbourne, 1971) is also cited from time to time in this study.

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C.B.H. Fincham's 1948 Leiden doctoral dissertation on the domestic jurisdiction clause in the League of Nations Covenant and the United Nations Charter, in which his line diametrically opposed the official one, may have contributed to the climate.¹²⁸ Both the Smuts and the National Party governments based their case at the United Nations on what they perceived to be the letter and spirit of the domestic jurisdiction clause (Article 2 (7)), which allegedly prohibited intervention in a member state's domestic affairs. But Fincham, a Third Secretary in South Africa's Legation at The Hague, argued that it should be scrapped from the UN Charter. Although this has not so far proved possible to document, it was rumoured in the 1950s that Eric Louw had been tackled at a General Assembly session along the lines of 'You say this, but one of your officials says that'. It was not possible to discuss the matter with Fincham who died in 1984, but Sole writes:

My own recollection is that although Charles [Fincham] felt that he was under a cloud, he was never victimised by the Department on account of the thesis. Eric Louw was reputed to have told Charles' head of mission in the Hague (Dr D.B. Bosman) that if he ever had any say in the matter Charles would never receive promotion; but at the time Dr Malan was Minister of Foreign Affairs [sic] and when Eric Louw became Minister, he had more pressing preoccupations on his mind.¹²⁹

Academics have not applied themselves critically to the management of South Africa's foreign relations. In view of the government's beleaguered international status for most of the post-war period, there may have been a feeling on the part especially of Afrikaans-speaking academics of not wanting to give aid and comfort to the enemy by criticising South African foreign policy failures. Apart from that, according to Geldenhuys, the influence of outside pressure on South Africa's foreign and domestic policies, has 'seemingly become surrounded with taboos' for South African scholars.¹³⁰ A factor which may also have contributed to the lack of detailed attention paid South African foreign policy, at least by historians, is the National Party government's long restrictive attitude to the records of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

¹²⁸ C.B.H. Fincham, *Domestic jurisdiction: The exception of domestic jurisdiction as a bar to action by the League of Nations and the United Nations: A contribution to the study of article 15, paragraph 8, of the Covenant and article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter*. Leiden, 1948. Perhaps the leading authority on the UN and domestic jurisdiction, M.S. Rajan, cites Fincham's thesis extensively and respectfully. M.S. Rajan, *United Nations and Domestic Jurisdiction*, 2nd ed. London, 1961 (1958).

¹²⁹ D.B. Sole, letter, 18 May 1993.

¹³⁰ Geldenhuys, *The Diplomacy of Isolation*, p. 210.

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Having been open in the 1970s, these records were later, until the early 1990s, closed to non-official researchers from 1910 onwards. Although most of the restrictions have been lifted and the so-called thirty year rule applied, not all foreign affairs records older than thirty years are yet available to general researchers. Many remain in the department's custody pending their transfer to the Archives a process which, in respect of material older than thirty years, is expected to be completed by the end of 1996.¹³¹

The Australian authorities have followed a less idiosyncratic approach to the records of their Department of Foreign Affairs. Having applied the thirty year rule for some years, the Australian Archives are accustomed to scholars researching foreign policy topics. In at least one respect, however, a researcher has more scope in the South African Archives as currently organised. For instance, once records are made available, the researcher is permitted to make his own photocopies (at a cost of fifteen South African cents - seven-and-a-half Australian cents - per page in 1993). In Australia all photocopying is undertaken by Archives staff, researchers having to list separately and mark in the file the items they want copied. That is both a time-consuming and, at thirty Australian cents per page (sixty South African cents between 1990 and 1992), a costly process.

And while the Australian Archives applies the thirty year rule, automatic access is not granted to records more than thirty years old. Where files have not been 'cleared', applications for clearance have to be lodged and have in the past taken a year or more to be processed.¹³² A side effect of the writer's own two-and-a-half years (part-time) in the Australian Archives was that he was instrumental in obtaining clearance for a multitude of files touching on South African/Australian relations, thereby facilitating the task of future researchers. Another one is that in some instances he may be in possession of the only copies still extant of documentation destroyed pursuant to the Archives' 'sentencing' policy which rids its shelves of material deemed to have low value.¹³³ The references given here to Australian archival material were in

¹³¹ Files with numbers commencing with '1' were the first to be transferred; by mid-1995 transfers had reached the number '70'. Information supplied by Mr Martin Meintjes.

¹³² The clearance process has since been speeded up, albeit at much expense. Ms Moira Smythe, letter, 23 May 1995.

¹³³ The actual 'sentencing' is undertaken by the agencies controlling the records, in effect those which generated them. It is defined as 'the process of examining records against authorised criteria to determine their value for research and other purposes. This may result in their permanent or temporary retention or their destruction'. Archives leaflet 'What is Sentencing?', September 1992.

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use between 1990 and 1992. Towards the end of the period some items were renumbered. The writer was advised in mid-1995:

To prevent confusion at a later time, it would probably be better if you only supplied the Commonwealth Record Series number, rather than the individual consignment details for each file, in your citations. This also helps in regard to those record series which are currently undergoing sentencing. For those records, the individual consignment details can vary from one year to the next.¹³⁴

However, to prevent worse confusion in his own mind, he has retained the original references in the footnotes while following the advice in respect of his source list.¹³⁵

Following the practice of the American State Department and other developed countries' Departments of Foreign Affairs, the Australian department includes an Historical Documents Branch. This falls under the Public Affairs Division and has been headed since 1976 by a leading historian of the country's foreign relations, indeed 'one of the most assiduous students of Australia's relations with the United Nations',¹³⁶ Dr W.J. Hudson. The Branch has two Sections, an Historical Documents Projects Section with a staff of six and a Historical Records Information and Access Section with a staff of seven. The task of the first-mentioned is to prepare for publication selections of documents relating to Australia's foreign relations. Some thirteen volumes have appeared so far.

The task of the second Section, which comprises two Sub-Sections, Information and Access, is *inter alia*, on the Information side, to meet 'the demand for more detailed research of the sort that is increasingly needed within the Department'. It handles two to three thousand queries annually including those received from other agencies and the public. Some are trivial but others involve weeks of work. Employing consultants, the Access Sub-Section clears records for public access under the Archives Act. Initially this was a low priority and a 'lot of public complaint was needed to win

¹³⁴ J. Pepper, e-mail message, 1 August 1995.

¹³⁵ Ms Smythe writes: 'someone wishing to consult one of your references will have to approach Australian Archives and reference staff will trace the file as long as the series is mentioned in some form or other. The great thing is to get the series number and the file number right. ... the series/consignment number may vary over time but Archives will be able to trace the correct file from the information cited'. e-mail message, 18 September 1995.

¹³⁶ H.S. Albinski, *Australian Policy under Labor: Content, Process and The National Debate* (St Lucia, Qld., 1977), p. 22.

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the hearts and minds of the money people'.¹³⁷ The Information and Access side of the Branch recently underwent an expansion to help it cope with the increased volume of work.

Dr Hudson was at first precluded from publishing on his own account but at his request later allowed to do so in order to maintain his academic reputation. By agreement with the then Foreign Minister, W.G. Hayden, he is restricted to sources released from the thirty year rule. His publications are not entirely private because he is authorised to use some official time and resources in their preparation. His staff publish on the same terms.¹³⁸

Himself no mean historian, Hasluck made the point about the *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy* series, which commences with 1937 papers, that before that date it was most unlikely that 'official files in Australia could have provided the matter for a volume of documents on foreign policy worthy of archival respect'.¹³⁹ So brief is the effective life-span of the Australian department now called the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, yet so much more has been published about its workings than about those of the South African department. And there is much greater interest in foreign policy questions among Australian scholars than among their South African counterparts. Thus Hudson's bibliographies of journal articles on Australia's external relations up to the 1970s are not matched in South Africa.¹⁴⁰

The few South African academics¹⁴¹ who write about foreign policy, mostly political scientists, focus on such high policy as they are able to extrapolate from official pronouncements, newspaper accounts of developments and personal interviews, rather than on the actual roots of policy and on the personalities of its makers. They create the impression of a machine turning out considered policies in accordance with a

¹³⁷ Ms Moira Smythe, letter, 23 May 1995.

¹³⁸ Information supplied by Dr Hudson. His most recent titles include *Casey* (Melbourne, 1986); *Australian Independence: Colony to Reluctant Kingdom*, Melbourne, 1988 (with M.P. Sharp); *Blind Loyalty: Australia and the Suez Crisis (1956)*, Melbourne, 1989; and *Australia and the New World Order: Evatt at San Francisco, 1945* (Canberra, 1993). Before joining DFAT, Dr Hudson was Associate Professor in the School of History at the University of New South Wales.

¹³⁹ P.M.C. Hasluck, 'Archives, Anthologies and Other Source Books', *Australian Outlook*, Vol. 32, No.1, April 1978, p. 105.

¹⁴⁰ See *Australian Outlook*, Vol. 24, No. 3, December 1970, pp. 328-45; Vol. 25, No. 1, April 1971, pp. 69-93; Vol. 30, No. 3, December 1976, pp. 414-31; and Vol. 31, No. 1, April 1977, pp. 38-51.

¹⁴¹ Or academics in general, mainly British, who write about South African foreign policy.

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well-defined national interest.¹⁴² Or if they detect the lack of such a machine and such policies, they urge their speedy creation.¹⁴³ Missing from their accounts is the haphazard and personalised nature of an operation where clashes of personality, both domestically and internationally, are sometimes what it is all about.

The conduct of foreign relations is often more a case of crisis management than anything else. Millar has suggested that 'Most countries' foreign policy (including Britain's and Australia's) consists of today's answers to yesterday's telegrams'.¹⁴⁴ J.B. Shearar, formerly of the South African Department of Foreign Affairs, is in general agreement, if less picturesquely: 'Hindsight can ascribe to the policy maker a much more in-depth analysis than he actually undertook. Policy in immediate terms is very often reaction to unexpected circumstances and the policy maker is totally dependent on the information and advice then available'.¹⁴⁵ As for content, the dust-cover of a work about the reports of an early Australian role player in the foreign affairs field, of which Hudson was joint editor, provides useful advice:

Academic studies of Australian foreign policy, reflecting the bureaucratic structure, have tended hitherto to concentrate on questions of 'high policy' in international relations. Australian governments, however, have been more consistently concerned with loan raising, with finding markets for Australian exports, with attracting investment and with immigration.¹⁴⁶

In South Africa's case, the requirements of domestic policy have practically always preponderated over other considerations. In that regard, Geldenhuys's view that the 'central tenet of Nationalist thinking on foreign affairs [was] the need to prevent the

¹⁴² See, eg., A. Johnston, 'International Relations in Historical Perspective', A. Venter & A. Johnston, eds., *Politics: An introduction for Southern African students* (Cape Town, 1991), pp. 290-93. The South African DEA itself once succumbed to this illusion by proposing that its Cadets or junior staff not be employed 'in those sections at Head Office where the foreign policy of the Union is formulated'. BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 17, Secretary Public Service Commission/SEA, 26 February 1953.

¹⁴³ See, eg., G. Mills, 'Time to jack up foreign policy', *The Star* (Johannesburg), 12 October 1995, p. 14.

¹⁴⁴ T.B. Millar, 'Academics and Practitioners in Foreign Affairs', *The Round Table*, No. 319, July 1991, p. 278.

¹⁴⁵ J.B. Shearar, 'Response to Prof. Barber', in A.J. Venter, ed., *Foreign Policy Issues in a Democratic South Africa: Papers from a Conference of Professors World Peace Academy (South Africa) held north of Johannesburg (in Sandton), South Africa on 20-21 March 1992* (Johannesburg, 1992), p. 28.

¹⁴⁶ W.J. Hudson & Wendy Way, eds., *Letters from a "Secret Service Agent": F.L. McDougall to S.M. Bruce*. Canberra, 1986.

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demands of foreign policy affecting domestic policy¹⁴⁷ is not as profound as it may seem. That applies to all countries. It certainly did to the Australians who (and more successfully than South Africa's Nationalists) insisted in keeping the international community at arms length in respect of their immigrant exclusion policy known colloquially as the White Australia Policy. But where the Nationalists proved unnecessarily obdurate, ultimately to their detriment, was absolutely to refuse to countenance the adaptation of domestic policy to meet the exigencies of the country's international position. And not only the Nationalists. As his handling of the Indian issue showed, Smuts was also guilty of that.¹⁴⁸ In consequence and in the long term,¹⁴⁹ just about everything Smuts on the one hand and the Nationalists on the other aimed for in politics did not stand the test of time.

Perhaps white South Africa's reluctance to adapt was a manifestation in another context of Blainey's 'tyranny of distance'.¹⁵⁰ Isolated from the post-war changes in Western thinking, it was not aware that anything had changed. A comment by A.A. Roberts, a South African delegate to the Seventh Session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1952 rather sums it up: 'I wonder if people at home realize the terrific momentum of the ideological flood of "human rights" and "self-determination" which is sweeping through the emotions of 1,500 million people'.¹⁵¹

* * *

Based on Australian and South African archival documents, this is the first study ever of diplomatic relations between the two countries as conducted through resident High Commissions or Embassies. As such it examines the main features of the diplomatic connection between 1945 and 1961, showing how it came about and its course.

Except for a period in the 1950s when the Malan and Strijdom governments held Australia to be their best friend internationally (a feeling not reciprocated), neither

¹⁴⁷ D.J. Geldenhuys, *The Effects of South Africa's Racial Policy on Anglo-South African Relations* (Unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1977), pp. 273-74.

¹⁴⁸ His obduracy over the Indian issue long predated the 1940s. See, for example, W.K. Hancock, *Smuts and the shift of world power* (London, 1964), pp. 15-19.

¹⁴⁹ Bearing in mind Keynes's view that in the long term we'll all be dead!

¹⁵⁰ After the title of his best-known book *The Tyranny of Distance: How Distance Shaped Australia's History*. Melbourne, 1966.

¹⁵¹ BTS 136/2/19, Vol. 2, Roberts/Forsyth, 30 December 1952.

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country was a priority for the other. Even so, the study reaches the rather unorthodox conclusion that at the outset the diplomatic connection was of greater value to Australia than to South Africa. It was in fact initiated by the Australian government in 1945.

At another level the study provided an opportunity to examine the origins and early years of the South African and Australian Departments of External Affairs, the comparative approach within the same time-frame, illuminating hitherto obscure or unknown aspects of both. Such aspects are taken up in Chapter One.

The period 1945-61 was a step in the evolutionary process which produced the Australian and South African foreign services as they are now or, in the case of the South African service, as it was up to the 27 April 1994 general election. Thus the study also provided an opportunity to examine what individual foreign service and associated officers did within a specific time-frame and context, how they, or at least their contemporaries, were recruited and trained, and how effective they were.¹⁵² Such matters are canvassed in one form or another in Chapters Two through Seven. Chapter Seven focuses on a key aspect of diplomatic activity - reporting.

A work on South Africa's foreign relations would be incomplete if it ignored the government's efforts to project a positive image of itself and its policies abroad, and to counter media and public hostility. Tending to dominate the debate in the 1970s and 1980s about what white South African diplomats should be doing, the information question gathered momentum in the 1950s. South African information efforts in an Australian setting are discussed in Chapter Five.

¹⁵² It must be mentioned that the quality of the source material about the Australians is inferior to that about the South Africans. That will be apparent from Chapter Four. The material on the Australians consists largely of biographical entries in the Australian *Who's Who*, in various editions of *The International Year Book and Statesmen's Who's Who*, in various editions of the Department of Foreign Affairs' confidential *Appointments and Biographies*, and references in published works. The personnel records have been destroyed. Ms. Moira Smythe, letter, 23 May 1995. Two of the Australians have entries in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* - Hodgson and Knowles - both in Vol. 9. M.J.S. Knowles's article 'Canberra in the early government period' in the *Canberra Historical Journal* (New Series, No. 19, March 1987, pp. 3-8) contains more extensive biographical information about his father. I am grateful to Mr Knowles for sending me a copy of this issue of the journal. I am also indebted to Mr Hugh Gilchrist for supplying me with background information about some of his former colleagues. In the case of the South Africans, while only Viljoen has an entry in the *Dictionary of South African Biography* (Vol. IV), which is not entirely accurate, departmental personnel material was consulted.

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Also intended to put the sending country in a favourable light are the standards its diplomats maintain abroad, especially in respect of their accommodation. As *The Economist* put it recently, 'countries think it important to express their prestige and personality in their physical presence'. This is 'architectural diplomacy'.¹⁵³ Such standards are also a tribute to the status of the receiving country and its image of itself. In any case, the physical environment in which diplomatic missions operate has an impact on their work. Chapter Six examines such aspects.

At the political level, what ultimately conditioned the bilateral relationship from the Australian side was the South African government's controversial standing at the United Nations. That is dealt with in Chapter Eight as are the Australian and South African roles in the establishment of the United Nations. The writer's perusal of the official documents of both countries as well as UN records has given him a perspective on the founding of the organisation and on South African/UN relations not previously possible.

In fact, so far as is known, from the South African side the present study is the only non-popular treatment, even if in passing, of the San Francisco Conference which drafted the United Nations Charter.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ *The Economist*, Vol. 336, No. 7929, p. 75. ('Prestige on the Potomac').

¹⁵⁴ Apart from the contemporary news reports filed by David Friedmann as South African Press Association (SAPA) representative at the conference, there are B.G. Fourie's and J.C. Smuts's references to it in their respective works, *Buitelandse Woelinge* (pp. 31-34) and *Brandpunte* (pp. 34-36) and *Jan Christian Smuts* (pp. 480-83). Leif Egeland, who was a last-minute substitute on the delegation, also touches on it in *Bridges of Understanding* (pp. 168-71).

CHAPTER ONE

THE DEPARTMENTS

Departments or Ministries of Foreign Affairs assist the Minister of Foreign Affairs to manage a state's foreign relations. As Zara Steiner, the historian of the British Foreign Office, says: 'No state is strong enough or weak enough to live in splendid isolation. ... No state has as yet permanently closed its Foreign Ministry.'¹ If, as Steiner also says, 'the need to communicate between states ... provides the *raison d'être* of all diplomatic institutions',² in South Africa's case it was the policy of the Hertzog National Party government of the 1920s to create such institutions in order to demonstrate the country's political independence of the United Kingdom.³ For 'diplomatic representation abroad is a function of sovereign independence'. Its establishment by South Africa is therefore 'an essential part' of the country's 'constitutional history'.⁴

The concept of the diplomatic unity of the British Empire, beloved of various Australian administrations in the 1920s and 1930s, if not actually anathema to Hertzog's government, had no appeal for it. Prestige was probably a factor. W.T. Cosgrave, the Irish Prime Minister, thought so. He congratulated Hertzog on the South African department's establishment in June 1927: 'My best wishes for the success of the new department ... and for the increased prestige of the Union in her relations with all nations.'⁵

The First World War and the creation of the League of Nations accelerated the movement of the self-governing Dominions - Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa (Ireland's case was rather different) - towards international maturity and full independence. The Dominions enjoyed separate representation at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference and they signed the Peace Treaty in their own right. That was followed by individual membership of the League of Nations. The drive for political independence was strongest in those Dominions which possessed a large non-British section among the politically active elements of their populations. Ireland, Canada and

¹ Steiner, ed., *The Times Survey of Foreign Ministries of the World*, p. 31.

² *Ibid.*, p. 11.

³ See Hertzog's statement in the House of Assembly on 10 April 1930. *HA Deb.*, Vol. 15, 1930, Col. 3022.

⁴ J.J.J. Scholtz, D.J. Potgieter, ed., *Standard Encyclopaedia of South Africa*, Vol. 4, p. 618.

⁵ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 1, Cosgrave/Hertzog, 8 June 1927.

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South Africa were prominent in that regard. French Canadians constituted about a third of the country's population and Afrikaners a majority of South Africa's white population. Afrikaners, French Canadians and the Irish were at best lukewarm, hostile in the case of the last-mentioned, towards the British connection.

At the 1926 Imperial Conference Hertzog, was the mainspring behind the so-called Balfour Declaration or Report⁶ which set the scene for the Statute of Westminster five years later when the British Parliament renounced its legislative power over the Dominions.⁷ The Balfour Report said of Britain and the Dominions that 'They are autonomous Communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or internal affairs ...' South Africa set up its Department of External Affairs on 1 June 1927⁸ and from 1929 started opening legations in several countries. By 1936 it was said to have 'outdistanced all of the other dominions. having no less than eight legations abroad' in Belgium, France, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, and the United States.⁹

Canada, Ireland and South Africa agitated for complete political independence and for them the Statute of Westminster represented the achievement of that goal. Australia, New Zealand and Newfoundland were 'pulled along unwillingly' in their wake and went along only reluctantly with the idea of a Statute of Westminster.¹⁰ They believed that

⁶ To distinguish it from the 1917 Declaration of the same name in respect of a Jewish national home in Palestine.

⁷ See H. Duncan Hall, 'The Genesis of the Balfour Declaration of 1926', *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 3, November 1963, pp. 169-93 for an account of the background to the declaration. Hall maintains (p. 172) that 'four figures, besides Balfour, stand out as the architects of the Balfour Declaration: General Smuts, Sir Robert Borden, L.S. Amery and General Hertzog'. Robert Menzies, then Attorney-General of the Australian Commonwealth, a political position equivalent to Minister of Justice in South Africa, demonstrated understanding for the positions of South Africa and Canada in his article 'The Relations Between the British Dominions', *The Australian Quarterly*, No. 28, December 1935, pp. 5-9.

⁸ Before that the External Affairs Branch of the Prime Minister's department handled South Africa's membership of the League of Nations, the South West Africa mandate, and communications between the Union government and the Dominions' Secretary through the Governor-General's Office. A Second Grade Principal Clerk, M.S.J.C. van Tyen (salary £650 per annum), devoted most of his time to external work. Other officials spent about 50 per cent of their time on it. The work of the department as a whole was said to consist of an equal amount of external and internal work. BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 1, Annexes A to D to Gordon Watson/Secretary, PSC, 9 March 1927.

⁹ CPD, Vol. 151, 5 November 1936, p. 1534.

¹⁰ *Year Book Australia 1988*, No. 71 (Canberra, 1988), p. 173. See also Robert Menzies's article 'The Relations Between the British Dominions', *The Australian Quarterly*, No. 28, December 1935, pp. 5, 6. Menzies was then Attorney-General of the Australian Commonwealth.

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constitutional development should continue to be in accordance with the peculiar genius of the British Constitution with its elasticity and power of adaptation to new conditions, rather than that an attempt should be made to circumscribe future constitutional development by a rigid legal formalism.¹¹

In deference to their wishes, the Statute contained the proviso that it would not apply to them until their Parliaments decided so.¹² Australia adopted it in 1942 and then only for reasons connected with the war.¹³ The positions of Australia and South Africa on the Declaration of War in September 1939 revealed their attitudes to the British connection. Australia's Prime Minister of less than five months, R.G. Menzies, chose to take his country into war without consulting parliament, citing as grounds the fact that Britain was at war.¹⁴ In South Africa and Canada the decision to go to war was supported by a parliamentary debate and vote.

Australia's first real foreign office dates from November 1935 when, apparently 'as a result of the increased volume of business' generated by the Abyssinian situation,¹⁵ the External Affairs Branch of the Prime Minister's department became a separate department with the former's administrative head, W.R. Hodgson, as its first Secretary. Hodgson held the position for a decade.¹⁶ A Department of External Affairs had been one of seven government departments created at the time of federation in 1901. In its initial incarnation it was responsible for federal territories such as Papua and the Northern Territory and for immigration including the administration of the White Australia Policy. Early Prime Ministers also used it as their secretariat¹⁷ and what became the Prime Minister's department in 1911, with its own Secretary, commenced as a section of the Department of External Affairs. Having in fact lost its principal justification with the creation of a separate Prime Minister's department,¹⁸

¹¹ AA, A1066/1, P.I. 45/140, 'The importance of External Affairs to Australia', n.d., p. 2.

¹² Section 10(1). Hudson and Sharp give an interesting account of the preliminaries to the Statute of Westminster viewed from an Australian perspective. W.J. Hudson & M.P. Sharp, *Australian Independence: Colony to Reluctant Kingdom*. Melbourne, 1988.

¹³ See Evatt's statement in the House of Representatives, *CPD*, Vol. 172, 2 October 1942, pp. 1387-1400.

¹⁴ Menzies believed in the indivisibility of the crown. A. Watt, *The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy 1938-1965* (Cambridge, 1968), p. 272.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 504.

¹⁶ Between November 1944 and 1952 Hodgson served in Canada, France and Japan, besides representing Australia at early sessions of the UN Security Council and General Assembly. From 1952 until his retirement in 1957 he was Australia's third High Commissioner to South Africa.

¹⁷ W.J. Hudson, 'The Department of Foreign Affairs: 1935-1985', *Australian Foreign Affairs Record*, Vol. 56, No. 11, November 1985, p. 1065.

¹⁸ *Year Book Australia 1988*, p. 173.

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External Affairs was abolished in 1916, its functions being split between the former and the new Department of Home and Territories. Its Secretary, Atlee Arthur Hunt, became Secretary of the latter.¹⁹ After 1921 it was revived as a branch of the Prime Minister's department 'to deal with matters arising from Australia's membership of the League of Nations'.²⁰

At the time of the department's second founding, one of its principal functions was the collection and distribution of information on 'the progress of international events'.²¹ On the distribution side, its main vehicle was a fortnightly (later monthly) publication which appeared under the title *Current Notes on International Affairs* until January 1973 whereupon it was renamed *Australian Foreign Affairs Record*.²² The brainchild of the then Minister of External Affairs (1934-37), Sir George Pearce, this became in time 'a basic source of information on Australian policy in the English-speaking world'.²³ Its initial free circulation of some eight hundred copies included Members of Parliament, schools, universities, libraries and trade unions throughout Australia.²⁴ Circulation expanded rapidly, reaching three thousand by 1939.²⁵ It was seven thousand two hundred in December 1965 with a 'waiting list' of four hundred.²⁶

There was no thought then of Australia opening its own diplomatic missions. Instead, it was believed that the country's interests could best be served by attaching liaison officers to British Embassies.²⁷ Pearce claimed that Australia was in that regard

¹⁹ See MacKirdy, 'The First Australian Department of External Affairs 1901-1916', *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, Vol. 25, November 1959, p. 503; A3299/1, Folder 1, 'Historical Summary of the Department of External Affairs', 1960, pp. 1-2, 8.

²⁰ MacKirdy, 'The First Australian Department of External Affairs 1901-1916', *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, Vol. 25, November 1959, p. 503.

²¹ AA, A1066/1, P.I. 45/140, 'The work of the Department of External Affairs', 1937, p. 1.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 2; *Current Notes*, Vol. 43, No. 12, December 1972, pp. 599-602. See also Vol. 37, No. 4, April 1976, p. 1, '30th Anniversary of "Current Notes".'

²³ P.R. Heydon, *Quiet Decision: A study of George Foster Pearce* (Melbourne, 1965), p. 126. Heydon, a career foreign service officer until his appointment as Secretary for Immigration in 1961, had been Pearce's Private Secretary during his term as Minister of External Affairs. The only South African so far to write a study of Australia's foreign policy, P.J. van der Wal, refers approvingly to *Current Notes*. He calls it an indispensable source for primary material, which it is. *Die Buitelandse Beleid van Australië met spesiale verwysing na sy beleid ten opsigte van Suid-Afrika* (Unpublished D.Phil thesis, Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, 1986), p. 8.

²⁴ AA, A1066/1, P.I. 45/140, Hodgson/Hardy, 25 October 1936.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 'Summary of activities of the Department of External Affairs in 1939', p. 1.

²⁶ *Current Notes*, Vol. 36, No. 12, December 1965, p. 841.

²⁷ See the Introduction above.

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'at least as well served as the other dominions' by their legations 'and at far less cost'.²⁸ Pearce exaggerated the extent of the liaison officer network. At the suggestion of Allen Leeper,²⁹ an Australian-born Foreign Office official whose services he obtained for six months to advise him on the administration of Australia's external relations, Prime Minister S.M. Bruce had sent R.G. Casey, the later External Affairs Minister, to London in 1924 as liaison officer attached to the Foreign Office.³⁰ His instructions were to report on British policy where this touched on Australia's interests which Bruce hoped to influence during its formulation stage. Casey did not fall under the High Commissioner but reported directly to Bruce. In fact, he was physically separated from Australia House because the Australian-born Cabinet Secretary, Maurice Hankey, gave him rooms in the cabinet secretariat.³¹ In practice Casey fed Bruce, later the Department of External Affairs, with a mass of information and gossip about British policies and personalities.

In time the liaison officer became the principal representative of the Department of External Affairs on the staff of the High Commissioner (who fell under the Prime Minister's department until 1972) and was called the External Affairs officer. On his return to Australia in 1929 where he subsequently entered federal politics, Casey was succeeded by V.C. Duffy who held the position until 1932. F.G. Shedden, later a long time Secretary of Defence, took over from him. Keith Officer was the first External Affairs official to hold the post, doing so from 1933 to 1937 when he went to Washington as Counsellor on the British Ambassador's staff.³² Alfred Stirling, who replaced him in London, was liaison officer for much of S.M. Bruce's long term as High Commissioner (1933-45), until his own appointment in 1946 as High Commissioner to Canada.

²⁸ *CPD*, Vol. 151, 26 November 1936, p. 2368. Sir George Pearce had visited South Africa in 1919 in his earlier capacity as Minister of Defence. Pearce was a senator for thirty-seven years and a cabinet minister for twenty-five. See his entry in the *ADB*, Vol. 11 (Melbourne, 1988), pp. 177-82.

²⁹ Harold Nicolson gives a sketch of him in *Peacemaking 1919*, p. 105. Leeper accompanied Smuts on his mission to Bela Kun in 1919 as did Nicolson himself. (*Ibid.*, pp. 292-308.) Nicolson also refers to Leeper in his sketch 'Arketall' in the semi-fictional reminiscences *Some People*.

³⁰ AA, A1066/1, P.1. 45/140, 'Confidential Handbook of Information concerning the Department of External Affairs', 1941, p.3.

³¹ For particulars of the establishment and early years of the Liaison Office, see the Introduction to W.J. Hudson & J. North (eds.), *My dear P.M.: R.G. Casey's letters to S.M. Bruce 1924-1929* (Canberra, 1980), pp. vii-xxiii; Edwards, *Prime Ministers and Diplomats*, pp. 69-79 and 'The Rise and Fall of the High Commissioner: S.M. Bruce in London, 1933-45', A.F. Madden & W.H. Morris-Jones, eds., *Australia and Britain: Studies in a Changing Relationship* (Sydney, 1980), pp. 42, 46.

³² Heydon (see note 23 above) published a lengthy profile of Officer in *Quadrant*, No. 66, Vol. XIV, No. 4, July-August 1970, pp. 30-41. ('Keith Officer (1889-1969) Pioneer and Symbol')

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Apart from the London office, Officer was in fact, as Counsellor in the British Embassy in Washington DC, the only liaison officer. In 1937 Hodgson proposed appointing one in the South African Department of External Affairs along the lines of the London office. L.R. Macgregor, Australian Trade Commissioner in Canada, raised the matter with the departmental Under-Secretary, P.R. Botha, during an official visit to South Africa in April of that year.³³ Hodgson subsequently took it up with his South African counterpart, H.D.J. Bodenstein, at the 1937 Imperial Conference, following up in writing. Hodgson did not formulate his proposal well and Bodenstein did not appear to grasp what he had in mind. Rejecting the idea of a liaison officer in his department, Bodenstein said there would be 'no objection to receiving an officer representing Australia in the Union in the same manner as the British High Commissioner represents the United Kingdom Government'.³⁴ But the Australians were not ready for that - it would have interfered with their idea of the diplomatic unity of the Empire.³⁵ They had already (in 1935) responded negatively to a Canadian suggestion for the exchange of High Commissioners, saying that the time was inopportune.³⁶

The deteriorating world situation and the outbreak of the Second World War brought about a change of policy. Australia opened its first legations, in Washington and Tokyo in 1940 and in Chungking in 1941. In response to an invitation from the Canadian government in September 1939, it also appointed a High Commissioner to Ottawa who assumed duty in March 1940.³⁷ Although the cabinet resolved to enter into negotiations with New Zealand and South Africa for an exchange of High Commissioners with those countries, Australian offices were opened in them only in 1943 and 1946 respectively.³⁸ There was press speculation on the occasion of Leslie Blackwell's visit to Australia as Smuts's emissary in November and December 1941 that one of the points he wanted to investigate was the advisability of exchanging diplomatic representatives.³⁹ In that regard, the newly installed Labor Party Prime Minister, John

³³ BTS 4/2/32, Vol. 1, P.R. Botha, Memorandum 'Direct contact between Australian and Union Departments of External Affairs', Cape Town, 22 April 1937.

³⁴ BTS 4/2/31, Vol. 1, Bodenstein/Hodgson 30 November 1937.

³⁵ P.G. Edwards, 'The origins and growth of professional diplomacy in Australia', *Australian Foreign Affairs Record*, Vol. 56, No. 11, November 1985, p. 1074. That was why they were not prepared to open their own diplomatic missions at that time.

³⁶ Edwards, *Prime Ministers and Diplomats*, pp. 122-23.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 121-25.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 123; R.G. Neale, ed., P.G. Edwards, H. Kenway & H.J.W. Stokes, asst. eds., *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-49*, Vol. II: 1939 (Canberra, 1976), p. 233, item 198.

³⁹ The purpose of the visit was to study Australia's war effort and government policy in respect of post-war reconstruction, social security and the reintegration of soldiers into civilian life. See *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 November 1941. Other press reports on the visit are contained in *The*

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Curtin, was quoted to the effect that Australia would not open a High Commission in South Africa because 'the expense involved would not be justified by the work involved'.⁴⁰ By the early 1950s Australia's representation abroad outnumbered South Africa's as it has done ever since.⁴¹

Common to all countries is the financial burden posed by their diplomatic representation. In 1930 Smuts said that 'if we want to do justice to our foreign representation, we shall have to limit it, as it is going to be a very expensive thing'.⁴² That was wise counsel even though it fell (and falls) on deaf ears. In the end it is a matter of prestige and governments are not known to allow monetary considerations to interfere with that. What *The Canberra Times* said in 1953 is still valid:

No nation can be great without assuming the responsibilities of greatness, and nowhere is this more evident than in the field of foreign relations. ... Each mission that Australia appoints abroad has to be maintained at a level consistent with the status that we want to achieve. ... If diplomatic representatives are asked to present a poor figure abroad, the loss in prestige far outweighs any monetary savings that may thereby be made.⁴³

The Star (Johannesburg) subconsciously echoed that in its comments on the investigation into the South African diplomatic service Eric Louw announced shortly after he took over the External Affairs portfolio in January 1955: 'a country's importance is often judged by the kind of state its ambassadors are able to maintain and they should not be placed at a disadvantage by parsimony at home'.⁴⁴ Four decades later the British Foreign Office was using similar arguments in an effort to disarm a Treasury move to reduce its allocations.⁴⁵ Drawing on his research into the pre-1914 German Foreign Office, Lamar Cecil supplies the following rationale, which would

Herald (Melbourne), 30 October 1941, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 & 22 November 1941 and *The Press* (Christchurch, NZ), 27 & 29 November 1941.

⁴⁰ C. Mulrooney, *Australia's relations with South Africa 1901-1975* (Unpublished MA thesis, University of Sydney, 1980), p. 26, citing *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 November 1941.

⁴¹ By 1951 Australia had 31 missions abroad to South Africa's 25. At head office it had 7 Counsellors, 12 First Secretaries and 12 Second Secretaries to South Africa's 2, 3 and 6 respectively. See Sole's October 1951 handwritten note to Jones on BTS, S4/5/45, Vol. 2. That resulted from the Spender reorganisation of 1951. The senior echelon of the department's head office had been considerably smaller a year previously. See AA, A6213, RCE/H/9, 'Department of External Affairs, Officers of Divisions and Sections Stationed in Canberra, 1st July, 1950'.

⁴² *HA Deb.*, Vol. 15, 10 April 1930, Col. 3017.

⁴³ *The Canberra Times*, 19 August 1953. (Editorial: 'The minimum price of world status').

⁴⁴ *The Star* (Johannesburg), 20 January 1955. (Editorial: 'Accent on diplomacy').

⁴⁵ For a counter-argument, see 'Punched out', *The Economist*, Vol. 334, No. 7907, 25 March 1995, p. 48. (Bagehot).

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strike a chord with most modern governments, especially of new middle-ranking and smaller countries:

The Foreign Office believed that the relationship between states was affected by the impression which an envoy's style and that of his establishment made on a foreign court or government, as well as on the country's press and public opinion. A shabby embassy could be regarded as a sign of German indifference to the nation concerned or as an indication that Germany was not a power of the first magnitude.⁴⁶

On a more humble scale M.H. Marshall, the Official Secretary at the Australian High Commission in South Africa, said of the disbursement of his representation allowance in the last quarter of 1947: 'the hospitality extended is largely in accordance with the general practice in Diplomatic circles in this country. This hospitality is regarded as essential in making and maintaining good "contacts", as well as keeping up the prestige of the Mission'.⁴⁷ In a nutshell, why diplomats are given entertainment allowances.

Also relevant are Mattingly's observations about fifteenth century Italian diplomacy: 'In no department of government is a steady dependable revenue free from embarrassing controls more important than in the conduct of foreign affairs. ... the daily drain of a well-staffed chancery and of permanent resident embassies is unlikely to be met ... except by governments with ample funds and little need to account for them'.⁴⁸ If today democratic governments are obliged to account in detail for the expenditure of taxpayers' money, the rationalisations and justifications sometimes border on the grotesque such as, for example, the proposition that the presence of an embassy in a foreign country has a direct and quantifiable effect on the sending country's export trade.

A recent British commentator (1994) expressed doubt whether there was 'ever such an outrageous squandering of taxpayers' money as on some foreign embassies' in London. He referred indignantly to what 'desperately poor, tiny African ... countries are spending to keep up an establishment which ... is often doing no more than servicing domestic politicians and their wives when they pass through London'. He said

⁴⁶ Cecil, *The German Diplomatic Service*, pp. 184-85.

⁴⁷ AA, A1838/1, 1348/2, Pt. 1, Marshall/DEA, 7 October 1947.

⁴⁸ G. Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy* (London, 1955), pp. 73-74.

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that the 'panoply of country [ie. national] days and chauffeur driven cars and receptions and doing the diplomatic round' was 'quite obscene'.⁴⁹

It was reported in September 1995 that the Zairean Embassy in Harare had been closed because of non-payment of rent for more than a year.⁵⁰ In late 1994 the print media drew attention to the Zairean charge d'affaires in Warsaw who was obliged to sleep at the railway station because he had not been paid for a year and to his colleagues who survived on welfare payments from the host government.⁵¹ A year earlier Zairean Embassy personnel in Bonn were said not to have been paid for eighteen months. Families were 'living without electricity or telephones and with the threat that the water supply' would be cut off. Children had been expelled from private schools for non-payment of fees.⁵²

These are extreme examples of what can happen when governmental pretensions are not checked. But few governments are free of pretensions. It was also reported in 1994 that the British Embassy in Paris, the United Kingdom's most expensive, cost some £16.7 million annually to run with an annual entertainment bill of £359 000.⁵³ While the costs would cover the whole Embassy and all its operations, the tendency in such reporting is to focus exclusively on the official residence and on what is perceived to be the ambassadorial life-style.

The United Kingdom is not the only country where such matters appeal to the journalistic imagination. During Sir Harold Caccia's time as Ambassador in the 1950s, the distinction of harbouring the most costly British Embassy was enjoyed by Washington. At £1400 the cost of the Queen's Birthday reception there at that time equalled the annual cost of heating the residence, a huge house three storeys high whose main

⁴⁹ Simon Jenkins, columnist for *The Times* (London) on *Extraordinary And Plenipotentiary*, BBC World Service Radio Programme, 22 May 1994. (The third of the series.) Walter Crocker, makes a telling point: 'The receptions commonly cost their taxpayers enough to feed a village for weeks in India, Indonesia or Africa' Crocker, *Australian Ambassador*, p. 46.

⁵⁰ *The Citizen* (Johannesburg), 21 September 1995.

⁵¹ BBC World Service report, 3 December 1994. See also *The Weekly Telegraph*, Issue No. 177, November 30/December 6, 1994.

⁵² *The Pretoria News*, 2 October 1993.

⁵³ *The Times* (London), 17 August 1994. M. Binyon, *A price for our pomp*. See also *The Weekly Telegraph*, Issue No. 163, August 24/30, 1994. Suzanne Lowry, *A world of claret and cordialité*. By way of contrast, it was reported in March 1995 that the South African Embassy in Paris spent more on entertainment than any other South African mission, 'about R480 000'. *Business Day* (Johannesburg), 14 March 1995. This was less than a quarter than that spent by the British Embassy, a much larger mission.

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corridors were said to be '100 yards long'.⁵⁴ In the 1990s running costs of the British High Commissioner's Cape Town residence alone were said to amount to some £330 000 (R1.9 million) annually.⁵⁵ There is also the High Commissioner's residence in Pretoria which is occupied for only half the year.

Although the Australians and the South Africans operated in each other's capitals on a more modest, even a shoestring scale in the 1940s and 1950s the perceived need to cut a dash inspired the South Africans to construct in 1956 and 1957 a residence for their High Commissioner in Canberra at a total cost up to February 1960 of £SA44 602 17.7d (£A55 753 4.6d).⁵⁶ Perhaps because they bought rather than built, not to mention the lower cost of housing in South Africa, the Australians got away with less. In March 1960 they paid £SA18 750 (£A23 437 10.0d) for their High Commissioner's Pretoria residence. On this aspect, more in Chapter Six. The 1930s, 1940s and early 1950s were a less profligate time than the present one and there was undoubtedly then, before the advent of 'public sector managerialism' (an aspect of what the Americans call 'big government'), at least in Australia and South Africa greater accountability for the expenditure of public funds. Diplomats and their head offices were kept on a tight rein.

Australia's decision to open its own missions brought about an escalation of costs:⁵⁷

1934/35	£A 5 916
1935/36	£A 7 827
1936/37	£A 12 417
1937/38	£A 14 215
1938/39	£A 20 129
1939/40	£A 39 135
1940/41	£A 98 048
1941/42	£A152 444
1942/43	£A173 336

⁵⁴ *The Advertiser* (Adelaide), 18 April 1959.

⁵⁵ *The Star* (Johannesburg), 27 March 1995.

⁵⁶ BTS, 4/6/36, Vol. 6, Acting Secretary for Public Works/SEA, 14 November 1959 and Snyman/SEA, 16 February 1960.

⁵⁷ DFAT, 'The Department of External Affairs. History - Functions and Organisation - Staff Establishment - Recruitment and Training - Budget', Unpublished, Canberra, 25 January 1946. 'Expenditure: Department of External Affairs. Table I.' Figures for 1936/37 - 1941/42 are also given in A1066/1, P.I. 45/140, 'Confidential Handbook of Information concerning the Department of External Affairs', 1941, Appendix B. However, the two sources differ on the amounts for 1940/41 and 1941/42. The figures for 1935/36 were derived from 'Departmental Expenditure', a three line list which may have been prepared in response to a request by W.M. Hughes, then the Minister for External Affairs. See AA, A1066/1, P.I. 45/140, Hughes/Hodgson, 17 December 1937.

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1943/44	£A199 112
1944/45	£A195 441
1945/46	£A260 500

By contrast, South Africa's head start in setting up a department and opening missions, saw it incur greater expenditure at an earlier date.⁵⁸

1932/33	£SA 77 000
1933/34	£SA107 000
1934/35	£SA128 000
1935/36	£SA142 000
1936/37	£SA157 000
1938/39	£SA163 414
1939/40	£SA172 762
1940/41	£SA173 089
1941/42	£SA158 986
1942/43	£SA172 170
1943/44	£SA228 948
1944/45	£SA484 053
1945/46	£SA4 519 741

In 1940 the Canberra staff of the Australian Department of External Affairs numbered twenty-five⁵⁹ including the Records (4), Cables (1) and Typing Sections (7),⁶⁰ a figure South African head office staff had reached in 1932, including the Typing (3), Messengers (3) Records (2) and Accounting Sections (3).⁶¹ In that year the Public Service Inspector recommended that the South African establishment be expanded to twenty-seven.⁶² It reached thirty-six in 1936.⁶³ Even in 1944 the Australian department was so compact that 'Everyone met for the tea-break in one room each morning and afternoon'.⁶⁴ Reflecting the small size of the Australian department in the late 1930s is this instruction about the distribution of S (presumably secret) letters and Foreign Office (confidential) prints:

⁵⁸ The figures for 1932/33 to 1936/37 were derived from BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 3, *Staatsdienskommissie, Inspeksierapport - Departement van die Eerste Minister en Minister van Buitelandse Sake* 15 Julie 1936, p. 10, para. 23; the others from BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 12, Pohl/Secretary, PSC, 14 January 1949. The decrease in expenditure in 1941/42 is explained by the reduction in the number of missions on account of the war. The increase from £SA 484 053 in 1944/45 to £SA 4 519 741 in 1945/46 may presumably be ascribed to the fact that (in Pohl's words) 'the old Legations were not only re-opened but the Government extended its consular and diplomatic representation to other countries'.

⁵⁹ AA, A1066/1, P.I. 45/140, 'Department of External Affairs, October, 1940', p. 1.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 'Department of External Affairs, Statement showing disposition of Staff as in Permanent Staff List.'

⁶¹ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 1, Smith/Secretary, PSC, 16 August 1932, p. 3, para. 4.

⁶² *Ibid.*, para. 78, p. 34.

⁶³ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 3, *Staatsdienskommissie, Inspeksierapport - Departement van die Eerste Minister en Minister van Buitelandse Sake* 15 Julie 1936, p. 2, para. 6.

⁶⁴ Renouf, *The Champagne Trail*, pp. 13-14..

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S. letters are opened by the Acting Secretary and forwarded by him to Mr. Mathew for perusal.

The Acting Secretary or Mr. Mathew will indicate any special distribution such as papers to Minister.

They are then handed to Mr. Waller who will detach for the Minister the carbons of S. letters and Foreign Office prints, marking the latter on the attached schedule with an asterisk.

He will then hand the S. letters and the remainder of the Foreign Office prints to Mr. Westcott for registration and filing.

The files will be returned to Mr. Waller who will superintend the departmental distribution and pass on the files to Mr. Oldham and Mr. Deschamps for perusal.⁶⁵

If these establishments seem small by comparison with the relatively gargantuan and labour-intensive ones maintained in the latter part of the present century,⁶⁶ the British Foreign Office establishment all told numbered just over a hundred on the eve of the First World War. The diplomatic service, a separate service, then totalled one hundred-and-twenty-four: forty-one heads of mission, thirteen counsellors, forty-five secretaries, and twenty-five attachés, a figure up from one hundred-and-twelve in 1850 when there were thirty-one heads of mission, twenty-five secretaries, and fifty-six attachés.⁶⁷ Only two hundred-and-twelve career diplomats entered the British diplomatic service between 1860 and 1914.⁶⁸ In 1914 as in 1850 the diplomats 'had to do their own copying, ciphering, archive and account keeping and press work' and the 'total cost of the service to the country was then only a fraction of the present figure. The embassy or legation was a "one-horse show".'⁶⁹

The South African head office establishment reached one hundred-and-seven in 1957, a year when twenty-one diplomatic and seven consular missions were manned by three hundred-and-five staff members including locally recruited people.⁷⁰ In 1951 the Australian diplomatic staff division consisted of one hundred-and-ten officers of whom

⁶⁵ AA, A1066/1, P.I. 45/140, 'Distribution of S. letters, Foreign Office prints, etc.', 26 April 1937. Initialled J.K.W.

⁶⁶ Steiner attributes the expansion to changing international circumstances. See *The Times Survey of Foreign Ministries of the World*, pp. 26-27.

⁶⁷ Jones, *The British Diplomatic Service*, p. 167.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

⁶⁹ 'The Future of the Foreign Service', *The Round Table*, No. 125, December 1941, pp. 62, 63.

⁷⁰ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 19, handwritten note on Fourie/Scholtz, CT 620, 6 May 1957.

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seventy-three were serving in twenty-nine missions abroad.⁷¹ By January 1960 the Department of External Affairs employed four hundred-and-one people in Australia and one hundred and fifty Australia-based ones and four hundred and-twenty-eight others at thirty-eight overseas missions.⁷²

Judging by the periodic flare-ups in the press,⁷³ Australian public and political opinion was more critical of External Affairs expenditure than the South African public and politicians. The authors of the brief manuscript 'History of the Department of External Affairs' argued in 1962 that, faced with the view that it was something of 'an expendable luxury', the early Australian department had as one of its principal tasks the establishing of its standing in the eyes *inter alia* of the Public Service and the general public.⁷⁴ Indeed, they hold that *Current Notes* was part of the process of the department proving its worth and justifying the expenditure devoted to it.⁷⁵ Be that as it may, *Current Notes* was to prove of inestimable value to the Australian department in impressing itself on the notice, and establishing its worth in the eyes of people who counted in Australia.

The South African department would have done well to print its own authoritative account of international events. But, dating back to the Smuts years, there was always ambivalence as to what policy was⁷⁶ and the domestic political climate in which External Affairs was obliged to operate, especially during the decades of the National Party's ascendancy, worked against the idea. The National Party member for Pretoria West, B.J. van der Walt, had in fact proposed such a regular publication in the 1955 debate on the External Affairs vote, and in terms suggesting that he was familiar with *Current Notes*: 'We can start with a quarterly, a publication in which official documents which are not confidential, may be printed; and in which officials of the Department and members of the public could write articles about South Africa's foreign policy.'⁷⁷

⁷¹ BTS, 1/25/8, Vol. 1, Press release P.R. 12/51, 28 February 1951, attached to Nel/SEA, 2 March 1951.

⁷² A3299/1, Folder 1, 'Historical Summary of the Department of External Affairs', 1960, pp. 5-6.

⁷³ See, for example, *The Canberra Times*, 19 and 20 August and 23 October 1953; 23 May 1956; and *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 September 1955.

⁷⁴ AA, A3299/1, Folder 1, 'History of the Department of External Affairs by L.G. Sellars and J.M. McMillan', p. 7.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁷⁶ Sole, *Reminiscences*, p. 67.

⁷⁷ *HA Deb.*, Vol. 88, 5 May 1955, Col. 5113. He referred in the same statement to Casey's *Friends and Neighbours* especially the reference to Australia's establishment of a parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee.

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The new Minister of External Affairs, Eric Louw, was dismissive, saying he could hold out no hope that such a publication would be started and one wasn't.⁷⁸ What his department did at the time, however, was to prepare a 'Weekly Review of International Events' as well as 'special memoranda on matters of importance to the Union'.⁷⁹ (See Chapter Seven.) Cabinet ministers were on the distribution list for such items but initially not missions abroad. Distribution was minimal, being confined to departmental officials, other departments and the cabinet. In earlier as well as later years there was a 'Policy Review' which, among other material, incorporated select reports from missions.

In its Sixth Report (1953) which dealt with the Department of External Affairs, the parliamentary Joint Committee of Public Accounts referred to criticism of the cost of Australia's 'external representation' and sought to answer the question 'whether the scale of spending was too lavish' in terms of the country's 'economic and financial standing'.⁸⁰ In a statement to the Committee, the Secretary for External Affairs had expressed the cost as a percentage of the national budget, comparing it with other Commonwealth countries' related percentages for the same year, 1950-51.⁸¹

Australia	0.186
United Kingdom	0.335
Canada	0.277
New Zealand	0.186
South Africa	0.343
India	0.824
Pakistan	0.729

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, Col. 5128.

⁷⁹ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 19, 'Staff position of the Political (General) Section', 27 September 1956, p. 2, para. 6. (Initialled 'R.J.' for R. Jones.)

⁸⁰ 1951-52-53. The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia. No. 211 [Group B.]-F. 4208. *Joint Committee of Public Accounts. Sixth Report. Department of External Affairs*, para. 18. The report provides a useful account of the department's history and administration up to that time.

⁸¹ *Ibid.* The Australian Minister of External Affairs, R.G. Casey, had used these percentages in an article in the May 1952 issue of *Current Notes* (Vol. 23, No. 5, pp. 211-13) to make the point that the cost of maintaining Australia's overseas representation was 'not high'. Referring to Casey's article in a letter to Spies, the South African Under-Secretary, Australia's Acting High Commissioner, K.T. Kelly, said 'I should like to think that in time public opinion in Australia will permit my Department to spend at least .3 of the Australian budget'. BTS, 1/25/8, Vol. 1, Kelly/Spies, 9 June 1952. Bearing in mind the parity achieved when expenditure was expressed as a percentage of the national income, these percentages indirectly indicate the difference in size between the Australian and South African national budgets and therefore their economies. There is little doubt that already in the 1950s the Australian department was outspending the South African one.

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The committee, however, which was not unsympathetic to the department, felt that a better comparison would be expenditure as a percentage of the national income (1950-51):⁸²

Australia	0.058
United Kingdom	0.133
Canada	0.043
New Zealand	0.074
South Africa	0.059

The committee concluded from this that Commonwealth government expenditure on external representation was not 'out of line with that of other British Commonwealth countries'.⁸³ That was then obviously also true of South Africa's expenditure. That the Australians should at least ask such questions while the South Africans did not may reflect the countries' relative standing in the world at the time.

The early South African department was seen as the channel of communication between the government and all other governments including those of the United Kingdom and the other dominions.⁸⁴ In 1936 it took a relatively sophisticated and ambitious view of itself, saying that its 'primary function' was 'to be au fait with the whole field of international politics' in which respect it was the duty of its External Relations section 'to occupy itself with a continuous study of international and imperial problems. By these means it should be possible to provide the Head of the Department, when he calls for it, with an exhaustive precis on any particular situation'.⁸⁵ In 1944, the department described itself as

the recognised point of contact between external Governments, whether of the British Commonwealth, or otherwise, in all matters of common concern, and the administrative unit charged with ascertainment, interpretation and application of the Union's foreign policy.⁸⁶

From a practical point of view the birth of the modern South African department dates back to the early post-war reorganisation. Contrasting his department's

⁸² *Joint Committee of Public Accounts. Sixth Report, Department of External Affairs*, para. 19.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, paras. 21, 73. See *The Canberra Times*, 19 August 1953 for an account of the committee's examination of Watt in respect of Casey's written statement on departmental representation.

⁸⁴ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 1, Executive Council Minute 1377, 6 June 1927 (Provisionally approved by the Governor General on 31 May 1927.) The immediately preceding minute concerned H.D.J. Bodenstein's appointment as Secretary for External Affairs and Secretary to the Prime Minister.

⁸⁵ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 3, Muller/Secretary, 24 December 1936.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. 7, Pohl/PSC, 22 November 1944, pp. 7-8.

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small size with that of Dominion foreign offices which were 'much larger' and possessed 'a greater cadre of experienced officers', the then Secretary for External Affairs, D.D. Forsyth, wrote in 1951 that it 'had to be almost entirely reconstructed and staffed since 1945'.⁸⁷ He was overlooking the Australian department in respect of which his observation was even more apposite - in the three years from 30 June 1946 its 'total staff more than trebled, from 210 to 642'. The number of missions grew from nine in 1945 to 26 in 1949.⁸⁸ By 1951 Australia had thirty-one missions to South Africa's twenty-five.

The establishment of a registry system in the British Foreign Office in 1906, consisting of a central registry and three sub-registries, was more than just an administrative reform affecting the way papers were kept.⁸⁹ It changed the distribution of work which in turn transformed the Foreign Office from 'a cozy ... family party' into 'a great and efficient department of state'.⁹⁰ In terms of the new procedure, 'when papers were sent to the Foreign Secretary a sheet was attached giving the opinions of departmental officials'.⁹¹ It did not matter that the central registry was in fact 'a giant bottle-neck' which caused the mechanism to collapse by 1913, the volume of business having increased by 36 per cent over the previous six years.⁹² What was important was that the clerks had become 'advisers engaged in the policy-making process'⁹³ or, as Jones says, 'sat in judgement on despatches'.⁹⁴ Never again 'were the permanent officials cut off from the nerve centre of political decision'.⁹⁵

So far as the United Kingdom is concerned, this points to the permanency of the Foreign Office's influence in relation to that of the politicians. Indirectly, it suggests a reason for Mrs Thatcher's complaint decades later that one of her Foreign Secreta-

⁸⁷ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 14, Forsyth/Under-Secretary, 24 May 1951, commenting on *Staatsdienskommissie, Departement van Buitelandse Sake, Inspeksieverlag oor Kantoer van die Eerste Minister en Minister van Buitelandse Sake, 3 Maart 1951*.

⁸⁸ Edwards, *Prime Ministers and Diplomats*, p. 180.

⁸⁹ For a description of the system, see Z. Steiner, 'The Last Years of the old Foreign Office, 1898-1905', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. VI, No. 1, 1963, p. 88.

⁹⁰ R. Butler, 'Beside the Point: Sir Eyre Crowe', *World Review* (United Kingdom), New Series, No. 50, April-May 1953, p. 9.

⁹¹ V. Cromwell, 'The Foreign and Commonwealth Office', *The Times Survey of Foreign Ministries of the World*, p. 557.

⁹² Steiner, 'The Last Years of the old Foreign Office, 1898-1905', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. VI, No. 1, 1963, p. 90.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

⁹⁴ Jones, *The British Diplomatic Service*, p. 219.

⁹⁵ Steiner, 'The Last Years of the old Foreign Office, 1898-1905', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. VI, No. 1, 1963, p. 90.

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ries, Sir Geoffrey Howe, had fallen under the spell of the Foreign Office 'where compromise and negotiation were ends in themselves'.⁹⁶ Eric Louw said something similar in 1961 when the cabinet contemplated terminating South Africa's membership of the United Nations. He said officials would never recommend that South Africa leave the organisation because 'that was the nature of the people in their profession'.⁹⁷ But Bruce Lockhart's view of the Foreign Office could certainly not have been applied to the South African department whose officials have never enjoyed the status of their British counterparts:

The F.O. ... is very like the Vatican. They know that, wars or no wars, they will be there whatever happens. Even if Britain becomes a third-class power, there will be a Foreign Office, and it will be run very much on the same lines as it is at present. The professional members, too, are like the Italian cardinals. They run the show and have survived all the storms of criticism.⁹⁸

Around the time of the birth of the South African department in 1927, the registry in conjunction with the library was still the 'most important factor in the Foreign Office'⁹⁹ and the Librarian and Keeper of the Papers was a man of considerable status.¹⁰⁰ The clerks did not become advisers in Australia or South Africa. Those countries' Departments of External Affairs set up registries or records sections to manage and store the flow of correspondence, but they were altogether lacking in influence as were their personnel in status. Not only that. During the war and especially in Australia they did not cope well. Hasluck writes of 'a motley staff' stowing away 'masses of paper' which 'after much fumbling and delay' they could produce if required. An historian by training, he warns of 'major difficulties for the archivist in handling the department's records'.¹⁰¹ In connection with his work on the official war history¹⁰² he had already

⁹⁶ Barnaby Mason, 'Matters of tact', *BBC Worldwide*, No. 19, May 1994, p. 18.

⁹⁷ B.M. Schoeman, *Van Malan tot Verwoerd* (Cape Town/Pretoria, 1973), p. 240.

⁹⁸ K. Young, ed., *The diaries of Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart*, Vol. 2 (London, 1980), p. 520.

⁹⁹ BTS, S4/5/1/1, Vol. 1, 'Memorandum on Foreign Office Organisation', n.d.

¹⁰⁰ One of them, Stephen Gaselee, collaborated with a former Chief Clerk, the Rt. Hon. Sir John Tilley, on a study of the Foreign Office, ie. J. Tilley & S. Gaselee, *The Foreign Office*. London, 1933.

¹⁰¹ Hasluck, *Diplomatic Witness*, pp. 4, 5. That is not the position today.

¹⁰² P.M.C. Hasluck, *The Government and the People, 1939-1941* (Canberra, 1952) and *The Government and the People 1942-1945* (Canberra, 1970). (Vols. I & II of The Australian War Memorial's Series 4 (Civil) of *Australia in the War of 1939-1945*.) The reason for the eighteen year gap between the two volumes was the intervention of Hasluck's political career. He became a minister within two years of entering parliament in 1949, quitting politics in 1969 when he was appointed Governor-General. He retired in 1974 and died in January 1993.

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discovered that the External Affairs archives were 'among the worst organised and worst kept' of all government archives.¹⁰³

The Australian External Affairs Records Section began modestly. In the late 1930s C.T. Moodie, a diplomatic officer, was in charge, assisted by G.A. Westcott. Moodie's job description was: 'Custody of secret documents. Perusal and filing of Foreign Office despatches and letters from Liaison Officers abroad. Distribution of publications.' Westcott was responsible for 'General filing and general assistance with records. Despatch of mails.'¹⁰⁴ The onset of war greatly increased the section's responsibilities which (apart from Westcott) were discharged by untrained temporary staff, thus Hasluck's comment. The minuscule pre-war Records Section grew to ten in 1944¹⁰⁵ then to sixteen in the 1945/46 departmental re-organisation.¹⁰⁶ In 1945 the department itself had proposed an establishment of twenty-five excluding despatch, which the Treasury felt 'appeared to be more than necessary when compared with the numbers in other Departments'.¹⁰⁷ Stuart records having reorganised the filing system in 1945.¹⁰⁸

At no time did the South African registry ever match that level of staffing. Before the establishment of the Department of External Affairs on 1 June 1927, the records of the Prime Minister's department were handled by a solitary First Grade Female Clerical Assistant, Miss I.C. Bowen, whose duties were to receive the post, place the correspondence on the relevant files, index and keep the records generally, and see to the despatch of all out-going letters.¹⁰⁹ Thereafter, the registry of the new department was manned initially by two male clerks, one First Grade, the other Second Grade. But the Public Service Inspector suggested in 1932 that such duties should not 'be entrusted to male officers of the status of first grade Clerks' because their prospects

¹⁰³ Hasluck, *Diplomatic Witness*, p. 4.

¹⁰⁴ AA, A1066/1, P.I. 45/140, 'Department of External Affairs. Organisation and Distribution of Duties', n.d. but pre-war from the internal evidence.

¹⁰⁵ AA, A571/62, 45/244, Assistant Secretary/Secretary, 'Post Hostilities Planning Division of Department of External Affairs', 7 August 1944. (Internal Treasury minute.)

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, Dunk/Secretary, Department of the Treasury, 9 December 1946. See also 'Department of External Affairs. Proposed Organization. 11th October, 1945. Statement of Duties.'

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 'Department of External Affairs, Proposed Organization, 11th October, 1945', Central Registry, pp. 25-26; and internal Treasury minute 'Permanent Staff - Department of External Affairs', 19 October 1945.

¹⁰⁸ *Towards coming-of-age*, pp. 87-88.

¹⁰⁹ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 1, Annex C to Gordon Watson/Secretary, PSC, 9 March 1927. Gordon Watson preceded Bodenstien as Secretary to the Prime Minister. Miss Bowen later married the Anglican Bishop of Pretoria. W.C. du Plessis, *'n Mens vir die Mens*, Johannesburg, 1972, p.4.

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were 'distinctly impaired by their continued employment on registry work'. Instead, also because the volume of work was too great for two people to handle, the Inspector recommended the replacement of the two male clerks by four Woman Clerks of different grades,¹¹⁰ who would be paid less than their male counterparts.

At that time there were said to be some ten thousand files in active use.¹¹¹ That was possibly an overestimate because the following year there were reckoned to be 8043 files, an increase of 3724 from 1929. In 1933 ninety-nine letters were received daily as opposed to thirty-five in 1929.¹¹² Sixteen years later there were thought to be eight thousand files.¹¹³ In 1951 the writing up of incoming mail in a register, apart from that received from missions by diplomatic bag, occupied the time of a Woman Clerk, Grade I, for half-an-hour per day.¹¹⁴

By 1944 the registry establishment had expanded to one Special Grade Woman Clerk, one First Grade Woman Clerk, three Second Grade Woman Clerks and one so-called Paper Keeper. The first-mentioned's salary scale, ranging from £300 to £400 per annum, was less than that attached to the second most junior diplomatic rank, that of Third Secretary or Vice-Consul - £400 to £600 per annum.¹¹⁵ Another First Grade Woman Clerk had been added to the establishment by 1947 and a Temporary Woman Clerk held against the post of Second Grade Woman Clerk.¹¹⁶ From June 1947 to January 1958 when she retired, the registry was commanded by Miss D.N. Mapstone, a Special Grade Woman Clerk. She was highly regarded and the junior male staff, the Cadets, who addressed her as 'Mappy', were in awe of her. When she failed an Afri-

¹¹⁰ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 1, Smith/Secretary, PSC, 16 August 1932, pp. 22-27, paras. 49-62, especially 49-50, 52-53 and 56.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, para. 50.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, Farrell/Secretary, PSC, 11 December 1933. The minute scale of this operation will be apparent from these figures of registered correspondence in the Foreign Office: 1821 - 6193; 1849 - 30 727; 1869 - 51 000; 1916 - 264 537; 1926 - 145 169. V. Wellesley, *Diplomacy in Fetters*, London, 1944, p. 192.

¹¹³ BTS, S4/5/2, Pohl/Secretary, PSC, 12 July 1948 and Miss Mapstone's undated, hand-written note on which Pohl's letter was presumably based.

¹¹⁴ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 14, *Staatsdienskommissie, Departement van Buitelandse Sake, Inspeksieverlag oor Kantoor van die Eerste Minister en Departement van Buitelandse Sake, 3 Maart 1951*, pp. 18-19, para. 35.

¹¹⁵ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 7, Pohl/PSC, 22 November 1944, pp. 12, para. 50, and 4, para. 15(b).

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. 11, Mapstone/Spies, 3 September 1947. This memorandum gives an indication of the duties attached to each post.

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kaans language test in 1955 the upgrading of her post to Clerical Assistant, Grade I, which she had requested,¹¹⁷ was held in abeyance.

The department felt that, given the highly satisfactory way she carried out her duties, a view shared by the Public Service Inspector,¹¹⁸ it would not be fair to proceed with the proposal because that would mean the appointment of someone else in the regraded post.¹¹⁹ If anything conveys the esteem in which Miss Mapstone was held it is that McDonald (Don) Spies, the Under-Secretary, advised her that while the department proposed approaching the Public Service Commission to upgrade her post, the matter would be held over until she had 'a further opportunity of satisfying the prescribed language requirements'.¹²⁰ Few others would have been accorded a similar courtesy.

Indicative of the department's small size at the time, despite its eighteen year existence, was that D.D. Forsyth, the Secretary for External Affairs, who took a personal interest in the registry and its staffing,¹²¹ raised Miss Mapstone's case with his Minister. Louw instructed it be handled that way.¹²² Louw also took a personal interest in administrative and staff matters, intervening in them more than once, especially during his first years as Minister of External Affairs. As early as 1932 when he was Minister in Washington he had proposed the administrative separation of the Departments of External Affairs and of the Prime Minister.¹²³ Within three months of taking over the External Affairs portfolio in January 1955 he told Forsyth that some overseas offices might be overstaffed, that he wanted consideration given to reducing staff and

¹¹⁷ She had requested it the previous year. BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 18, Mapstone/Scholtz, 5 October 1954 (handwritten note on Chief Clerk/Officer in Charge, Registry, 1 October 1954.)

¹¹⁸ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 14, *Staatsdienskommissie, Departement van Buitelandse Sake, Inspeksieverlag oor Kantoer van die Eerste Minister en Departement van Buitelandse Sake, 3 Maart 1951*, p. 17, para. 29.

¹¹⁹ The upgraded post required of its incumbent a higher standard of bilingualism than that expected of Special Grade Woman Clerks.

¹²⁰ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 18, Spies/Mapstone, 19 August 1955.

¹²¹ Another example is the case of Mrs E.M.G. Gamble who had applied for the post of Woman Clerk, Grade II in the registry. See various items on BTS, S4/5/2, Vols. 17 and 18. Forsyth noted on the file copy of his 24 September 1953 letter to the PSC about Mrs Gamble (Vol. 17) that she had been interviewed by Miss Mapstone who was 'agreeably impressed'. They later established a joint household and lived together for the rest of their lives, both dying in the 1980s. (Mrs Gamble was the writer's aunt.)

¹²² BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 18, Mapstone/Chief Clerk, 14 January 1955; Scholtz/Mapstone, 4 May 1955; Mapstone/Scholtz, 6 June 1955; Scholtz/Secretary, 5 August 1955 plus handwritten notes on this submission - Forsyth/Under Secretary, 11 August and Spies/Scholtz, 12 August 1955.

¹²³ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 1, Louw/Bodenstein, 17 May 1932.

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that, pending further instructions, 'no more Cadets [were] to be recruited'.¹²⁴ In 1956 he claimed to have obtained from the Chairman of the Public Service Commission, Dirk Steyn, a measure of discretion for G.P. Jooste (Forsyth's successor) and himself to depart from strict rules of seniority in respect of promotions and transfers.¹²⁵

If true, that was some achievement in view of the Commission's status and the statutory weight given its recommendations. (See Chapter Two.) But it may not have been true. For instance, Sole mentions that the Commission at first withheld its concurrence from B.G. Fourie's appointment as Permanent Representative to the United Nations in 1958 because it meant he would supersede other officers, including Sole himself.¹²⁶ Also in 1956 Louw instigated that year's inspection of overseas missions conducted by the Chief Public Service Inspector, J.P.B. van Veen, and retired diplomat W.G.W. Parminter.¹²⁷

If the Foreign Office Registry and Library was the hub of the British system, in 1946 the Coding Section was called the hub of the South African one.¹²⁸ In fact, since it bestrode the department's communications, it was in respect of day-to-day business more important than the Registry. Recognition was given that by slotting the section in initially under the Prime Minister's department.¹²⁹ Up to June 1927 J. Nesor, a First Grade Clerical Assistant on an annual salary of £430, was responsible for coding and decoding as well as parliamentary and internal work.¹³⁰ After June 1927 Nesor, by then a Senior Clerk, was assisted by W.C. du Plessis, a Third Grade Clerk, whose place was

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. 18, Forsyth/Under Secretary, 18 April 1955.

¹²⁵ BTS, 4/5/1, AJ 1957. Memorandum E.H.L., 17 August 1956. According to Louw, Steyn fell in with this but asked to be informed before promotions were announced 'so that formal approval could be given'. An instruction from Spies to Scholtz on the file copy indicated that Louw did not want his memorandum (attached to which was a list of promotions and transfers for 1957 including Uys from Canberra to Cologne and Hamilton from Washington to Canberra) sent to the Public Service Commission. 'It should, however, carefully be placed on record here so that it can be found at any time, even after years'.

¹²⁶ Sole, *Reminiscences*, p. 212. Louw announced Fourie's appointment in the House of Assembly (*HA Deb.*, Vol. 97, 18 August 1958, Col. 2368) before the PSC had pronounced on it.

¹²⁷ Their report, dated 8 October 1956, is on BTS, 4/5/1, AJ 1957. See Sole, *Reminiscences*, p. 31, for a description of Parminter. Louw's four-page list of instructions is on BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 18 ie. 'Proposed inspection of the Union's foreign missions by the Chief Public Service Inspector, Mr J.P.B. van Veen and Mr W.G.W. Parminter, formerly Minister for the Union in Paris'.

¹²⁸ *Public Service Commission, Department of External Affairs and Office of the Prime Minister, Routine Inspection Report, 30th September 1946*, p. 19, para. 90.

¹²⁹ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 2, *Public Service Commission, Department of the Prime Minister, Report on the Staffing requirements of the Parliamentary and Coding Section, Cape Town, 18th March, 1935*, pp. 1-2 para. 3; 4, para. 8; Sole, *Reminiscences*, p. 17.

¹³⁰ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 1, Annex C to Gordon Watson/Secretary, PSC, 9 March 1927.

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later taken by Second Grade Clerk J.P.V. Visser. Visser was to head the Prime Minister's department in the 1950s and 1960s.¹³¹ Nesor himself was later Secretary for South West Africa and Secretary for Justice. And Du Plessis's defeat of Smuts at Standerton in the 1948 General Election marked the beginning of a fair political career. After a spell in the House of Assembly, this took him to Ottawa and Washington as High Commissioner (and Permanent Representative to the United Nations) and Ambassador, respectively, before his appointments as Secretary for Information and Administrator of South West Africa in the 1960s.

Coding work continued to be combined with parliamentary duties. The volume was not great and in 1936 the work was basically performed by one clerk assisted by others in times of crisis.¹³² In its November 1944 reorganisation proposals the department recommended that the Coding Section be placed in the Economic, International Reconstruction and General Branch and that it be strengthened by increasing its staff from three to five and put in charge of a Third Secretary.¹³³ The Public Service Commission assigned it to the Political, Diplomatic and Consular Branch. At the time of the 1946 inspection, the section was directed by a Second Secretary who, apart from exercising a supervisory role, checked punctuation and helped with deciphering during rush periods. He was assisted by one Grade I Clerical assistant, one special grade Woman Clerk and two Grade I Woman Clerks.¹³⁴ The inspector recommended the addition of one Grade I Woman Clerk.¹³⁵ He remarked on the presence of two Cadets in the section for training.¹³⁶

¹³¹ Du Plessis, *'n Mens vir die Mens*, p. 4. Du Plessis was then the most junior member of a departmental staff consisting of only thirteen people, including three typists and two messengers.

¹³² BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 3, *Staatsdienskommissie, Inspeksierapport - Departement van die Eerste Minister en Minister van Buitelandse Sake 15 Julie 1936*, p. 15, para. 36.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 7, Pohl/PSC, 22 November 1944, p. 10, para. 46.

¹³⁴ A handwritten list supplies the names of three Grade I Woman Clerks, Misses D. Griffiths, K. Whitford and R.J. Fourie. The Second Secretary was D.C.M. van der Merwe and the Clerical Assistant, Grade I, M.W.W. Aucamp. BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 9. This volume contains complaints from senior staff in late 1946 about the Coding Section's slowness in circulating telegrams. It was then operating with a reduced staff on account of illness.

¹³⁵ *Public Service Commission, Department of External Affairs and Office of the Prime Minister, Routine Inspection Report, 30th September 1946*, pp. 11-12, 16, paras. 55, 57, 79.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, para. 81. Those particular cadets were presumably on their way to missions abroad. A 'Cadet training pool' was established in 1953 to permit new recruits to circulate through various head office sections for about a year for 'training in every aspect of the department's work', including Coding, Registry and Accounts which constituted their primary responsibility in a mission abroad. BTS, S4/5/45, Vol. 2, Steyn/SEA, 26 February 1953 and telephonic conversation with R.F. Botha, 1 July 1994. At the time of his capture by the opposing university in 1953, Botha was a Cadet in the Coding Section. See *Die Transvaler*, 29 May 1953.

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The bulk of the cables arrived at night and were delivered to the Coding Section when it opened for business the next morning. Incoming material had to be deciphered or decoded, typed and ready for distribution not later than 12 noon. Outgoing messages needed to be ready for despatch before the local post office closed at 4.30 pm. Thereafter they could be handed in at the General Post Office on Church Square. In the case of urgent ('Immediate') incoming messages after hours, the post office was required to telephone the Second Secretary or the First Grade Clerk who would attend to the deciphering.¹³⁷ For the twelve months September 1945 to September 1946 the cable account averaged £SA996 monthly, the amount for July 1946 being £SA1289.4.11.¹³⁸ In respect of volume, 1333 messages were despatched and 2684 received in the first six months of 1944 as opposed to 2156 and 3246 in the first six months of 1946. During the month of July, 236 were despatched and 435 received in 1944 compared to 460 and 677 in that month in 1946.¹³⁹ During the whole of 1931 only 549 telegrams were received and 376 despatched in one or other of various codes and cypress in the personal charge of the Senior Clerk, varying in length from two to two thousand words.¹⁴⁰

An important recommendation in 1946 was that the section should henceforth be staffed by women only since, according to the inspector, they were 'eminently suited to this type of work'. That would have the advantage of ensuring continuity, minimise staff changes and provide a permanent head of section, besides releasing 'a trained diplomat', of which there was a marked shortage, for other work. In any case, males were 'apt to be discontented after a while in that they feel that they are losing ground in the matter of experience'. A potential obstacle, though, was the after hours work which 'it would be unwise for women to do ... unless escorted'.¹⁴¹ The recommendation had been put into effect by 1948. In 1950 Forsyth observed that 'the Coding Section, staffed as it is now exclusively by women, has been pretty fairly tested and has justified itself'.¹⁴²

¹³⁷ *Public Service Commission, Department of External Affairs and Office of the Prime Minister, Routine Inspection Report, 30th September 1946*, p. 17, paras. 82-83.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 18, para. 87.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 17, para. 84. These numbers were insignificant by comparison with the upwards of thirty thousand messages a year in the later stages of the war that the Australian External Communications Section, which handled all government traffic, was dealing with.

¹⁴⁰ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 1, Smith/Secretary, PSC, 16 August 1932, p. 14, para. 30(a). The paragraph gives a brief description of measures taken to safeguard the codes.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 19, paras. 91-92.

¹⁴² BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 13, Forsyth/Under-Secretary (Pretoria), 'Coding Section', 1 February 1950. The future Mrs Sole, Miss E.D. Wookey, was then on the point of leaving the section on the occasion of

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At that time it was still expected of the head of section to construct 'a basic English cypher ... an Afrikaans cypher and a proper codebook' all of which were said to be 'elementary requirements in the case of any country aspiring to international standing and none of which we at present possess'.¹⁴³ By 1954 the Coding Section had been grouped with the Political, International Organisations, Africa and Protocol Sections in the Diplomatic and Consular Division. Its staff consisted of one Senior Clerk (Miss M.D. Wood), one Clerical Assistant, Grade I, (Miss D. Griffiths), one Special Grade Woman Clerk (Miss A.G. Newton) and two Grade I Woman Clerks (Misses D.J.M. Brink and J.G.A. Krause.)¹⁴⁴ Miss Newton was in charge of the section from the late 1950s until her retirement in the early 1970s.

In Australia there were at first two sections dealing with external cables, the Cables Branch of the Prime Minister's Department and the Cables and Records Section of the Department of External Affairs. The latter had been set up at the outbreak of war to cope with 'the greatly increased cable traffic'. Before that the Political Section had encyphered and decyphered the department's cable traffic with its London Office.¹⁴⁵ In 1940-41 the Cables and Records Section consisted of 'half a dozen or so clerks' headed by E.A.G. Tilley, himself a Clerk.¹⁴⁶ These sections merged in May 1943 to form the External Communications Branch of the Department of External Affairs under the eccentric J.L. Mulrooney.¹⁴⁷ It seems that a reason for the merger was that Dr Evatt, the Minister of External Affairs, wanted to control the flow of information.

In 1945 two-thirds of Australian expenditure on External Affairs was incurred by the External Communications Branch whose share that year, with all the wartime traffic - upwards of 30 000 cables a year handled by a staff of about a hundred - was

her marriage. She had joined it from the Registry of the Department of Social Welfare less than two years before. See correspondence on BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 11 and Sole, *Reminiscences*, p. 133.

¹⁴³ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 13, Spies/Forsyth, 6 February 1950.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. 17, 'Diplomatieke en konsulêre afdeling, hoofkantoor', 8 April 1954. This grouping demonstrates the low priority given Africa at the time. R.F. Botha was then listed as a Cadet in the General Section.

¹⁴⁵ DFAT, 'The Department of External Affairs. History' etc., p. 2.

¹⁴⁶ Hasluck, *Diplomatic Witness*, p. 3. See also AA, A1066/1, P.I. 45/140, 'Department of External Affairs, Statement showing disposition of Staff as in Permanent Staff List', 1940 and 'Confidential Handbook of Information concerning the Department of External Affairs', 1941, Appendix C. Tilley had joined the Public Service in 1917 and the Department of External Affairs in 1940. AA, A1067/1, S46/238, 'Department of External Affairs: Seniority of Officers'. 1940.

¹⁴⁷ Edwards, *Prime Ministers and Diplomats*, p. 152; Hasluck, *Diplomatic Witness*, pp. 10-11.

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estimated at £A103 000.¹⁴⁸ Expenditure in 1939-39 had been £A4532¹⁴⁹ and that mainly in respect of communications with London. While the end of the war was expected to bring about 'a drastic reduction in cable costs and staff', expenditure was thought unlikely ever to return to its pre-war level.¹⁵⁰ Nor did it.

The 1947 approved staff establishment of seventy-three posts¹⁵¹ dwarfed the Records Section as it did the South African Cables Section. Of considerable assistance to researchers is the practice of the External Communications Branch of numbering all incoming and outgoing cables consecutively, the numbers of the former being preceded by I and the latter by O, apart from whatever other reference numbers they bore. The Is were typed on special, printed blue bordered paper and the Os on red, both bearing the heading 'Cablegram'. From late 1956 these became 'Inward Cablegram' and 'Outward Cablegram'. The South African set-up was relatively primitive by comparison with cables typed initially on all sorts of odd pieces of paper. At a later date incomings were circulated on blue flimsy paper and outgoing on red but without an overall number.

Reference was made in the Introduction to Millar's view that the role of a foreign office is hard to determine, books and articles on the subject not saying anything really significant about it. Only 'the serving foreign service officer really knows what is happening and he is forbidden from reporting it'.¹⁵² A work which accords with that description is Deon Geldenhuys's *The Diplomacy of Isolation: South African Foreign Policy Making* (Johannesburg, 1984.) In many respects an admirable attempt to cut through to the core of the policy-making process, it is in the end very much the product of an outsider looking in. Of the examples that can be cited, there is Geldenhuys's treatment of Munger's proposition that South African Ambassadors were kept on a tight rein politically,¹⁵³ no doubt along the lines of Sir Francis Bertie's view that after the introduction of the registry system in the Foreign Office 'the ambassador had been

¹⁴⁸ AA, A571/62, 45/244, Assistant Secretary/Secretary, 7 August 1944, p. 2, para. 10. (Internal Treasury minute).

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Hamilton/Assistant Secretary (Finance), 'Accountant - Department of External Affairs', 12 April 1945, para. 2. (Internal Treasury minute). The Australian £ was worth about eighty per cent of the South African £.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Dunk/Secretary, Department of Treasury, 13 February 1947.

¹⁵² At least not immediately. T.B. Millar, 'On writing about foreign policy', *Australian Outlook*, Vol. 21, No. 1, April 1967, p. 78.

¹⁵³ E.S. Munger, *Notes on the Formation of South African Foreign Policy* (Pasadena, 1965), p. 26.

It was, however, true in the financial sense.

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reduced to the status of a marionette, whose strings were manipulated from London'.¹⁵⁴ In South Africa's case, however, that is to do too much honour to the departmental head office.

That Munger is wrong will be evident from Sole's complaint about the lack of a directive or brief (see Chapter Three, p. 146) which applied to most career officers who sank or swam according to ability and inclination, not to mention the particular circumstances in which they found themselves. Geldenhuys's error lies in attaching too much significance to his interviews with serving and retired officers. Of Hamilton, for example, following Munger,¹⁵⁵ he writes that he had been given 'a relatively free hand to improve the very poor relations between South Africa and Sweden following the disappointing performance of his predecessor in the post'.¹⁵⁶ Hamilton himself would have been his source.

In November 1961, O.L. Davis, the Australian High Commissioner, recorded a conversation with Hamilton who was visiting Pretoria on the occasion of an inaugural flight. Hamilton had said that despite his strong disagreement with government policy Jooste 'had told him that he could "play it his own way" in Stockholm and hoped that he would have as much success as in Australia'. Hamilton said 'that relations with Sweden had considerably improved. He said that there had been considerable misunderstanding in Sweden in relation to South Africa and that his predecessor had tended to antagonize by an over-zealous pressing of the Government's point of view'.¹⁵⁷ In fact, Hamilton's predecessor, J.E. Bruce, was not perceived to have done badly at all. Eric Louw told the House of Assembly in 1959 that he was doing 'exceptionally good work'¹⁵⁸ and Jooste told Hamilton in January 1961 that he had done 'excellent work'.¹⁵⁹

While it may be difficult for outsiders to determine a foreign office's influence on the policy-making process at any given time, it is useful to bear in mind Steiner's

¹⁵⁴ Jones, *The British Diplomatic Service*, p. 219. However, at least in respect of the British Service, the invention of the telegraph had already sounded death knell of the independent, policy-making Ambassador. See W.A.P. Phillips, 'The machine age of government', *The Forum*, Vol. 5, No. 6, September 1956, p. 37.

¹⁵⁵ Munger, *South African Foreign Policy*, p. 27.

¹⁵⁶ Geldenhuys, *The Diplomacy of Isolation*, p. 135.

¹⁵⁷ AA, A9421/1, 221/1, Record of conversation Davis/Hamilton, 16 November 1961.

¹⁵⁸ *HA Deb.*, Vol. 101, 6 May 1959, Col. 5482.

¹⁵⁹ Hamilton, Vol. 3, SEA, Pretoria/High Commissioner, Canberra, Cypher OTP telegram No. 1, 9 January 1961. Jooste drafted this telegram personally and it was approved by Verwoerd.

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view that a 'study of the role of the Foreign Office really implies a study of specific individuals and policies'.¹⁶⁰ Such an exercise has yet to be attempted in respect of the South African department if not the Australian one after 1949. Yet in general and from a practical point of view, it can be said that a department's influence is in inverse proportion to its Minister's personality and knowledge. The more experienced and better informed the Minister and the stronger his personality, the less influential the department is likely to be. That has proved true of both the Australian and the South African departments from their inception. Probably the only time the South African department enjoyed any real influence was under Malan and possibly under Hilgard Muller after the assassination of Dr Verwoerd (*ie.* between 1966 and 1977).

The department was in no position to challenge Smuts's primacy in foreign relations even if it had wanted to because its head, Forsyth, was a career public servant brought in from outside, who altogether lacked experience and qualifications in the field. That was clearly how Smuts wanted it. Given his initial limitations, Forsyth was not a bad Secretary. His rise and varied experience in the public service from fifteen year old office junior to head of department in less than thirty years showed that he was a good, perhaps outstanding, administrator. In fact his successor, Jooste, called him one of the most able administrative officials he had known.¹⁶¹ Wentzel du Plessis was another from across the political divide who spoke well of Forsyth's abilities, as did Leif Egeland.¹⁶² Nonetheless, Smuts concentrated all policy in his own hands and his officials were terrified of his intellect and that cold blue eye. In essentials, Sole confirms that, writing that Smuts

did not look on the Department as an aid to the formulation of policy and Forsyth in those years was not prepared to do more than carry out his master's instructions. With the advent of Malan, after an initial period of intense nervousness and because of Malan's initial ignorance of foreign policy, albeit a policy whose objectives were holding actions rather than new initiatives although we did achieve something positive in persuading the government to participate in the Berlin air lift and in the Korean War.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ Z.S. Steiner, 'The Foreign Office under Sir Edward Grey, 1905-1914', F.H. Hinsley, ed., *British Foreign Policy under Sir Edward Grey* (Cambridge, 1977), p. 26.

¹⁶¹ Jooste, *Diensherineringe*, p. 186.

¹⁶² Du Plessis, *Die Goue Draad*, p. 100; Egeland, *Bridges of Understanding*, p. 143.

¹⁶³ D.B. Sole, letter, 7 June 1993. See also Sole, *Reminiscences*, p. 143.

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In an early draft chapter of the official history of the South African Department of Foreign Affairs, the late Professor C.J.F. Muller argued that the first permanent head of the department, Dr H.D.J. Bodenstein, was more important than Forsyth, his successor. Muller may have been looking at things from the wrong perspective.¹⁶⁴ Both brought different qualities to bear and were valuable in their own way. A law professor from Stellenbosch University, and considered something of an *éminence grise*,¹⁶⁵ Bodenstein did not know his way round the Public Service machine; Forsyth, who was skilled in techniques of attracting scarce resources, human and otherwise, to his department, did.

Much the same could be said of W.E. Dunk in Australia who replaced Hodgson as Secretary for External Affairs in 1945. He soon fell out with his Minister, Dr Evatt, and, after eighteen months, accepted Chifley's offer of the Chairmanship of the Public Service Board, a post he retained until his retirement a decade later.¹⁶⁶ There is a tendency to regard Dunk's eighteen month term at External Affairs as an interregnum and the man himself at that time as 'only a glorified staff manager'.¹⁶⁷ From his own testimony that is obviously wrong:

it was perhaps the most concentrated productive effort of my official life ... in a brief year and a half, and starting literally from scratch, the Department was firmly founded with normal establishment structure, lines of authority and communication, with around twenty overseas posts and growing at a rapid but healthy rate.

As with South Africa, therefore, the birth of the modern Australian department clearly dates back to the early post-war reorganisation and Dunk's eighteen months should receive more scholarly attention than has so far been the case.

¹⁶⁴ Draft chapter 'The foundation of the Department of Foreign Affairs in 1927', p. 11. (Original in Afrikaans). Muller may have been influenced by Bodenstein's three-and-a-half column entry in the *DSAB*, Vol. II, (Pretoria, 1983 (1972)), pp. 66-68. There is no entry for Forsyth who died in 1987 after the first series of the *DSAB* had been discontinued.

¹⁶⁵ He was most unpopular with the ex-Unionist side of the United Party who believed that his influence was malevolent. See, eg., Egeland, *Bridges of Understanding*, pp. 88-89 and Sole, *Reminiscences*, p. 20.

¹⁶⁶ W.E. Dunk, *They also serve* (Canberra, 1974), pp. 65-67 and Watt, *Australian Diplomat*, p. 90. A two-part profile of Dunk is contained in *Nation* (Australia), No. 20, 20 June 1959, pp. 9-10 and No. 21, 4 July 1959, pp. 14-15.

¹⁶⁷ 'Canberra's destiny-man', *Nation*, p. 14.

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If Malan was prepared to accept his officials' counsel the strong and assertive, pugnacious even, Eric Louw was not.¹⁶⁸ An example of that, which led to his censure by the United Nations General Assembly, was his rejection of Jooste's advice to tone down his proposed contribution to the 1961 general debate.¹⁶⁹ Louw's attitude was that the time had passed whereby South Africa could 'afford to appear conciliatory and even strictly diplomatic'.¹⁷⁰ Inasmuch as he was obviously playing exclusively to the domestic gallery, he no doubt welcomed the censure as well as the high level 'welcome home' ceremony at Jan Smuts airport on his return from New York in December.¹⁷¹ If, as was rumoured, Verwoerd was planning to replace him as Foreign Minister, Louw may have bought himself time.¹⁷² By contrast, the British High Commissioner, Sir John Maud, who was present at the airport, thought that everything Verwoerd said on the occasion, including his observation that this was the 'pinnacle' of Louw's career, was consistent with the possibility that [he] might be encouraged to retire early in the new year'.¹⁷³ Instead, he carried on for a further two years, successfully resisting efforts to dislodge him.

Louw was more likely to heed the advice of a political colleague than that tendered by an official. Not that he initially did in the case of the so-called Caltex affair when he publicly criticised that company for a television programme on South Africa sponsored by its parent company, Texaco. But no official could have tackled him the

¹⁶⁸ *The New York Times* (13 October 1961, Profile) called him a 'quietly pugnacious Afrikaner'.

¹⁶⁹ Traditionally item 9 on the General Assembly's agenda, the general debate gives heads of delegation the opportunity to express their views on the international situation. It is not a debate and speakers, who are called upon in the order in which they inscribe their names on the President's list, read from prepared texts. Brazil is traditionally the first speaker. See BTS 136/2/29, Vol. 2, Louw/Secretary, 19 September 1961 and 'Notes on the Minister's Speech' (Original in Afrikaans); 'Draft framework of statement to United Nations' General Assembly'; and 'Sixteenth Session of the United Nations General Assembly: Statement by the Honourable Eric H. Louw, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of South Africa'.

¹⁷⁰ BTS 136/2/29, Vol. 2, Louw/Secretary, 19 September 1961.

¹⁷¹ Verwoerd was among cabinet ministers, members of the diplomatic corps and senior officials in an estimated crowd of 2000 to 3000 people who met Louw at the airport. Verwoerd reportedly told him: 'You have become one of the heroes of South Africa'. *Rand Daily Mail*, 8 December 1961.

¹⁷² Munger, *South African Foreign Policy*, p. 30. Inasmuch as Verwoerd had cabled Louw his 'full support' just after the event - 'Premier sterk min. Louw', *Die Transvaler*, 13 October 1961 - it would have been difficult subsequently to repudiate him. Van der Schyff claims that Verwoerd considered Louw's 'performance at the UN session of 1960 as the climax of his career and his part in the eventful session of 1961 his finest hour'. Compare this, however, with Geldenhuys's interpretation. Geldenhuys, *The Diplomacy of Isolation*, p. 27. And Van der Schyff is wrong when he says that South Africa 'was prohibited from taking part in UN discussions' in 1961. *DSAB*, Vol. V (1987), p. 470.

¹⁷³ AA, A1838/2, 155/7/14, Pt. 1, Memo. 714, Davis/DEA, 11 December 1961, Attachment (Record of conversation Davis/Maud, 8 December 1961), p. 1, para. 1.

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way Wentzel du Plessis, the Verwoerd-appointed ambassador to the United States, did:

I fear that your statement yesterday as reported concerning Huntley programme can create a difficult and even delicate situation for us in our relations with the press in this country because it is going to be interpreted as an attempt at intimidation.

Du Plessis said methods to bring pressure to bear could be effective only when undertaken on a confidential basis and added that he had much appreciation for what Caltex was trying to do for South Africa in the United States.¹⁷⁴ Louw disagreed:

I regret that I cannot agree with your attitude which seems to suggest that Huntley's malicious campaign against South Africa must be allowed to continue without any reaction on our part. I must remind you that your previous intervention did not have desired effect.¹⁷⁵

Louw eventually lowered his profile on the issue, leaving his colleague, the Minister of Economic Affairs, Diederichs, to pick up the pieces when replying to a question put by a member of the parliamentary opposition.¹⁷⁶

According to Sole, by the end of his term as Foreign Minister Louw was 'widely distrusted both abroad and at home'.¹⁷⁷ While one may query the 'distrusted', there is no disputing that he was disliked¹⁷⁸ and it would have been better from the government's point of view if Verwoerd had replaced him earlier. Piet Cillie, Editor of *Die Burger*, told the Australian High Commissioner, O.L. Davis, in May 1960 that sending Louw to that year's Commonwealth Prime Minister's Conference 'had been a disaster. ... Mr. Louw was a very bad choice as he was constitutionally unable to present South Africa's case in an attractive and friendly manner. He seemed to like to pick a quarrel and preferred to be disliked rather than liked'.¹⁷⁹ Davis himself had written the previous month, asking that his comments be drawn to Robert Menzies's attention:

¹⁷⁴ BTS, 136/3/10, Vol. 4, Du Plessis/Louw, No. 34, 22 April 1960. Also BTS, 136/3/10/1, Vol. 1, Du Plessis/Jooste, 4 May 1960.

¹⁷⁵ BTS, 136/3/10/1, Vol. 1, Louw/Du Plessis, No: 30, 26 April 1960.

¹⁷⁶ *The Cape Argus*, 13 May 1960; BTS, 136/3/10/1, Vol. 1, Oral reply to question XXXIII.

¹⁷⁷ Sole, *Reminiscences*, p. 262. Sole gives reasons on p. 231 why Louw's officials respected him.

¹⁷⁸ See, for example, the report on his press conference in London on 4 May 1960. *The Times* (London), 5 May 1960.

¹⁷⁹ AA, A1838/1, 201/1/2, Pt. 3, Record of conversation Cillie/Davis, 17 May 1960, p. 2., para. 5.

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Mr Louw is not held in high regard in South Africa. ... Among the members of the diplomatic corps he is not highly regarded and is considered to be of not more than average intelligence. ... In his own Party ... the moderate element, including Mr Sauer, Dr Dönges, Mr Naude and Mr Fouche do not appear to think well of him. ... Mr Louw is a poor speaker and does not show up well in Parliament. Both publicly and privately he talks too much and listens too little. ... During Mr Macmillan's visit to South Africa he accompanied Mr Macmillan and, according to the United Kingdom High Commissioner, left a very poor impression on Mr Macmillan.¹⁸⁰

In September 1958, shortly before the end of his term as Acting High Commissioner, Hugh Gilchrist had said Louw was

such a bad listener: apart from being slightly deaf in one ear, he prefers to lecture rather than to listen, and there is rarely an opportunity to interrupt or get a word in without being very brusque. One also has the impression that he suffers from the widespread South African failing of self-deception and wishful thinking. I also have some doubts whether Jooste always tries very hard to correct this thinking in his Minister, especially when the correction is certain to arouse strong emotion in him.¹⁸¹

Aware though he was of Louw's limitations, Robert Menzies respected his qualities. He wrote of him later: 'I knew Louw well. I had always found him somewhat stiff and intractable ... Yet I knew him to be courageous, honest, and devoted to what he regarded as the proper interests of his country'.¹⁸² Menzies may even have held him in some affection. After the 1961 censure, replying in the House of Representatives to the question 'whether he was not concerned that Australia remains one of the last countries to be associated with South Africa', he said: 'Mr Louw ... made a speech, no doubt very severely expressed as those who know him would expect it to be, but no more severely expressed, and perhaps less severely expressed, than many other speeches that have been made in the General Assembly'.¹⁸³

His acknowledgment of Louw's congratulations on his victory at the November 1958 elections seemed to go beyond the merely formal and routine: 'My dear Eric, I greatly appreciated your congratulations ... I assure you it was wonderful to hear from

¹⁸⁰ AA, A9421/1, 201/3, Davis/Tange, 22 April 1960.

¹⁸¹ AA, A1838/2, 201/9/1, Pt. 2, Memo. 733, Gilchrist/DEA, 17 September 1958, p. 3, para. 10.

¹⁸² R. Menzies, *Afternoon Light: Some Memories of Men and Events* (Melbourne, 1967), p. 194.

¹⁸³ BTS, 136/2/29, Vol. 3, Woodward/Department of Foreign Affairs, 19 October 1961.

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my friends, and your thoughtfulness in sending a message through your High Commissioner made me extremely happy. With warmest regards'.¹⁸⁴

Someone else who may have liked Louw, at least initially, was the Canadian High Commissioner J.J. Hurley who congratulated him in glowing terms on his performance at the 1959 session of the United Nations General Assembly: 'May I also say how very pleased I was to learn of your well received activities and speeches at the 14th Session of the United Nations, and to learn of the increase in the favourable atmosphere toward the Union of South Africa which was no doubt due to your efforts.'¹⁸⁵ Also at least initially, Hurley may have been well disposed towards South African government policies, a position from which he was said later to have retreated. Gilchrist, the Acting Australian High Commissioner, reported in December 1958:

the Canadian High Commissioner (Hurley) seems to have somewhat revised the very favourable initial opinions of Union Government policies which he held soon after his arrival here last year (opinions formed largely as a result of conversations during his first formal calls on Cabinet Ministers).¹⁸⁶

There again, Hurley may have been playing both ends against the middle. In May 1963 the Australian Trade Commissioner, J.L. Chapman, reported (enviously) that he had attended a businessman's lunch in Cape Town at which Hurley revealed that he was

on Christian name terms with the Deputy Minister of Economic Affairs and the Secretary of Commerce and Industries and others. I might also suggest that personally from his utterances he played politics locally, which were not in line with the policy of his Government.¹⁸⁷

Early in 1961 Louw seemed, metaphorically, to have been experiencing something of a cold wind. He was recovering from an operation at the time of UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld's visit and could not take part in the discussions. Nonetheless, he took strong exception to the omission of his name from the press release announcing that the visit would commence on 5 January. Accordingly he had his wife dictate a note to his typist, Bess van der Wateren, for delivery to Jooste,

¹⁸⁴ BCB, Vol. 3, 6/5, Vol. IV, Menzies/Louw, 6 January 1959.

¹⁸⁵ BTS, 136/2/3/14, Hurley/Louw, 17 November 1959. A coolness may have entered their relations after the detention of the Canadian journalist Norman Phillips during the state of emergency the following year. See various items on BTS, 136/3/10, Vol. 2.

¹⁸⁶ AA, A1838/2, 201/9/1, Pt. 2, Memo. 733, Gilchrist/DEA, 17 December 1958, p. 3, para. 13.

¹⁸⁷ AA, A9421, 112/3, Pt. 1, Chapman/Secretary, Department of Trade, 22 May 1963.

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saying that he was 'very disappointed and also disturbed' by the press release which had not mentioned that illness prevented him from taking part in the talks. 'The Minister is simply shoved aside, though he is the responsible Minister, and had conducted the preliminary discussions with Hammarskjöld in London'. He demanded a follow-up release to put the matter in perspective. 'If the release was drafted by the Prime Minister, or on his instructions, then Mr Jooste should kindly mention this objection to the Prime Minister'.¹⁸⁸ It is not known how Verwoerd received this, but the next day's news reports about the Hammarskjöld visit, which was delayed for a few days, mentioned that Louw, having just been discharged from hospital, would 'not be available for the talks'.¹⁸⁹

Seeking to assess Louw's diplomatic role up to 1937, A.J. van Wyk, one of the academics associated with the official history,¹⁹⁰ cites American sources to the effect that Louw was 'rather naive' when he took up his post as Trade Commissioner in New York in 1925. He also mentions that the British Ambassador to the United States, Sir Ronald Lindsay, called Louw 'completely second-rate' on the occasion of his departure from the United States in 1933 after his term as Minister.¹⁹¹ That was not the way the American media saw him. One journal said he was 'Politically astute, capable, unassuming' and 'One of the most interesting personalities in the Diplomatic Corps'.¹⁹² (Lindsay, who had been Permanent Under Secretary of State at the Foreign Office between 1927 and 1929 and would have met, if not actually worked with Louw when he was High Commissioner in London, was himself 'less than widely liked in the United States'.)¹⁹³ Naivety in someone on his first overseas assignment as Louw then was understandable while, as Van Wyk points out, the British view of Louw as second-rate was tinged with self-interest. He refused to play their game of the diplomatic unity of the Empire but, in line with his party's policy, sought as far as possible to demonstrate the fact of South African political independence, and that even before the adoption of the Statute of Westminster in 1931.

¹⁸⁸ BTS, 136/3/10/3, Vol. 4, Van der Wateren/Secretary, 3 January 1961.

¹⁸⁹ *Rand Daily Mail* (Johannesburg), 4 January 1961.

¹⁹⁰ See the Introduction above.

¹⁹¹ Draft chapter 'Adv Eric Louw, Pioneer Diplomat, 1925-1937', pp. 4, 17-18.

¹⁹² AA, A981 SOUTH AFRICA 39, 'South Africa's Envoy Departs', *World-Telegram* (New York), 2 November 1933.

¹⁹³ Heydon, 'Keith Officer (1889-1969) Pioneer and Symbol', *Quadrant*, No. 66, Vol. XIV, No. 4, July-August 1970, p. 36. Rose calls Lindsay 'a rather pedestrian figure'. Rose, *Vansittart*, p. 67. Vansittart succeeded Lindsay as PUS.

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A decade later British officials tended to regard J.W. Burton, the third head (Secretary) of the resuscitated Australian Department of External Affairs (1947-50) with similar hostility because he wanted Australia to develop an independent foreign policy, especially in Asia.¹⁹⁴ They would not, however, have described Burton as second-rate. A pre-war London School of Economics PhD graduate in Politics and Economics, perhaps the least (but most public) of his attributes was that he was an Australian Labor Party (ALP) zealot. Evatt appointed him head of the department at the age of thirty-two.¹⁹⁵ He held the Secretaryship until the age of thirty-five, stepping down six months after the Liberal-Country Party Coalition took office in December 1949. He subsequently accepted the High Commissionership in Colombo but resigned in controversial circumstances to contest a House of Representative seat on behalf of the ALP at the 1951 election. He failed to gain the seat and spent much of the rest of the decade trying to enter federal politics, without success - his talents did not lie in the direction of electoral politics.

He commenced an academic career in 1964 at the age of forty-nine, taking up a teaching post at University College, London. He was Director of the Centre for the Analysis of Conflict there, moving to the University of Kent in 1979. From 1983 he taught at the University of Maryland and at George Mason University, Virginia, where he helped establish centres for Conflict Analysis and Resolution.¹⁹⁶ His publications include such influential and frequently-cited works as *International Relations - a General Theory* (London, 1965), *Systems, States, Diplomacy and Rules* (Cambridge, 1968) and *Conflict & Communication: The Use of Controlled Communication in International Relations* (London, 1969).¹⁹⁷

If the British knew their enemies they also knew their friends, among whom they counted D.D. Forsyth.¹⁹⁸ Appointed to his post by Smuts in 1941 at the age of

¹⁹⁴ See G. Pemberton, 'A matter of independence', *The Canberra Times*, 17 August 1991.

¹⁹⁵ Burton was born on 2 March 1915. He transferred to External Affairs from the Department of Labour and National Service on 30 June 1941. He became Secretary for External Affairs on 27 March 1947, resigning on 17 June 1950. AA, A6213, RCE/H/9, CV.

¹⁹⁶ Burton CV. I am indebted to Mr Hugh Gilchrist of Canberra for obtaining this CV from Dr Burton.

¹⁹⁷ Some of his other titles: *Peace Theory: pre-conditions of disarmament* (1962); *World Society* (1972); *Deviance, Terrorism and War: A study in process in solving unsolved social and political problems* (1979); *Dear Survivors* (1982); *Global Conflict* (1983); *Resolving Deep-rooted Conflict* (1987); and the Conflict Series of four books (two with Frank Dukes, 1990).

¹⁹⁸ See Berridge, 'The Ethnic "Agent in Place": English-speaking Civil Servants and Nationalist South Africa, 1948-57', *Intelligence and National Security*, 4 (2), April 1989, pp. 257-67. Berridge

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forty-five, Forsyth retained it for eight years after the Nationalist victory in 1948, stepping down at the normal retirement age of sixty in March 1956. He was then appointed a Director of De Beers (the diamond concern). He seems to have enjoyed an easy relationship with Dr Malan¹⁹⁹ but not with Eric Louw, who took over the External Affairs portfolio in January 1955. Suggesting that is that Louw personally drafted the press release announcing Jooste's appointment as Forsyth's successor²⁰⁰ and he had to be talked out of his insistence that all staff proposals suggested by Forsyth in his final months be deferred for Jooste's consideration.²⁰¹ A few months after his retirement Forsyth sought an interview with Louw *inter alia* to make the point that the British preferred the use of the term External Affairs not Foreign Affairs to describe a Commonwealth country's 'Foreign Office'. Louw replied that he was well aware of that.²⁰² In fact, this disagreement over terminology symbolised what he had striven for during most of his public life and he personally was probably delighted still to be minister when the switch was made on the occasion of South Africa becoming a republic in 1961.

Personal likes and dislikes certainly play a role in the conduct of foreign relations, and not only foreign relations. David Kelly, whose career in the British service extended from the second to the fifth decades of the present century, writes of many times having seen 'purely personal likes or dislikes, personal health, vanity, prejudice, or just lack of time for proper consideration, decide important issues'.²⁰³ A Canadian scholar writes of the influence exercised by the personality of Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King on his dispute with the Governor-General, Lord Byng, in 1926 over the former's request for the dissolution of the House of Commons. That contributed to the Imperial Conference's recommendation later that year that the Governor-General of

writes (pp. 262-63) that 'Glowing tributes' to Forsyth's 'soundness' and 'general helpfulness to Britain' abound in British documents of the time.

¹⁹⁹ Geldenhuys, *The Diplomacy of Isolation*, p. 21.

²⁰⁰ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 18, Draft in Louw's hand attached to Forsyth/State Information Office, 8 December 1955.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 19, Spies/Scholtz, 13 January 1956.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, Louw/Forsyth, 10 September 1956.

²⁰³ Kelly, *The Ruling Few*, pp. 1-2. Walter Crocker calls the Australian-born Kelly 'an outstanding British ambassador of the era'. *Travelling back*, p. 179.

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a Dominion should no longer represent the United Kingdom government.²⁰⁴ Eden's dislike of John Foster Dulles is said to have contributed to the Suez crisis in 1956.²⁰⁵

Smuts's and Evatt's mutual dislike had an impact on Australian/South African relations, at least from the South African side, in the early post-war period.²⁰⁶ Relations improved when the National Party took office and Malan got on well with Evatt the only time they met.²⁰⁷ (See Chapter Three). With particular reference to the South West Africa question at the United Nations in 1949, Hudson in fact claims to have been 'told authoritatively that Evatt's regard for some members of the South African government influenced his behaviour' in favour of South Africa.²⁰⁸ In 1950, after he had left office, Evatt even proposed to the South Africans that he should put their case for them at the International Court of Justice at the hearings in connection with the first advisory opinion on South West Africa.²⁰⁹

On the Australian side, the Department of External Affairs waxed and waned, prospering under ministers such as McMahon in the early 1970s but plumbing the depths earlier under Hasluck (1964-69) who, Juddery says,

rarely entered his department's offices at the eastern end of the Administration Building. Foreign policy was run, almost exclusively, from the minister's office on the bottom floor of Parliament

²⁰⁴ J.E. Esbrey, 'Personality and Politics: A New Look at the King-Byng Dispute', *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, VI, No. 1, 1973, pp. 37-55.

²⁰⁵ M. Rutherford, 'Time to concede the end of a political affair', *Business Day*, 16 May 1994. (Review of J. Dickie's *'Special' No More - Anglo-American relations: rhetoric and reality*. London, 1994.)

²⁰⁶ Evatt appears, however, to have had at least a grudging respect for Smuts. Thus Hudson writes: 'Evatt, like most of his generation, admired Smuts and tended to stress South Africa's role in the "war against fascism".' Dr W.J. Hudson, undated comments to the writer, 1995.

²⁰⁷ So did Eric Louw who had met him at the 1948 session of the UN General Assembly over which he presided. A.T. Stirling, *Lord Bruce: The London Years* (London, 1974), p. 431. The ship bearing Evatt to Australia called at Cape Town for seven hours on 31 December 1948. See Chapter Three below.

²⁰⁸ W.J. Hudson, 'Australia and the South-West Africa Question', *World Review* (Australia), Vol. 5, No. 2, July 1966, p. 29.

²⁰⁹ BCB, Vol. 7, 8/4, Viljoen/Forsyth, 12 May 1950 and Forsyth/Viljoen, 1 June 1950. While still Minister of External Affairs, in an effort to be helpful, Evatt proposed that South Africa should submit information on South West Africa under Chapter XI of the UN Charter. Evatt/Viljoen, 25 August 1949 and High Commissioner, Canberra/SEA, Code telegram No. 28, 26 August 1949. Three years later, then out of office, also trying to be helpful and following on a discussion with Sauer during his visit to Australia on the Qantas inaugural flight - see Chapter Three - Evatt suggested to Malan that he co-operate with any good offices committee the UN should set up in respect of the treatment of Indians issue. BCB, Vol. 8, 8/8, OTP telegrams High Commissioner, Canberra/SEA, No. 32, 6 November 1952; SEA/High Commissioner, Canberra, No. 36, 7 November 1952; and Nel/Evatt, 10 November 1952. Malan declined, pleading the Charter's domestic jurisdiction clause (Article 2(7)).

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House. He did not welcome alternative proposals from his department.

Nor did Hasluck encourage initiatives on the part of his diplomats.²¹⁰

At least Hasluck, who had worked for the Department of External Affairs in a temporary capacity for six years in the 1940s, was not guilty of what he accused his then Minister: 'Evatt ... used to regard his department as his own possession and to expect his department to be the instrument of his will'.²¹¹ Hasluck claimed to have based his 1947 resignation on that. 'Reluctantly, I was forced to the opinion that the present Minister for External Affairs does wish to make the diplomatic staff and the staff of the Department of External Affairs his personal possession. I do not wish to have any place in a service of that kind'²¹² However, Hasluck's own ministerial *modus operandi* was not beyond reproach: 'His intrusion into detail was such that public servants privately criticised him for wanting to be not merely minister but also departmental secretary, section head and junior clerk'.²¹³

Evatt was a difficult man and may have suffered from a form of epilepsy which ultimately impaired his mental faculties.²¹⁴ Even now, thirty years after his death, his memory evokes strong feelings. In 1993 Peter Ryan, a former Director of Melbourne University Press, called him 'a man of unsound mind - there were signs apparent in the mid-1940s ... of the gathering darkness under which he died'. Ryan said that it 'would be hard to think of a figure ever in Australian public life so politically evil and so personally odious'.²¹⁵ Edwards is more charitable, holding that it 'is not unduly fanciful to see his career as worthy of a Shakespearian tragedy - a man of exceptional ability, in whom many placed great hopes, ultimately felled by fatal flaws of personality'.²¹⁶ One-

²¹⁰ B. Juddery, *At the Centre: The Australian Bureaucracy in the 1970s* (Melbourne, 1974), p. 95. Juddery could have mentioned that it was also Evatt's practice to work out of his office in the parliament building. Gareth Evans, the present Foreign Minister, does so too. Perhaps other Liberal/Country Party External Affairs Ministers did likewise.

²¹¹ Hasluck, *Diplomatic Witness*, p. 292.

²¹² *Ibid.*, p. 293. Statement at the University of Western Australia, 9 September 1947. Others suggest the reason was Evatt's appointment of the 32 year old Dr J.W. Burton as Secretary for External Affairs. Whatever the reason, there can in retrospect be no doubt at all that Hasluck's resignation was a very 'smart career move' from his point of view. His subsequent career had a fairy tale quality about it.

²¹³ *The Age* (Melbourne), 11 January 1993.

²¹⁴ K. Buckley, B. Dale & W. Reynolds, *Doc Evatt: patriot, internationalist, fighter and scholar* (Melbourne, 1994), pp. 405-07.

²¹⁵ Peter Ryan in *The Weekend Australian*, August 28-29, 1993. See also Buckley *et al.*, *Doc Evatt*, p. 412 and Renouf, *Let Justice be Done*, p. 1.

²¹⁶ Edwards, *Prime Ministers and Diplomats*, p. 141.

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time United Nations Under Secretary-General Brian Urquhart called him 'a brilliant but insecure man, almost paranoid in his desire to dominate and in his suspicion of those around him. He was even jealous of Eleanor Roosevelt'.²¹⁷ Evatt is, however, something of a secular saint to important sections of the present-day Australian Labor Party.²¹⁸

His political rival of the 1950s, Robert Menzies, described him as 'a scholar of great attainments and a well-furnished lawyer, but, oddly enough, a poor advocate. He was a strange and controversial figure'.²¹⁹ His personality, working methods and style caused unhappiness to most External Affairs officers who came into contact with him. Watt, who worked with him in a senior capacity in Canberra and at international conferences, said Evatt caused him 'seriously to doubt whether I could serve him and at the same time keep my self respect'.²²⁰ The more junior J.K. Waller, who had been Secretary of the Australian delegation to the 1945 San Francisco Conference, who also commented years later, was more explicit:

I disliked Evatt more than any other person I've ever worked with or for ... [He] viewed me with some suspicion, as he viewed a number of people in the Department. This was his normal state of mind ... Loyalty with Evatt meant, of course, personal loyalty - that you were his slave - and this I found very distasteful.²²¹

Evatt's principal External Affairs *protégé* of the time, J.W. Burton, was made of sterner stuff. A 1991 interview suggested that the Tuggeranong (Canberra) farm he

²¹⁷ B. Urquhart, *A life in peace and war*, London, 1987, p. 117.

²¹⁸ Thus Gareth Evans, the present Australian foreign minister, dedicated his book *Cooperating for Peace: The Global Agenda for the 1990s and Beyond* (St Leonards, NSW, 1993) 'To the memory of Dr Herbert Vere Evatt, Leader of the Australian Delegation to the 1945 San Francisco Conference and President of the Third United Nations General Assembly, and to all those men and women throughout the United Nations system today who share his vision and commitment.'

²¹⁹ R.G. Menzies, *The Measure of the Years* (North Melbourne, 1970), p.155. Among Evatt's scholarly attainments was writing several well-reviewed and kindly-received (by professional historians) historical works while a member of the Australian High Court (1930-40). See eg. G.C. Bolton, 'Australian Historians in Quest of a Theme', *Teaching History*, Vol. 3. Part 2, September 1969, pp. 10-11 and Buckley *et al.*, *Doc Evatt*, Chapter 11, pp. 123-36. Perhaps the best-known of this genre was *Rum Rebellion: A Study of the Overthrow of Governor Bligh* by John Macarthur and the New South Wales Corps (Sydney, 1938). This has been reprinted many times. The same Bligh had captained H.M.S. *Bounty* at the time of the famous 1789 mutiny.

²²⁰ Watt, *Australian Diplomat*, p. 314.

²²¹ Waller, *A Diplomatic Life*, pp. 17-18. Waller was Secretary for Foreign Affairs from 1971 to 1974.

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bought in the early 1940s represented his independence from Evatt: 'When you worked with Evatt, you needed an escape. I didn't want to become a yes man'.²²²

For the historian C.K. Webster, a member of the British delegation at the same conference, Evatt was 'a really malignant man'.²²³ On the other hand, the Australians found Webster himself wanting. F.W. Eggleston, the Minister in Washington, who was present in San Francisco, said he was 'frequently exceedingly rude and intolerant', and 'a very dogmatic man, talks everybody down and refers to their arguments as poppy-cock. He did as much harm on his side as anything done on the other [Australian] side'.²²⁴

F.H. Stuart, an Oxford-educated Australian who transferred from the British consular service to the Australian foreign service at the end of the war, called Evatt 'a malevolent man who frequently adopted the crudest devices to poison his colleagues and associates against each other. His effect on me was from the beginning an uncomfortable one: I found him, quite simply, evil'.²²⁵ Stuart said he 'found working for him debasing'.²²⁶ M.H. Booker described the Australian department under Evatt as 'divided into those who were members of his personal coterie, and who worked directly with him in the international field; and those who were not',²²⁷ an observation which is perhaps germane to an examination of the post-1977 South African foreign service. Thus Geldenhuys refers to 'a small circle of relatively young officials' whom R.F. Botha²²⁸ grouped around himself known as the 'Washington Mafia' which was said to consist of officials who had served under him in Washington and at the United Nations. Geldenhuys raises the issue only to drop it inconclusively.²²⁹

²²² P. Clack, 'Theories amidst cows and hills', *The Canberra Times*, 8 September 1991. I am indebted to Mr Hugh Gilchrist for this article.

²²³ P.A. Reynolds & E.J. Hughes, *The Historian as Diplomat: Charles Kingsley Webster and the United Nations 1939-1946* (London, 1976), p. 71.

²²⁴ W.J. Hudson & Wendy Way, eds., *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-49*, Vol. VIII: 1945, Eggleston/Bruce, 9 July 1945, p. 146; W.J. Hudson, *Australia and the New World Order: Evatt at San Francisco, 1945* (Canberra, 1993), p.156.

²²⁵ Stuart, *Towards-coming-of-age*, pp. 68-69.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

²²⁷ M.H. Booker, *The Last Domino: Aspects of Australia's Foreign Relations* (Sydney, 1976), p. 108.

²²⁸ South African Foreign Minister from April 1977 to May 1994.

²²⁹ Geldenhuys, *The Diplomacy of Isolation*, pp. 137 and 270, footnote 126. Of the five Directors-General who served Botha during his seventeen years as Foreign Minister - B.G. Fourie, J. Van Dalsen, P.R Killen, N.P. van Heerden and L.H. Evans - the last two had worked in his private office. Van Heerden was a member of the Embassy in Washington when Botha was Ambassador there. They had worked together while Botha was still a junior official on the administrative preparations for the South West Africa Case at the International Court of Justice (1963). With the possible exception of

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Watt's predecessor but one as Secretary for External Affairs, W.E. Dunk, added his own charge to the indictment, writing of Evatt's 'highly individual methods which required freedom to gather his daisies as opportunity occurred without much regard for whether they grew in his field or his neighbour's', of his working through a 'few individuals and sycophants', and of the 'unhealthy cynicism' which prevailed which 'together with the way Dr Evatt used (and abused) junior staff ... brought me to the realization that the gap of our incompatibility was too wide and too temperamentally deep to be bridged'²³⁰ Pointing, perhaps, to the difference between the two countries' foreign service and public service cultures, it is difficult to conceive of South African officials publishing such comments about their Ministers, no matter what they thought of them and however long after their connection with them.

Dr Malan saw Evatt from another perspective. In a personal message cabled on the occasion of the ALP's defeat at the December 1949 general election he said:

I am confident that the close understanding between our two countries which you have done so much to build up ... will continue to operate ... No only were you largely responsible for the establishment of direct diplomatic relations but we in South Africa owe you a special debt of gratitude for your firm support of the South African point of view under most difficult circumstances at the United Nations and we shall always remain most appreciative of the personal attention you gave to our problems.²³¹

Their brief meeting in Cape Town on the last day of 1948 when each made a favourable impression on the other set the scene for this. It is unlikely that Smuts would have said the same if he had remained in office.

Evatt's immediate successors were also his political opponents - P.C. Spender (1949-51), R.G. Casey (1951-60) and R.G. Menzies (1960-61). Spender had been Treasurer then Minister of the Army in Menzies's first administration (1939-41). He served for less than eighteen months as External Affairs Minister before resigning in 1951 to become Ambassador to the United States. That fuelled speculation that Menzies had thereby rid himself of a potential rival.²³² On the other hand, Spender himself

the last of them, the Botha-appointees had no obvious rivals for the job at the time of their appointments.

²³⁰ Dunk, *They also serve*, p. 66.

²³¹ BTS, 1/25/A, Vol. 1, Minister External Affairs/High Commissioner, Canberra, Cablegram No. 35, 14 December 1949.

²³² E.A. Lyall, 'Australia's Overseas Representation and Government Patronage', *Australian Outlook*, Vol. 23, No. 2, August 1969, pp. 126-27; Edwards, *Prime Ministers and Diplomats*, p. 122.

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wrote in his memoirs²³³ that Menzies offered him Washington when told of his desire to quit active politics on grounds of health.

Although Spender's term as Minister was but an interlude between the eight year Evatt term and the nine year Casey term, it witnessed two of Australia's principal early post-war foreign policy achievements, the Colombo Plan and the Anzus Treaty. Edwards writes that his

short tenure of the ministry, from December 1949 to April 1951, was highly significant. His parliamentary speech of 9 March 1950,²³⁴ drafted in collaboration with departmental officials, accurately outlined the major emphases of Australian foreign policy for the next two decades, and the ANZUS Treaty, which Menzies was later to claim as one of the greatest achievements of his long term as Prime Minister, was achieved largely by Spender's energetic diplomacy, taking astute advantage of opportune circumstances and overriding the initial pessimism of his Prime Minister.²³⁵

On the administrative front, Spender initiated a review of the basic organisation of the Diplomatic Staff Division of the Department of External Affairs which led to certain structural changes being made, enabling the department better to cope with its increasing responsibilities.²³⁶

Because of the magnitude of the achievements crammed into such a brief term (it was sufficiently brief not to include any failures), Spender was conceivably the most successful of all Australian foreign ministers. Originally a leader of the Sydney bar, he resigned the Washington Embassy in 1957 on his election to a nine year term on the International Court of Justice. He is best known in South Africa for his casting vote as President of the Court in 1966 which in effect delivered victory in the South West Africa Case to South Africa. Sole claims that the 'personal link' established with Spender at the 1950 Colombo Conference of Commonwealth Ministers of External Affairs, at which South Africa was represented by Paul Sauer, 'laid the foundation for his understanding of the South African situation which was to prove crucial in the judgement of

²³³ *Politics and a Man* (Sydney, 1972), pp. 301-02.

²³⁴ See below, p. 277 and note 187.

²³⁵ *Prime Ministers and Diplomats*, pp. 186-87. See also G. St. J. Barclay, *Friends in High Places: Australian-American diplomatic relations since 1945* (Melbourne, 1985), Chapter 2, pp. 32-55.

²³⁶ BTS, 1/25/8, Vol. 1, Press release P.R. 12/51, 28 February 1951, attached to Nel/SEA, 2 March 1951; 'Reorganisation of the Department of External Affairs: Statement by the Minister for External Affairs, the Hon. P.C. Spender, K.C., M.P., 28th February, 1951', *Current Notes*, Vol.22, No.2, February 1951, pp.106-07.

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the International Court of Justice'.²³⁷ Spender cabled Dr Malan after the Colombo Conference that he had 'the pleasure of a close association with Mr. Sauer at Colombo and I well realise that South Africa has commitments in areas other than South and South-East Asia'.²³⁸ That is one way of looking at it. It was in the prevailing political climate a controversial verdict and Spender's act brought down much opprobrium upon his head besides damaging Australia's reputation in the eyes of the anti-apartheid lobby at the United Nations.

Spender's successor, Richard Gardiner Casey,²³⁹ was independently wealthy as Spender was not. Casey and his wife Maie²⁴⁰ were licensed pilots and accustomed to using their own light aircraft almost as a means of regular long distance transportation within Australia as they had done in the United States in the early 1940s. Flying was also a means of recreation and Casey would from time to time engage in eagle shoots from single-engined aircraft.²⁴¹ He was one of the most experienced of Menzies's Ministers by the time he took over the External Affairs portfolio. He had served as Treasurer²⁴² as far back as the mid-1930s, as Minister of Supply at the outbreak of war, as United Kingdom Minister of State in the Middle East, a war cabinet position, and as Governor of Bengal in the 1940s, before returning to Australian politics. He had resigned from the Cabinet in 1940 to head the newly-opened Australian Legation in Washington with the rank of Minister.

Casey, whom his biographer calls 'one of the last of the great Anglo-Australians',²⁴³ is also thought of as the father of Australian diplomacy because of his work as liaison officer in London between 1924 and 1931, with a break in 1927.²⁴⁴ (See p. 39 above.) He served a record term as Minister of External Affairs. In that capacity he seems to have been on a friendly footing with the various South African High Commissioners in Canberra up to 1961. Otherwise, his contact with South Africa and South Africans was mainly at the United Nations or in a United Nations context. With an eye to Australia's stand on the domestic jurisdiction issue, he was generally sympathetic

²³⁷ *Reminiscences*, p. 140.

²³⁸ AA, A1838/2, 201/10/1, Pt. 1, O. 2289, Spender/Malan, 18 February 1950.

²³⁹ See W.J. Hudson's biography, *Casey*. Melbourne, 1986.

²⁴⁰ Short for Ethel Marian.

²⁴¹ *The Canberra Times*, 11 July 1955. *The Canberra Times* of 19 September 1950 carries a report on a forced landing made by Maie Casey.

²⁴² Minister of Finance in South Africa.

²⁴³ Hudson, *Casey*, p. vii.

²⁴⁴ W.J. Hudson, 'The Yo-yo Variations: a Comment', *Historical Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 55, October 1970, p. 425.

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towards the South African government's embattled position at the UN but only on the legal aspects. He held no brief for the discriminatory content of South Africa's domestic policies. Indicative of his attitude towards the colour question were his comments about S.E.D. Brown's *The South African Observer* on whose mailing list he was. He called it 'a most vicious anti-coloured publication'.²⁴⁵

That at least in the mid-1950s South Africa was of minimal interest to him is revealed by a contemporary diary entry: 'An occasional letter from W.R. Hodgson (Australian High Commissioner in South Africa) reminds me of how little South Africa comes into our thoughts or our calculations.'²⁴⁶ That was a few years after he had initially displayed enthusiasm for a suggestion by M.H. Marshall, newly-returned from a five year posting to South Africa, that Australia should 'accord South Africa and Southern Africa generally a place of high importance in its political and strategic thinking'. In that regard, Marshall recommended that Casey should visit South Africa at his 'earliest convenience'.²⁴⁷ Casey told Watt, the permanent head of the department, that Marshall's view was 'a timely corrective'. He had never been to South Africa, one of the places to which he had 'not given anything like enough thought':

I can well believe that what Mr. Marshall says about South Africa (and perhaps of Africa as a whole) is true - and that we should pay more attention to this area.²⁴⁸

He called for Alfred Stirling's comments on Marshall's paper. (Stirling, then Ambassador to the Netherlands, had been High Commissioner in South Africa until 1950.) Stirling wrote back expressing general agreement with Marshall including that the vacant High Commissionership (which had been vacant since his own departure in May 1950) should be filled.²⁴⁹ There the matter rested. Whether or not Marshall's and Stirling's views expedited an appointment, the next High Commissioner, W.R. Hodgson, took up duty a few months later. Twenty years on Watt wrote in his memoirs that Casey had a tendency to develop 'crushes' for people which lasted a while before he switched to other people.²⁵⁰ That seems to have applied also to issues.

²⁴⁵ AA, A1838/1, 201/2/5, Pt. 7, Casey/Plimsoll, 27 April 1959, concerning the March 1959 issue (Vol. IV, No. 11). Brown would then have been mainstream National Party.

²⁴⁶ T.B. Millar, ed., *Australian Foreign Minister: The Diaries of R.G. Casey 1951-60* (London, 1972), p. 176.

²⁴⁷ AA, A1838/1, 1348/2, Pt. 1, 'For the Secretary and the Minister', M.H. Marshall, 30 January 1952.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Casey/Watt, 11 February 1952.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Memo. Hague 61/52, 7 March 1952.

²⁵⁰ Watt, *Australian Diplomat*, p. 202.

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After stepping down from External Affairs Casey was made a Life Peer. His last official position was Governor-General of Australia (1965-69). He died in 1976.

As elsewhere, the favouring of some officials over others on grounds other than merit is quite common in foreign service which is, after all, a human occupation. Perhaps it is its nature coupled with the personalities of those engaged in it. Eighteenth century courtiers would not have been surprised. They knew all about the role of the King's favourites not to mention that of his mistresses. If the influence of the last-mentioned - where they still exist - has waned, that of Ministerial or Ambassadorial wives should not be discounted.²⁵¹ There is also the Churchillian aphorism which Waller cites: 'the art of good administration is favouritism', meaning that 'you must pick the people in whom you have confidence so that you can delegate to them with a clear conscience without fear of being let down'.²⁵² Someone in another occupation who held a similar view was the early twentieth century First Sea Lord, Jacky Fisher, who said 'Favouritism is the secret of efficiency'.²⁵³

What critics may subconsciously have in mind, though, is something along the lines of the Oxford University Boat Club president's lament that his predecessor had selected the team 'arbitrarily, picking personal favourites, wrecking morale'.²⁵⁴ Or the Lyndon Johnson model: 'He was ill at ease with abstract loyalty, loyalty to issue, to concept, to cause, which might lead one to occasional dissent, a broader view, and might mean that a man was caught between loyalty to civil rights and loyalty to Lyndon Johnson'.²⁵⁵ And A.J.P. Taylor's point about 'patrons' in journalism is not without relevance to foreign service, if not quite so apocalyptically. ('As so often happens in journalism, maybe in other walks of life, when you lose your patron you are done for.') Undoubtedly, however, what counted with the South African department

²⁵¹ See Sole on Mrs Margo Diederichs and Henderson on Lady Spender. Sole, *Reminiscences*, pp. 205-06 and Henderson, *Privilege and Pleasure*, pp. 34-37, 42-43. See also Clark, *Corps Diplomatique*, p. 93.

²⁵² Waller, *A Diplomatic Life*, p. 42.

²⁵³ *The Economist*, Vol. 334, No. 7906, 18 March 1995, p. 93. (Review of J. Morris, *Fisher's Face* (1995)).

²⁵⁴ *International Herald Tribune*, 29 March 1995. ('An American Pulling Hard To Save Oxford').

²⁵⁵ D. Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest* (Greenwich, Conn., 1973 (1969)), p. 526: "How loyal is that man?" he asked a White House staffer about a potential hand. "Well, he seems quite loyal, Mr. President," said the staffer. "I don't want loyalty. I want *loyalty*. I want him to kiss my ass in Macy's window at high noon and tell me it smells like roses. I want his pecker in my pocket." (Emphasis in original.)

²⁵⁶ A.J.P. Taylor, *A Personal History* (London, 1983), pp. 204-05.

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in recent years was the ability as well as the connections to manipulate the system to one's advantage.

In any event, it is no coincidence that both the present (1995) and the immediately previous (1992-93) Australian Secretaries for Foreign Affairs and Trade are ALP supporters. The last-mentioned, the late Peter Wilenski, had held a number of senior public service positions under ALP governments extending back to the mid-1970s when he was Gough Whitlam's Private Secretary.²⁵⁷ The first-mentioned, Michael Costello, had been W.G. Hayden's Private Secretary for six years in the 1980s, from even before Hayden became foreign minister. In their cases, though, it was probably more loyalty to cause than to person. And on the other side of politics, R.G. Casey, had, Watt said

a tendency to develop a 'crush' upon some person he had newly met which diminished with the passage of time. Having drawn from such an individual all the 'bright' ideas he could produce, Casey would come to feel that he was not such a first-class man after all, and switch his interest to someone else.²⁵⁸

What all this says is that ministerial idiosyncrasies and preferences are important. They influence the course of foreign service careers besides playing a role in the formulation of foreign policy. Thus Edwards writes of some who survived the Evatt regime 'by ability, strength and good fortune' going on to 'distinguished careers in diplomacy or elsewhere'. But others 'were left broken men, forced to seek spiritual, or sometimes spirituous, consolation'.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁷ See J. Walter, *The Ministers' Minders: Personal Advisers in National Government* (Melbourne, 1986), pp. 69-73, for details of the Polish-born Wilenski's career up to the early 1980s. Although trained as a medical doctor, Wilenski was something of a public sector management specialist. From 1971 to 1980 he was foundation professor of the Australian Graduate School of Management at the University of New South Wales. In 1983 he was appointed Chairman of the Public Service Board. He next became Secretary for Transport and Communications before going off to the United Nations as Australian Permanent Representative in succession to R.A. Woolcott. His last assignment before retirement for health reasons in 1993 was Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Trade. He died in 1994. His published articles include "Social change as a source of competing values in public administration", *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. XLVII, No. 3, September 1988, pp. 213-22.

²⁵⁸ Watt, *Australian Diplomat*, p. 202.

²⁵⁹ Edwards, *Prime Ministers and Diplomats*, p. 144.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DIPLOMATS

On the academic side many, perhaps most, foreign service officers are generalists holding only a bachelor's degree, especially in arts. That was certainly true of the South African service during the period covered by this study. In fact like Australia's, perhaps like most, the South African service has traditionally offered arts graduates an alternative career to teaching. Down the years some teachers and others who abandoned that profession before qualifying were lured by the presumed attractions of foreign service. Also, in the early days of the South African service a few junior magistrates employed by the Department of Justice switched to foreign service.

In mid-1938, of the some seventy officers making up the staffs of the combined South African Departments of the Prime Minister and of External Affairs at head office and abroad, twenty-two held BAs, nine B Coms and eight BA LLBs. However, probably at no other time was the departmental top structure - the Secretary and his immediate deputy, the Under-Secretary - academically so well-qualified: the former held an LLD and the latter a BA LLD.¹ Heads of Mission abroad, all but two of them² political appointees, were also well-qualified: the four Envoys Extraordinary and Ministers Plenipotentiary held between them a BA LLB, a BA PhD, an MD and a DD and the two Accredited Representatives an MA and a BA LLB. Of the ten Legation Secretaries, as they were then known, five held BAs. The thirteen Attachés or Vice-Consuls counted among their number four BAs, three B Coms, three BA LLBs, one BA B Com, one BA LLD and one B Econ. Of the ten Probationer Diplomats, later called Cadets, the 'Sole generation',³ five held BAs and three B Coms in addition to which there was one BA LLB and one M Com.⁴

¹ P.R. Botha, the Under-Secretary, was awarded a doctorate in laws by the University of Amsterdam in 1925 for his thesis *Die Staatkundige Ontwikkeling van die Suid-Afrikaanse Republiek onder Krüger en Leyds*. Amsterdam, 1925. He succeeded W.J.H. Farrell as Under-Secretary in October 1933 on transfer from the Department of Commerce and Industries. At the time he was Trade Commissioner in Montreal. BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 1, Secretary, PSC/Secretary, DEA, 23 October 1933. See Sole, *Reminiscences*, p. 20, for a description of him.

² The Accredited Representatives in Ottawa (De Waal Meyer) and Geneva (Andrews).

³ *ie.*, D.B. Sole was among their number. Sole's immediate group of six comprised in addition to himself H.A. van Huyssteen, I.M. Hoogenhout, M.H.H. Louw, G.J.J.F. Steyn and G.C. Nel. Nel, BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 1, Botha/Secretary, PSC, 2 February 1938. Only Nel and Sole spent their working lives in the foreign service.

⁴ Analysis of the three-page list on BTS, 4/5/17, Vol. 1.

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In April 1947 twenty-three out of seventy-eight officers held BAs, fourteen BA LLBs, three B Econs, one BA LLD, one MA LLB, one MA, one B Com D Com, one M Com, one B Sc LLB, one B Ed MA, one BA (Admin) and one MA (Admin). Only the then head of department, D.D. Forsyth, did not have a degree, being in possession of the Civil Service Lower and Higher Law Certificates.⁵ Then, a return of cadets submitted pursuant to Treasury Circular No. 17 of 1951 shows that of the thirty-eight recruited between January 1946 and June 1951, nineteen held BAs, five B Coms and five BA LLBs. One had a B Comm LLB, three BA (Hons), two B Scs and one B Sc (Econ). The 1947 and 1951 lists contained a handful of Oxford graduates, one being A.A.M. Hamilton, the future High Commissioner to Australia.

On the Australian side, of the fifty-four cadets accepted for training between 1943 and 1947-48, twenty-two were listed as having no academic qualifications upon appointment;⁶ otherwise, there were fifteen BAs, seven BA (Hons), two LLBs, one BSc, one MA and one LLM. Under pre-war conditions one or two graduates under twenty-five years of age were recruited every year after 1935. There were nine such officers by the outbreak of war.⁷ Five of the thirteen officers (apart from the Secretary, Hodgson) making up the staff of the department at the time, including the London Office and Keith Officer at the British Embassy in Washington, held Oxford or Cambridge degrees. Only one, Westcott, of the Records Section did not have a degree.⁸

As they grew older, even the legally-qualified among the South Africans were ill-equipped to earn a living elsewhere including in the legal profession. Diplomacy was the only trade they knew, a point made recently (1994) about diplomats of the former German Democratic Republic.⁹ Renouf says the same of Australian diplomats.¹⁰ (Perhaps this could also be said of modern politicians). That is ironic in view of the supposedly elitist nature of foreign service and the emphasis laid on the need for specialised training after entry. Although there was at that time neither entrance examination nor formal training, junior South African officers were required to take

⁵ See BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 11.

⁶ That was because of the special circumstance prevailing during the war which interrupted many young people's tertiary education. In some instances it may also have been a case of cadets being accepted when their final results were known but before the degrees had actually been conferred.

⁷ AA, A1838/1, 1260/7/2, 'Department of External Affairs - Recruitment Policy', n.d.

⁸ AA, A1066/1, P.I. 45/140, 'Department of External Affairs. Personnel', n.d.

⁹ S. Kinzer, 'For East German Diplomats, the Cookie Crumbles', *International Herald Tribune*, 12 July 1994, p. 1. Australians found themselves in the same position.

¹⁰ Renouf, *The Champagne Trail*, pp. 152-53.

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part-time courses *inter alia* in law and economics additional to subjects they had completed for their degrees. The standard was equivalent to a first year degree course and candidates were required to make their own arrangements for study.¹¹ They could apply for exemption if the subjects had formed part of their degree courses.¹² The prescribed period for completing the courses was three years but, depending on circumstances, some officers took much longer.

G.C. Nel, who joined the Department of External Affairs in 1938 on the strength of his BA degree and Higher Education Diploma, completed his last departmental course in 1948 whereupon he qualified for promotion to Second Secretary.¹³ He was awarded the promotion when he took up duty as Second Secretary in the South African High Commission, Canberra.¹⁴ By that time he had already served in the Consulates in Lourenço Marques (1940-41) and Cairo (1941-47). Failure to complete the departmental courses was an impediment to promotion. In Nel's case his brother-in-law, E.G. Malherbe,¹⁵ the Principal of the University of Natal, concerned about reports of the Nel family's straitened financial circumstances in Cairo,¹⁶ wrote to Forsyth asking that Nel be promoted. Forsyth replied firmly that

in this Department there is an absolute bar to promotion to the 'Secretaryship' grades unless an officer has certain prescribed qualifications which Nel has not. Consequently, with the best will in the world I cannot give him promotion.¹⁷

Later that year, replying to a 'long, rambling letter' (Nel's description) he had received from Nel himself, Forsyth said:

I am glad to hear that you are getting down to your studies. Your progress (or lack of it) in that regard has been worrying me for some time. It would be a pity to get yourself left behind simply

¹¹ BTS, 24/2, Vol. 1, Pohl/Careers Master, Hilton College, 15 December 1945.

¹² Sole, *Reminiscences*, pp. 22-23.

¹³ BTS, Nel, Vol. II, Nel/DEA, 11 February 1949 and Spies/Nel, 3 March 1949.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Spies/PSC, 23 March 1949.

¹⁵ Malherbe's wife Janie was Nel's sister. E.G. Malherbe, *Never a Dull Moment*, p. 347.

¹⁶ It was alleged at the time that 'South African representation [was] among the poorest paid in the world'. *Rand Daily Mail* (Johannesburg), 16 September 1947, Leading article 'Orphans in Striped Trousers'. H. Thomas, a Public Service Inspector, who inspected South African offices abroad in the course of a seven months trip between May and December 1947, quoted *in extenso* from this article in his report, saying that it gave 'a reasonably accurate picture of the general position'. BTS, 4/5/1, AJ 1957, *Public Service Commission, Department of External Affairs, Inspection Report on Overseas Offices: General Report, 13th January, 1948*, p. 5, para. 9. Thomas said he was 'convinced that early relief in various directions [was] imperative' (p. 2, para. 6.)

¹⁷ BTS, Nel, Vol. II, Forsyth/Malherbe, 8 February 1946 and Malherbe/Forsyth, 2 February 1946.

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because you had not the additional qualifications upon which we insist.¹⁸

Considered objectively, the value of these part-time courses lay in their forming part of the rites of initiation neophytes were compelled to undergo. Their content certainly failed to equip those who passed them any better for their careers. In that regard hands-on, in-service experience was, as it still is, the best training. Forsyth's own career in various public service departments was an excellent example of that.¹⁹ As Moodie said to Renouf when the latter took over his desk in Canberra in 1943, 'The best way to learn this job is to do it'.²⁰ The British believe that too.²¹

Once the formal system of recruitment known as the diplomatic cadet scheme had been set up at the end of 1942, the Australians focussed on full-time academic training. For between 1943 and 1949 their service was open to school leavers as well as to university graduates. The University of Sydney devised a special nine-month course for the first intake of diplomatic cadets in 1943 - five graduates and seven undergraduates, including four first-year students. Training was taken over by the specially created School of Diplomatic Studies at the University College of Canberra,²² which then fell under the aegis of the University of Melbourne, for the 1944 and subsequent cadet intakes up to 1949. The course was designed to provide cadets with 'the higher education of which they [had] been deprived owing to their entry into the armed forces, and to include the study of subjects likely to be of most use to them in

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, Nel/Forsyth, 30 July 1946 and Forsyth/Nel, 7 August 1946.

¹⁹ Born on 6 March 1896, he joined the Department of Defence as a Junior Clerk at the age of 15 on 1 July 1911. A year later he became a Second Grade Clerk in Pretoria. He was promoted to Stores Clerk Grade II in 1917. During the First World War he served in the South West Africa and East Africa campaigns. In 1920 he was transferred to the South West Africa Administration rising to Grade II Magistrate at Otjiwarongo in 1931. Between 1931 and 1934 he was a Grade I Magistrate falling under the Department of Justice in Sutherland, Cape Province. In 1934 and 1935 he served as a Public Service Inspector. From 1937 to 1939 he was Under Secretary for Social Welfare. In July 1939 he returned to South West Africa as Secretary of the Territory. On 30 July 1941 he became Secretary to the Prime Minister and Secretary for External Affairs, serving in the former capacity until the two departments separated in January 1955 and in the latter until his retirement at the age of 60 on 1 April 1956. Thereafter he was appointed a Director of De Beers. Forsyth, Vol. 4, CV. He died in 1987.

²⁰ Renouf, *The Champagne Trail*, p. 9. A founder member of the Australian service, C.T. Moodie was Ambassador to South Africa from 1972 to 1975.

²¹ E. Clark, *Corps Diplomatique*, London, 1973, p. 31.

²² See *The Canberra Times* and *The Sydney Morning Herald* of 4 March 1944; 'The Training of Diplomats', *Current Notes*, Vol. 41, No. 2, February 1970, p. 52; undated paper 'Canberra University College' on AA, A659/1, 44/1/123 and AA, 'The Department of External Affairs. History', etc., pp. 14-16.

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their career'.²³ In a broader sense it was 'seen as a further step in the formation of a National University at Canberra'.²⁴ The entrance examination was dispensed with in 1949 and only university graduates accepted. The scheme was dropped entirely in 1956 'in favour of a policy of direct recruitment to Third Secretary level'.²⁵

Born amidst much 'hype',²⁶ the diplomatic cadet scheme was intended to serve as a vehicle for recruiting and training junior foreign service officers in circumstances where the war-time expansion of Australia's overseas representation had left departmental ranks in Canberra seriously depleted. In 1942, for example, after the opening of a legation in the Soviet Union, 'only two permanent professional officers were left in the Department besides the Secretary'.²⁷ With modifications, the cadet scheme was for thirteen years an important method of recruitment to the Australian foreign service. Although it was intended to ensure the department a steady supply of recruits at a time of a labour shortage and a need to expand Australia's diplomatic service rapidly, the way the scheme was structured and operated said much about how contemporary Australians viewed the world and their country's place in it.

The cadet scheme has received the lion's share of attention. But it was not the only method of recruitment nor, in respect of officers destined to occupy top posts in the 1960s and 1970s, if not later, was it the most important one. Thus the assertion of his latest biographers that Evatt 'improved the selection of staff through the cadetship system'²⁸ requires qualification. During his short Secretaryship (1945-47) Dunk bypassed the scheme. He said later that he went 'outside the Public Service for recruits at various levels' giving 'those selected direct entry to the classification for which they were considered qualified'. He 'looked for young graduates in the twenty to early thirty age group ... selected applicants were given direct and immediate appointment and placement'.²⁹ At the time he told an External Affairs officer, P.R. Heydon, that he

²³ DFAT, 'The Department of External Affairs. History' etc, p. 14.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

²⁵ S.J. Mackay, *The Diplomatic Cadet Scheme* (Unpublished undergraduate essay, Australian National University, Canberra, 1992), p. 23; AA, A3299/1, Folder 1, 'Historical Summary of the Department of External Affairs', 1960, p.4..

²⁶ See J.G. Starke, 'Our diplomatic service must come of age', *The Daily Telegraph* (Sydney), 6 October 1943 and J. Stone, 'Training for an Australian Foreign Service', *The Australian Quarterly*, Vol. XV, No. 3, September, 1943, pp. 33-46. A lot of the hype may have been generated by the publicity attendant upon the announced changes to the British diplomatic service at that time - the so-called Eden Reforms. See Cmd. 6420, *Proposals for the Reform of the Foreign Service*, 1943.

²⁷ AA, A981/1, 43/300/1/29/8, Hodgson/Secretary to the Treasury, 29 October 1943, para. 3.

²⁸ Buckley *et al*, *Doc Evatt*, p. 304.

²⁹ Dunk, *They also serve*, p. 67.

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wanted to discontinue the cadet scheme because the department was 'unbalanced in the number of officers in the junior age group'. His policy was rather 'to bring in public servants of proved capacity and special qualifications at higher ages and try and get some spread in age grouping'.³⁰ The contradiction between going outside the Public Service and bringing in Public Servants will have been noted.

Of the some one hundred and fifteen diplomatic staff listed as being employed by the department in 1946,³¹ including temporary staff such as Paul Hasluck and men on secondment from other departments, fifty-three or 46.09 per cent had been recruited before 1945. Of these, twenty-one (39.62 per cent) were Cadets or Third Secretaries; nine (16.98 per cent) Second Secretaries; fourteen (26.42 per cent) First Secretaries; six (11.32 per cent) Counsellors; and three (5.66 per cent) Assistant Secretaries or, in terms of salary, at that level. Thirty-seven of the one hundred and fifteen (32.17 per cent) joined the department between 1940 and 1944. Sixty-two officers (53.91 per cent), some of them already in the Public Service, were recruited in 1945 and 1946, twenty-five (21.74 per cent) in 1945 and thirty-seven (32.17 per cent) in 1946. In terms of salary (both years combined), thirty of the sixty-two (48.39 per cent) were Cadets or Third Secretaries; nineteen (30.65 per cent) were Second Secretaries; seven (11.29 per cent) were First Secretaries and six (9.68 per cent) were Counsellors. Dunk was not, therefore, markedly successful in reducing the intake of junior staff. Years later he observed happily that

in the many times since that I have visited our Embassies, High Commissions, etc., it has been a pleasure to be greeted by an Ambassador. High Commissioner or other senior staff and recall bringing them into the department in relatively junior positions.³²

Short though it was, his term as Secretary had a major impact on the composition and structure of the Australian Department of External Affairs. His contribution endured for decades. Clearly, he was by no means just 'a glorified staff manager'.³³

³⁰ AA, A1838/1, 1260/5/1, Dunk/Heydon, 23 August 1946.

³¹ AA, A1067/1, S46/238, undated tabulated list showing salary scale, actual salary and allowances and appointment details. Not on the list are heads of mission on contract, Dunk himself, Hodgson, Keith Officer and Stirling. The percentages and figures in the text derive from an analysis of the list.

³² Dunk, *They also serve*, p. 67; Edwards, *Prime Ministers and Diplomats*, p. 180.

³³ 'Canberra's destiny-man', *Nation*, No. 21, 4 July 1959, p. 14. See Chapter One.

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Among those who entered the department in 1945 and 1946 were O.L. Davis (1946), J.C.G. Kevin (1945), O.C.W. Fuhrman (1946),³⁴ M.H. Marshall (1946), K.T. Kelly (1945), H. Gilchrist (1945) and L.E. Phillips (1946), all of whom later served in South Africa.³⁵ Phillips came in as a Third Secretary (£490); Kelly (£562), Davis (£598) and Gilchrist (£616) as Second Secretaries; Fuhrman (£856), Kevin (£808) and Marshall (£784) as First Secretaries. (Their annual salaries in 1946 appear in parenthesis after their names). M.J.S. Knowles, the son of the first High Commissioner, Sir George Knowles, was taken temporarily on strength in 1946 so that he could accompany his father to South Africa as Third Secretary. He was then an officer of the Department of Commerce and Agriculture on temporary transfer to the Department of Post-War Reconstruction.³⁶ He returned to Commerce and Agriculture after his South African posting. Davis was High Commissioner/Ambassador from 1959 to 1962 and Kevin Ambassador from 1962 until his death in 1968. Fuhrman and Marshall were Official Secretaries, the former for three months in 1946, the latter from 1946 to 1951. Kelly and Gilchrist were First Secretaries respectively from 1952 to 1955 and 1955 to July 1957. Gilchrist then acted as High Commissioner to January 1959 being succeeded by Phillips.³⁷ Kelly was thirty-five when he joined the department.

Other entrant Second Secretaries in 1946 who were to be heard of later were K.C.O. Shann (£580), T.W. Cutts (£598), and W.G.A. Landale (£598).³⁸ L.H.E. Bury (£784) and A.H. Tange (£784) were entrant First Secretaries who made their mark: Bury as Australian (and South African) Executive Director at the International Monetary Fund in the 1950s. He later entered federal politics, becoming a Liberal Party Cabinet Minister including Minister of External Affairs in the early 1970s. Tange was Secretary for External Affairs and Secretary of Defence for a total of two decades. Omitted from this tally are J.P. Quinn who acted as High Commissioner for a year in 1951 and 1952, who preceded the cadet scheme having joined the department in 1940,

³⁴ Fuhrman came from the Department of Social Services. While working in the Australian High Commission, London, he served as Secretary to Australian delegations to League of Nations Assemblies from 1924 to 1937, with a break in 1928. W.J. Hudson, *Australia and the League of Nations* (Sydney, 1980), Appendix I, pp. 193-96.

³⁵ AA, A1067/1, S46/238, list of 115 officials.

³⁶ AA, A1838/1, 1348/2, Pt. 1, Dunk/PSB, 16 May 1946.

³⁷ The holder of a BA LLB degree from Sydney University, Davis was initially recruited for a three-month period as a temporary Second Secretary. AA, A447/1, A1945/2291, Cumpston/PSB, 9 January 1946 and Schneider/DEA, 15 January 1946.

³⁸ Cutts was Ambassador to South Africa in the 1970s. Landale, the father of the Michael Landale referred to in Chapter Four, was the Chief of Protocol in Canberra in the late 1950s.

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A.T. Stirling, the second High Commissioner, and W.R. Hodgson, for ten years head of the department. Renouf, a graduate of the first cadet scheme, would complain later:

Nor did I like what I learned of the conduct of the Department in Canberra. Officers who had not been able to join through the diplomatic cadet scheme, were being brought into the Department and appointed to ranks higher than my own.³⁹

He had a point.

K. Desmond (1946), Miss E.A. Warren (1948), R.A. Woolcott (1950), I.E. Nicholson (1955) and J.H. Brook (1953) were also products of the cadet scheme. South Africa was the first post for Miss Warren (1951-54), Nicholson (1957-59) and Brook (1960-64) after graduating from it and the second one for Desmond (1948-51) and Woolcott (1954-57). If it had not been for the severance of diplomatic relations between Australia and the Soviet Union in 1954 (his first post) it is conceivable that Woolcott's career would not have taken him to South Africa.

The 'hype' surrounding the diplomatic cadet scheme deflated with the passage of time perhaps because, as C.T. Moodie said in 1956, people had 'seen through the glamour into the facts'.⁴⁰ In 1943 the first advertisement for diplomatic cadets attracted one thousand five hundred applications nationwide. Thereafter the numbers dropped dramatically, stabilising around one hundred annually.⁴¹ As the 1950s advanced, the feeling grew that the scheme was a cumbersome means of recruitment and actually deterred prospective candidates because of the two year cadetship on low pay, besides what had come to be known of the nature of foreign service putting people off. 'We all want to get bright young men', Moodie wrote,

but a great deal of the work we have to do overseas does not require high intellectual qualifications but a lot of common sense and knowledge of human beings. A highly qualified intellectual is often of little use to us and finishes up by getting disgruntled. I would rather have for most of my needs a good Consular type even if he is only a fair Pass Degree.⁴²

³⁹ Renouf, *The Champagne Trail*, p. 32.

⁴⁰ AA, A1838/1, 1260/1, Pt. 1A, Moodie/Tange, 13 February 1956.

⁴¹ In the decades since the numbers have climbed to several thousand annually.

⁴² AA, A1838/1, 1260/1, Pt. 1A, Moodie/Tange, 13 February 1956. This recalls the British practice of diverting those who passed the competitive entrance examination well to the diplomatic service and those who didn't to the consular service. The latter fate befell Francis Stuart, later of the Australian service. See *Towards coming-of-age*, p. 30.

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South African officials would have agreed with him. He could have said the same about the head office.

Once considered to have a special role requiring specialised training, to-day, at least in Australia, the professional foreign service officer tends to be regarded as just another public servant. P.G.F. Henderson, Robert Menzies's son-in-law (he married Menzies's daughter Heather) and himself a former Secretary for Foreign Affairs (1979-84), wrote a few years ago that the concept of 'a professional foreign service' was 'no longer a generally agreed upon point of departure':

Instead of the term 'foreign service' encompassing a body of men and women who have engaged themselves in a profession that is recognisable and demanding, there is pressure for it to mean only intermittent or single periods of service overseas by various public servants who may or may not have served overseas before - something anyone can do for a while.⁴³

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade had even placed advertisements for junior staff which 'made no mention of the term 'foreign service' or 'diplomat' but referred instead to graduate recruitment for international work'.⁴⁴ That marked the culmination of a process initiated two decades earlier by K.C.O. (Mick) Shann, then a Deputy-Secretary in the department who, together with its head, J.K. Waller, attempted 'to end the separate caste existence of the diplomats by making diplomatic postings available to any clerical/administrative employee in - or, theoretically, outside of - the Department'.⁴⁵ Shann, who had followed the Public Service route into the department (he came from the Department of Labour and National Service), urged that the '*de facto* closed shop of the diplomats, with their pretensions to elitism' should be ended.⁴⁶ At best, and at least in Australia, foreign service officers are now what Hudson calls 'specialist public servants ... who tend to maintain aristocratic

⁴³ P.G.F. Henderson, S. Harris and R.A. Woolcott, *Managing Australia's Diplomacy: Three Views from the top* (Geelong: Australian Institute of International Affairs/Deakin University School of Social Sciences, Occasional Paper No. 2, 1989), p. 1.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4. Bearing in mind the circumstances of his dismissal from the Secretaryship by the Labor Foreign Minister, W.G. Hayden, a certain bitterness on Henderson's part is understandable.

⁴⁵ Juddery, *At the Centre*, p. 102.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 103. Shann had spent seven years in the Bureau of Census and Statistics and the Department of Labour and National Services before joining External Affairs in January 1946. BTS, 1/25/8, Vol. 1, 'For the Press - New Minister to the Philippines - Mr K.C.O. Shann', 31 May 1955.

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conventions' and who work in 'foreign offices which usually are not mentioned in the same breath as humdrum domestic government departments'.⁴⁷

This may all be part of the 'tall poppy' syndrome in terms of which it is almost a national sport to bring down those thought to have climbed too high. Anti-elitism is very much ingrained in Australian Labor Party culture. Some years ago an Australian resident in New York City defined the matter in these terms: 'If I do good work [in the US] people are happy about it. In Australia what I found was that if I did good work, people would be angry about it'.⁴⁸ Even so, the idea of putting an end to the diplomatic 'closed shop' was not unique to Australia. More than a generation previously N.F.W. Fisher, the longtime Secretary to the Treasury and head of the British Civil Service (1919-39), believed firmly in a unified Civil Service, including also the Foreign Office, whose members 'would be promotable, according to merit, between departments'.⁴⁹

There was a time when foreign service tended to attract 'the best people' in Australia who had attended 'the best schools' as well as some who had not. Some rejected applicants (including many who had not attended the best schools) went on to make spectacular successes of other careers, particularly politics, in fact doing better for themselves than if they had spent their working lives in the foreign service. One thinks of Neville Wran, Premier of New South Wales from 1976 to 1986,⁵⁰ and Kim Beazley and John Wheeldon who became federal cabinet ministers - Beazley was Minister of Education and Wheeldon Minister of Social Services, both in the Whitlam government (1972-75). Turned down by External Affairs in 1953,⁵¹ Billy Mackie Snedden went on to lead the Liberal Party during the Whitlam era (1972-75). Before that he had been Attorney-General (1963-66), Minister for Immigration (1966-69), Minister for Labor and National Service (1969-71) and Treasurer (1971-72). He was

⁴⁷ W.J. Hudson, 'The Australian People and Foreign Policy', F.A. Mediansky & A.C. Palfreeman, eds., *In Pursuit of National Interests: Australian foreign policy in the 1990s* (Sydney, 1988), p. 1.

⁴⁸ *National Geographic*, Vol. 173, February 1988, p. 199.

⁴⁹ Rose, *Vansittart*, 1978, p. 65.

⁵⁰ Whom Grenfell Price of the Selection Board grouped among 'a mediocre collection of pass people'. He was 'a weak pass man, with unsuitable subjects'. A1838/1, 1260/6/1, Grenfell Price/Burton, 27 December 1947.

⁵¹ His active interest in politics may have had something to do with his rejection. At the time of his application he was an immigrant interviewing and selection officer in Italy. Lyall suggests that appointment resulted from his political affiliations - he had already unsuccessfully contested State and Federal seats on behalf of the Liberal Party. He entered parliament shortly after his overseas tour. The then Minister of Immigration, Harold Holt, said later that the purpose of Snedden's overseas posting which included also the United Kingdom, was 'to broaden him out'. E.A. Lyall, 'Australia's Overseas Representation and Government Patronage', *Australian Outlook*, Vol. 23, No. 2, August 1969, p. 133.

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Speaker of the House of Representatives between 1976 and 1983, *ie.*, for most of Malcolm Fraser's term as Prime Minister.

Donald Horne, perhaps best known for his book *The Lucky Country* (1964) was accepted in 1944 but dropped out the same year for journalism, later becoming an editor⁵² and still later a Professor of History. He is now what might be called an Australian icon, a status he achieved without the benefit of a university degree.⁵³ Jill Ker Conway was rejected in 1958 on grounds, she thought, of her gender. (Perceptions of her personality seem also to have been a factor.) An historian, she later completed an MA at the University of Sydney and a PhD at Harvard. She taught at the University of Toronto from 1964 to 1975 and was Vice-President there. Until recently she was President of Smith College, an 'Ivy League' institution for women in Northampton, Massachusetts, from 1975. She also serves on the boards of several major American corporations.⁵⁴

Arthur Roden Cutler VC entered the Australian service by a 'side door instead of up the front steps'.⁵⁵ His career is an good example of the upward mobility of some Australian External Affairs officials. A recipient of the Victoria Cross (VC) for heroism during the Syrian campaign in 1941 when he lost a leg,⁵⁶ he was taken by Evatt into the Department of External Affairs in the mid-1940s, being appointed immediately, at the age of twenty-nine, High Commissioner to New Zealand. He remained with the department for two decades, serving as Chief of Protocol in Canberra as well as heading several missions abroad. In 1966, while Ambassador to the Netherlands, he came to the notice of the New South Wales Premier, Robert Askin, who recommended his appointment as Governor of New South Wales, a position he held for fifteen years (1966-81).

⁵² *Inter alia* of Australia's leading news magazine, *The Bulletin*, where he was responsible for removing the slogan 'Australia for the white man' from the honoured place it had occupied on the masthead ever since the magazine's founding in the 1880s. The issue of 30 November 1960 (Vol. 81, No. 4216) was the last to carry the slogan.

⁵³ See his entry in *The International Year Book and Statesmen's Who's Who 1994/95* (42nd ed., East Grinstead, Eng., 1994), pp. 285-86. He holds honorary doctorates.

⁵⁴ *Who's Who In Australia 1994* (Melbourne 1994), pp. 843-44.

⁵⁵ Hasluck, *Diplomatic Witness*, p. 6.

⁵⁶ He was awarded the VC for 'exceptional courage in driving enemy back and establishing outposts'. Two weeks later he was 'seriously wounded in leg - subsequently amputated'. *Who's Who In Australia 1994*, p. 416.

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The Australian department has traditionally enjoyed a better reputation in the wider community than the South African department and its top echelon has tended to serve as a nursery from which the heads of other Public Service departments are recruited. An early example was P.R. Heydon who became Secretary for Immigration in November 1961 at the age of forty-seven⁵⁷ holding the post until his death ten years later. K.C.O. (Mick) Shann was Chairman of the Public Service Board in 1977-78.⁵⁸ Cutler was not the only External Affairs official to become the Governor of an Australian State. James Plimsoll, the department's Secretary in the mid- to late 1960s, served as Governor of Tasmania from 1982 to 1987, dying in office.

There was less mobility on the South African side, quite likely because most recruits between 1927 and the end of the Second World War and for some time thereafter were drawn from other Public Service departments. Men rejected by External Affairs simply continued with their existing employment. Two who were appointed to head other departments, G.J.J.F. Steyn (Commerce and Industries) and H.M. Stoker (Census and Statistics), left External Affairs relatively early in their careers.⁵⁹ For reasons which may have to do with the nature of their societies, the South African foreign service has also enjoyed less status than its Australian counterpart. Ironically, in view of the supposedly egalitarian nature of Australian society, more 'hoop-la' has surrounded the Australian service from its early days than the South African one. The Australians took the cadet selection process more seriously, initially making this a combination of high marks in a competitive entrance examination and a personal interview for which candidates qualified on the strength of their showing in the examination. Standards were high and a Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Trade in the late 1980s failed to qualify for an interview in 1947 because his marks in the examination were not good enough.⁶⁰

Interviews were conducted by a Selection Board consisting of a senior member of the Department of External Affairs, a member of the Public Service Board (equivalent to the South African Public Service Commission) and a prominent aca-

⁵⁷ *The Canberra Times*, 11 & 12 August 1961.

⁵⁸ *The International Year Book and Statesmen's Who's Who 1983* (Thirty-First ed., East Grinstead, Eng., 1983), p. 620. The Australian Public Service Board is equivalent to the South African Public Service Commission. See below.

⁵⁹ Steyn was a member of the 'Sole generation'. See footnote 3 above. Stoker was older.

⁶⁰ By the time of his admission the examination had been abolished in favour of an interview only. See below.

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demic.⁶¹ Thereafter, the Minister of External Affairs would himself announce the names of the successful candidates.⁶² These would spend two years full-time at the School of Diplomatic Studies then attached to Canberra University College, a period subsequently reduced to one year with a year's service in the department. By contrast, no publicity attended the South African intake and there was initially no selection panel but the Secretary for External Affairs personally interviewed applicants. When Eric Louw became Minister of External Affairs in January 1955 it was his practice to interview all applicants⁶³ in addition to the departmental interview thereby demonstrating, apart from anything else, the small size of the service at that time. The procedure followed for entrants brought in from elsewhere in the Public Service was the same as for men coming directly from the universities, viz.

applicants who on paper would seem to be suitable are asked to come to Pretoria for an interview and those considered fit for appointment are recommended to the Public Service Commission for its approval.⁶⁴

Early in 1935 the Chinese Consulate-General requested information about the training of diplomatic and consular staff. It was advised that with few exceptions officials were recruited from the Public Service and that the juniors among them were trained abroad.⁶⁵

Revealing of the influence of the British system of public administration were the Public Service Board in Australia and the Public Service Commission in South Africa whose function was to lay down conditions of service for public servants as a whole, to involve themselves in appointments and promotions and to promote economy and efficiency in government departments. In South Africa the Public Service and Pensions Act, 1923, empowered the Commission to make recommendations about

⁶¹ The board did its interviewing in the State capitals. Stuart, who was secretary to the first board in 1943 writes briefly of the experience. *Towards coming-of-age*, pp. 85-86.

⁶² See, eg., *The Canberra Times*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Argus* (Melbourne) of 10 January 1951.

⁶³ AA, A1831/1, 1348/5/1, 12 July 1956, Memo. 256, Gilchrist/DEA, 12 July 1956. His advice to them was that they should regard foreign service not as a career but as a vocation. Louw also personally reviewed the 'proposed appointment of every officer of rank above Third Secretary to an overseas post, before the posting is approved'. *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ BTS, 24/2, Vol. 3, Spies/Mrs Heber Percy, 29 March 1952.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, Consul-in-charge/DEA, 21 January 1935; Botha/Consul-in-charge, 8 February 1935.

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appointments and promotions to the Minister of the department concerned.⁶⁶ Such recommendations could be overridden only by the Governor-General on the advice of Ministers. In both countries the Commission or Board and the Treasury were the two departments with which the Departments of External Affairs were most intimately concerned. In South Africa submissions to the Commission and the Treasury tended to be set pieces in which certain propositions occurred regularly. Phrases such as 'the present staff is totally inadequate' to cope with work which was having to be performed at 'high pressure' are enduring examples.⁶⁷

Thus, following Crocker, neither the Australian nor the South African department were allowed to administer themselves⁶⁸ but, unlike the British Foreign Office, formed part of the wider Public Service which is still the case.⁶⁹ Not having encountered its like in any of the countries where he served (South Africa was not among them), Crocker called the Public Service Board a 'unique Australian mammoth'. Neither Australia nor South Africa has ever seriously considered the alternative - to separate External or Foreign Affairs from the Public Service and to form a separate service like the military. That has probably never been a viable option for either country.

In the 1940s and 1950s South African foreign service officers usually proceeded from one post to another on promotion. If a head office official declined a posting abroad, that meant in effect that he was declining promotion and he was thereupon superseded by another. R. (Bob) Jones, who elected to spend the rest of his career in Pretoria after postings in Lisbon, Leopoldville, London and Ottawa, was probably the only official to fall into that category on a long term basis.⁷⁰ In 1957 A.H.H. Mertsch, then Ambassador to West Germany, declined promotion to the post

⁶⁶ See 'The Appointment of Public Servants in South Africa', *The Round Table*, Vol. XX, December 1929 to September 1930, p. 885 and Lord Hailey, *An African Survey: A study of problems arising in Africa South of the Sahara* (London, 1938), p. 221.

⁶⁷ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 2, SEA/Secretary, PSC, 2 March 1935.

⁶⁸ Crocker, *Australian Ambassador*, p. 60.

⁶⁹ The British Foreign Service was formally separated from the Home Civil Service in 1944. D.C. Watt, *Personalities and Policies: Studies in the formulation of British Foreign Policy in the twentieth century* (London, 1965), p. 5; Sir Brian Barder, e-mail message, 22 September 1995. See also T.B. Millar, *Australia's Foreign Policy* (Sydney, 1968), p. 17.

⁷⁰ Jones served continuously in Pretoria from 23 January 1947 until his retirement in 1969. BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 17, unsigned submission to Secretary, 28 May 1954; Sole, *Reminiscences*, pp. 21-104. See also AA, A1050/2, 201/10, Memo. 401, Gilchrist/DEA, 9 August 1957; Hamilton, Vol. II, Forsyth/Secretary, PSC, 9 November 1953, p. 2; and Hamilton, Vol. III, Forsyth/Secretary, PSC, 8 July 1954.

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of Under-Secretary at Head Office, a post which, according to Jooste, would thenceforth be used to give suitable heads of mission an opportunity to serve periodically at Head Office.⁷¹ The post had been held by Spies until his transfer to the Department of Lands, at his request, on Jooste's appointment as Secretary for External Affairs. In those years, whatever they felt about it, South African officers were obliged to spend long years abroad, moving from one post to another at irregular intervals. If no one found himself in the position of the United Kingdom's Sir Nevile Henderson who spent his entire career abroad,⁷² at senior level the South Africans were abroad for most of theirs. As a note on an Australian file put it:

In view of there only being two posts above the rank of Counsellor at Head Office *i.e.* Secretary and Under-Secretary for External Affairs, it follows that officers senior to the first mentioned grade rarely, if ever, have periods of service in the Union. Contact with the Union in such cases is maintained through the home leave privileges accorded and occasionally by the recall of officers for purposes of discussion.⁷³

For many if not most officers that was part of the job's attraction.

G.C. Nel spent only two short terms at Head Office (1938-1940 and 1947-1949) and the rest of his career abroad until his retirement in the 1970s - in Australia, Spain, Chile, the Netherlands, Moçambique, Uruguay and New York. E.J.L. Scholtz reported after his November 1957 inspection of the Canberra High Commission that D.P. Olivier, the Official Secretary, who had been abroad since June 1948,

would welcome a transfer back to Head Office. I assured him that in so far as the exigencies of the service permitted such applications received sympathetic consideration and his request would be borne in mind.⁷⁴

Early in 1958 Hamilton took the subject up with Scholtz. 'Olivier should know', Scholtz replied, that there were

⁷¹ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 19, Secretary, PSC/SEA, 28 February 1957; Jooste/Naude, 4 March 1957. W.C. Naude accepted Jooste's offer of the post.

⁷² *The Times* (London), 4 January 1943. (Obituary).

⁷³ AA, A1838/1, 1348/5/1, 'Diplomatic and Consular Service', n.d. (Probably 1953).

⁷⁴ BTS, 4/6/36, Vol. 6, Scholtz/Secretary, n.d. p. 7.

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curiously enough, a large number of officers who have been abroad for some time and wish to have a spell at Head Office and only a few vacancies to accommodate them.⁷⁵

In the event, Olivier's wish was fulfilled in October of that year. But for two relatively short periods at Head Office (1944-47; 1969-70), Hamilton's own career lay abroad. He served in London as Second Secretary/First Secretary (1947-54), Washington as Counsellor (1954-57), then as head of mission in Canberra (1957-61), Stockholm (1961-65), Madrid (1965-68) and Tokyo (1970-74), retiring at the age of sixty-five in December 1974. Between times he attended several sessions of the General Assembly in the early years of the United Nations. He and his wife now (1995) live in retirement at Somerset West, near Cape Town.

The Australians did things differently. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, some heads of mission excepted, foreign service personnel in so-called arduous posts tended to be recalled to Head Office after two years and in other posts after three years continuous service. It was claimed that the

policy of short term service abroad ensures that the work in the different divisions in Head Office is kept up to date, is handled by experienced officers and adequately compensates and justifies higher transportation costs of more frequent transfers of officers.

It also obviated the need for home leave and the corresponding expense.⁷⁶

While professing admiration for the Australian practice, Spies held that South Africa was not in a position to follow suit because 'our field staff is at present so much larger than the units at Head Office that our period has inevitably to be stretched a good deal more'.⁷⁷ That was why there was a greater turnover among the Australian staff in South Africa than among the South Africans in Canberra. On the South African side between 1949 and 1962 there were three Third Secretaries⁷⁸ and three Second Secretaries.⁷⁹ Including Nel, there were five heads of mission.⁸⁰ Between 1946 and

⁷⁵ BTS, Olivier, Vol. 1, Scholtz/Hamilton, 14 February 1958.

⁷⁶ BCB, Vol. 4, 6/5/1 SR, Viljoen/SEA, 16 November 1949, 'Salary and Allowances - Australian Foreign Service Personnel', p. 2.

⁷⁷ BTS, 1/25/8, Vol. 1, Spies/Kelly, 16 June 1952.

⁷⁸ P.R. Killen (1949-54), C.R. Roberts (1954-59) and J.C. Bosch (1960-64).

⁷⁹ G.C. Nel (1949-54), D.P. Olivier (1955-58) and P.L.T. Snyman (1959-62).

⁸⁰ Dr P.R. Viljoen (1949-51), G.C. Nel (1951-54), J.K. Uys (1954-57), A.A.M. Hamilton (1957-61) and H.H. Woodward (1961-64).

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1962 six Australian Third Secretaries served in South Africa,⁸¹ six First Secretaries⁸² and seven heads of mission (excluding people who acted for only a few months).⁸³

With the exception of the most junior staff, all of the career South African officials posted to Canberra in the 1940s and 1950s went there on promotion.⁸⁴ In 1953 Jones had been earmarked for the High Commissionership in Canberra and J.K. Uys for that in Ottawa.⁸⁵ When the former declined the promotion he was superseded by the latter who arrived in Canberra in March 1954. W.C. du Plessis, then a Member of Parliament, became High Commissioner in Ottawa and Permanent Representative to the United Nations. Jones was eventually promoted to the 'newly-created post of Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in the Africa Section of the Head Office establishment',⁸⁶ a post created especially for him though it was presented publicly as being pursuant to the policy of building up the department's Africa section.⁸⁷

Renouf reminds us of a significant aspect of the Australian diplomatic cadet scheme, namely, that the Department of External Affairs itself recruited cadets through an open examination⁸⁸ thereby at least partly circumventing the Public Service Board.⁸⁹ The South African department was never afforded that latitude. Indeed, on at least one occasion it was told not to correspond with applicants. ('The Commission desires me to state that it would be glad if the department would be so good as to avoid correspondence with applicants in future, and, for the sake of uniformity of procedure, refer all enquiries by applicants regarding prospects of appointment, etc., in the Public service to this office for disposal.')⁹⁰ And in 1937 it was challenged to justify why it

⁸¹ M.J.S. Knowles (1946-48), K. Desmond (1948-1951), Miss E.A. Warren (1951-54), R.A. Woolcott (1954-57), I.E. Nicholson (1957-59) and J.H. Brooke (1960-62). Woolcott was promoted to Second Secretary in 1957.

⁸² O.C.W. Fuhrman (August-November 1946), M.H. Marshall (1946-51), K.T. Kelly (1952-55), H. Gilchrist (1955-57) and L.E. Phillips (1959-60).

⁸³ Sir George Shaw Knowles (1946-47), A.T. Stirling (1948-50), M.H. Marshall (1947-48; 1950-51), J.P. Quinn (1951-52), Lt Col W.R. Hodgson (1952-57), H. Gilchrist (1957-59) and O.L. Davis (1959-62). See Appendix I.

⁸⁴ P.R. Killen was a Cadet held against a vacant post of Third Secretary. BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 12, De Villiers/SEA, 18 May 1949.

⁸⁵ BTS, S4/5/45, Vol. 2, Forsyth/Prime Minister, 11 May 1953.

⁸⁶ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 19, Jooste/Jones, 30 November 1956.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, Scholtz/Director of State Information, 3 December 1956, Annexure.

⁸⁸ Renouf, *The Frightened Country*, p. 500. Renouf himself was among the twelve cadets comprising the first intake under the scheme in 1943.

⁸⁹ The Public Service Board was represented on the Selection Board.

⁹⁰ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 2, Burke/SEA, 9 January 1936.

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wanted H.H. Woodward and another junior official in preference to thirteen other Public Service applicants who were their senior.⁹¹

For the researcher into the history of the South African Department of External Affairs, the Commission's value lies mainly in its detailed inspection reports. Many times between the 1920s and the 1950s Public Service Inspectors descended on the department and reported on aspects of its organisation and activities, with recommendations for improvements.⁹² The Public Service Commission had also prepared the way for the department's establishment in 1927.⁹³ That was an environment in which Forsyth as opposed to Bodenstein was perfectly at home because he himself had been an inspector. Bearing in mind Millar's view cited in the Introduction⁹⁴ these reports and the departmental responses to them furnish excellent descriptions of the department's sinews even if they do not convey a sense of its soul.

Once in the department the newly appointed South African juniors - Learner Diplomats, Probationer Diplomats or (from May 1945) Cadets - found themselves regarded with ambivalence. On the one hand they tended to be treated with disdain by senior officers at head office and abroad along the lines of the British Third Secretaries who were 'treated as skivvies by old fashioned Ambassadors'.⁹⁵ On the other, there was a real need for their services as working members of their sections despite such occasional fantasies, in which the Public Service Commission concurred, as 'the employment of Cadets abroad should be restricted as far as possible with a view to their entire withdrawal from your overseas service' and in respect of the desirability of avoiding 'the employment of Cadets in those sections at Head Office where the foreign policy of the Union is formulated'.⁹⁶ This last suggests complete ignorance of the foreign policy formulation process. In fact, what the department told the Commission

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, Secretary, PSC/SEA, 23 February 1957.

⁹² Some examples: *Public Service Commission, Department of the Prime Minister, Report on the Staffing requirements of the Parliamentary and Coding Section, Cape Town, 18th March, 1935*; *Staatsdienskommissie, Inspeksierapport - Departement van die Eerste Minister en Minister van Buitelandse Sake 15 Julie 1936*; *Public Service Commission, Department of External Affairs and Office of the Prime Minister, Routine Inspection Report, 30th September 1946*; *Public Service Commission, Department of External Affairs, Inspection Report on Overseas Offices: General Report, 13th January, 1948*; *Staatsdienskommissie Departement van Buitelandse Sake, Inspeksieverlag oor Kantoer van die Eerste Minister en Minister van Buitelandse Sake, 3 Maart 1951*.

⁹³ See BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 1, Annexure to Chairman, PSC/Prime Minister, 30 March 1927.

⁹⁴ p. 20 above.

⁹⁵ Quoted in Moorhouse, *The Diplomats*, p. 47.

⁹⁶ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 17, Secretary, PSC/SEA, 26 February 1953.

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about its External Relations Section in 1935 is valid even today, both at home and abroad: 'were it not for the services of the newly appointed probationer diplomats, who, of course, are not intended as permanent units of this section, the position would have been intolerable'.⁹⁷

Thus Spies, at that time the Chief Clerk, was disconcerted to be told in mid-1946 that a new recruit's capacity for work was 'just about zero' besides which he had little Afrikaans and no Dutch. (It was contemplated posting him to The Netherlands.)⁹⁸ Although down the years some of his contemporaries if not his superiors would have considered this assessment to have ongoing validity, a forty year career took that Cadet to many countries and he was a (non-Ambassadorial) head of mission at least four times covering a period of many years. In fact, he spent most of his career abroad. An early negative assessment was also no barrier to advancement in the Australian service. Watt tells of difficulties with 'a very young officer' whose file he marked 'Never to be sent overseas again'.⁹⁹ He was and in an Ambassadorial capacity.¹⁰⁰

White South Africa made no pretence of being an egalitarian society and its hierarchical, authoritarian and paternalistic nature was mirrored in the early foreign service, then very much of a white male preserve. The reasons for excluding women were perhaps what a modern feminist would have expected:

*if women are admitted to the Diplomatic Service, they would compete against the male personnel. A promotion line would have to be drawn somewhere for women otherwise it would be soon be found that a woman would be placed at the head of an office while male clerks would be her direct subordinates. To the best of my knowledge such a policy is rejected by all Government Departments. If a promotion barrier was set for women - say not above posts of Third Secretary - I believe that we would in due course receive incessant representations from such women to lift the barrier. It will be appreciated that such a position would have extremely adverse consequences.*¹⁰¹ (Italics added.)

E.J.L. Scholtz, then a Chief Clerk, Grade I, drew up the paper in which this appeared as a defence against charges by Supreme Court Justice K.R. Bresler that his

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, SEA/Secretary, PSC, 2 March 1935.

⁹⁸ BTS, S4/1/5/2/1, Vol. 3, Memoranda Louw/Spies, 6 May 1946 and Spies/Louw, 9 May 1946.

⁹⁹ Watt, *Australian Diplomat*, p. 166.

¹⁰⁰ P. Hastings, 'Alan Watt, an admirable ambassador', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 September 1988. The article marked Watt's death in Canberra earlier that month at the age of 87.

¹⁰¹ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 17, 'The question of the employment of women in the South African foreign service', 24 February 1954. (Original in Afrikaans.)

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daughter Claire had been misled. The University of Pretoria had admitted her for study towards the degree BA (Diplomatic) which he claimed External Affairs had 'dictated' but she discovered in her final year that her gender made her ineligible for service in the department. The Public Service Commission referred this to the department for its comments. In its reply, the department mentioned the 'aversion which the majority of men have to serving under women', that it could ill afford to lose trained personnel through marriage, and that 'women cannot be suitably employed in certain consular posts and posts involving trade work'. Rather disingenuously it denied having 'dictated' the BA (Diplomatic) course to the university; the latter had instituted this 'after consultation with the Department but not at its request'.¹⁰²

The Commission need not have asked. It knew what the position was. Only six years before, the Public Service Enquiry Commission had pronounced itself 'unable to recommend that there should be any alteration in the present policy of not recruiting women for the Diplomatic and Consular Service'.¹⁰³ No doubt because its report was a public document, the Commission refrained from mentioning the aversion of men to serving under women, confining itself to the prospect of female officers leaving the service on marriage 'even if the marriage bar were removed'. There was also a problem of women not being so readily transferable as men. It conceded, however, that 'women trained in the Diplomatic and Consular Service will become quite as efficient as men similarly trained'.¹⁰⁴

The Australians would not, ostensibly, have dared to behave so crassly if only because the female applicants in some years were superior to the male.¹⁰⁵ That was probably true of Elizabeth Anne Warren who was admitted to the 1948 scheme. She had been a prize-winning student in History and Anthropology at the University of Sydney in the early to mid-1940s, obtaining high distinctions for those subjects in the course of her undergraduate studies.¹⁰⁶ As mentioned, she served in South Africa from

¹⁰² BTS, 24/2, Vol. 3, Spies/PSC, 11 March 1954. Vol. 2 contains the department's correspondence on the subject with the University of Pretoria in 1950. No effort was made to turn the university from its course.

¹⁰³ U.G. 54-'48, *Sixth Report of Public Service Enquiry Commission*, Cape Town 1948, p. 29, para. 204. M.H. Marshall drew this paragraph to the attention of the Australian department. See AA, A4231/2, South Africa 1948, Departmental Despatch No. 6/48, 5 April 1948.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, para. 203.

¹⁰⁵ Mackay, *The Diplomatic Cadet Scheme*, p. 17.

¹⁰⁶ AA, A1838/1, 1260/6/1, 'Department of External Affairs: Particulars of University Course of persons selected to enter the School of Diplomatic Studies, March, 1948'. The phenomenon of the 'high distinction' still features in Australian academia.

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1951 to 1954. Equality of opportunity for men and women was very much the ALP's policy during its eight years in government in the 1940s and the first intake of diplomatic cadets in 1943 consisted of nine men and three women; two of the latter did not have degrees. The later Menzies government was less interested in advancing the cause of women and 1950 was the last year a woman was appointed under the diplomatic cadet scheme.¹⁰⁷ While applications from women continued to be entertained, they were not taken seriously. Thus a 1952 handwritten assessment of applicants under the heads 'Character', 'Intellectual "Attack"', 'Technical qualifications', 'Manners, dress etc', and 'Other interests' listed the male and female applicants separately and focussed only on the former as potential cadets.¹⁰⁸

A year later Waller, then Assistant Secretary for Personnel Affairs, thought that the 'female element' would disappear because the Public Service Board had authorised a maximum cadet intake of only sixteen over the next four years.¹⁰⁹ The female element did not disappear but was deliberately kept to a minimum. A 1963 Department of Trade submission about women Trade Commissioners¹¹⁰ quoted Nicholas Parkinson, a future head of the Department of External Affairs (1977-79), to the effect that in terms of the Public Service Act women could not be prevented from applying for positions in that department. Many more applications were in fact received from women than from men. But only about one in twelve appointees were women and that on the basis 'of the quality of their educational achievements'.

As mentioned, Jill Ker Conway, who had excellent educational qualifications, was turned down in 1958 on grounds of gender and personality. Elizabeth Anne Warren of the 1948 intake was by contrast 'a nice and capable girl'¹¹¹ a description which would not, as with a 'nice looking girl with good dark eyes and pleasant features' (see below), have been applied to a male officer. The average woman recruit married within five years. (Until the 1970s, even under Labor women who married were

¹⁰⁷ Mackay, *The Diplomatic Cadet Scheme*, p. 19. It was probably no coincidence that Dr Burton, who encouraged the recruitment of women during his time as Secretary, resigned in 1950. See *The Diplomatic Cadet Scheme*, pp. 17-19.

¹⁰⁸ A1838/T174, 1260/11/5, Confidential note 1 October 1952.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 1260/12/1, Waller/Moodie, 23 June 1953.

¹¹⁰ AA, A3120, 106/1/6, Taysom/Director, 'Women Trade Commissioners?', 13 March 1963. I am indebted to Ms Moira Smythe for a copy of this document and for a copy of the report in *The Financial Review* (Australia), 5 September 1995, which refers to it. ('How the mellow men once blocked the "battle-axes".')

¹¹¹ AA, A9421, 9/2/3, Pt.1, Jamieson/Quinn, 26 November 1951.

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obliged to resign their positions.)¹¹² It was an expensive process but External Affairs lacked the 'courage to slam the door because of parliamentary opinion, pressure groups and so on'.

The submission itself was couched in terms which read strangely today:

it is difficult to find reasons to support the appointment of women Trade Commissioners ... a relatively young attractive woman could operate with some effectiveness, in a subordinate capacity ... [but] such an appointee would not stay young and attractive for ever and later on could well become a problem ... It is extremely doubtful if a woman could, year after year, under a variety of conditions, stand the fairly severe strains and stresses, mentally and physically, which are part of the life of a Trade Commissioner ... A spinster lady can, and very often does, turn into something of a battleaxe with the passing years. A man usually mellows; A woman would take the place of a man and preclude us from giving practical experience to one male officer. She could not be regarded as a long term investment in the same sense as we regard a man.

White women were not, of course, the only South Africans excluded from the foreign service. That was barred to all who were not white, *ie.* most of the population. While it may not have erected formal barriers, in practice Australia did not differ greatly in that respect except that it employed a foreign service officer of Chinese race (whose career was not of a 'high-flying' nature).¹¹³ Not unnaturally the foreign service reflected the mores operative in white South African society at large. In April 1956 Uys enquired from Australia what his attitude should be towards non-white diplomats, citing the fact that dancing sometimes took place at receptions and pointing out that 'In the Union mixed dancing is frowned upon. Indeed, it is strongly disapproved.'¹¹⁴ After consulting *inter alia* with Eric Louw, Spies, the Under-Secretary, replied a month later by way of a personal letter: 'You will however realise what a sensation it would cause here if a photograph or report should be published of a member of the Uys family dancing with a non-white, and it is felt that you should tactfully ensure that something like that doesn't occur'.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Edwards, *Prime Ministers and Diplomats*, p. 105.

¹¹³ Charles Lee. See M. Booker, *The Last Domino: Aspects of Australia's Foreign Relations* (Sydney, 1976), p. 60 and DFAT, Department of Foreign Affairs. *Manual of Information and Instructions, Vol. 4, Statement of Service, Appointments and Biographies*, First Ed., 1976, p. 287.

¹¹⁴ BTS 1/25/6, Vol.1, Uys/Acting SEA, 24 April 1956. (Original in Afrikaans.)

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Spies/Uys, 26 May 1956. (Original in Afrikaans.)

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Who was accepted for foreign service? In Australia, a candidate's academic record and perceptions of his appearance, personality and character were among the main considerations. A 1951 circular indicated that applicants were judged 'on their applications, testimonials and personal interview'. Importance was attached to 'certain essential personal characteristics'. Academic achievement was not the primary consideration.¹¹⁶ That year it was said of one man:

his academic record was good, his knowledge of Japanese most valuable and his general knowledge of international affairs, although not outstanding, was good. On these points he deserved placing in the first five previously selected. On the other hand, his personality and appearance were disappointing. The Committee unanimously agreed that whilst he would make a useful junior officer he lacked the personality ever to rise to be a Chief of Mission.¹¹⁷

Also in 1951 Hugh Dunn was held to possess the required attributes. Interviewing him in London, the selection committee described him as

A very pleasant personality, modest, reliable, unassuming and of good appearance. He gives impression of having a very strong character, and considerable maturity of judgment which would make him invaluable in a crisis. His knowledge of international affairs was weak ... A Rhodes Scholar, Dunn is at present reading for an honours degree in Chinese. ... Because of the impression he gave of capacity, reliability and intelligence, the Committee awarded Dunn first place among the candidates.¹¹⁸

Dunn seems to have been rather ambivalent about a foreign service career and joined the department only in 1954, having first lectured in Chinese for two years at the University of Toronto, Ontario, Canada.¹¹⁹

The following compendium of extracts from the comments accompanying its 'Suggested list for final consideration' shows the emphasis the 1953 Australian Cadet Selection Board¹²⁰ placed on personality and appearance:

¹¹⁶ A1838/T184, 1260/10/1, Administrative Circular No. 33/51, 30 March 1951, para. 6.

¹¹⁷ Unsigned single sheet dated 17 September 1951 attached to AA, A1838/T184, 1260/10/4/1, Waller/Kevin, 27 September 1951.

¹¹⁸ AA, A1838/T184, 1260/10/4/1, Memo. 706, Waller/DEA, 29 August 1951, Attachment, p. 1.

¹¹⁹ *The International Year Book and Statesmen's Who's Who 1994/95* (42nd Edition, East Grinstead, Eng., 1994), p.181.

¹²⁰ Comprising Prof C.M.H. Clark of Canberra University College, J.K. Waller of the Department of External Affairs with W.H. Tucker of the Public Service Board as Chairman. Clark, the author of *A History of Australia* which was published in six volumes between 1962 and 1986 was an Australian

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(1) 'A nice, clean looking lad with a very pleasant personality indeed. A somewhat boyish appearance'; (2) 'Another boyish type. A little rougher or more rural than [(1)] and [(7)]'; (3) 'Tall, presentable with spectacles and a good deal of aplomb'; (4) A pleasant personality with quite a nice manner ... Nice speaking voice, pleasant smile. Sense of humour. Definitely a leader. Not a first class brain but a lot of other qualities'; (5) 'Quite a presentable young man in spectacles. Nervous but reasonably well under control. Good chin'; (6) 'A nice looking boy - not very talkative and a not very supple mind'; (7) 'A very nice lad. Still very young and pimply but definitely above the average in intelligence and in spite of rather boyish manner he answered a lot of very difficult questions including one on German unification very sensibly'; (8) 'Somewhat red and scruffy appearance. Improves when he smiles. Nice speaking voice'; (9) 'Not a very forthcoming personality although reasonably presentable in appearance. A little bellicose in appearance'; (10) 'A nice looking girl with good dark eyes and pleasant features'; (11) 'He is a nice looking lad well set up, modest and a trifle shy. Did not answer questions very well. I had an odd feeling that he had been politically "got at" and that he might be a plant. His academic record is excellent and yet it did not show in his interview'; (12) 'Reasonably presentable. A little brash, but on the whole pleasant, well controlled, steady and very interested in the work'.¹²¹

The final selection fell on (1), (3), (5), (6) and (11) plus an applicant in London. The London applicant was appointed but only three of the others: Nos. (1), (3) and (5). No. (6) declined appointment while No. (11) took up a Rhodes Scholarship.¹²² No. (1) died a year later. Not surprisingly, the 'nice looking girl with good dark eyes' was not selected. No. (5), M.E. Lyon, served as Ambassador to South Africa between 1981 and 1984. After his first year as a cadet, he was assessed as

up to standard but not above it. His manner has improved during the past 12 months but there is still a lack of poise. He is intellectually less mature than [E] and [F] but should develop into a sound though unimaginative officer.¹²³

icon of the 1980s and early 1990s until his death in 1991. Paul Johnson gives an idea of the extent of his influence in *The Times Literary Supplement*, 13 May 1994, p. 25.

¹²¹ AA, A1838/T184, 1260/12/5, 'Suggested list for final consideration' 1953.

¹²² *Ibid.*, Waller/PSB, 1 December 1953 and 28 February 1956; *Ibid.*, 'External Affairs Cadetships. PR 15, 1 March 1954; *The Canberra Times*, 2 March 1954.

¹²³ AA, A1838/T184, Shaw etc/PSB, 14 April 1955.

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Commenting on the 1954 list, Waller of the Selection Board told Tucker, the Chairman:

[A], [B], [C] and [D] all struck me as weak characters. [A] does not yet know where he is going and is I think more suited for an academic life than the rough and tumble of the Public Service. [C] is also more a research type. [B] and [D] left me with an impression of effeminacy which may merely have been immaturity but which strongly affected my judgement. [D] also had an unfortunate inability to look one in the eye.¹²⁴

Homosexuality, if not obvious effeminacy, would not today be a disqualification.

Of B.G. Dexter it was written in 1947:

when we got the excellent private testimonials I told the rest of the Committee that I thought we had misjudged him. School, Geelong Grammar; a master at Wesley; an Honours B.A. in Languages; the Diploma in Education; invalided from New Guinea, and an Instructor in the Navy - it seems a very good and suitable record. Unfortunately he is evidently solid and slow, and we couldn't get much life out of him in the interview, but he has an exceedingly good manner and personality.¹²⁵

That year Dexter was among candidates preferred to Neville Wran, a future Premier of New South Wales. Dexter was the son of a 'poverty-stricken Anglican parson, educated at Geelong Grammar on a church scholarship and at university partly under the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme'.¹²⁶ Much more so than for the South Africans, the schools the Australian candidates attended were of considerable importance,¹²⁷ Geelong Church of England Grammar School alone supplying eleven per cent of all entrants between 1942 and 1962.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ AA, A1838/268, 1260/13/5, Waller/Tucker, 13 December 1954.

¹²⁵ AA, A1838/1, 1260/6/1, Grenfell Price/Burton, 31 December 1947. When he was serving as Ambassador to Laos in the late 1960s, Dexter's 'good manner and personality' sufficiently impressed Prime Minister Harold Holt to offer him the directorship of the Office of Aboriginal Affairs. This became the Department of Aboriginal Affairs with Dexter as its Secretary. Juddery, *At the Centre*, p. 140. Dexter later returned to the foreign service. He is now associated with former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser in running CARE International and CARE Australia.

¹²⁶ Juddery, *At the Centre*, p. 139. Dexter later became P.R. Killen's brother-in-law, the former marrying Judith Craig in 1948 and the latter Anne Craig in 1952, daughters of a Perth medical specialist. See below.

¹²⁷ Thereby contradicting the widespread notion of Australia as an egalitarian society. In as much as white South Africans are probably more status conscious than Australians, it is interesting that the South African department should have laid no stress on an applicant's school. That was possibly rooted in two facts: (a) most appointees were drawn from other Public Service departments and (b) Afrikaners had no tradition of exclusive private schools. Perhaps that was why Eric Louw put his son

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There may have been several reasons for that. For instance, the school's general ambience may have prepared its students to cope well with the selection process and, equally important, the exceptional long time headmaster, James Darling, an English immigrant, steered students towards the Commonwealth Public Service in general and to External Affairs in particular.¹²⁹ (Very much a member of the 'establishment', Darling was appointed chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Commission even before he retired as headmaster of Geelong Grammar.)¹³⁰

In the case of the South Africans, the periodic circularising of other Public Service departments may have served to draw the attention of junior officials to what was on offer.¹³¹ In a few cases, applicants had relatives in the department or they knew people at university who were interested in a career in foreign service.¹³² Some, as in Sole's case, responded to newspaper advertisements¹³³ while others developed an interest at school and wrote in for information, whether of their own accord or because their teachers suggested it. T. Langley, a member of the South African parliament from 1966 to 1994, requested information in his pre-matriculation (Std 9) year. Nothing came of that but forty-six years later the ANC-led Government of National Unity nominated him Ambassador to Portugal, thereby making him a late entrant by the back door. When the Portuguese government refused to grant him *agrément*, apparently on grounds of his conservative background, he was subsequently nominated and accepted

in a Washington DC public school only hastily to remove him because of the presence of black children. A.J. van Wyk, Official history, draft chapter *Adv Eric Louw, Pioneer Diplomat, 1925-1937*, p. 11.

¹²⁸ P. Gronn, 'Schooling for ruling: The social composition of admissions to Geelong Grammar School, 1930-1939', *Australian Historical Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 98, April 1992, p. 86. The British school Eton College has traditionally supplied a large proportion of entrants to the British diplomatic service. While comparisons are no doubt odious and one is reluctant to call Geelong Grammar the Australian Eton, it is interesting that the former's headmaster, John Lewis, was appointed headmaster of Eton in 1993 after thirteen years at Geelong. A New Zealander by birth, he had been a master at Eton for nine years in the 1970s. He took up the appointment in September 1994. *The Times* (London), 1 December 1993. The Prince of Wales spent two terms at 'Timbertop', a branch of Geelong Grammar on the slopes of the Australian Alps, in the first half of 1966. 'Timbertop' was established in Darling's time. *The Bulletin*, Vol. 80, No. 4138, 3 June 1959.

¹²⁹ Gronn, *Australian Historical Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 98, April 1992, pp. 83-84.

¹³⁰ *The Canberra Times*, 29 June 1961. He was also chairman of the Australian Road Safety Council and a member of the Council of the University of Melbourne, of the Universities Commission and of the Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council. He died in Melbourne in November 1995 at the age of 96. *The Weekly Telegraph* (London), Issue 225, November 8-14, 1995, p. 34. (Obituary).

¹³¹ See, for example, BTS, 24/2, Vol. 1, PSC/Heads of Department etc, Circular No. 4 of 1934, 8 May 1934.

¹³² As in the case of the present writer.

¹³³ Sole's mother also had a hand in his application. In fact, she seems to have been the prime mover. See *Reminiscences*, pp. 14-15.

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as Ambassador to the Czech Republic.¹³⁴ Others who requested information and who became prominent in other careers include the historian B.A. Le Cordeur, then a first year student at Rhodes University, and the United Party politician Radclyffe Cadman, then a Sub-Lieutenant in the Royal Navy.¹³⁵

J.E. Spence would ostensibly have been a catch. The senior History Master at Pretoria Boys' High School, M.S. Geen, wrote on his behalf in 1947:

One of my senior pupils, who is likely to obtain a first class with several distinctions in the Matriculation Examination at the end of next year, is considering the diplomatic service as a career.

I should be glad if you would let me know (a) the subjects that he should study for the B.A. degree, and (b) the conditions of service for cadets in the Union Diplomatic Service.¹³⁶

Spence indeed obtained a first class pass in the 1948 matriculation examination with distinctions for English Higher, History and Latin.¹³⁷ But after completing his BA (Hons) degree at the University of the Witwatersrand, he proceeded to the London School of Economics and a distinguished academic career in the United Kingdom. Now retired, he is Director of Studies at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, a post once held by Arnold Toynbee. Spence says that he was not aware until now that Geen had made the enquiries.¹³⁸

Piet Beukes, then a Rhodes Scholar, later editor of the United Party newspaper *Die Suiderstem* and other publications, applied in 1936. Charles te Water interviewed him in London, saying he had 'made a very favourable impression' and was 'the type we require in our service'. He recommended that Bodenstein see him personally. Beukes also impressed C.K. Allen, the Warden of Rhodes House, who sang his praises to Te Water.¹³⁹ But his application was not successful. In retrospect, from what one knows of Beukes's subsequent career in journalism, and given his personality and sense of humour he would probably have found foreign service too restrictive.

¹³⁴ BTS, 24/2, Vol. 2, Langley/DEA, 10 November 1949; *Rapport*, 19 February 1995; *The Star* (Johannesburg) and *The Citizen* (Johannesburg), 16 August 1995; *Die Afrikaner*, 28 July - 3 August 1995.

¹³⁵ BTS, 24/2, Vol. 3, Secretary, PSC/SEA, 12 September 1955; Cadman/DEA, 22 December 1944.

¹³⁶ BTS, 24/2, Vol. 1, Geen/DEA, 14 August 1947; v.d. Berg/Geen, 28 August 1947.

¹³⁷ *Rand Daily Mail* (Johannesburg) and *Die Transvaler*, 4 January 1949.

¹³⁸ Prof. J.E. Spence, oral communication, August 1994.

¹³⁹ BTS, 24/2, Vol. 1, Te Water/Bodenstein, 2 November 1936 and Allen/High Commissioner, 23 October 1936.

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The South African department also considered personality and appearance to be of prime importance. The motivation for the 1944 reorganisation held that

The men selected to represent South Africa overseas must be persons who will commend themselves to the Governments to which they are accredited or by whom they are received and to the foreign colleagues with whom they will be in daily social and professional contact. They must be men of education and of culture and must have personality. They must be competent to observe and interpret political and economic trends and to report intelligently upon them.¹⁴⁰

Rightly or wrongly, it was thought that the

men possessing these qualities are the exception rather than the rule among the ordinary run of candidates for appointment in the Public Service. They will have to be carefully selected and trained for the duties they will be required to discharge and ... their academic and practical training should be designed to produce good 'all-rounders' rather than specialists in any particular aspect of foreign representation.

There in a nutshell is why to this day a bachelor's degree is a better recommendation for an aspiring South African foreign service officer than a PhD. The holder of a BA will be younger, more malleable and less likely to cause trouble and make waves. It is also why Departments of Foreign Affairs, at least not the Australian or the South African ones, are not places known for their intellectual sparkle.

G.C. Nel was always rated highly for his acceptability. His first head of mission, E.K. Scallan, wrote from Lourenço Marques that he had

become extremely popular with all sections of the community both Portuguese and British and in this respect he has been able to render very valuable services to this Consulate General through his intimate contacts with them.¹⁴¹

Sole, his contemporary, says that he had 'a most engaging personality'.¹⁴² Forsyth, his head of department, described him as an 'attractive officer with a very pleasant manner which endears him to all'. Nel had, he said, 'developed immeasurably' in the time he had

¹⁴⁰ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 7, Pohl/PSC, 22 November 1944, p. 2, para. 8.

¹⁴¹ Nel, Vol. 1, Scallan/SEA, 15 September 1941.

¹⁴² Sole, *Reminiscences*, p. 17.

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acted as head of mission in Canberra. There again, it was not an 'onerous post'.¹⁴³ Paul Sauer wrote to Dr Malan about him after his visit to Australia in 1952:

the Prime Minister, Mr Menzies, and the Governor-General, Sir William McKell, both unsolicited, spoke particularly highly of him and gave me the impression that they would like him to stay on. It came through that his predecessor [Viljoen] was sometimes 'a little moody', as Mr Menzies put it to me.¹⁴⁴

Forsyth's notes on his final interview with Viljoen the previous December recorded that Viljoen had said 'Mr Gert Nel has shaped very well and is very popular with everyone with whom he comes in contact'.¹⁴⁵ Shortly after taking over as High Commissioner in 1954 J.K. Uys reported that 'everywhere you go they speak of him [Nel] with the highest praise. Everybody knows Gerrie'.¹⁴⁶ A few months later he wrote that he 'had scarcely set foot in Australia when, completely unsolicited, he heard the most positive remarks and words of praise about Mr Nel'. Before his departure from the Union he had 'heard from at least two heads of department about the good work Mr Nel was doing' in Australia. And Minister Havenga had spoken well of him, calling him a hard working chap.¹⁴⁷

Nel's name also featured prominently (in his absence) at the customary lunch the Prime Minister and Cabinet gave Uys a few months after his arrival. Ministers told Uys that Nel 'was always up with the job'.¹⁴⁸ Uys would not have known of the contemporary Australian report that Nel was among the 'three closest friends' of the previous Indian High Commissioner, Kumar Shri Duleepsinhji, the Cambridge University, Sussex and England cricketer,¹⁴⁹ and that at a time of tension between the Indian and South African governments. Such a spread of testimonials from foreigners as well as his own people is unusual and has not so far been encountered in respect of any other officer.

¹⁴³ BTS, Nel, Vol. 3, 9 December 1952 comments on 8 August 1951 Staff Report.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Sauer/Malan, 24 September 1952. (Original in Afrikaans.) Something does not jell here for Viljoen and Menzies seem to have been on a good footing. See Chapter Four below.

¹⁴⁵ BTS, 4/2/32, Vol. 2, Forsyth/Spies, 6 December 1951.

¹⁴⁶ BTS, Uys, Vol. 3, Extract from Uys/Scholtz, 9 April 1954. (Original in Afrikaans.)

¹⁴⁷ BTS, Nel, Vol. 3., Uys/SEA, 17 June 1954. (Original in Afrikaans.) Havenga had met Nel when he attended the January 1954 Conference of Commonwealth Ministers of Finance in Sydney.

¹⁴⁸ BTS, Uys, Vol. 5, Uys/SEA, 8 July 1954. (Original in Afrikaans.)

¹⁴⁹ AA, A1838/2, 169/11/128, Pt. 1, Note by J.E. Oldham, 11 May 1954, on Gen. Cariappa's statement of 6 May. Duleepsinhji was once thought of as a rival to the famous Australian, Donald George Bradman. I. Rosenwater, *Sir Donald Bradman: A biography*, London, 1978, p. 295 and M. Page, *Bradman: The Illustrated Biography*, South Melbourne, 1983, p. 87.

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Needless to say, the words of praise did not lead to accelerated promotion for Nel. If he did not scale the heights in his career that was perhaps because of a tendency to obsequiousness towards his superiors for, while he lacked a Sole's or a Fourie's intellectual penetration, he was a conscientious administrator and there was nothing wrong with his reporting. Sole has another explanation: 'he was an Afrikaner who did not support the Nationalist Party' and 'he had an American wife who made little attempt to speak Afrikaans'. Sole feels that both 'these elements had in varying degrees their impact on the careers of other officials of the Department'.¹⁵⁰

That the worm eventually turned, is shown by Nel's complaint about the disruption of his arrangements in connection with his transfer from The Hague to Lourenço Marques in 1964. If he behaved out of character, the incident also said something about departmental obsequiousness towards politicians. For, as a safeguard against things going wrong, he was required to remain in The Hague until the new Ambassador, the politician J.J. ('Buks') Fouche, had presented his credentials. And that despite the routine nature of the occasion and the presence there of Nel's experienced successor as second-in-command. The reprimand Nel received from J.K. Uys, the Deputy Secretary in Pretoria, was typical of Uys:

I consider it a pity you wrote to the Department in the way you did because I can say that from what I have seen of your work there you acquitted yourself well in The Hague. Why spoil everything now with a letter such as that we received from you.¹⁵¹

Bruce Lockhart wrote of the British service that 'promotion in any government service abroad is often accelerated by the favourable reports brought back to London by influential and important visitors'. He himself had profited from that phenomenon during his time in Moscow.¹⁵² That did not apply to the South African service when Nel was in Canberra. In any case the merit system which sorted the wheat from the chaff in the rest of the Public Service was then thought to have no place in the Department of External Affairs. That was because 'it was found impossible to assess with equity the merits of person[s] serving in various centres throughout the world vis a vis their colleagues in the same grade'.¹⁵³ The merit system was eventually introduced

¹⁵⁰ Letter, 26 December 1994.

¹⁵¹ BTS, Nel, Vol. 4, Nel/SEA, 23 September 1964 and Uys/Nel, 12 October 1964. (Originals in Afrikaans).

¹⁵² *Retreat from Glory*, p. 98.

¹⁵³ BTS, 24/2, Vol. 3, undated paper 'Diplomatic and Consular Service' attached to Taljaard/Kelly, 2 February 1953.

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into the department during Fourie's time as Secretary whereupon some officers started receiving early promotion without, however, the problem of equitable assessment being overcome. It remains a problem to this day.

A practical illustration of the South African emphasis in the 1940s and 1950s on personal attributes was Sub-Section 8(c) of the half-yearly report on Cadets (P.M. 3/3/651) which posed nine questions about the subject's personality, viz.: (i) Measure in which his conduct and bearing inspire respect and confidence; (ii) Measure of maturity and balance; (iii) Force of character; (iv) Personal address; (v) Personal appearance; (vi) Amenability to discipline; (vii) Any special qualities, aptitudes or shortcomings; (viii) Does he (and if married, his wife) participate in local social and sporting activities; and (ix) Does he (and if married, his wife) appear to be completely acceptable socially amongst officials and diplomats of approximately comparable grading.

On 4 July 1952 Gert Nel reported on his 25 year old colleague, P.R. Killen, who had then completed four years of service with the Department of External Affairs: one at Head Office and three in Canberra: (i) Conduct and bearing correct and inspire respect and confidence not only amongst staff members but also amongst those with whom he associates outside the office; (ii) Shows maturity and balance in advance of his age; (iii) Has strong and independent character, is determined and will work hard on own initiative to find solutions to problems; (iv) Pleasing conduct and demeanour; (v) Exemplary, always neat; (vi) Is amenable to discipline and assists in maintaining discipline; (vii) Shows particular interest and aptitude in matters of a political nature, Is interested in his work and anxious to promote relations between his own country and Australia by personal contact. (viii) Yes, participates in local social activities and suitably reciprocates. Takes part in sporting activities - belongs to tennis, cricket, hockey and badminton clubs.; (ix) Yes, popular not only amongst officials and diplomats of comparable but also of higher grading.¹⁵⁴ In short, he possessed what it took for a successful career.

As mentioned, there was no South African selection board in the early years. Since both service and intake were small, Forsyth did most of the selecting as had Bodenstein before him.¹⁵⁵ He interviewed candidates, recording his impressions in his

¹⁵⁴ BTS, Killen, Vol. 1A.

¹⁵⁵ Sole, *Reminiscences*, p. 14.

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execrable handwriting under such headings as Full name, Address, Married or Single, Children, Appearance, Personality, Degree subjects taken, English - spoken, Afrikaans - spoken, Other languages, Where grew up, Parents, Previous experience, First impression. In Killen's case, his appearance was 'pleasant, prepossessing' and his personality 'good'. First impression of Killen: 'Good. If he improves his Afrikaans should do well'.¹⁵⁶ Forsyth interviewed C.F.G. von Hirschberg in the same year that he did Killen. Von Hirschberg writes:

I applied in January 1948 and was asked some time later to travel by train to Pretoria for an interview with Forsyth which could not have lasted more than fifteen or twenty minutes. I saw no one else.¹⁵⁷

The emphasis on personal characteristics and appearance is probably common to all foreign services. As Walter Crocker put it: 'Diplomats ... have to deal with and to live with foreigners ... and to be effective, they have to be acceptable to them, specifically to foreigners with power, so that personable social qualities retain their relevancy'.¹⁵⁸ Lord Strang, sometime British Permanent Under Secretary of State, held that prospective foreign service officers should

be interested in people, since so much of the work of diplomacy is done by talking. The tongue and the pen are the tools of his trade. If he likes people, he should not be too reserved to let them feel that he likes them. If he does not like them, he should not be so ill-mannered as to let the dislike appear.¹⁵⁹

Those to whom Professor Sir Walter Raleigh's words apply:

I wish I loved the Human Race;
I wish I loved its silly face;
I wish I liked the way it walks;
I wish I liked the way it talks;
And when I'm introduced to one

¹⁵⁶ BTS, Killen, Vol. 1, Killen interview sheet.

¹⁵⁷ Letter, 18 July 1994.

¹⁵⁸ Crocker, *Australian Ambassador*, p. 48. Crocker (*Travelling back*, p. 179) approvingly quotes Kelly's *The Ruling Few* which turns around this proposition. See especially pp. 117-19. See also D.C.M. Platt, *The Cinderella Service: British Consuls since 1825* (London, 1971), p. 241 (Appendix: Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugesen to Sir Alexander Cadogan) and Cd 7748, *Royal Commission on the Civil Service, Fifth Report of the Commissioners*, London, 1914, p. 16, para. 16 and Reservation by Mr Arthur Boutwood, p. 43. Boutwood held that the 'primary qualification for the Diplomatic Service is a capacity to deal on terms of equality with considerable persons and their words and works'.

¹⁵⁹ *The Diplomatic Career*, London, 1962, p. 54.

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I wish I thought *What Jolly Fun!*¹⁶⁰

should not, as Strang said, 'try to join the Foreign Service'¹⁶¹ where there is scope enough for misanthropy without need for misanthropists.

Paul Hasluck wrote of the pioneering Australian social anthropologist, A.P. Elkin, that he 'never made anyone feel that aborigines had become important simply because he had started to take an interest in them'.¹⁶² Diplomacy, it must be said, tends to attract to its ranks people who believe and try to make others do so too, that it is important precisely because they are engaged in it. That is probably a necessary attribute, a shield and buckler against Bruce Lockhart's description of it as a 'belittling and narrow existence'¹⁶³ or, to adapt Frances Crofts Cornford on Rupert Brooke, 'the long littleness of [diplomatic] life'.

'Genuineness', we are told, 'does not flourish in diplomatic circles. Diplomats, even those who start honest [in the sense of being unaffected], often finish vain'.¹⁶⁴ The retired Australian diplomat Gary Woodard put it better: 'Diplomacy is a profession which can easily lend itself to the absorption of false values'.¹⁶⁵ A desirable attribute is the ability to comply with norms which seem ridiculous to others. Jill Ker Conway gives the 1950s example of Canberra-based External Affairs officers who wore striped trousers, carried furled umbrellas and, on entering an elevator, removed bowler hats from perspiring heads. 'It was 103 degrees outside and these men were dressed as though they were in Whitehall'.¹⁶⁶

An examination of the selection process as it applied to the Australian Dick Woolcott and the South African Rae Killen adds perspective to the matter of selection. Both rose to head their countries' Departments of Foreign Affairs, Woolcott from September 1988 to February 1992 and Killen from 1985 to 1987. Richard Arthur Woolcott was born in Sydney, NSW, on 11 June 1927, the son of a naval dentist. Peter Rae Killen was born in Durban, South Africa, on 10 January 1927, the son of a factory

¹⁶⁰ 'Wishes of an Elderly Man Wished at a Garden Party, June 1914', *Laughter from a Cloud* (London/Sydney/Bombay, 1923), p. 228.

¹⁶¹ *The Diplomatic Career*, p. 55.

¹⁶² *Mucking About*, p. 227. See also Hasluck's essay 'The Problem of Administration' in R.M. & C.H. Berndt (eds.), *Aboriginal Man in Australia*, pp. 435-52.

¹⁶³ Lockhart, *Retreat from Glory*, p. 84.

¹⁶⁴ Hambloch, *British Consul*, p. 38.

¹⁶⁵ *John Paul Quinn: Recalled by some of his friends for his children*, 1968, p. 16.

¹⁶⁶ J.K. Conway, *The road from Coorain* (London, 1990 (1989)), p. 190.

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manager. Early in their careers they served as Third Secretaries in the other's country, Woolcott in South Africa from July 1954 to January 1957 and Killen in Australia from June 1949 to July 1954. Woolcott was promoted to Second Secretary while he was in South Africa. Killen was more academically gifted than Woolcott, obtaining a first class pass with two distinctions (English and Latin) in the 1943 matriculation examination and a distinction for Roman Law, one of his major subjects for his BA degree in 1947. Both displayed an early interest in foreign service as a career and when they were sixteen¹⁶⁷ their parents - Woolcott's father and Killen's mother - approached the respective Departments of External Affairs for information about the qualifications required.

In February 1944 Surgeon Commander Woolcott wrote personally to Hodgson, the Secretary for External Affairs, saying that his son Richard, newly embarked upon his final year at Geelong Grammar School, was interested in a foreign service career. He asked Hodgson to let him have 'some information regarding subjects most suitable for special study ... as the Diplomatic Corps is still his ambition'.¹⁶⁸ Hodgson replied two weeks later. While at that time, just over a year after the launch of the Australian diplomatic cadet scheme, applications were still being entertained from academically unqualified men and women in the age group seventeen to twenty-four, Hodgson said young Woolcott would be 'well advised to complete a University course prior to attempting the [competitive entrance] examination'. That was because though 'schoolboys may enter, they will in normal times have to compete with University graduates who, of course, have a marked advantage over them both in knowledge and intellectual maturity'.¹⁶⁹ In respect of subjects, Hodgson felt that

a history course gives on the whole the best training to a candidate for the Diplomatic Service. If it is possible to include in this some study of economics so much the better. At present a knowledge of languages is not a pre-requisite of entry, but it remains a considerable advantage'.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁷ Sixteen and seven months in Woolcott's case; sixteen and eight months in Killen's.

¹⁶⁸ A989/1, 43/300/1/29/6, Pt. 1, Woolcott/Hodgson, 15 February 1944. A 'layman's' reference to his own country's foreign service as 'the Diplomatic Corps' is a common error. The term refers today to Ambassadors and their staffs in a foreign capital. In 1914, however, the Royal Commission on the Civil Service used the term in its Fifth Report to distinguish between the Foreign Office in London and the Diplomatic Service abroad. Cd 7748, p. 1.

¹⁶⁹ A989/1, 43/300/1/29/6, Pt. 1, Hodgson/Woolcott, 29 February 1944.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

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Young Woolcott did not take Hodgson's advice. He was next heard from in September 1947 when, in the second year of a three year arts course at Melbourne University, having yet to write his second year examinations, he applied for a diplomatic cadetship.¹⁷¹ He sat the examination on 11 October 1947 but his results were not such as to qualify him for a personal interview.¹⁷² Someone who was interviewed that year was the later ALP cabinet minister (in the Whitlam government, 1972-75), J.M. Wheeldon, then eighteen, who was rejected both on account of his age and the fact that he lacked a university degree.¹⁷³ With unconscious irony the thirty-three year old Secretary for External Affairs, J.W. Burton, told Wheeldon's sponsor, Kim Beazley MP, who had himself been an unsuccessful applicant for a diplomatic cadetship in 1943,¹⁷⁴ that the required 'maturity and academic experience' could not 'reasonably be expected from an applicant of 18'.¹⁷⁵

While the same could be said of thirty-three year old heads of department, Burton, if inexperienced, by all accounts possessed the personal attributes to make a success of the job. Evatt's successor as Minister of External Affairs, the Liberal Party's P.C. Spender, thought highly of Burton's ability and he resigned of his own volition rather than being forced out. Perhaps this is a moot point but if he was forced out it was because of policy differences, not lack of ability. Spender said later of Burton 'He was a most personable man and I liked him. He was, moreover, a highly intelligent one and a resolute adviser with considerable experience.'¹⁷⁶ (But not of the minutiae of running a Department of External Affairs.)

Woolcott persisted and was accepted two years later, quite likely because the entrance examination had been dispensed with.¹⁷⁷ After graduating he worked as a journalist in London for a few months in 1949.¹⁷⁸ Once in the department he displayed

¹⁷¹ See AA, A1067/1, S47/323 UVW for his signed application dated 11 September 1947.

¹⁷² See the undated file copy of the letter addressed to unsuccessful candidates with surnames commencing with 'W' on AA, A1068/1, S47/323 UVW. His is the only familiar name in that group.

¹⁷³ Mackay, *The Diplomatic Cadet Scheme*, p. 20.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 14. Beazley and Wheeldon were cabinet colleagues in the Whitlam administration, the first mentioned Minister for Education and the latter Minister for Social Security.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁷⁶ P.C. Spender, *Exercises in Diplomacy: The ANZUS Treaty and the Colombo Plan* (Sydney, 1969), p. 28.

¹⁷⁷ Mackay, *The Diplomatic Cadet Scheme*, p. 16 and 'The Australian Diplomatic Service', *Current Notes*, Vol. 22, No. 5, May 1951, p. 284.

¹⁷⁸ At the London office of *The Herald* (Melbourne). He had intended to work for *The Herald* in Melbourne in 1950 but was instead selected as a diplomatic cadet. R.A. Woolcott, letter, 17 January 1995.

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an aptitude for the work coupled with an engaging personality¹⁷⁹ that saw him scale the heights in a forty-two year career. In the early 1970s he was, according to one observer, 'ferociously capable in his dual role' of 'diplomat/politician'.¹⁸⁰ His job at the time - head of the department's information and cultural relations branch but, at the same time, 'unofficially its chief political trouble-shooter'¹⁸¹ - was tailor-made to his abilities. So well did he do that he was spoken of in 1974 as

a key figure at the interface of the political and bureaucratic levels of government'. Already his encyclopaedic command of detail and public relations skills had put him into the limelight as a regular travelling companion of ministers.¹⁸²

The same year he was Gough Whitlam's first choice as Secretary for Foreign Affairs but was said to be 'too young'.¹⁸³ Woolcott says it was he himself

who responded to Gough Whitlam's suggestion of the Secretaryship in late 1973 by saying I was perhaps, too young, that the appointment could be disruptive to the Department and that there were other suitable, more experienced officers available.¹⁸⁴

One may agree with his comment that this was 'curious in these days of unrestrained ambition'. While political and service exigencies occasioned an eighteen year delay before he became Secretary, he was always in the running. As Foreign Minister Gareth Evans said at his retirement dinner in 1992:

for the last 20 years or so, I do not think anyone has been in any doubt that it was really only a question of when, not whether, Dick Woolcott became Secretary.¹⁸⁵

¹⁷⁹ That he was no 'pushover' was revealed by his handling of the Eybers case. See Chapter Six.

¹⁸⁰ He denies playing the politician, saying that while serving the government of the day he was careful to avoid a political role. 'I served Menzies, Holt, McMahon, Whitlam and Hawke (three Liberal PMs and two Labour PMs) in an advisory capacity on their overseas travels. It was in fact suggested to me by leaders of both parties that I enter Federal politics, a course which I eschewed'. Letter, 17 January 1995.

¹⁸¹ Juddery, *At the Centre*, p. 94.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 105. A fact Woolcott lists in his Who's Who entry, *ie. Who's Who In Australia 1994*, p. 1602. Differences in public sector culture as well as perceptions of the importance of public servants in relation to politicians virtually preclude such a discussion of individual officers in the South African Department of External Affairs. Perhaps that is why there are no public sector specialists equivalent to Juddery and other Australasians (Juddery was New Zealand-born) among South African journalists.

¹⁸³ Renouf, *The Champagne Trail*, p. 99.

¹⁸⁴ Letter, 17 January 1995.

¹⁸⁵ 'Farewell to Dick Woolcott: Speech by Senator Gareth Evans, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, to Retirement Dinner, Parliament House, Canberra, 26 February 1992', p. 3.

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It is not every foreign service officer whose minister calls him 'a very notable [citizen] and an outstanding servant of his country'.¹⁸⁶ Few South Africans have qualified for such an accolade.

A developed sense of fun marked Woolcott's career from the beginning. An early, if juvenile manifestation of it was chopping down the flag pole at the Canberra University College hall of residence, 'Gungahlin', on the eve of his first overseas posting, to Moscow, at the end of 1951.¹⁸⁷ A fellow resident, P.G.F. Henderson, himself later a Secretary for Foreign Affairs (1979-84) recorded his impressions:

'This,' I thought, 'must lead to real trouble.' It did. But Dick still went off on his posting. The long-suffering head of the Department's Personnel branch may well have thought, as others in that position have thought since, that some of our most highly regarded colleagues are sometimes better employed serving overseas than at home.¹⁸⁸

The South Africans were not exempt from displays of high spirits. When R.F. Botha, later Foreign Minister (1977-1994), was a Cadet in 1953 he was also Pretoria University's cheerleader, a position requiring the incumbent to keep the enthusiasm of his team's supporters at peak during the annual rugby match against the University of the Witwatersrand. It was practice in those days for the universities to seek to capture their rival's cheerleader, a fate which befell both that year. Botha was carried off to Johannesburg and detained for forty-eight hours in one of the men's residences on campus.¹⁸⁹ The Department of External Affairs was not amused. Botha was required to give a full explanation for his absence and was reprimanded.¹⁹⁰

Rae Killen's rise was less assured and less spectacular than Woolcott's. At the time of his appointment as Director-General he was the senior Deputy Director-General in the South African Department of Foreign Affairs. He had served in far fewer posts than Woolcott - in subordinate capacities in Australia, the Belgian Congo, Canada and the United Kingdom - and never as Ambassador. In fact, his only Ambassadorial experience was the three years he spent in that capacity on contract in

¹⁸⁶ 'Farewell to Dick Woolcott', p. 5.

¹⁸⁷ A more mature example was the despatch he wrote after representing Australia at one of the many W.V.S. Tubman presidential inaugurations in Liberia. See the Introduction above.

¹⁸⁸ Henderson, *Privilege and Pleasure*, pp. 25-26.

¹⁸⁹ *Die Transvaler*, 29 May 1953.

¹⁹⁰ R.F. Botha, telephonic communication, 1 July 1994. An earlier incident had seen three Cadets engaged in a chicken-stealing expedition.

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London after being displaced as Director-General in 1987 by N.P. van Heerden, the Foreign Minister's preferred choice to head the department. He retired in 1991 and died the following year.

Almost fifty years earlier, in September 1943, his mother, Mrs D. Killen of 149 South Ridge Road, Durban, had written to the Department of External Affairs requesting 'all available information regarding the qualifications & training necessary for a candidate for the South African Diplomatic Service'.¹⁹¹ She omitted to mention that she wanted the information for her son and the clerk who replied to her letter accordingly assumed she was writing on her own behalf. Forwarding a copy of circular D.A. 11-1¹⁹² which gave details of the required qualifications, he appended the rider: 'It may be mentioned that at present it is not the policy of this Department to appoint women in diplomatic posts'.¹⁹³

Circular D.A. 11-1 made it clear that a recognised university degree was a *sine qua non* for entry into the South African diplomatic service. Nothing more was heard from Killen until he approached the department on his own behalf in March 1947 to ask for 'details of the conditions applying to entry into the diplomatic Service'. In the interim he had served with the South African forces in Italy for fifteen months after leaving school (November 1944 - April 1946). He said that he was in the final year of his BA (Legal) and that he hoped to proceed to the LLB degree.¹⁹⁴ The clerk who had replied to his mother three-and-a-half years before sent him a memorandum setting out 'the requirements for admission to, and advancement in, the Union's Diplomatic and Consular Service'.¹⁹⁵

That was by way of a feeler on Killen's part because he addressed a further letter to the department in December of the same year seeking advice. He said that he had taken his degree, 'with two prospects in view: either Law as a profession, or the Diplomatic Service'. Law no longer interested him but he was attracted by the scope offered by External Affairs. Should he return to university to take the courses prescribed by the department, or should he take an LLB degree? He could also apply for a scholarship for overseas study and he wanted to know what Oxford or

¹⁹¹ BTS, 24/2, Vol. 1, Mrs Killen/DEA, 9 September 1943.

¹⁹² Issued over Bodenstein's signature on 2 November 1938.

¹⁹³ BTS, 24/2, Vol. 1, Louw/Mrs Killen, 18 September 1943.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, Killen/DEA, 16 March 1947.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, Louw/Killen, 11 April 1947.

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Cambridge degree would be best for employment in the department?¹⁹⁶ He would not have known it then but putting such questions to a department which, unlike the Australian department, set little store by Oxford and Cambridge degrees, was unlikely to draw genuinely helpful answers. Many of its senior officers, including the permanent head, Forsyth (whose only formal qualification was the Civil Service Lower and Higher Law Certificates), had joined the Public Service at a young age, obtaining degrees through part time study and, as far as the staff section was concerned, that was the tried and tested route to preferment.

A year or so later there was the case of C.B.H. Fincham, academically perhaps the most gifted South African foreign service officer of the post-war generation, whom the University of Leiden awarded a Doctor of Laws degree in 1948 for an internationally respected dissertation on the domestic jurisdiction clause in the League of Nations Covenant and the United Nations Charter.¹⁹⁷ When Fincham joined the department in December 1945 at the age of almost thirty (he was born on 19 July 1916) he was in possession of a BA from the University of Cape Town comprising mainly legal subjects, an MA in Psychology from the same university and an LLB from the University of South Africa. He had also long been interested in a foreign service career, making his first approach to the department in 1936.¹⁹⁸

According to Sole 'there was a story that when Charles sent his LLD certificate to the Departmental staff section for registration the question was asked: "where is Leiden and what sort of university is it?"'¹⁹⁹ The file does not confirm that but it does reveal that South African English-language universities of the day declined to equate a Leiden LLD with one of their own doctoral degrees. The universities of Pretoria and Stellenbosch were, however, in no doubt about its value.²⁰⁰ External Affairs had initiated the matter by asking the University of South Africa in April 1949 whether Fincham's doctorate was 'equivalent to the Doctor's degree of any South African university and, if not, what measure of recognition it would receive here'.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, Killen/DEA, 3 December 1947.

¹⁹⁷ C.B.H. Fincham, *Domestic jurisdiction: The exception of domestic jurisdiction as a bar to action by the League of Nations and the United Nations: A contribution to the study of article 15, paragraph 8, of the Covenant and article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter*. Leiden, 1948.

¹⁹⁸ BTS, 24/2, Vol. 1, Fincham/DEA, 1 May 1936.

¹⁹⁹ Letter, 18 May 1993.

²⁰⁰ BTS, Fincham, Vol. 2, Secretary for Education/SEA, 30 June 1949.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, v.d. Berg/Registrar, University of South Africa, 27 April 1949.

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When that university proved 'unwilling to express an opinion', External Affairs referred the matter to the Union Education Department.²⁰² The latter took it up with all South African universities with the above result. The correspondence dragged on for eighteen months. O.G. Albers who was later taken up in the department's diplomatic wing but then in the staff section,²⁰³ drafted some of it. When all is said and done, it is not clear why the staff section should have taken the matter to such lengths. For Fincham received neither promotion nor additional emoluments for his achievement.

Perhaps it was a manifestation of the department's then strongly authoritarian tendencies.²⁰⁴ At that time foreign service officers were obliged to obtain departmental permission to marry, their intended spouses, whether South African or foreign, having to be approved before the marriage.²⁰⁵ Junior officers appeared to have submitted meekly to this and there are no known cases, at least not to this writer, of rebellion in the ranks. Possibly that was because the people likely to object were precisely those whose personalities would have disqualified them from selection in the first place. Although departmental approval was a *sine qua non*, it is not known whether any prospective brides were abandoned at the altar because approval was not forthcoming.

The Australians had no similar provision as Forsyth discovered when he approached the High Commission in Canberra for details of 'Australian regulations and practice in respect of the marriage of foreign service officers with non-Australian nationals'. Australians could marry whom they pleased except that 'in exceptional cases', while there were 'no actual prohibitions', an officer could be advised against marrying a particular person.²⁰⁶ Nel, who himself had been through the process in Cairo in the 1940s - his wife was an American - for some reason professed ignorance of the rule earlier the same year when taking up with Forsyth personally Killen's desire to become engaged to an Australian. (We 'would ... like to know ... what the position

²⁰² *Ibid.*, v.d. Berg/Secretary for Union Education, 9 May 1949.

²⁰³ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 13, Joubert/PSC, 24 November 1949. At that time he seems to have been employed in a temporary capacity. The Public Service Commission's recommendation for his appointment as Clerical Assistant, Grade II, was dated 5 December 1949 which Dr Malan approved on 9 December.

²⁰⁴ See Sole, *Reminiscences*, pp. 216, 222-23 for examples of what he calls departmental 'lack of consideration'.

²⁰⁵ While still a formal requirement, this is no longer enforced.

²⁰⁶ BCB, Vol. 4, 6/5/1 SR, Forsyth/High Commissioner, Canberra, 23 September 1952 and Nel/SEA, 16 October 1952. Nel stressed that 'no prior approval whatsoever' was needed for Australian foreign service personnel 'who contemplate marriage with either Australian or non-Australian nationals'.

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is if one of our officers wishes to marry a girl of foreign nationality'.) Forsyth replied firmly: 'the prior approval of the Department is necessary in the case of the marriage of any member of our diplomatic staff to anyone - even though she may be a South African citizen'.²⁰⁷ (Emphasis in original.)

Because theirs was a unilingual country, the Australians had no rule requiring the wives of foreign service officers to demonstrate their language proficiency. Initiated by Eric Louw, the proviso that South African foreign service wives should prove their fluency in both official languages was aimed at the foreign women some of his officers married while serving abroad. (He prohibited the practice in respect of those who were not yet married and required offenders to leave the service.)²⁰⁸ What it came down to was that the wives of foreign service officers abroad were expected to converse fluently in Afrikaans with visiting Afrikaans-speaking South Africans.²⁰⁹ As far as Louw and the department were concerned, that was more important than the wife's or husband's ability to speak the language of the country in which they were stationed, though Louw always insisted on French as a prerequisite for a diplomatic career.

In keeping with the idiosyncratic management style manifest in a department which has had only four Ministers since 1955²¹⁰ and eight permanent heads since 1927,²¹¹ the language requirement was applied selectively until it was abandoned in the

²⁰⁷ BTS, Killen, Vol. 1, Nel/Forsyth, 17 April 1952; Forsyth/Nel, 2 May 1952.

²⁰⁸ Fourie, *Brandpunte*, p. 48. This would have been enough to deter the older generation of foreign service officer. However, there are no cases known to this writer of officers being forced to leave the service after contracting foreign marriages.

²⁰⁹ Louw made that clear in a message to South African diplomats within days of taking office. See *Die Burger* and *Rand Daily Mail* (Johannesburg), 20 January 1955; *Die Transvaler*, 21 January 1955 and *The Star* (Johannesburg), 20 January 1955. (Editorial). Sole writes approvingly of this: 'I recognised fully the importance of ensuring that wives serving abroad, who should be as fully representative as their husbands, were able to converse in both of South Africa's official languages. *Reminiscences*, p. 231. Louw's message formed the subject of Hodgson's first ministerial despatch of 1955, *ie.*, AA, A4231/2, Cape Town/Pretoria 1955, No. 1/55, Hodgson/Casey, 28 January 1955.

²¹⁰ E.H. Louw (1955-1963), H. Muller (1964-1977), R.F. Botha (1977-1994) and A. Nzo (1994-). By contrast, by the time R.G. Casey became Australia's Minister of External Affairs in April 1951, he was the twenty-fourth holder of the office. *The Canberra Times*, 9 July 1959. Many of his predecessors had combined it with other portfolios including the Prime Ministership. He has had eleven successors to date: R.G. Menzies (1960-61); G.E.J. Barwick (1961-64); P.M.C. Hasluck (1964-69); G. Freeth (1969); W. McMahon (1969-71); L.H.E. Bury (1971); N. Bowen (1971-72); E.G. Whitlam (1972-73); D.R. Willesee (1973-75); A.S. Peacock (1975-80); A. Street (1980-83); W.G. Hayden (1983-88); and G.J. Evans (1988-).

²¹¹ The first two (H.D.J. Bodenstein and D.D. Forsyth) served for twenty-nine years and the next two (G.P. Jooste and B.G. Fourie) for twenty-six. They were followed by two (H. van Dalsen and P.R. Killen) who had a total of five years between them, by one (N.P. van Heerden) who served for five

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late 1960s with changes of Minister and head of department. However, even (and perhaps especially) Afrikaans-speaking officers were hounded down the years on account of their English-speaking or foreign wives' inability to speak Afrikaans. Much seemed to depend on the husband's standing in the estimation of the departmental hierarchy. If the hierarchy fancied you, a blind eye was turned on your wife's lack of fluency in Afrikaans, even your own.

Thus E.M. Rhoodie claimed that Anthony Hamilton, his head of mission in Canberra in the late 1950s, 'could barely speak Afrikaans'. The same applied to Mrs Hamilton whom, Rhoodie said, would ask his wife to give her a sentence in Afrikaans that she would 'proudly throw at the visitors' during visits by South African politicians.²¹² That never harmed Hamilton's career any more than his political views, which were known to (and reported on by) Australian officials before he went to Canberra.²¹³ Hamilton was too much of the *beau ideal* of a foreign service officer, a man who had established close relationships with Robert Menzies, the Australian Prime Minister, and with the aristocratic British High Commissioner in Canberra, Lord Carrington, to be regarded any way other than favourably by his department and Minister in the prevailing circumstances.

For a government struggling to obtain international recognition and acceptance, here was one of its diplomats who had achieved that within his circle, to its benefit. Neither Louw nor Jooste were going to move against a man like that. (On the other hand, Sole rightly points out that 'under the Nationalist Government ... Hamilton served [as Head of Mission] only in those overseas posts that were regarded as out of the way where he would have little contact with Afrikaners'²¹⁴ other than members of

years, and lastly by the present incumbent (L.H. Evans) who was appointed to a five year term in 1992. In 1995 the Government of National Unity confirmed Evans in his post until the expiry of his contract in 1997. In the sixty years since 1935, the Australian department has had fourteen permanent heads: W.R. Hodgson (1935-45); W.E. Dunk (1945-47); J.W. Burton (1947-50); A.S. Watt (1950-54); A.H. Tange (1954-65); J. Plimsoll (1965-70); J.K. Waller (1970-74); A.P. Renouf (1974-77); N.F. Parkinson (1977-79); P.G.F. Henderson (1979-84); S. Harris (1984-88); R.A. Woolcott (1988-92); P.S. Wilenski (1992-93); and M.J. Costello (1993-).

²¹² E.M. Rhoodie, *The real information scandal* (Pretoria, 1983), p. 43. He was presumably thinking of the delegation to the 1959 meeting of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. Mrs Rhoodie, who seems not to have got on with Mrs Hamilton, does not refer to this in her book *Agter 'n Marmerskans* (Johannesburg/Cape Town, 1982).

²¹³ See, for example, AA, A1838/T54, 1500/1/30/8, Memo. 397, Gilchrist/DEA, 6 August 1957 and file note dated 30 August 1957 by J.C.G. Kevin. Citing Rhoodie, Berridge mentions Hamilton's name in passing in his article 'The Ethnic "Agent in Place"', *Intelligence and National Security*, 4 (2), April 1989, p. 261.

²¹⁴ Letter, 6 January 1995.

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his staff - Canberra, Stockholm, Madrid and Tokyo. So perhaps Rhoodie's criticism had some effect after all). In any case, others who were less gifted, useful or likeable were less fortunate and for so long as the requirement remained in force, the quality of his wife's Afrikaans was a potential barrier to an officer's advancement though not, of course, in the Public Service at large.

Hamilton kept up his association with Menzies until the latter's death in 1978 and is still in touch with Lord Carrington. He writes of the latter: 'We stayed with them frequently on our visits from European posts and they twice came to stay with us in Pretoria when the Tories were in opposition and Peter was between posts at the Admiralty. They are coming out to see us this summer [1994], we hope.'²¹⁵

Geldenhuis refers to the English/Afrikaans divide in the Department of External Affairs.²¹⁶ This writer is hesitant to share his conclusion that 'Afrikaners and Nationalists - but particularly Afrikaner-Nationalists - [were] in some important respects "more equal" than other officials'.²¹⁷ Given basic ability, what counted was not 'ethnic' background but personal chemistry with the Minister and the Secretary. Hamilton had a rapport with Jooste (less so with Louw) while many of his Afrikaans-speaking colleagues did not. As Steiner says of the influence of Hardinge, Crowe and Tyrrell in the pre-1914 Foreign Office, the 'personal factor was all important', meaning their relationship with the Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey.²¹⁸ At the height of the National Party's ascendancy in the 1950s and 1960s, the appointments of Jooste and Fourie to head the department were clearly on merit. All things considered, they were the best choices at the time. The fact that two of Fourie's three principal rivals (Sole and Taswell) were English-speaking should not be allowed to cloud the issue. In itself that was an indication that English-speakers could be considered seriously for the position.

Australia's Alan Watt wrote of being 'haunted' when Secretary for External Affairs by a disgruntled, perhaps unhinged wife:

²¹⁵ A.M. Hamilton, *Antipodean Days 1957- to '61*, August 1993, p. 7 and letters, 9 August, 1 September, 28 October and 22 November 1993. Lord Carrington spent three weeks in South Africa early in 1995. Hamilton, letter, 20 February 1995.

²¹⁶ *The Diplomacy of Isolation*, pp. 134-35.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

²¹⁸ Z.S. Steiner, 'Grey, Hardinge and the Foreign Office, 1906-1910', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. X, No. 4, 1967, p. 349.

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I would be telephoned or visited at home, waylaid as I left the office after a long day, or forced to explain to Prime Ministers or Ministers for External Affairs to whom she had written about her husband. When the latter was posted overseas to an important position, she visited the relevant diplomatic representative in Canberra to ask that the foreign Mission should refuse to issue a visa to her husband.²¹⁹

The woman behaved that way because of her husband's conduct. Few wives would then have done so on account of Watt's or his department's perceived shortcomings towards themselves. Few South African wives of the day, though they may as Sole says, have resented its exercise,²²⁰ would have denied their husband's employer the right to pronounce on their command of the official languages or, indeed, whether they were suitable consorts for foreign service officers. A South African foreign service officer whose wife behaved as V. Sackville-West²²¹ did and refused to accompany him on his overseas postings would have been obliged to leave the service. Even now such an officer would not be posted overseas.

At least in Australia and other countries of the developed world, the position is very different today. In Australia and Canada the parties to what are known as *de facto* (common law) marriages accompany their partners abroad at government expense, as do parties to longstanding homosexual (gay) relationships. South Africa lags behind in that respect. In the context of the language question Sole, a foreign service officer of the 'old school', remarks that 'wives serving abroad ... should be as fully representative as their husbands'.²²² A modern Australian, British or American, if not South African, foreign service wife would hold that if that were so, they should be remunerated accordingly and in some cases they are. In those countries there are strong diplomatic wives associations which have achieved benefits for their members undreamed of by previous generations of foreign service wives.

In Sweden a diplomatic wife receives her own pension. In Sweden and Denmark, where a foreign service officer divorces his wife, he is required to 'divide his pension between his two (or three) wives according to the number of years each

²¹⁹ Watt, *Australian Diplomat*, pp. 166-67.

²²⁰ Sole, *Reminiscences*, p. 231.

²²¹ Harold Nicolson's wife.

²²² Sole, *Reminiscences*, p. 231.

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woman has served as a partner in diplomatic postings'.²²³ The period we are examining was less enlightened. If in the case of South African officers their wives' performance was not formally taken into account in the periodic assessment of their promotability (as in the United Kingdom), perceptions of the wife could still indirectly make or break the husband's career. Even so, that would not have been to the extent, as with some services, of forcing the husband into early retirement.²²⁴ Public Service regulations would not have provided for that.

²²³ C. Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches & Bases: making feminist sense of international politics* (London, 1989), pp. 104-05. The chapter 'Diplomatic Wives' (pp. 93-123) is a useful counterbalance to the traditional concentration on the foreign service husband's career.

²²⁴ E. Clark, *Corps Diplomatique*, p. 93.

CHAPTER THREE

THE HIGH COMMISSIONS

The Australian government initiated the exchange of High Commissioners with South Africa in the early postwar period. Domestic political considerations were probably the immediate reason for the proposal and its timing. Parliamentary and public pressure built up to satisfy the perceived need to fill the gap represented by South Africa in the network of Australia's relations with other members of the British Commonwealth. Smuts's standing as international statesman, 'the one South African with an international reputation',¹ could have had something to do with it.² By that time Curtin's common sense view that 'the expense involved would not be justified by the work involved' (see Chapter One, pp. 40-41 above) had been forgotten. Domestic political pressure was probably also the reason for the premature disclosure of the government's intentions. It was said on its behalf in the Senate in June 1945 during Evatt's absence at the San Francisco Conference that favourable consideration had been given the proposal.³

In September, replying to an Opposition speaker who held that 'some diplomatic contact' with South Africa was 'of extreme importance', N.J.O. Makin, acting as Minister of External Affairs on the occasion of yet another Evatt absence, told the House of Representatives that conversations between the two countries were proceeding.⁴ D.D. Forsyth commented on the file copy of the *Rand Daily Mail* report on Makin's remarks: 'P.M. informed. He knows nothing about this and nor do I'.⁵ In the same debate an ALP backbencher advocated the opening of a mission in South Africa before one was opened in Latin America, as planned.⁶ Makin in fact anticipated by more than a month his submission to Cabinet of 29 October 1945 requesting authority

¹ W.A. Spooner, *United States policy toward South Africa, 1919-1941, political and economic aspects* (Unpublished PhD thesis, St John's University, NY, 1979), p. 260.

² According to Hudson 'Evatt, like most of his generation, admired Smuts and tended to stress South Africa's role in the "war against fascism".' Written comments, June 1995. However, in view of what is said about it in Chapter One and later in the present chapter, it would seem Evatt's attitude towards Smuts was ambivalent. The point is valid in respect of Australian public opinion at large.

³ *CPD.*, Vol. 182, 5 June 1945, p. 2462.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. 185, 20 September 1945, pp. 5717, 5719.

⁵ *BTS*, 4/2/32, Vol. 1, 24 September 1945.

⁶ *CPD.*, Vol. 185, p. 5710.

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to communicate with the South African government. The submission was approved the following day.⁷ It made these points:

In addition to the general value which such a step would have in completing our representation in the British Commonwealth of Nations it is suggested that it would be important for the following reasons:-

(i) In the work of the United Nations and its various constituent bodies members of the British Commonwealth should be fully unformed as to each other's attitudes, policies and problems;

(ii) Trade between South Africa and Australia might very well increase as a result;

(iii) South Africa and Australia, owing to the similarity of their climatic conditions, can probably assist each other very considerably in the exchange of scientific and economic information, particularly relating to agriculture and the pastoral industry;

(iv) It would facilitate the general growth of cultural and educational ties.

The proposal took the form of a cable to Smuts as South African Prime Minister expressing the hope he would agree to receiving a High Commissioner at Pretoria 'in the near future' and reciprocate 'by appointing a High Commissioner with residence in Canberra'. We feel, the cable concluded, 'that our relations in the past have lacked the continuous and positive character which such an exchange of representatives would develop on the basis of our friendship in peace and war as fellow members of the British Commonwealth'.⁸ Smuts sought to put the Australians off:⁹ An 'acute shortage of personnel' made it difficult to reciprocate at that time. It was therefore hoped that 'the appointment of an Australian High Commissioner could be delayed until such time as a convenient date could be agreed upon'.¹⁰ Burton conveyed this to Evatt, then in Washington, saying it was proposed to reply that 'we appreciate their difficulty' but hope the exchange would 'prove possible by middle of 1946'. Evatt's

⁷ AA, A1066/1, M45/21/6, Agendum No. 979, 29 October 1945, 'Australian Representation in South Africa' and Strahan/Makin, 31 October 1945.

⁸ AA, A461/1, A348/1/18, O. 27815, 1 November 1945.

⁹ *Ibid.*, I. 3510, 7 November 1945.

¹⁰ BTS, 4/2/32, Vol. 1, Smuts's handwritten instructions on Canberra's telegram No. 118. A copy of this telegram is also on BTS, 130/10, Vol. 1 as is a copy of the South African reply, No. 101, despatched on 7 November. As received in Canberra the next day, this was numbered I. 3510. It is not clear why the South African reply was despatched only on 7 November because five days previously (2 November) Smuts had instructed Forsyth and Forsyth Jooste about the action to be taken.

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suggested amendment - 'at latest by middle of 1946' - was not incorporated in the cable as despatched.¹¹

The domestic pressures on the Australian government did not subside and on 9 April 1946, the day the Cabinet approved his appointment for 'not more than three years', it cabled Smuts its intention to appoint as High Commissioner Sir George Knowles, since 1932 Solicitor-General, Head of the Attorney-General's Department, and Chief Parliamentary Draftsman. The cable held that there was 'considerable public feeling in Australia that the initial step should be taken' and expressed the hope that Knowles could 'proceed to South Africa in June or soon afterwards'.¹² This time the South Africans did not demur but 'warmly welcome[d] the decision to appoint a High Commissioner ... and the choice of so distinguished representative as Sir George Knowles'. Expressing the hope of reciprocating 'as soon as possible', the reply requested Australia's 'ready understanding of the circumstances' which precluded 'an immediate appointment'.¹³ A year earlier, however, in a lengthy submission to the Public Service Commission on the question of its post-war re-organisation, the Department of External Affairs had anticipated the establishment of High Commissions in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, as well as representation in Ireland and India.¹⁴

The Australian press release announcing the opening of a High Commission in South Africa stressed the 'importance of completing the network of Australian representation in British Commonwealth countries'. The release also announced appointments to Ireland and New Zealand.¹⁵ Not that Ireland then really qualified for the description of Commonwealth country. After all, de Valera was perhaps the only government leader anywhere in the world to pay his condolences in person at the German Legation on the occasion of Hitler's suicide in 1945.¹⁶

¹¹ AA, A1066/1, M45/21/6, Burton/Evatt, 14 November 1945 (draft); Evatt/Burton, 16 November 1945; AA, A1066/1, M45/21/6, O. 29644 (No. 130), 22 November 1945.

¹² AA, A1066/1, M45/21/6., Strahan/Evatt, 9 April 1946; O. 7010 (No. 27), 9 April 1946.

¹³ BTS, 130/10, Vol. 1, Minister of External Affairs, Cape Town/Minister of External Affairs, Canberra, No. 24, 12 April 1946.

¹⁴ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 7, Pohl/Public Service Commission, 22 November 1944, p. 6, para. 25.

¹⁵ AA, A1066/1, M45/21/6, 'For the Press: Appointment of Australian High Commissioners', 8 May 1946.

¹⁶ The Earl of Longford & T.P. O'Neill, *Eamon de Valera* (London, 1970), pp. 411-12; J.T. Carroll, *Ireland in the War Years* (Newton Abbot/New York, 1975), pp. 160-61.

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There can therefore be no doubt that the Australian government initiated the diplomatic link between the two countries and was rather forward about it. By not reciprocating immediately with its own appointment, the Smuts government caused the Australian government embarrassment. That was mainly the latter's own fault. An almost parallel situation had arisen some months before when the Australians in effect rejected a Portuguese request for an exchange of diplomatic representatives. On instructions S.M. Bruce, the High Commissioner in London, told the Portuguese Ambassador that Portugal should not press 'the question of the appointment of a Chargé d'Affaires in Australia' at that time. That was due to 'the fact that at the moment we were heavily committed with regard to new missions abroad, with consequent demands on personnel to staff them'. Australia 'fully appreciated that the Portuguese Government would *not* regard it as discourteous if, while agreeing to the Portuguese appointment at Canberra, we did not reciprocate by sending a representative to Lisbon'. Even so, the government felt that despite 'the comprehending attitude of the Portuguese Government, it was not a desirable situation that one sided representation should continue indefinitely'.¹⁷

Bruce recorded that the Ambassador was upset, but the face-to-face interview left his government with no room for manoeuvre. The absence of personal contact in the case of their own proposal to the South Africans encouraged the Australians to disregard Smuts's wishes. They then found themselves in precisely the situation they warned the Portuguese about. In the event, the opening of a Portuguese mission in Australia was delayed until 1960.

Hudson holds that Evatt admired Smuts (see footnote 2 above); Sole would disagree. For instance, he says Evatt 'revelled in the humiliations' Smuts received at the 1946 session of the UN General Assembly 'in part with Australian assistance'. (Sole got that first-hand from Evatt's 'court jester', Sam Atyeo.)¹⁸ It may have been a case of admiration mixed with envy. From Smuts's side, however, admiration was quite likely altogether lacking. He would probably have agreed with Sir Alexander Cadogan that Evatt was 'the most frightful man in the world'¹⁹ as a generation earlier this would have summed up his attitude towards W.M. Hughes, Australia's Prime Minister during the

¹⁷ *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, Vol. VIII, pp. 206-07. The reason for the Australian attitude was less shortage of staff than a desire for clarification of the position of Portuguese Timor.

¹⁸ *Reminiscences*, pp. 103-04; also letter, 30 June 1994.

¹⁹ D. Dilks, ed., *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan O.M. 1938-1945* (New York, 1972), p. 745 - Diary entry for 23 May 1945.

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First World War. (His relations with Hughes at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference were not happy.) His personal feelings towards these Australians perhaps compounded his standoffish attitude towards their country. In any case, the existence of the animus would not have helped him be more receptive to Australia's proposal. He simply did not attach much importance to the connection and Australia accepted that.

Supporting that perception is a comment from just before the 1948 South African general election:

your Prime Minister carries so much more weight in Empire counsels than does ours and consequently has infinitely more numerous and more effective channels of communication with London than we can possibly have; and that you have so many more people of substance coming to you from London than we have ...

You in South Africa, therefore, need be much less anxious than we about the effectiveness of your communications with London. We are greatly perturbed and dissatisfied and are likely to go on being so.²⁰

In retrospect and from its own point of view, the Chifley government's insistence on the establishment of diplomatic relations with South Africa was ill-advised. It may (though this is unlikely) have come to that conclusion itself by the time of its fall four years later. It courted South Africa against the background of Smuts's international eminence and did not anticipate the controversy that would soon envelop his and his successors' domestic policies. Nor did it anticipate Smuts's own fall less than two years later. The controversy would bedevil the South African government's relations with the international community from the time of the first session of the UN General Assembly in 1946 (see Chapter Eight) until the end of white rule almost five decades later. In time it would show signs of damaging the international standing of the South African government's interlocutors including Australia whereupon they started to distance themselves.

As early as 1947 Evatt and Burton contemplated signalling Smuts to mend his fences with India in respect of the Treatment of Indians item. After the 1947 session of the UN General Assembly Burton instructed that a telegram be prepared 'reviewing

²⁰ BTS, 1/25/2A, Vol. 1, Loose paper 'Copy: From Curthoys, Melbourne, March 23, 1948'. R.L. Curthoys was *The Times*' (London) chief correspondent in Australia at the time. He had earlier been Editor of *The Argus* (Melbourne). His remarks seem to be a manifestation of the so-called 'cultural cringe' or undue deference to things English (or European) in relation to things Australian.

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Australian support for South Africa ... and tactfully suggesting that, during the ensuing year, they make a determined effort to reach an agreement with India'.²¹ The draft commenced by referring to Australia's 'determined efforts' at the 1947 session to support South Africa over the Indian and South West Africa questions. In respect of the last-mentioned, Evatt had 'made a special plea on South Africa's behalf'. Unfortunately,

It is probable (and our reports from India tend to confirm the view) that this support has diminished the reserve of goodwill which Indians have shown towards Australia. Although this is in itself disturbing to us, we are more concerned lest the present disagreement over Indians in South Africa should unduly prejudice India and Pakistan in their attitude towards the British Commonwealth as a whole. I am confident that you will agree on the importance of India and Pakistan remaining within the Commonwealth as full and actively cooperating members, and I cannot but feel that if a solution to the problem is not found soon such membership on their part may be seriously jeopardised.²²

The fury this would have produced in Smuts can be imagined. It would likely have damaged the budding official relationship which was probably why Evatt did not send it. (The draft bears the inscription 'No [sic] sent'.) His reasons may have included the feeling that if he did, Smuts would never appoint a High Commissioner to Australia. In any case the draft expressed sentiments which should best conveyed orally rather than in writing let alone in a cable. Smuts was not as concerned as the Australians to keep India in the Commonwealth. He was more interested in the domestic political problems local Indians were perceived to be causing. Some six months earlier when warning the New Zealand government against allowing Chinese to enter New Zealand on the same terms as other aliens, he had drawn an unflattering parallel with his own country's situation:

we wonder, having regard to Asiatic aspirations, commitment to the policy [of giving Chinese immigrants the status of other aliens] will not expose New Zealand to very grave risk in the future. It is China today. It will be other Asiatic countries, including Japan, in the future. Our difficult Asiatic problem once appeared as innocent as does the question which confronts you today.²³

²¹ AA, A1068/1, M47/21/4/1, Box 1, Townsend/Middle East [Branch], 1 December 1947.

²² *Ibid.*, 'Draft telegram to the Prime Minister of South Africa. Top Secret. For the Prime Minister from the Acting Prime Minister', undated.

²³ AA, A1838/2, 539/12, I. 9343, 8 May 1947. (Addressed Wellington No. 19; repeated London No. 500; Ottawa No. 13; and Canberra No. 20).

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Indian government complaints about the treatment of South African Indians achieved momentum well before the question reached the United Nations. By mid-1946 India was on the point of withdrawing its High Commissioner from South Africa. That was the background against which Indian officials claimed that 'the readiness of the South African Government to exchange High Commissioners with Australia' could be a 'sinister move'. At least that is what Moodie of the Australian High Commission in New Delhi, reported to Canberra on the basis of a conversation with Banerjee, the Secretary of the Indian Department of Commonwealth Relations. India, he said, feared that South Africa 'would send to Australia a High Commissioner who would pump anti-Indian propoganda into the Australian Government and public'.²⁴

The South African government continued to plead shortage of staff.²⁵ But shortly before the 1948 general election Smuts apparently asked J.R.F. Stratford, United Party MP for Parktown, whether he wanted to go to Australia. He declined for personal reasons.²⁶ After it took office the National Party government, which probably expected its relations with London to be shaky, responded positively to the idea of appointing a High Commissioner. Forsyth had, however, to explain the situation to Malan when Evatt's telegram of 6 June 1948 arrived. In it Evatt indicated his intention of announcing Alfred Stirling's appointment in succession to Knowles who had died in Pretoria the previous November.²⁷ At the same time Evatt reminded Malan about the lack of a South African High Commissioner.

It would give me pleasure to be able to announce at the same time, the intention of your Government to appoint a High Commissioner to Australia in the near future. This was always the express intention of the South African Government, but it has not been carried out up to the present. I should appreciate your early comments.²⁸

²⁴ AA, A1067/1, M46/21/7, Moodie/Heydon, 21 June 1946.

²⁵ See Knowles's report on his interview with F.S. Waterson., AA, A4231/2, Pretoria Despatch No. 44/46, 14 November 1946.

²⁶ AA, A1838, 201/10/7, Pt. 1, No. 5/48, Marshall/Minister of External Affairs, 10 March 1948.

²⁷ From a post-operative thrombosis following a prostate operation after some sixteen months in South Africa. Knowles, 'Canberra in the early government period', *Canberra Historical Journal*, New Series, No. 19, March 1987, p. 8. See *The Canberra Times*, 24 & 25 November 1947 and *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 November 1947. Canberra had been told that Knowles had entered the Pretoria Nursing Home on 3 November because of 'some recurrence of pleurisy trouble'. AA, A1838/1, 1348/2, Pt. 1, I. 21755, 4 November 1947. Perhaps the reference to 'pleurisy' was a euphemism.

²⁸ BTS, 130/10, Vol. 1, Minister of External Affairs, Canberra/Minister of External Affairs, Pretoria, No. 13, 6 June 1948.

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Forsyth minuted on the telegram: 'This morning I explained to Dr Malan what had happened (ie. the circumstances surrounding the appointing of an Australian H.C. in the Union)'. The timing of Stirling's appointment may have been Malan's reassuring first broadcast as Prime Minister a few days earlier. He said South Africa would gladly continue its good relations with Britain and the Commonwealth.²⁹ No doubt that came as a welcome surprise against the background of press and parliamentary predictions to the contrary.³⁰ There was also Australian press speculation that the change of government in South Africa had influenced the making of the appointment then: 'Significance is added to the South African post by the defeat of General Smuts as Prime Minister and the uncertain future of South Africa in the Empire set-up.'³¹ In his response to Evatt, Malan promised to give the 'important matter' of a South African High Commissioner his 'earliest attention' as soon as 'the pre-occupations attendant upon the assumption of office' permitted him to do so.³²

When Evatt passed through Cape Town on the last day of the year on his return to Australia after the 1948 session of the UN General Assembly, he again reminded his hosts that they had no man in Canberra.³³ (He and his wife and seventeen year old adopted daughter were guests of the government for the time - seven hours in Cape Town and twelve in Durban - they spent on South African soil.) In a press interview in Durban he said Australia was 'looking forward eagerly to a reciprocal appointment by South Africa'.³⁴ According to Stirling, Evatt got on 'very well' with Malan and Eric Louw who had represented South Africa at the General Assembly session over which he had just presided. The same applied to the Governor-General, G. Brand van Zyl, to the extent that Evatt appropriated one of the latter's cricket books!³⁵ (Stirling refrained from mentioning the purloined book in his official account of the visit.)³⁶

²⁹ *The Times* (London), 5 June 1948.

³⁰ Evatt's press release announcing Stirling's appointment suggests that. Undated draft on A1838/1, 201/10/6/1, Pt. 1. See also Mulrooney, *Australia's relations with South Africa*, p. 29.

³¹ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 June 1948.

³² AA, A1838/1, 201/10/6/1, Pt. 1., Minister of External Affairs, Pretoria/Minister of External Affairs, Canberra, No. 35, 14 June 1948.

³³ See *The Cape Argus*, 31 December 1948; *The Pretoria News*, 31 December 1948; *Die Burger*, 31 December 1948 and 1 January 1949; *Cape Times*, 1 January 1949. See also Stirling, *Lord Bruce*, pp. 430-31.

³⁴ *The Natal Daily News*, 3 January 1949; *The Natal Mercury*, 4 January 1949.

³⁵ Stirling, *Lord Bruce*, p. 431.

³⁶ AA, A4231, South Africa 1949. Cape Town despatch 1/49 dated 4 January 1949.

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Evatt declined to meet a deputation from the Natal Indian Congress which wanted to call on him during his ship's call at Durban.³⁷ The briefing paper prepared for the newly appointed South African High Commissioner some months later saw this as equivocation on Evatt's part in respect of the domestic jurisdiction issue:

The Natal Indian Organisation had sent him a telegram asking whether he would meet its representatives to enable them to give him first-hand information. The Australian High Commissioner replied as follows: 'Have been asked by Dr. Evatt to acknowledge your message and express regret that his short stay and full itinerary made compliance with your request impossible. He suggests that your communications be put in writing and forwarded to the Australian High Commissioner, Cape Town, for onward transmission to him'.³⁸

The February 1949 announcement of the appointment of Dr P.R. Viljoen, South Africa's High Commissioner to Canada and a former Secretary for Agriculture, as High Commissioner to Australia was greeted by a sigh of relief in that country. Politicians and press, if not the public, had become restive, viewing the lack of a South African presence as a slight. ('South African neglect of Australia is neither flattering nor farsighted'.)³⁹ Evatt had in January expressed his thanks to Malan 'for his rapid response to my suggestion' when Viljoen's name was submitted.⁴⁰ Presumably, however, he knew that Stirling had drawn Canberra's attention to Viljoen early the previous December and that Forsyth had enquired in mid-December whether a house would be available if an appointment were made soon.⁴¹ Viljoen was approached about the post in November⁴² and as far back as the beginning of September 1948 the Australian press had reported the South African government's decision to send a representative to Australia.⁴³ Eric Louw told the House of Assembly on 30 August that the decision had

³⁷ *Die Burger*, 8 January 1949.

³⁸ BTS, Vol. 229, 1/25/5, Vol. II, 'Australia's attitude towards the Indian question'.

³⁹ BTS, 4/2/32, Vol. 1, Article from *Pix*, 6 September 1947, attached to Baker/SEA, 30 September 1947. Calling *Pix* 'one of Australia's leading magazines', the New Zealand-born R.H. Brooke who, apart from being a South African MP (for Mowbray), was also Chairman of the Australia-New Zealand Association in Cape Town, quoted this in the House of Assembly. *HA Deb.*, Vol. 64, 30 August 1948, Col. 1142.

⁴⁰ BTS, 4/2/32, Vol. 1, Forsyth/Stirling, 21 January 1949; Stirling/Forsyth, 24 January 1949; AA, A1838/T17, 1500/1/30/1, I. 1212, 22 January 1949, O. 1163, 26 January 1949 and I. 2348, 11 February 1949.

⁴¹ AA, A1838/T17, 1500/1/30/1, I. 19795, 14 December 1948 and I. 712, 15 January 1949.

⁴² BTS, Viljoen, Vol. 5, Viljoen/Forsyth, 22 November 1948; Cypher OTP telegram No. 90, Forsyth/Viljoen, 15 December 1948; Cypher OTP telegram No. 93, Forsyth/Viljoen, 21 December 1948; and Viljoen/Forsyth, 31 December 1948.

⁴³ AA, A1838/1, 201/10/6/1, Pt. 1, I. 14110, 31 August 1948; *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 September 1948.

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been taken some three weeks previously.⁴⁴ Other names mentioned at the time were G.P. Jooste and J.D. Pohl among officials, J.F.T. Naude among politicians, and A.L. Geyer.⁴⁵

References to a diplomatic link between Australia and South Africa in the 1940s are misleading. The early part of the period 1945-61 marked an intermediate stage in the constitutional history of the Commonwealth. At the beginning of the period the term 'diplomatic connection' would have been a misnomer because of doubts whether Commonwealth representatives in the other Dominions should in fact enjoy diplomatic status. As Hancock had said earlier, Australia had 'international relations with foreign countries, but her relations with Great Britain or New Zealand are not international relations: they are constitutional relations'.⁴⁶ An Australian scholar pointed out in 1947 that High Commissioners and their staffs were 'not strictly diplomats' because the king was individually the head of state of each of the Dominions and it was felt that he could not appoint representatives to himself. That was why there was no question of High Commissioners handing over formal credentials. At best they were 'quasi-diplomats'.⁴⁷

For all that, as the American Minister, Lincoln MacVeagh, reported to President Roosevelt in 1942, the British High Commissioner, then Lord Harlech, a former Colonial Secretary, was 'the most important personage' among resident diplomats in South Africa. He was 'as outstanding' among them as his job was 'beyond theirs in range and complexity'.⁴⁸

Interviewed by the *Winnipeg Free Press* in 1946, C.J. Burchell, Canadian High Commissioner to Australia from 1939 to 1942 then to South Africa, gave a practical illustration of his difficulties:

when Eleanor Roosevelt was given an official state dinner in Australia the official representatives of all other governments were invited but the Australian government had gracefully to explain to the High Commissioner for Canada that he had really no official

⁴⁴ *HA Deb.*, Vol. 64, 30 August 1948, Col. 1151.

⁴⁵ AA, A1838, 201/10/7, Pt. 1, I. 18975, 29 November 1948.

⁴⁶ W.K. Hancock, *Australia* (London, 1930), p. 262.

⁴⁷ C.A. Sharp, 'Diplomats', *The Australian Outlook*, Vol. 1, No. 4, December 1947, p. 51. See also B.D. Tennyson, *Canadian Relations with South Africa: A Diplomatic History* (Washington, DC, 1982), p. 109.

⁴⁸ "'Dear Franklin...': Letters to President Roosevelt from Lincoln MacVeagh, U.S. Minister to South Africa 1942-1943", *Munger Africana Library Notes*, No. 12, March 1972, p. 21.

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standing in diplomatic circles and was, therefore, at the bottom of the list and they were sorry that there was no room for him.

(The same thing happened to his predecessor in South Africa on the occasion of State dinners given Lord Killearn.)⁴⁹ Burchell concluded that

in hesitating to appoint men with the title or status of Ambassador or Minister to the other self-governing Dominions Canada is not standing up to her position of a completely self-governing Dominion as was fully acquired under the Statute of Westminster 1931, nor is Canada recognizing the other Dominions as being fully self-governing.⁵⁰

He had complained in November 1944 to Norman Robertson, the head of the Canadian Department of External Affairs, about the 'continued use of the title of High Commissioner'. For South Africans, including the newspapers, made no distinction between the terms Trade Commissioner and High Commissioner. Indeed, that very week newspapers in Pretoria and Johannesburg had called him a Trade Commissioner!⁵¹ Already in July of that year he had recommended that his title be changed to 'Ambassador'.⁵²

The inferior status of High Commissioners was a practical manifestation of the indivisibility of the crown. Until the establishment of the Indian republic within the Commonwealth in 1950 the polite fiction was maintained that Commonwealth countries were members of one big, happy family whose representatives were not in the same category as those of foreign countries. Thus while the Foreign Office dealt with foreigners, the Commonwealth family was the preserve firstly of the Dominions Office, the lineal descendant of the old Colonial Office, then of the Commonwealth Relations Office. Once the position was separated from that of the Governor-General who continued to be the personal representative of the sovereign, early British High Commissioners in Commonwealth countries were not Foreign Office representatives but officials of the Dominions Office. For that reason the 'foreign offices' of the dominions were not called that but Departments of External Affairs.

⁴⁹ Tennyson, *Canadian Relations with South Africa*, p. 107.

⁵⁰ BTS PM 43/4, Vol.II (21/12/28 - 30/9/55, Undated cutting from the *Winnipeg Free Press* attached to Pick/Forsyth, 30 September 1946.

⁵¹ CA, DEA Records, File 167(S), Burchell/Robertson, 6 November 1944. However, *The Pretoria News* of 2 November, without mentioning Burchell himself, refers to his office as that of 'the Canadian High Commissioner'.

⁵² Tennyson, *Canadian Relations with South Africa*, p.107.

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All of this was anathema to South Africa's Nationalists who sought in vain to have the High Commissioner in London accorded diplomatic status. Established by Act of Parliament in 1911 and falling under the Department of Finance, the High Commission in London was the first South African mission abroad. The British authorities did not regard it as a diplomatic one and accorded its head, the High Commissioner, a lesser status than that enjoyed by foreign envoys. High Commissioners were exempt from taxation but they did not enjoy immunity from civil and criminal jurisdiction.⁵³ The Australian and Canadian High Commissioners were in a similar position. In the case of the Australians, the High Commissioner resorted under the Department of the Prime Minister. When Hertzog appointed a political as opposed to a trade representative to Canada before the Second World War he was given a title other than the pejorative 'High Commissioner', that of 'Accredited Representative'.

If Bodenstein and the Department of External Affairs thought thereby to circumvent the susceptibilities of the Canadians and in that way have their man enjoy diplomatic status, they were mistaken. The Canadians refused to play along and in fact considered the Accredited Representative to be of lesser importance than even a High Commissioner. The first Canadian representative in South Africa, appointed in 1940, was a High Commissioner. In keeping with the Smuts government's view of the Commonwealth, Viljoen, who was appointed in 1945 as the successor to the Accredited Representative, was also described as High Commissioner.⁵⁴

The position of the High Commissioners was regularised at the 1948 Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference. What would have contributed to that was the independence of India and Pakistan, for the Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, told W.G. Parminter, the South African Minister in Paris, in March 1948 that

The position had become urgent by the creation of the two new Dominions of India and Pakistan. It was essential that, in the capitals of both these countries, the British High Commissioners should have at least equal diplomatic status with the foreign Ambassadors who would be accredited there, otherwise the position of the High Commissioners would be intolerable.⁵⁵

⁵³ BTS 130/11, Vol. 1, Annex A (Status and Title of High Commissioner) to memorandum Jooste/Secretary, 30 October 1947, p.5. Until the passage of the Diplomatic Privileges Act, No. 71 of 1951, High Commissioners in South Africa enjoyed more or less the same privileges as foreign diplomatic representatives except immunity from the civil or criminal jurisdiction of South African Courts. AA, A1838/2, 1511/2/1/7, Nel/DEA, 14 October 1949.

⁵⁴ Tennyson, *Canadian Relations with South Africa*, pp. 105, 106.

⁵⁵ BTS, PM 43/4, Vol.II (21/12/28-30/9/55), Parminter/SEA, 19 March 1948.

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It seems, however, that the original intention was to devise a means of keeping Ireland in the Commonwealth.⁵⁶

Early in 1949, with the consent of their governments, High Commissioners were accorded the style 'Excellency', put on an equal footing with Ambassadors and in all respects integrated into the Diplomatic Corps. Even so, anomalies persisted: the Commonwealth Relations Office continued to handle the affairs of Commonwealth countries while in deference to British sensitivities Commonwealth 'foreign offices' kept on calling themselves Departments of External Affairs. And for some time there continued to be resistance on the part of foreign diplomats to High Commissioners serving as Deans of the Corps not to mention other aberrations such as the refusal of the French Ambassador to South Africa in 1950 to accord Australian High Commissioner Alfred Stirling's designated consort, his sister Dorothy, the courtesies due her position.

Stirling saw this as the outcome of objections by heads of legation in South Africa (*ie.* Ministers) whose wives were outranked by his sister, the equal of an Ambassador's wife.⁵⁷ He had been Menzies's Private Secretary in the early 1930s and reported the matter to his old chief, possibly because an item about it had appeared in a Melbourne newspaper.⁵⁸ Menzies's reaction is not known⁵⁹ but External Affairs in Canberra was quite relaxed. R.L. Harry minuted Anstey Wynes whom, among other duties, was performing those pertaining to Chief of Protocol.⁶⁰ 'The attitude of the Ministers (and of the French Ambassador) on the status of High Commissioners is interesting, and should be known to Legal & Consular Division, where I suggest this correspondence might come to rest'.⁶¹

In 1956 the Dean of the Corps, Netherlands Ambassador van den Berg, who 'for years tried to give High Commissioners a place outside the Diplomatic Corps',⁶²

⁵⁶ Tennyson, *Canadian Relations with South Africa*, p.112.

⁵⁷ See *The Canberra Times & The Cape Times*, both of 7 January 1950.

⁵⁸ AA, A1838/T13, 1500/2/18/1, Stirling/Menzies, 16 January 1950.

⁵⁹ Perhaps it fell within the category of the 'slightly contemptuous affection' in which Waller says Menzies held Stirling. Waller, *A Diplomatic Life*, p. 4. In any case, Dorothy Stirling was known to Menzies and his wife and had accompanied the latter, from London, on a visit to Norway and Sweden in 1938. A.W. Martin, *Robert Menzies: A Life, Vol. 1: 1884-1943* (Melbourne, 1993), p. 225.

⁶⁰ In that capacity he had met Viljoen in Sydney on arrival. The office of Chief of Protocol was created only in 1954. F.H. Stuart was the first holder - *Towards-coming-of-age*, p. 164 - followed by A.R. Cutler and W.G.A. Landale.

⁶¹ AA, A1838/T13, 1500/2/18/1, RLH/Dr Wynes, 15 February 1950. (Handwritten).

⁶² AA, A1838/2, 201/11/1, Pt. 3, Quinn/Secretary, 15 February 1960. Underlining in original.

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objected to the Australian High Commissioner acting as Dean during his own absence on vacation. He was overruled by Eric Louw.⁶³

Knowles was given a 'credential' to hand over during his call on the Governor-General, G. Brand van Zyl, on 3 September 1946. His temporary Official Secretary, O.C.W. Fuhrman, cabled the South African Secretary for External Affairs from the ss. *Nestor* which was bearing Knowles and his suite to South Africa asking 'what procedure do you suggest should be followed by Sir George Knowles in matter of lodging his credentials and at what place should this be done'.⁶⁴ The South African department considered this for almost two weeks before replying that it had not been 'prescribed in the Union for High Commissioners as representing other Commonwealth Governments to hand over formal credentials'.⁶⁵ The reason for the delay is not clear. The file copy of the cable bears J.D. Pohl's instruction to G.P. Jooste: 'Pse have procedure for assumption of office of new H.C. gone into and discuss'. Jooste presumably did a thorough job!

There were few precedents to guide him, in fact only the Canadian High Commissioners Henri Laureys in 1940 and C.J. Burchell in 1944, the British High Commissioner being in a different category of importance. At least Knowles fared better than Laureys and Burchell who were not even met on arrival.⁶⁶ Knowles had no complaints about his reception, having been met when the *Nestor* called at Durban 'by representatives of the Union Government and Provincial Administration, the Municipality of Durban, a number of local organisations and the Press'.⁶⁷ Knowles reported in the same despatch, his first, that

prior to my audience with His Excellency, it was made clear to me, by a representative of the External Affairs Department, that the Union Government did not desire the presentation of any Credentials by me since the South African Government took the view that the presentation of Credentials by a High Commissioner representing a Member State of the British Commonwealth of Nations to the Representative of his Majesty in the territory of another Member was neither expected nor necessary. Accordingly, when calling upon His Excellency the Governor-General, I did not take

⁶³ AA, A1838/1, 1500/2/18/3, Memo. 18, Hodgson/DEA, Annex, Annual Report 1956, Part A, p. 9, para. 11(a).

⁶⁴ BTS, 130/10, Vol. 1, Fuhrman/SEA, 27 July 1946.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, SEA/Fuhrman, 8 August 1946.

⁶⁶ Tennyson, *Canadian Relations with South Africa*, p.108.

⁶⁷ AA, A4231/2. PRETORIA 1-26, 1946, Pretoria Despatch No.1, 13 September 1946. See also *The Natal Mercury*, 15 August 1946.

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with me the Credential with which I was furnished in Australia. His Excellency made no mention of the non-production of this document and apparently took its absence for granted.⁶⁸

Considerable progress had been made towards granting High Commissioners diplomatic recognition by the time of Viljoen's appointment to Australia, though the matter of the King accrediting diplomatic representatives to himself as the constitutional head of another dominion remained unresolved. To overcome the difficulty, Viljoen was given a letter from Malan commending him to Chifley, the Australian Prime Minister, thereby establishing a precedent which old Commonwealth members followed for some years.⁶⁹ Years later Louw told Casey that South Africa wanted the system of accreditation of High Commissioners to be put on exactly the same footing as that of diplomats from foreign countries 'in that they wanted to have names put up to them in advance so that they had the alternative of accepting them or refusing them'.⁷⁰

So it eventually came to pass. Hugh Gilchrist of the Australian High Commission did not like Louw and commented snidely on his remarks when he received the record of the conversation. Louw, he said, should 'be aware, but probably is not, that the C.R.O [Commonwealth Relations Office] may often act as a kindly buffer between him and the Foreign Office. It is not apparent to us that Louw's political theses would receive more tender consideration from the latter than from the C.R.O; in fact, they might well receive less'.⁷¹

The matter must be put into perspective. The one-time Canadian High Commissioner in London later Governor-General, Vincent Massey, had felt as long ago as 1925, on the establishment of the CRO's forerunner, the Dominions Office, that

the one essential step towards better understanding is to bring the Dominion representatives into direct contact with the Foreign

⁶⁸ AA, A4231/2, PRETORIA 1-26, 1946, Pretoria Despatch No.1, 13 September 1946. I have not so far been able to trace a copy of this credential.

⁶⁹ At least, a paper dated 24 April 1950, initialled by J.E. Bruce, the Chief of Protocol, entitled 'Accreditation of High Commissioners' on the file BTS 130/11, Vol. 2, gives the impression that South Africa initiated the practice. A letter from Attlee to Malan dated 5 February 1951 on the same file confirms this impression as does Alfred Stirling's Departmental Despatch No. 4/49 of 3 March 1949 (AA, A4231/2, South Africa 1949).

⁷⁰ A1838/1, 1348/1, Pt. 1, Record of conversation Casey/Louw, New York, 11 October 1958. Maud records that Louw rejected the first name proposed as his successor as British Ambassador to South Africa in 1963. J. P.R. Maud, *Experiences of an Optimist* (London, 1981), p. 93.

⁷¹ AA, A1838/2, 201/11/1, Pt. 2., Memo. 632, Gilchrist/DEA, 30 October 1958.

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Office itself. An intermediate department, however able its staff or well-intentioned its head, will serve only to cause circumlocution, delays and misunderstandings.⁷²

He discovered later as High Commissioner that 'the Dominions Office machinery delayed the transmission of information about foreign crises'. He thought then that the DO's functions could be performed better by a Dominions section within the Foreign Office. His views were shared by Sir William Clark, a former British High Commissioner to Canada and South Africa and a Dominions Office official. Clark argued in 1944 that Britain and the Dominions 'would be on a more comfortable parity if our Foreign Office and Dominions Office were merged into a Department of External Affairs'.⁷³ Louw's views a decade and a half later were, therefore, perfectly reasonable.

The improved status of High Commissioners was an outward manifestation of, and connected to, changes in the nature of the Commonwealth that were occurring at the political level in the early post-war period. Apart from the Irish question, and soon to overtake it in importance, there was the admission of non-white states to dominion status and to full membership of the Commonwealth which they retained after becoming republics. The Commonwealth's changed composition was ultimately to contribute to South Africa's exclusion when it became a republic in 1961. Conscious that its position was at risk, the South African government at first tried to resist the automatic admission to the Commonwealth of newly independent Asian States but gave this up as a bad job. Ghana was the only African State to gain admission before South Africa's exclusion.⁷⁴

Much was said in the 1950s especially by the South African government's domestic political opponents about the familial nature of the Commonwealth and how disastrous it would be for South Africa to leave it. It was a reason advanced for South Africa not becoming a republic. An object of Australian policy in the 1950s was both to keep South Africa a monarchy and within the Commonwealth. Thus a 1952 departmental memorandum held that

⁷² Quoted by J.A. Cross, *Whitehall and the Commonwealth* (London, 1967), p. 74.

⁷³ *Ibid.* Clark had been High Commissioner to both Canada and South Africa.

⁷⁴ C.A. Smith, the South African Information Attaché in Canberra, told Miss E.A. Warren of the Australian Department of External Affairs in 1954 that 'Dr Malan would leave the British Commonwealth rather than accept the Gold Coast as an equal member. AA, A1838, 201/10/7. Pt. 1, Record of conversation Warren/Smith, 9 July 1954.

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there is room for us, by intelligent interest and continuous good will, to help delay the eventual establishment of a South African republic and perhaps influence the decision whether the republic will be in or outside the Commonwealth.⁷⁵

If they were not unwilling for the country to remain in the Commonwealth, far outweighing this in importance for South Africa's Nationalists was the achievement of the republic. It is in retrospect ironic that the republican status for which they fought so hard, anathema to Australian governments of the day, should be an object of Australian domestic and constitutional policy in the 1990s. At least in that regard, if not in respect of its domestic policies, the South African National Party was on the right side of history. Himself a strong exponent of the Commonwealth connection in the 1950s, Hugh Gilchrist had become deprecatory by the 1990s. He wrote in 1995:

For 30 years I have regarded it as an organization of little value and of some potential embarrassment to Australia. Its value diminished sharply when Britain joined Europe, and continued to diminish with every minor accession to membership. ... For Australia it has no defence or economic value, and little cultural value ... rather less than the British Council.⁷⁶

South Africa's membership of the Commonwealth served to a limited extent as a buffer for its situation at the United Nations. (See Chapter Eight.) If nothing else, it had the effect of restraining the old white members in their rhetoric. On the other hand, the leader of the anti-South African coalition in the UN General Assembly, India, was also a member of the Commonwealth. Even before the issue was submitted to the General Assembly, it was being said that the 'studied refusal of the South African authorities to meet the Indian case may well be one of the factors contributing to an Indian decision to go outside the British Commonwealth'.⁷⁷ In those circumstances it availed South Africa little that it was a member of the Commonwealth and that, until the end, its domestic policies were not discussed at the regular heads of government meetings where decisions were taken by consensus.

⁷⁵ A1838/1, 201/10/6, Pt. 1, Desmond/Lee, 'The political importance of our South African post', 30/1/1952. Kieran Desmond had served in South Africa as Third Secretary/Second Secretary from 1948 to 1951. Charles Lee, a Chinese Australian, was his senior in the Africa and Middle East branch.

⁷⁶ H. Gilchrist, letter, 20 January 1995.

⁷⁷ AA, A4231/2, New Delhi Despatches 1-52 1946, No. 28/46, Mackay/Acting Minister of State, 29 May 1946, p. 10, and A1067/1, M46/21/7, 'Note on South African - Indian relations', 25 June 1946, p. 2, para. 11. The Indian government's request for the item to be included in the General Assembly's provisional agenda was dated 22 June. See UN Doc. A/149, 21 October 1946.

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It might have been expected that the old Commonwealth would at least put up a united front at international conferences such as that which drafted the United Nations Charter.⁷⁸ Far from it. Driven by perceptions of their national interest, Australia and New Zealand and, perhaps to a lesser extent Canada, went their separate ways, actively opposing what the United Kingdom was trying to achieve. Thus Smuts, who supported the British line, remarked ruefully when summing up the work of the conference: 'The British Commonwealth distinguished itself in many ways, but not least by showing how much that great Regional Group can sometimes differ among themselves'.⁷⁹

In the event, and for various reasons, including the attitude of Australia's Prime Minister and Foreign Minister at the time, Robert Menzies, South Africa's departure from the Commonwealth had a minimal effect on Australian-South African relations. On Menzies's recommendation the Cabinet decided on 10 May 1961 that 'the general approach should continue to be to keep intervention against South Africa at the minimum'.⁸⁰ Two years later the Cabinet rejected proposals by Menzies's successor as Minister of External Affairs, Garfield Barwick, to modify Australia's stand on South Africa in order to safeguard Australia's general international standing and improve its tactical position at the eighteenth session of the UN General Assembly.

Barwick had proposed, firstly, that Cabinet seriously consider 'publicly imposing limitations - complete or partial - on the export of arms to South Africa'. Failure to take 'some public step' in that regard 'could produce an unfavourable international reaction' especially if the lack of action should be associated with the recent decision to accept a South African Military Attaché. Secondly, the government should express to its South African counterpart 'its concern at recent international developments' and urge it 'to moderate the rigours of its racial policies'. Thirdly, for 'presentational purposes' internationally as well as domestically, the government should make a public statement on its attitude to apartheid. That would reaffirm 'the repugnance' it felt towards apartheid in theory and practice and at the same time explain 'the legal and practical reasons' why Australia was 'unable to support the extreme approach' adopted by the majority of UN members.⁸¹

⁷⁸ The United Nations Conference on International Organisation (UNCIO).

⁷⁹ Central Archives, A1 (Smuts Collection), 298, 'Press statement on San Francisco Conference (To be released for publication on Sunday, 24th June, 1945)', p. 8. The statement was published in the *Rand Daily Mail* (Johannesburg) on 25 June 1945.

⁸⁰ AA, A5818/2, Vol. 26, Decision No. 1361, 10 May 1961.

⁸¹ AA, A5819/2, Vol. 22, Submission No. 883, paras. 3, 6, 10, 12.

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The Cabinet turned him down on all three points. The minute recording the decision indicated doubt was expressed that

Australia's position, including in relation to its own domestic policies, would in the long run be assisted by concessions to United Nations or African pressures over South Africa, nor that it would be in keeping with its policy towards and relationship with, South Africa to make such concessions. Therefore it indicated that there should be no modification of Australian policies towards South Africa nor of the position Australia has taken publicly and internationally.⁸²

Practically speaking, viewed from the vantage point of the South African Department of External Affairs, the greatest immediate deprivation entailed by loss of Commonwealth membership was the lack of access to reports generated by the British Foreign Office network.⁸³ South African officials also forfeited attendance of the regular meetings of representatives of the 'old' Commonwealth in London and elsewhere in respect *inter alia* of items on the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly. Cabling Canberra about his conversations on the subject of South Africa's pending departure from the Commonwealth, the External Affairs officer in Australia's London High Commission reported that

It is quite clear that from 31st May the South African High Commission here will be excluded from all Commonwealth Consultations, will receive no distribution of cables and will not be invited to the many Meetings to which South Africa has always come. Chadwick⁸⁴ commented wryly that this might mean that they will get far better service in London. But this is, of course, untrue, and unduly cynical. I think the South Africans here are going to feel strangely isolated.⁸⁵

The feeling of isolation would of course be confined largely to the officials who had previously attended Commonwealth meetings and to those of their colleagues elsewhere abroad accustomed to fraternal exchanges with Commonwealth colleagues in the same capitals. Whether South Africa was in or out of the Commonwealth would have little impact on the bulk of its citizens.

⁸² *Ibid.*, Decision No. 1012, 10 September 1963.

⁸³ See *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 December 1946, for an indication of the extent of the FO network in the early postwar period.

⁸⁴ A Commonwealth Relations Office official.

⁸⁵ AA, A1838/2, 155/7/14, Pt. 1, I. 8095/96, 29 March 1961, para. 3 (H).

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At the personal level, though, there would be less, if any, of those fraternal feelings which had marked relations between individual Australian and South African diplomats at posts abroad at a time when the two countries took their first steps in diplomacy. The small size of the missions not to say of the Commonwealth itself encouraged an intimacy that would have been lacking later even if South Africa had remained in the Commonwealth. In London during the war, besides the High Commissioners who met regularly,⁸⁶ their staffs were in close touch. The association predated the war. It flourished in the 1930s, the South Africans enjoying the reputation of being willing interlocutors.

Stirling considered Parminter, the Official Secretary at South Africa House in the late 1930s, to be 'a very good colleague, always ready to meet and co-ordinate'. Parminter once lent Stirling the original of a telegram from Smuts which saved him several hours work.⁸⁷ And as the war progressed, Stirling found the 'exchange of information with South Africa ... increasingly useful'.⁸⁸ Not only in London but also during later postings in Ottawa and Washington, he thought South African diplomats were 'among the best - certainly the most readily co-operative - of the Commonwealth colleagues'.⁸⁹

In the 1930s the staff of the Australia's London Liaison Office monitored South African issues especially political developments quite closely, reporting their gleanings to Canberra. Their sources were news items or information received from South African colleagues or other sources. Oswald Pirow's 1938 visit to Germany attracted attention. Stirling reported it on the basis of 'Mr. [Malcolm] MacDonald's record of a talk with Mr. Pirow on the latter's return'. While it was not possible 'to procure a copy of the record' Stirling had 'endeavoured to reconstruct it' and believed the outcome to supply 'a fairly complete reproduction of Mr. Pirow's views'.⁹⁰ Though the circumstances of its compilation reduce the value of its content, the report is not without interest. For example, according to Stirling, Pirow had told Hitler and Goering that 'no Government in South Africa which kept out of war [if war had come in September

⁸⁶ They and their Canadian and New Zealand colleagues were briefed daily by the Dominions Secretary or by the Deputy Prime Minister. In Waterson's time he and the Australian S.M. Bruce would see each other frequently, sometimes playing golf together.

⁸⁷ *Lord Bruce*, p. 161.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 430.

⁹⁰ AA, A981/1, SOUTH AFRICA 28, No. 107, Stirling/Hodgson, 21 December 1938.

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1938] could have remained in office' and that 'if it were to secure the peace of the world, South Africa would give up South-West Africa'.⁹¹

In 1939 Stirling reported the appointments of Alwyn Zoutendyk and Robert Harrower (Roy) Coaton respectively as South African Consul-General and Vice-Consul in Buenos Aires. His despatch consisted entirely of extracts from the 1938 Annual Report of the British Ambassador to Argentina. The Ambassador found Zoutendyk a 'genial and agreeable colleague'. Back in Canberra a reader of the despatch underlined the sentences dealing with the Argentine Government's decision to grant Zoutendyk 'the right of access to the Argentine Minister for Foreign Affairs' and 'a special status with quasi-diplomatic privileges such as "franchise de douane"'.⁹²

A decade later, J.S. Cumpston, Australian Chargé d'Affaires in Chile, reported the help he had given Coaton to set up an office in Santiago. S.F. du Toit had been appointed non-residential South African Minister to Chile - his headquarters were in Buenos Aires - and Coaton Chargé in Santiago. Du Toit visited Santiago from 23 August to 9 October 1948. He presented his credentials on 1 September.

The first member of the South African Legation to arrive was Mr R.F. Coaton [sic], who reached Santiago at midnight on 2nd July, 1948. He and his family were met at the station and taken to the Hotel Carrera by the First Secretary of the British Embassy, Mr. F.C. Mason; the First Secretary of the Canadian Embassy, Mr. Paul Tremblay, and myself. Mr. Coaton subsequently established himself in one of the rooms of my offices while he located an office where he could set up his Chancery. He was also given sufficient space to house a typist and a Clerk and for the Minister to work in the office during his visit to Santiago in August and September. ... For this accommodation and for the use of the telephone and other incidental services, it was arranged that the sum of US.\$100 per month should be paid to the Australian Consulate-General in New York. This sum was paid for the months of July (from the 9th July), August and September. ...

As the South African Minister was unable to make satisfactory arrangements for the use of a car while in Santiago, it was arranged that he and I would share the use of the Cadillac car during the period of his stay. It was agreed that he would pay for his share at the rate of 1/- Australian currency per mile.⁹³

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, H. 223, Stirling/Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 21 December 1938.

⁹² AA, A/981, ARGENTINE 13, 4 August 1939. Consuls-General normally enjoy neither access to Foreign Ministers nor diplomatic privileges.

⁹³ AA, A1838/1, 1500/4/10, Ministerial Despatch No. 20/1948, Cumpston/Evatt, 2 November 1948.

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What its members should be doing once they get there is integral to opening a diplomatic mission. At least, outsiders would see it that way. That gives rise to the question of instructions. Seventeenth and eighteenth century French diplomacy attached great importance to written instructions:

These documents ... contained not only a statement of the policy to be pursued by the ambassador, but a full account of political conditions in the country to which he was accredited. Delicate and often waspish comments were added on the origins, careers and characters of those statesmen and diplomatic colleagues with whom he would have to negotiate.⁹⁴

The instructions given the French Ambassador to Austria in 1774 consisted of 'a whole volume, divided into five separate chapters, covering the entire European situation and indicating the policy to be pursued, not towards Austria only, but in every continental country'.⁹⁵

The South Africans and the Australians were more relaxed about instructions. Sole records that when he opened the South African legation in Vienna in the late 1950s, from his own department he

experienced nothing but frustration, ineptitude and indecision. Not one section in the Department had bothered to draw up a brief on what the Government's objectives were in opening up a mission in Vienna. ... The general impression I received was that because I did not possess any special political or personal pull, no one was interested.⁹⁶

Later he objected to the publication of such comments as they were *inter alia* by the *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg). He said his memoirs were based on his weekly letters to his parents which

quite naturally give expression to the gripes and frustrations, the tribulations and petty triumphs of a diplomat who spent most of his career abroad and who presented impressions from his particular vantage point without any attempt to achieve an overall perspective.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Nicolson, *The Evolution of Diplomatic Method*, p. 56

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

⁹⁶ *Reminiscences*, p. 190.

⁹⁷ *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg), 24 November 1991 (Letter).

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As far as this writer is concerned, however, that is what memoirs are about and comments such as these impart authority to his work.

Senior Public Servants are probably even more sensitive than politicians to what they consider to be their rights. Late in June 1946 Knowles sent for O.C.W. Fuhrman, who would accompany him to South Africa as temporary Official Secretary pending the arrival of the newly-recruited M.H. Marshall. No doubt having regard to his previous occupation as Solicitor-General, Knowles complained about the lack of a "brief" - in the sense that he had no "written instructions".⁹⁸ In mid-July when his ship, the *Nestor*, was proceeding around the Australian coast from Sydney to Fremantle, calling at Melbourne *en route*, the absence of a written reply to his representations which included *inter alia* the use of his personal car, a second-hand Daimler, as the official car⁹⁹ and the payment of a mileage allowance, caused him to reprimand Dunk smartly:

I think you will ... agree that when I write you officially on any matter I am entitled to an official reply in writing ... I request therefore that you will send me by air mail to Fremantle an official reply to the letter referred to in my telegram of 13th July.¹⁰⁰

Dunk having in the meantime departed for the 1946 Paris Peace Conference, Alan Watt replied as Acting Secretary. In respect of the lack of a 'brief', he said:

it has not been customary for the Minister for External Affairs to issue written instructions to Heads of Missions on taking up their duties. This would be particularly difficult as regards current problems in South Africa, as Government policy in this connection has not yet been determined. I hope, however, that the conversations held before your departure from Canberra will have thrown some light upon the problems themselves and the way in which Australian interests are likely to be affected. Instructions on particular matters will, of course, be telegraphed by the Minister from time to time as required.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ AA, A1838/1, 1348/1, Pt. 1, Fuhrman/Secretary, 27 June 1946. (Handwritten.) Such complaints, which continue to this day, were present from the beginnings of modern diplomacy in the fifteenth century, as were those about ambassadors' 'pecuniary embarrassment'. See Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*, p. 111.

⁹⁹ Mervyn Knowles writes (11 September 1995) that his father acquired the Daimler, a 1939 model that had been on blocks for most of the war for some £1800 because of the projected six to nine month delay before delivery of an official car. In the event the latter (a Cadillac) was delivered in March 1947. The Daimler was sold for £850 after Knowles's death.

¹⁰⁰ AA, A1838/1, 1348/1, Pt. 1, Knowles/Dunk, 16 July 1946.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, Watt/Knowles, 24 July 1946. From the time of John F. Kennedy American Presidents have issued their Ambassadors abroad with letters of instruction. D. Swartz, 'Make the Ambassador Responsible for What the CIA is Doing', *International Herald Tribune*, 31 October 1995, p. 10.

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Anticipating, perhaps, that he was not going to be furnished with a brief, Knowles had already declared that, in the matter of reporting, he proposed sending Evatt despatches 'concerning matters dealt with by me or calling for report' at fourteen day intervals or more frequently if the situation required.¹⁰² Gough Whitlam rightly described Knowles as a 'relentless worker'¹⁰³ and in the sixteen months he spent in South Africa before his death he seems personally to have generated more than ninety per cent of the some one hundred-and-sixty despatches addressed to Evatt from the High Commission in South Africa.¹⁰⁴ In fact, Knowles was the most active Australian head of mission in South Africa up to 1961. He was focussed in his activities and made the best use of his time. Thus a four hour journey by Skymaster from Johannesburg to Cape Town saw him writing 'about 30 pages of a scribbling block, covering two despatches ... besides looking out a good deal, and following our course on the map which I had brought with me'.¹⁰⁵ According to his son he took on 'with almost missionary zeal the task of informing South Africans about Australia' which

involved carting Australian films and projector all over the country for showing to dignitaries and, indeed, almost anyone who expressed interest. ... In Pretoria and Capetown he used this procedure to entertain Minister, officials and foreign representatives and inform them about the other country 'down under'.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² AA, A1838/1, 1348/1, Pt. 1, Knowles/Dunk, 3 July 1946.

¹⁰³ ADB, Vol. 9, p. 623. Mervyn Knowles, Sir George's son, provides an indication of his father's capacity for work in 'Canberra in the early government period', *Canberra Historical Journal*, New Series, No. 19, March 1987, pp. 3-8.

¹⁰⁴ They are contained in bound volumes in the series A4231/2, Pretoria 1946 and 1947. There were 66 despatches in second half of 1946 and 85 in 1947 up to the time of Knowles death, some quite lengthy.

¹⁰⁵ Diary entry, 7 June 1947, p. 388. I am obliged to Mr Mervyn Knowles for sending this to me under cover of his letter of 16 March 1995.

¹⁰⁶ M.J.S. Knowles, letter, 7 June 1994. Viljoen was not so fortunate. Treasury turned down his pre-departure request for a 16 mm. sound projector. BTS, 4/6/36, Vol. 1, Pohl/Treasury, 8 March and Treasury/External Affairs, 22 March 1949. I am grateful to Mr Knowles for providing me with copies of reports illustrative of Sir George's public relations work from the following South African newspapers: *Die Suiderstem*, 10 January 1947; *Oudtshoorn Courant*, 9 April 1947; *Eastern Province Herald*, 9 April 1947; *Oudtshoorn Observer*, 10 April 1947; *Grocott's Daily Mail* (Grahamstown), 11 April 1947; *The Daily Representative* (Queenstown), 14 April 1947; *Diamond Fields Advertiser* (Kimberley), 21 June 1947.

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The matter of a brief was next raised by Gilchrist when he acted as High Commissioner in the late 1950s. He did so by way of a report on the Canadian practice of issuing new heads of mission with a Letter of Instructions. That was a 'massive document' running to '25 foolscap pages of single spaced typescript, plus a dozen pages of annexes' which included background on a wide variety of subjects. Its very size led to its substitution in 1957 by the Letter of Appointment which outlined 'Canada's main interests in the country ... important tasks concerning the Post, and other matters of immediate concern', consigning matters of detail to a 'loose-leaf Post Book issued to each Post'.¹⁰⁷ In drawing attention to the Canadian practice Gilchrist unwittingly echoed Sole's contemporary complaint, in effect the professional foreign service officer's lament which extends back to fourteenth and fifteenth century European diplomacy.¹⁰⁸

On the occasion of my departure to take up duty in this post I was unable to obtain from senior officers any indication of the lines of Prime Ministerial or Ministerial interest in either the region or the post. ... If any formulation of Australian policy at any level with regard to South Africa exists, it has not been communicated to this Mission.¹⁰⁹

Then in charge of departmental administration, J.C.G. Kevin countered with: 'Our usual practice is to give oral briefing to senior officers proceeding to posts abroad, and as a general rule we think this preferable to the more formalised Canadian practice of issuing a letter of instruction.'¹¹⁰ (It also had the advantage of keeping off the record superficial briefings exposing a lack of knowledge of the subject or error-ridden ones.) Gilchrist followed up on his return to Canberra after his posting and, thanks to his persistence, O.L. Davis, was supplied with 'guidance notes' shortly after his arrival in 1959.¹¹¹

Casey, the Minister of External Affairs, also corresponded with him.¹¹² Casey had written to him on 20 March. Davis replied on 3 April. Casey's 29 May letter referred to Davis's 3 April letter. Casey noted on the coversheet which forwarded the

¹⁰⁷ AA, A1838/1, 1348/5, Memo. 657, Gilchrist/DEA, 13 December 1957, paras. 2, 7 and A1838/1, 201/10/6/1, Pt. 1, Lee/Kevin, 3 February 1958. Working through an agent it did not prove possible to trace copies of the Letters of Instructions and Appointment in the Canadian Archives.

¹⁰⁸ See Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*, p. 111.

¹⁰⁹ AA, A1838/1, 1348/5, Memo. 657, Gilchrist/DEA, 13 December 1957, para. 8.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 201/10/6/1, Pt. 1, Kevin/Australian High Commission, Pretoria, 4 February 1958.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, Memo. 140, Heydon/High Commissioner, 22 May 1959, Attachment, 'Guidance notes for Australian High Commission', 22 May 1959.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, Casey/Davis, 29 May 1959.

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draft to him 'This is a good letter'.¹¹³ The matter on which Davis particularly sought guidance was how far he should go in 'trying to persuade South Africa to retain its link with the crown and the Commonwealth' (3 April). Casey replied on 29 May: 'Our reason for preferring South Africa to remain a monarchy is basically sentimental, as is the Afrikaner nationalists' desire for a republic'. On the other hand, there was

in the Union a large English-speaking minority of British origin, with whom we have a great deal in common. Under a republic based on extreme Afrikaner Calvinist nationalism, this English-speaking minority would almost certainly exert less influence in the politics of Southern Africa, and might undergo much pressure to accept assimilation into Afrikanerdom, or otherwise suffer politically as a group.

There was also the matter of South Africa breaking its constitutional link with Australia. Another aspect was the attitude of the non-white majority. The South African government held that the republican question was of no interest to non-whites. While their views were not yet clear, 'many of them seem to regard it as of secondary importance'.¹¹⁴

The guidance notes, Casey's letters (two) and a reply by A.H. Tange, the Secretary for External Affairs, to a letter Davis had sent him¹¹⁵ all appear to have been drafted by Gilchrist. Their message accordingly bears his stamp:

Australia's interests would best be served by South Africa having a stable, progressive pro-Western Government which caused the least possible irritation to Asian and other African countries. 2. Insofar as the Union Government has promoted economic development and successfully checked Communism at home, and has morally supported the West abroad, it has acted in accord with Australian interests. 3. On the other hand, the government's handling of racial problems has strongly (and to some degree unnecessarily) antagonised not only African and Asian but most European and American opinion.¹¹⁶

Viljoen was better served than Knowles in the matter of a 'brief' because it was then South African practice (according to Forsyth and perhaps confined to non-career

¹¹³ AA, A1838/2, 201/11/1, Pt. 3, Heydon/Minister, 30 April 1959.

¹¹⁴ AA, A1838/1, 201/10/6/1, Pt. 1, Casey/Davis, 29 May 1959.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Davis/Tange, 8 April 1959; Tange/Davis, 28 May 1959. A copy of Gilchrist's draft of Tange's letter is on A1838/2, 201/11/1, Pt. 3

¹¹⁶ 'Guidance notes for Australian High Commission', 22 May 1959, paras. 1-3. The 'and to some degree unnecessarily' implies a measure of justification.

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appointees) to provide heads of new missions 'with a set of general directives and background papers covering the more important aspects' of the subjects with which they would be concerned. It was expected that much of his time would 'be taken up in promoting a sympathetic understanding of the Union's problems', in which respect 'You will yourself be able to judge what particular methods should be followed in achieving this object, but you will no doubt refer to this Department for advice and guidance where necessary'.¹¹⁷

Ironically, Sole drafted this letter and he had a hand in preparing the series of fourteen relatively comprehensive briefing papers which accompanied it. The subjects covered included 'Australia and the United Nations', 'Australian attitude towards the Indian question in South Africa', 'The White Australia policy' and 'Communism in Australia'. Conceding that 'Our information in regard to Australia's attitude towards the black, brown and yellow races is rather limited', the 'White Australia' paper *inter alia* required Viljoen to report 'how the policy can be reconciled with the Human Rights declaration which the Australians championed to such an extent at the recent [UN] General Assembly Session'. Some years later, though, the Australians were under the impression that

A South African Head of Mission suffers from the fact that he receives little in the way of advice or instruction from his Government. The South African High Commissioner in London is probably an exception or so it struck Stirling and myself during the war-years; the South African Ambassador at Washington is not an exception i.e. he is given very little political information from home and he is allowed a minimum of initiative.¹¹⁸

Trade was the second of the four points mentioned in the Cabinet submission of 29 October 1945. Australia had a Trade Commissioner (G.R.B. Patterson) in place in Johannesburg and an Assistant Trade Commissioner (A.B. Millard) in Cape Town by mid-1947.¹¹⁹ What Mervyn Knowles calls a 'minor difficulty' arose because Millard, a Colonel, had outranked Patterson, a Major, during the war.¹²⁰ Sir George Knowles

¹¹⁷ BTS, 1/25/1A, Vol. 1, Forsyth/Viljoen, 19 May 1949.

¹¹⁸ AA, A1838/2, 201/10/1, Pt. 2, Record of conversation Oldham/Hamilton, 15 October 1957. For that reason Oldham felt 'it may be of help in furthering Australian relations with South Africa to give Mr. Hamilton non-confidential information'. His views on South African Ambassadors being allowed a minimum of initiative, even if incorrect, foreshadowed what Munger said on the subject. Munger, *South African Foreign Policy*, pp. 26-27.

¹¹⁹ AA, A1838/1, 1348/9, DEA/Australian High Commission in South Africa and DEA/External Affairs Officer, London, both dated 23 April 1947.

¹²⁰ M.J.S. Knowles, letter, 4 April 1995.

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had stressed trade on his arrival, mentioning his intention of opening information offices in Pretoria and Cape Town to 'tell South Africans about Australian business and trade'.¹²¹ The Australian Trade Office was also operative in the British colonies in Southern and Eastern Africa which was reflected in its designation from March 1948. The Cabinet had approved Patterson's appointment the previous November.¹²² All in all, nine Trade Commissioners and Assistant Trade Commissioners represented Australia in South Africa between 1947 and 1961. (See Appendix I).

The salaries of some of these people were elevated. Six months before the retirement of the third High Commissioner, Hodgson, in July 1957, Casey put up a submission to Cabinet recommending an increase in his salary from £A2500 to £A3500 which would in turn raise his retirement benefits. He said that the Trade Commissioner in South Africa was paid in the range £A2603 to £A2933 and it seemed 'anomalous that the High Commissioner should be paid less than one of his staff'.¹²³ And Hodgson had been Secretary for External Affairs for ten years. Crocker implies, in fact, that it was not uncommon for Trade Commissioners to be paid more than their ambassadors: 'In order to keep the emoluments of Trade Commissioners secret an accounts section was set up separate from that of the embassy and as far as possible the Trade Commissioner office was kept outside of the embassy building'.¹²⁴

South Africa followed suit with its own trade representation only in 1961 *inter alia* as a result of suggestions from Australian quarters that it do so.¹²⁵ It did not seem to lose much by the lack of a representative - for much of the 1950s the trade balance was in its favour.¹²⁶ In 1963 the Australian Trade Commissioner observed that without

¹²¹ *The Star* (Johannesburg), 15 August 1946; *Rand Daily Mail*, 22 August 1946.

¹²² AA, A1838/1, 1270/9, Pt. 1, Thomson/DEA, 22 November 1946.

¹²³ AA, A4926, XMI, Vol. 21, Submission NO. 512, 23 January 1957.

¹²⁴ Crocker, *Travelling back*, p.192. Domestic politics played a role in this as it did in South Africa in the 1970s in respect of relations between the Departments of Foreign Affairs and Information. Relations between Australian External Affairs officials and Trade Commissioners who then resorted under the Department of Commerce and Agriculture were demarcated in 1945. See AA, A1068, M47/21/2/4, 'The relationship of officers of the Department of External Affairs and Commerce and Agriculture at posts outside Australia'. This document was sent to Knowles in South Africa at his request. AA, A1838/1, 1348/9, I. 10281, 22 May 1947; A1068, M47/21/2/4, O. 8405, 26 May 1947; and A1838/1, 1348/9, Burton/Official Secretary, Cape Town, 26 May 1947.

¹²⁵ See BCB, Vol. 9, 15/34, Vol. 1, Anderson/Olivier, 23 October 1958.

¹²⁶ For five of the eight years between 1947/48 and 1954/55. Also in 1957/58 and 1958/59. AA, CP 54/1/1, 363/F/2, Balance of trade with Union of South Africa. n.d.; A1838/2, 201/10/2, Supplement No. 2 to Trade Policy Report No. 9/1955, p. 1; A1838/2, 774/1, Pt. 2, 'Australian Trade with South Africa', n.d. and 'Australia's interest in South Africa', n.d.

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wheat, which South Africa had been importing large quantities, the trade balance would be well in the latter's favour.¹²⁷

As with the proposal to exchange High Commissioners, the establishment of the Australian trade office was ill-considered and its existence hardly justified the expense. Crocker's criticism of the Australian Trade Commissioner Service as 'an expensive, privileged, highly mixed, and almost entirely useless, excrescence'¹²⁸ may, therefore, not have been without significance as regards the South African part of its operation. For it was reported after the office had been operating for eight years: 'As South Africa is self-sufficient in most of Australia's principal exports, we have not been able to develop a substantial export trade with that country'.¹²⁹ That was because 'Australia and the Union of South Africa [had] similar types of economies and [were] natural competitors in some products'.¹³⁰

Four years after that the new High Commissioner, Davis, was informed that the 'economies of Australia are competitive, rather than complementary. The value of their trade with each other is small'.¹³¹ In the result, 'Australian trade with South Africa never reached one per cent of either exports or imports'.¹³² In 1963 and 1964, for instance, exports amounted to 0.9 per cent and 0.7 per cent respectively of total exports and imports to 0.8 per cent of total imports in both years.¹³³

By virtue of similar conditions South Africa was Australia's best market for agricultural (including horticultural and viticultural) machinery, taking 46.21 per cent in 1953/54 and 31.21 per cent in 1954/55 of the latter's exports. But in those years total exports to South Africa amounted to only 0.43 and 0.37 per cent respectively of Australia's global exports.¹³⁴ Similar percentages characterised Australia's export trade with South Africa for decades thereafter. At the time South African exports to Australia included diamonds - industrial and gem, asbestos, fish, peanut oil and (of all things)

¹²⁷ A9421, 112/3, Pt. 1, Chapman/Brook, 2 May 1963.

¹²⁸ Crocker, *Travelling back*, p. 192.

¹²⁹ AA, A1838/2, 201/10/2, Supplement No. 2 to Trade Policy Report No. 9/1955, p. 1.

¹³⁰ D.F. Nicholson, *Australia's trade relations: an outline history of Australia's overseas trading arrangements* (Melbourne, 1955), p. 210.

¹³¹ AA, A1838/2, 201/10/2, Guidance notes for Australian High Commission, 22 May 1959, p. 1.

¹³² R.H. Wagenberg, *Commonwealth reactions to South Africa's racial policy 1948-1961* (Unpublished PhD thesis, London School of Economics, 1966), p. 78.

¹³³ AA, A9421/1, 202/12/1, 'Draft reply to Questionnaire A/AC.14/L.4'.

¹³⁴ AA, A1838/2, 201/10/2, Supplement No. 2 to Trade Policy Report No. 9/1955, p. 1.

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wattle bark extract.¹³⁵ Apart from trade there was also the matter of Australian investment in South Africa which related primarily to the establishment of branches or subsidiaries of existing Australian companies.

In 1957 the High Commission estimated that Australian capital invested in this way amounted to £A5 million or £A6 million. The companies concerned included Henry Jones & Co. (canning and jam-making), Sydney Clow & Co. (motor vehicle distributors), National Mutual Life Assurance Co. and Queensland Insurance Co. The climate for medium term investment was considered attractive. Rembrandt Tobacco maintained the only large South African subsidiary in Australia. Interestingly, South Africa was seen as a 'potential minor source of investment funds, mainly from persons insuring against future political upheavals in Southern Africa'.¹³⁶

Trade representation usually, though this is not essential, goes hand in hand with diplomatic representation, the trade people enjoying the benefit of diplomatic ranks and diplomatic privileges. In order to close the ears of the diplomatic corps to the siren call of Johannesburg, however, South Africa required recipients of diplomatic privileges to reside in Pretoria and to move to Cape Town for the Parliamentary session. Living in Johannesburg and, at least initially in Cape Town, the Australian Trade Commissioners had no diplomatic status and received 'only very limited consular privileges'.¹³⁷

Late in 1954 Forsyth told Hodgson that 'Existing legislation does not provide for the grant of customs privileges to persons holding the designations of Commercial Counsellor or Commercial Secretary unless they are resident and function in Pretoria and are accorded diplomatic status'.¹³⁸ Another Australian in an anomalous position was the young Consular Officer or Attaché in Cape Town. For four years the High Commission laboured to have him accorded privileges beyond those relating to first entry until, in 1957, he was granted duty-free importation of goods for his own use.¹³⁹

Living and working as they did in Canberra the South Africans did not have that problem. Nor would they have experienced it if individual sections, even the High

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, Guidance notes for Australian High Commission, 22 May 1959, p. 2.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 774/1, Pt. 1, Memo. 584, Gilchrist/DEA, 13 November 1957.

¹³⁷ AA, A1838/1, 1348/1, Pt. 1, Hodgson/Casey, 12 October 1953.

¹³⁸ BTS, 130/10, Vol. 2, Forsyth/Hodgson, 23 November 1954.

¹³⁹ AA, A1838/1, 1348/1, Annual Report 1957, Part A, p. 12, para. 11(b).

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Commission itself, were established in Sydney or Melbourne, because the Australian government did not insist on diplomatic missions basing themselves in the Federal Capital. It could hardly do that when (in the early 1950s) most government departments still had their headquarters in Sydney or in Melbourne. (See Chapter Six). Even so, when the State Information Office, perhaps on the initiative of E.M. Rhoodie who took up the post of Information Attaché in the High Commission in October 1957, thought of basing him in Sydney, Gilchrist made use of the opportunity to suggest that he

press his Department of External Affairs to grant the Australian Attaché in Cape Town full diplomatic or consular privilege; otherwise, he might find that we had decided to apply strict reciprocity in his case and thus exclude him from privilege except on initial entry.¹⁴⁰

In the event, on the recommendation of J.K. Uys, the second High Commissioner, the Information Attaché remained in Canberra.

The establishment of relations on a residential basis marked a high point in Australian-South African bilateral relations. Another one was the establishment of the air link in 1952, also on Australia's initiative. The original motivation had been the need for alternative air communications with the United Kingdom in the event of war in the Middle East, *eg.*

We have ... long recognised the importance of South Africa to Australia as constituting the main link in one of our life-lines to the United Kingdom. We have recently taken concrete steps to establish an air route between Australia and South Africa. This route, having [a] stop at Cocos Island, is important not only in peacetime by bringing the two countries closer together commercially and culturally but also as a means for close co-operation in time of war.¹⁴¹

The Australian airline Qantas had a monopoly on the route, known as the Wally Service, until 1957 when South African Airways (SAA) commenced its own fortnightly service to Perth. The five year delay was partly connected with the reluctance of the Australian Civil Aviation authorities to grant SAA landing rights at Perth, the desired terminus. That for two reasons: the weight of the DC 7Bs SAA proposed using

¹⁴⁰ AA, A1838, 224/3. Memo. 251, Gilchrist/DEA, 6 June 1957.

¹⁴¹ AA, A1838, 201/10/7, Pt. 1, Undated notes, presumably for a speech on the occasion of Viljoen's departure.

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on the route and the fact that no foreign airline was then flying into Perth. The second objection had less to do with SAA than a reluctance to grant cabotage rights in Perth to the British airline BOAC - the right to pick up passengers in there and fly them to another point in Australia.¹⁴²

For years Qantas and SAA, which entered into a pool arrangement, flew the route at a loss. In Qantas's first year of operations it lost £A150 000. The total loss for 1954/55 was 'something in excess of £150 000'.¹⁴³ By September 1958 South African Airways was losing £A8000 per month and Qantas £A5000.¹⁴⁴ Qantas welcomed the SAA flight as a way of reducing its own losses and the partnership arrangement was for years loss sharing rather than profit sharing. Qantas's 1963/64 estimates anticipated a total revenue of £570 000 with operating costs of around £507 000 which did not, however, take account of fixed charges estimated at £176 000. The loss had been anticipated. In 1950 the Minister for Air told Menzies that the government would probably have to subsidise Qantas by up to £A100 000 annually.¹⁴⁵

The historian of Qantas wrote later that the service 'was important in political and strategic terms but initially attracted low traffic density and, without a subsidy on the mail rate, sustained regular losses'. A later volume of his work called the service 'politically valuable',¹⁴⁶ presumably meaning for Australia. It may have started that way, but before long South Africa was the principal beneficiary of whatever political advantage there was. The longer range of jet aircraft was probably among the reasons why, by 1963, the Australian Chiefs of Staff Committee could not 'envisage circumstances in which the air fields and facilities of the Republic of South Africa would be of significance to Australia in wartime'.¹⁴⁷ In 1946, however, it had been held that for 'strategic reasons alone ... it would seem vital for Australia that South Africa should remain within the Commonwealth'.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴² AA, A1838/1, 716/50/6/1, Pt. 2, O. 10497, 5 August 1956 and O. 13828, 17 October 1956. BOAC then had Darwin/Sydney cabotage rights, a less valuable route.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, Fogarty/DEA, 4 April 1956.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Pt. 3, Gilchrist/DEA, 18 September 1958. Schoeman was his source.

¹⁴⁵ 'The Airlink', *David Tothill's South African Opinion II* (Canberra, 1991), p. 119. The article first appeared in the 29-30 November 1991 edition of *The Weekend Australian*. It was based on original Australian documents.

¹⁴⁶ J. Gunn, *Challenging Horizons: Qantas 1939-1954* (St. Lucia, Qld., 1987), p. 329 and *High Corridors: Qantas 1954-1970* (St. Lucia, 1988), p. 186.

¹⁴⁷ AA, A9421, 224/1, agendum 41/1963, 'The strategic significance of the Republic of South Africa up to 1973', p. 6, para. 20.

¹⁴⁸ AA, A1067/1, M46/21/7, 'Note on South African-Indian relations', 25 June 1946, p. 3.

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By the early 1960s Qantas itself was questioning the value of the service in both commercial and political terms. In respect of the latter it feared that continuing to fly the South African route would impact negatively on its 'highly important Kangaroo route service to London via Asia and the Middle East' not to mention its 'service to Manila, Hong Kong and Tokyo'.

These services ... pass through areas in which there is a deeply felt antagonism to South Africa because of the 'apartheid' policy. Qantas is seriously concerned that restrictions could be placed on these services as a reprisal for the Qantas services continuing to operate to South Africa and in partnership with South African Airways.¹⁴⁹

Both the Department of External Affairs and Australia's Ambassador to South Africa, J.C.G. Kevin, took fright, the latter recommending against a Qantas withdrawal from the South African route even for commercial reasons. Garfield Barwick, the Minister of External Affairs, suggested to Menzies that Qantas confine any discussions with South Africa to 'financial and civil aviation considerations alone'.¹⁵⁰ The South African authorities should not be given the impression that the Australian government 'had sought to terminate the Qantas service because of pressure of the Afro/Asian bloc'.¹⁵¹

The inaugural flights in 1952 and 1957 provided each country's Minister for air transportation, the South African Ministers of Transport, P.O. Sauer and B.J. Schoeman, and the Australian Ministers for Civil Aviation or Air, H.L. Anthony and S. Paltridge, with the opportunity to visit the other. Sauer and Anthony did so in 1952 and Schoeman and Paltridge in 1957. Groups of journalists were also included in the passenger lists for these flights on the (perhaps mistaken) assumption that press coverage promoted bilateral understanding. The tendency, however, was to focus on each country's exotica, political exotica in South Africa's case. (See Chapter Five.)

The establishment of the air link led to the expansion of Australian territory¹⁵² because of the need for a refuelling stop between Perth and Mauritius. Although the route from Sydney and Melbourne to Cape Town via Kerguelen Island in the Southern Indian Ocean, a French possession, was shorter, that via the Cocos (Keeling) Islands,

¹⁴⁹ AA, A9421/2, 53/1, Pt. 2, Anderson/DEA, 17 September 1963, p. 3, para. 11.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, Kevin/Harry, 25 October 1963.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Barwick/Menzies, 25 September 1963.

¹⁵² See BCB, Vol. 13, 27/4, Uys/SEA, 23 June 1955.

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in latitude 12° 5' S and longitude 90° 55' E, was more suitable. Chifley himself had called it 'the best route having regard to strategic, political, operational, commercial and migration aspects'.¹⁵³ During the First World War North Cocos was the scene of a naval engagement between the Australian cruiser *Sydney* and the German light cruiser *Emden* which brought about the latter's destruction.¹⁵⁴

Apart from their situation in a more temperate zone, the islands were a British possession administered by the Straits Settlement at Singapore and, after negotiations, the United Kingdom transferred them to Australia. The Australian Treasury insisted on that before it would approve expenditure on upgrading the wartime airstrip to receive four-engined propeller-driven transcontinental aircraft. Before Australia took possession, most of the population was relocated, supposedly voluntarily, to Borneo, a development which failed to attract United Nations attention. If it had, the infelicitous reference in a later publication to shipping out 'the surplus native population'¹⁵⁵ would not have been favourably received. Nor would the recommendation of Australia's Acting Commissioner in Singapore, Critchley, who undertook an inspection *in loco* in August/September 1951, against the employment of local islanders on the airstrip.

He argued that the Governor of Singapore should be supported 'as far as practicable in moving Cocos Islanders to North Borneo and import suitable labour on an appropriate contract basis'.¹⁵⁶ Contemporary British fears that the transfer of sovereignty would not be well received in 'the South Asian Dominions because it would be represented as a deal in colonial peoples' were not born out by events.¹⁵⁷ In later years, inspired by its Afro-Asian members, the UN would be hypersensitive to such issues. When the jet airliners of the 1960s bypassed the islands, their importance declined.

Another high point, if for the South Africans more than for the Australians, was the visit Menzies and his wife and daughter paid South Africa in July 1953 after the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II as guests of the South African government. The

¹⁵³ AA, A1838/1, 716/27/7/1, Pt. 1, Chifley/McLarty, 2 December 1948.

¹⁵⁴ E. Scott, *A Short History of Australia* (Seventh ed., revised by H. Burton. Melbourne, 1964 (1916)), p. 358.

¹⁵⁵ B. Carroll, *Australian Aviators: an illustrated history* (North Ryde, NSW, 1980), p. 141. An item in *The West Australian* (Perth) of 15 December 1949 ('Cocos natives migrate to Borneo') held that the islands could comfortably maintain only 600 persons. Their population was then 1800.

¹⁵⁶ AA, A2910/1, 406/5/13, Pt. 1, Critchley/DEA, 4 September 1951, p. 4.

¹⁵⁷ AA, A1838/1, &16/27/7/1, Pt. 1, 'For the Secretary: Cocos Islands', 26 October 1950.

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invitation was of two years' standing.¹⁵⁸ It was the first visit by an Australian Prime Minister since W.M. Hughes had touched at Cape Town and Durban in August 1919 on his return to Australia after the Paris Peace Conference. Although a draft of a background memorandum K.T. Kelly of the Australian High Commission prepared for Menzies held that he was the first Australian Prime Minister ever to visit South Africa,¹⁵⁹ it was in fact the third such visit. Besides Hughes, Andrew Fisher spent two months in the country in 1910 on the occasion of the Union celebrations.¹⁶⁰

Early in June 1957 the ship bearing Menzies to the United Kingdom called for some hours at Cape Town. Menzies was shown the Simonstown naval dockyard and Strijdom entertained him to lunch at Groote Schuur. He also had a meeting with Roy Welensky, the Prime Minister of the Central African Federation.¹⁶¹ The continuing erosion of South Africa's respectability towards the end of the 1950s prompted him to sidestep a further invitation early in Verwoerd's premiership.¹⁶² To this day, no serving South African head of government has visited Australia.

The 1953 visit was marred, not so much for Menzies himself as for his fellow-countrymen, by remarks Malan made in the course of an extempore speech at the lunch he hosted at the Mount Nelson Hotel in Cape Town on 9 July 1953.¹⁶³ He was

¹⁵⁸ AA, A1838/2, 201/10/11/1, Lee/Official Sec., Cape Town, 26 May 1952. See also the attachments to McKenna/Lee, 16 May 1952, on the same file.

¹⁵⁹ AA, A9421/1, 202/1, Pt. 1, Memo. 185, Kelly/SEA, 24 June 1953, p. 9. Hodgson had caught up with the facts by the time he reported on the visit. AA, A1838/2, 201/10/11/1, Hodgson/Minister for External Affairs, 4 August 1953, para. 2.

¹⁶⁰ Fisher was accompanied by the Canadian Minister of Posts and Telegraphs, R.E. Lemieux, the New Zealand Minister of Education, G.O. Fowlds, and the Melbourne journalist Ambrose Pratt. In November and December 1910 *The Age* (Melbourne) published Pratt's reports on their travels under the general series title 'South Africa through Australian eyes'. The reports were later published in book form, *ie.*, A. Pratt, *The Real South Africa*. London, 1912. Pratt's work influenced Charles van Onselen in his choice of sub-titles for volumes one and two of his work *Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand 1886-1914* (Johannesburg, 1982), *ie.* *New Babylon* and *New Nineveh*.

¹⁶¹ See AA, A4231/2, South Africa 1957, 4/57, Hodgson/Minister of External Affairs, 14 June 1957. Hodgson retired less than three weeks later.

¹⁶² AA, A1838/2, 201/10/11/1, Heydon/Davis, 27 May 1959. See also various items of correspondence between 1959 and 1961 on BCB, Vol. 12, 25/11.

¹⁶³ The Mount Nelson Hotel has provided a backdrop for several watermark episodes in the history of Australian/South African bilateral relations. At a banquet he hosted at the Mount Nelson for the new South African Governor-General, Viscount Gladstone on 9 December 1910, Fisher said: 'We Australians - and I speak as the representative of 4 1/2 millions of people - look upon South Africa as holding the keys of the East and West. The geographical position of your country renders it of vital importance to the Commonwealth [of Australia] that those who occupy South Africa and guide the destinies of the Union should maintain British Imperial ideals in their broadest sense inviolate.' AA, A2/1, 11/3154.

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reported to have said the time might come when India (white South Africa's particular international bogeyman at the time) would be 'knocking on Australia's door' and if it did Menzies could depend on it that South Africa would be Australia's friend.¹⁶⁴ Kelly of the High Commission doubted 'whether at the outset of this speech' Malan 'intended to make any direct reference to the future relations of India and Australia'. But the press naturally seized on this aspect of his speech and it achieved wide publicity in South Africa, India, Pakistan and Australia. Excepting some Afrikaans-language reporting the reaction was generally negative.

The Australian historian Fred Alexander, who had spent a sabbatical in the Union in 1950, called Malan's remarks an 'extraordinary gaffe'.¹⁶⁵ A correspondent for *The Herald* (Melbourne) said that having a public meal with Malan was 'becoming for Commonwealth statesmen what having supper with the Borgias used to be for bygone Italian politicians. They never know what they might be asked to swallow - politically'.¹⁶⁶ *The Times* (London) was more relaxed. Reporting the day Menzies sailed for home (10 July), its South African correspondent said that the 'most cordial relations' were established between him and Malan at the Coronation conference of Commonwealth Prime Ministers. It was 'obvious that both Governments are eager for the closest cooperation. Dr. Malan went so far in an after-luncheon speech ... as to say that if Australia found Asian nations knocking at her door in the future she could count on South African friendship'.¹⁶⁷

The British High Commissioner, Sir John Le Rougetel, was also relatively relaxed, as was Sir Walter Crocker, Australia's High Commissioner in New Delhi. The day after the event, in a personal letter to his colleague at the Commonwealth Relations Office and eventual successor, Sir Percivale Liesching, Le Rougetel said Malan's theme was

as usual, the importance of preserving white civilisation in South Africa. He combined this with the suggestion that South Africa

¹⁶⁴ AA, A1838/2, 169/11/128 Part 1, Kelly/DEA, 15 July 1953. See also BCB, Vol. 11, 20/8, Nel/Secretary for External Affairs, 17 July 1953; *Die Burger*, 10 July 1953 (report & editorial); *Rand Daily Mail*, 11 (report & editorial) & 13 July 1953 (cartoon); *The Star* (Johannesburg), 10 (photograph & report) & 11 July (editorial); *The Canberra Times*, 10, 11, 13 & 14 July; *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 July; *The West Australian* (Perth), 11 July. See also the reports from the Australian High Commissioner in New Delhi on AA, A1838/2, 169/11/128 Pt. 1 for an indication of how Malan's speech was received in India.

¹⁶⁵ *The West Australian* (Perth), 20 July 1953.

¹⁶⁶ *The Herald* (Melbourne), 13 July 1953.

¹⁶⁷ *The Times*, 11 July 1953.

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and Australia were the 'twin sisters of the South' in that they had similar and almost simultaneous origins and were confronted with similar problems, in particular the thrust of Indian penetration. He described Australia, perhaps not very happily, as being divided from the rest of Asia by two oceans.¹⁶⁸

Crocker reported on 14 July that for the first time in a long time, Australia, more particularly its immigration policy, was featuring 'as an item of leading interest in the Indian press'. However, the reactions were relatively mild and even revealed 'some measure of understanding of the Australian position'.¹⁶⁹

That remarks similar to Malan's made by W.M. Hughes in Durban twenty-five years earlier, though he refrained from identifying potential enemies, passed without comment, points to the difference in political climate. Hughes was reported to have said at the Durban Club in August 1919: 'As comrade nations we can depend on each other. If South Africa is in danger let her cry out and Australia will come and stand at her side. If perchance Australia needs help we will send a shrill "Coo-ee" across the leagues of ocean and you will come quickly to her aid.'¹⁷⁰ But by 1953 another world war had intervened and attitudes had changed. India had taken its place in the international firmament and South Africa was deeply enmeshed in its (India-inspired) troubles with the League of Nations' successor¹⁷¹, the United Nations. It was, in short, a different world.

As Le Rougetel implied, the purpose of Malan's speech was to demonstrate affinity and fraternity with Australia. Paul Sauer had done that the previous year on the occasion of his visit to Australia as would Ben Schoeman during his visit in 1957. Sauer said:

I found in Australia two close bonds with South Africa - first, on the economic side, their strong backing for a higher gold price, and second, keen sympathy and understanding of the Australians towards South Africa's efforts at keeping the southern part of South Africa white, just as Australia on the southern fringe of Asia aims at keeping the continent European.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁸ PRO, DO 35/5035, Le Rougetel/Liesching, 10 July 1953. I am grateful to Prof A.W. Martin for sending me a copy of his transcription of this letter.

¹⁶⁹ AA, A4231/2, India 1953, Despatch No. 18, Crocker/Casey, 14 July 1953.

¹⁷⁰ *The West Australian* (Perth), 13 August 1919.

¹⁷¹ In politics if not in law.

¹⁷² AA, A1838/2, 201/10/1 Pt. 1, Extract from South African press telegram dated 20 September 1952.

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Five years later Schoeman said in a broadcast over ABC radio:

the really significant thing about our relationship is that we share a common racial, social and spiritual ancestry ... Descended, as we are, from the same kind of people, it is only natural that we should be attached to similar standards and values in our ways of life. The civilisation of the West is our common heritage.¹⁷³

That was after a paragraph had been excised from his text on the recommendation of the South African High Commissioner, Hamilton. The Director of the State Information Office, P.J.G. Meiring, had sent Hamilton an advance copy of Schoeman's remarks, saying that Eric Louw had already approved the text.¹⁷⁴ The paragraph read:

I think a fair comparison between our respective situations is that Australia is a continent on an island and South Africa is an island on a continent. What I mean by that is that in many respects we in South Africa have closer links with the people of Australia than we have with vast masses of people in Africa. In the same way, Australians have a closer affinity to South Africans than to the teeming masses who inhabit your 'hinterland' in South-East Asia.¹⁷⁵

Hamilton thought the speech 'an excellent bit of work, striking, with one exception, just the right notes'. The 'discordant' note was the reference 'to the "teeming masses" of South East Asia'. That the idea was 'true in itself might not make it less embarrassing to the Australian Government, which in recent years has been making a sustained effort to get onto good terms with the governments to the north'.¹⁷⁶

Believing the Schoeman visit to have negative connotations, Gilchrist approached it cautiously:

we shall watch for, and report, any decision by Schoeman to visit Australia on the inaugural flight, since a general election in South Africa may be only four or five months beyond November, such a visit could have political implications which we might wish to play down. If he did decide to come over, I would hope that any Australian public references could be kept as far as possible to the sphere of transportation, without political overtones.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷³ BCB, Vol. 13, 27/4 (Vol. II), Australian Broadcasting Commission, Guest of Honour, Hon. B.J. Schoeman, 20 November 1957.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, Meiring/Hamilton, 19 October 1957.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, Notes for broadcast speech by the Hon. Mr. B.J. Schoeman (Australia: November 1957.)

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, Hamilton/Meiring, 28 October 1957.

¹⁷⁷ AA, A1838/1, 716/50/6/1, Pt.2, Memo.425, Gilchrist/DEA, 22 August 1957.

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What gave rise to that was an interview between Schoeman, Gilchrist and two Qantas representatives. Gilchrist's notes recorded Schoeman saying it was 'important for the Union to have closer relations with Australia, as a friendly country; he referred to Australian support of South Africa in the United Nations'.¹⁷⁸ Gilchrist subsequently expressed satisfaction that Schoeman's itinerary did not include Canberra because 'such a visit could have political overtones'.¹⁷⁹

Some of his senior departmental colleagues thought his views unduly negative. He had drawn up a set of notes to facilitate the consideration of 'what political advantage may be gained, and what political disadvantage may be avoided, by Mr. Schoeman's forthcoming visit'. The Chief of Protocol, A.R. Cutler,¹⁸⁰ minuted on the covering letter that he did not 'wish to be involved, as he considers that to brief, say, DCA¹⁸¹ & PM's¹⁸² with material of this nature on a primarily non-political occasion, would not be appropriate'.¹⁸³

Around that time Gilchrist also poured cold water on the idea of the South African Prime Minister, J.G. Strijdom, paying a goodwill visit to Australia. Hodgson had suggested that in a press interview on the occasion of his retirement. The South African press made something of it, prompting Gilchrist's comment to Canberra that he regarded 'any invitation during the next twelve months to Mr. Strijdom to visit Australia as very ill-timed' on account of the approaching South African general election. After the election, however, there 'might be some value in then inviting him to Australia, in the hope of broadening his outlook on Commonwealth and racial matters'.¹⁸⁴

If South African governments from Malan's time at least until the mid-1960s came to regard Australia as their best friend internationally, the feeling was never reciprocated. And perhaps because of the government's lack of experience in international affairs, it did not initially demonstrate its feeling of friendship in the most obvious way, by appointing a High Commissioner to Australia.¹⁸⁵ Thus a two year five

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, Record of conversation, 16 August 1957.

¹⁷⁹ AA, A1838/1, 716/50/6/1, Pt.2, Annex to memo. 541, 19 October 1957, p.5.

¹⁸⁰ See Chapter Two, p. 90 above.

¹⁸¹ Department of Civil Aviation.

¹⁸² Prime Minister's Department.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, Handwritten note on Memo. No.541, Gilchrist/DEA, 19 October 1957.

¹⁸⁴ AA, A1838/2, 201/10/10/1, Pt.1, Memo. 247, Gilchrist/DEA, 13 July 1957.

¹⁸⁵ Despite Malan having told the House of Assembly in 1952 that the High Commissioner's post in Australia was 'one of importance'. *HA Deb.*, Vol. 78, 24 April 1952, Col. 4325.

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month interregnum ensued after Viljoen's departure in October 1951, when the High Commission was in the charge of Gert Nel, a Second Secretary with thirteen years departmental experience and two posts behind him.

The lengthy absence of a substantive head of mission points to a lack of substance in a diplomatic relationship. As A.R. Cutler, then Australian Chief of Protocol, later Governor of New South Wales, observed in respect of the last of the three Australian interregnums up to 1961: 'no matter what we do or say the non-appointment of a High Commissioner basically indicates that the country is not very important to us. Therefore my view is that if we regard South Africa seriously, the sooner a High Commissioner is appointed the better'.¹⁸⁶ After Nel, the South Africans took care to leave no lengthy gaps and three relatively senior career officials were appointed to head the mission up to 1961: Uys, A.M. Hamilton and H.H. Woodward.¹⁸⁷

The three interregnums on the Australian side were: November 1947 to August 1948; August 1950 to July 1952; and July 1957 to April 1959. The first, caused by Knowles's death, saw his Official Secretary, M.H. Marshall, take charge of the mission until August 1948. He also acted as High Commissioner from May 1950 to April 1951. From that month until July 1952, the High Commission was in the charge consecutively of a Counsellor, J.P. Quinn and a First Secretary, K.T. Kelly. Two other First Secretaries, H. Gilchrist and L.E. Phillips, acted as High Commissioner between July 1957 and April 1959. Besides Knowles, the High Commissioners during the period were A. Stirling (August 1948 to May 1950), W.R. Hodgson (July 1952 to July 1957) and O.L. Davis (April 1959 to June 1962). Davis was succeeded by J.C.G. Kevin, who served as Ambassador until his death in 1968.

Having invested much time and money not to mention emotional capital in the careers of its senior officers, bringing them to a level where they are considered worthy of head of mission status, Departments of Foreign Affairs are not unnaturally inclined to behave as if only the doings of their substantive heads of mission have significance. That is even more the case with political appointees. Junior officials who may find themselves temporarily heading a mission tend to be viewed in the light of pre- and

¹⁸⁶ AA, A1838/1, 1500/2/18/4, Cutler/Kevin, 20 February 1958. He was responding to Gilchrist's recommendation that the nomination be delayed until after the April 1958 South African general election. In the event it was delayed until the following year. Memo. 77, Gilchrist/DEA, 24 January 1958.

¹⁸⁷ There was a three month gap between Uys and Hamilton and one of six weeks between Hamilton and Woodward.

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post-castaway 'admirable Crichtons'¹⁸⁸ and waived aside as being of little importance. Normally that would be the case because interregnums between Ambassadors tend to be short, a few weeks or months at most.

Diplomatic service is an hierarchical occupation - the higher the rank, the higher the pay and the more attention outsiders, especially the media, pay a diplomat. Yet high rank and high salaries are not measures of achievement. What departments tend to overlook is that foreigners regard whoever is the head of mission as the personification of his government and country. And when a Chargé d'Affaires serves in that capacity for years securing in the process the confidence of the receiving government, the latter tends to regard him as the equal of a substantive head of mission irrespective of his position in the order of precedence.¹⁸⁹

So it was that Nel on the South African side and Marshall, Quinn, and Gilchrist on the Australian side, however they were regarded by their own departments,¹⁹⁰ were accepted by the receiving government as full representatives of their governments and countries. As Acting High Commissioner, together with the Canadian High Commissioner, T.W.L. MacDermot, Marshall accompanied Dr Verwoerd on his first official visit as Minister of Native Affairs to the Transkei and Ciskei. The State Information Office's press telegram reporting their comments on their return to Cape Town held that this was the first time any High Commissioner had visited these areas. Both expressed views which would have appalled a later generation of their countries' diplomats. On the strength of them, however, the South African government would have considered the visits excellent value. The press telegram reported Marshall saying:

the trip was not only interesting, but its educational value could hardly be overrated. 'This inspection tour has helped me considerably in better understanding the complexity of the native problem', he said. He now appreciates what great efforts were being made to improve the natives' way of living and living conditions, and to educate the natives, especially in regard to agriculture. 'What made a very profound impression on me is the quality of the agricultural soil being made available to the natives', he said. Not only the landscape beauty of the soil, but also the richness of it was notable. The Transkei and Ciskei made Mr. Marshall recall the rich-

¹⁸⁸ After J.M. Barrie's butler of that name.

¹⁸⁹ Chargés d' Affaires *ad interim* come third after Ambassadors Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and Envoys Extraordinary and Ministers Plenipotentiary (known simply as Ministers).

¹⁹⁰ From the Australian side Quinn would have been the best thought-of of the three.

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ness of the soil in Southern Victoria in Australia. The soil was not only rich, but also well watered.

Mr. Marshall spoke highly of the Department of Native Affairs went about their task. 'They are sincere and enthusiastic in the execution of their duties', he said. He had been told that results which officials saw of their labours were not always as encouraging as they would like them to be. Nevertheless, he had found proof of tangible favourable reactions in certain areas. In regard to the officials, Mr. Marshall further said that here one apparently was not confronted with persons who were in the Department of Native Affairs solely for the purpose of livelihood. It was striking that these men were infused with an ideal and were working for a cause to the best of their abilities. They and the Minister were sincere and earnest in what they were doing for the natives. Yet, 'it would appear that as far as the natives were concerned there was, to a certain extent, suspicion as to what the European was trying to do for them. That suspicion may perhaps be attributed to the less advanced stage of development of the native compared to the European. The unadvanced mind often by nature was inclined to be suspicious of those things to which he was not accustomed', Mr. Marshall said.

In conclusion, Mr. Marshall added that he was extremely grateful to the South African Government and Dr Verwoerd (Minister of Native Affairs) for being invited to visit these native areas as a guest of Dr. Verwoerd. He appreciated it very highly that he was put in a position to visit the natives in their real home.¹⁹¹

If Nel and Gilchrist were not substantive heads of mission, their performance *en poste* was comparable to those who were. On the Australian side, Gilchrist was the most active of all heads of mission after Knowles and, not excluding Knowles, probably the most articulate.¹⁹² Nel in effect succeeded Viljoen and from a practical point of view the Australians tended to consider him in his two year five month stint as Acting High Commissioner (a month longer than Viljoen's) as superior to Viljoen in all but rank. There was, however, the question of Australia's status as receiving country and they welcomed Uys's appointment. Casey himself announced it.¹⁹³ Indeed, at the Cabinet lunch for Uys gratification was expressed at his seniority: 'The fact that your country has seen fit to appoint to Australia one of its most senior career diplomats is a

¹⁹¹ AA, A1838/1, 201/2/5, Pt. 2, State Information Office/High Commissioner, Canberra, press telegram No. 207, 13 April 1951.

¹⁹² Australians may believe that such an accolade should more properly be bestowed on Quinn or Woolcott or even Kelly. However, one can go only by the evidence to hand.

¹⁹³ BTS, 4/2/32, Vol. 2, DEA, Canberra, PR 101, 10 November 1953; *The Canberra Times*, 11 November 1953.

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great compliment to us'.¹⁹⁴ The euphoria wore off and the Australians were relieved when Hamilton succeeded Uys three-and-a-half years later.

Yet, in the absence of significant issues in bilateral relations requiring the attention of a more experienced and senior officer, the forty year old Nel (when he took over as head of mission) was a man for all seasons and what the situation required. A bonus from the departmental point of view was that he could not afford to be temperamental, which in any event was not in his nature.¹⁹⁵ Nonetheless, in keeping with the myopia about 'unanointed' heads of mission and despite having informed Pretoria of the compliments paid Nel (see Chapter Two), Uys wrote in the year of his arrival:

for the first time since the establishment of this office, a career officer is Head of this Mission. As can be rightly expected, he reports extensively, as the mail schedules for the past months will prove. He also actively takes part in the numerous administrative duties of the office, not to mention his representative activities in and outside Canberra, all of which place extra duties on the secretarial and typing staff.¹⁹⁶

We come now to the internal working of a diplomatic mission. Especially in respect of foreign language posts, Sole emphasises the

key role of the locally recruited staff. If one has an efficient, loyal and dedicated local staff, it makes all the difference in the world - not only to the efficiency of the mission, but even more to the image of the Embassy. This is absolutely vital. However necessary it may be at times to economise on South African staff, one should never be penny pinching on local staff. On the contrary, one should attract the highest possible calibre of personnel.¹⁹⁷

That is in fact applicable not only to foreign language ones but to all posts.¹⁹⁸ For with the exception of the missions of the former communist countries which filled all their posts with home-based staff,¹⁹⁹ no mission can function without locally-recruited or

¹⁹⁴ AA, A1838/238, 201/10/1, Pt. 1, 'Draft speech of welcome to the High Commissioner for the Union of South Africa', 1954.

¹⁹⁵ As mentioned in Chapter Two, the worm turned eventually.

¹⁹⁶ BTS, S4/5/45, Vol. 2, Uys/SEA, 1 October 1954. He was explaining his staff difficulties.

¹⁹⁷ *Reminiscences*, p. 155.

¹⁹⁸ See Clark, *Corps Diplomatique*, pp. 66-67.

¹⁹⁹ That was certainly the case with the Soviet Consulate in South Africa until the time of its closure in 1956. See *HA Deb.*, Vol. 85, 3 May 1954, Col. 4405.

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locally-engaged staff.²⁰⁰ While they are usually nationals of the receiving state, nationals of the sending state sometimes obtain temporary employment in that way.

Locally-recruited staff usually outnumber transferred or home-based officers who are costly to maintain in diplomatic splendour. Apart from their salaries and allowances to enable them to associate on an equal footing with the elite of the countries where they are stationed, and for the same reason, the housing costs of the home-based are usually very high. In 1988 two thousand locally-engaged staff were working in Australia's overseas missions and eight hundred Australia-based staff, a 60/40 ratio. At the same time 1770 officers were serving with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Canberra.²⁰¹ In 1995 2530 British diplomats abroad were supported by 7400 locally-engaged staff,²⁰² a ratio of 34/66.

If this was not always the practice, some countries now rely on locally-recruited staff to perform functions previously undertaken by transferred officers, thereby holding the numbers of the latter to a minimum. This is in order to reduce costs. The conditions of service for locally-engaged people vary from country to country. They accord with local legislation and practice, but are often superior to those laid down for the workforce of the country concerned. Many mission employees are married women or otherwise birds of passage who work in an Embassy for a few years before moving on.

That was very much the case with the local staff in the Australian and South African High Commissions during the period under consideration. Their functions were the traditional ones of archivist or registry clerk, typist, chauffeur, messenger, accountant and gardener. Perks attaching to employment with the Australian High Commission included (in 1959) a 'disturbance allowance' of some £SA15 monthly to compensate for the annual move to Cape Town for the Parliamentary session.²⁰³ That effectively increased monthly salaries. Another one was that the biannual trek was undertaken in the luxury Blue Train.

At times there was a considerable turnover, involving transferred staff as well. Thus the Australian High Commission's annual report for 1957 indicated that the turn-

²⁰⁰ 'Locally-recruited' is South African terminology; 'locally-engaged' Australian.

²⁰¹ I. Castles, ed., *Year Book Australia 1988*, No. 71, Canberra, 1988.

²⁰² *The Glasgow Herald*, 3 July 1995. ('Diplomats on last round of cocktails?')

²⁰³ AA, A1838/1, 1348/5, 'Post Report: South Africa (Pretoria and Cape Town) February 1959', p. 11.

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over since the end of 1956 had been such that only two people were still on strength a year later - one home-based officer, the acting High Commissioner (Gilchrist), and one locally recruited typist, Miss M.J. McCraw,²⁰⁴ who had been with the High Commission for five years. One locally-engaged stenographer, Miss C.M.L. Mellor, who spent fifteen months with the High Commission in 1956-57, resigned to marry Ray Swart MP. Gilchrist was the best man. She was a 'serious member' of the Black Sash and Gilchrist was concerned that this would compromise the High Commission's diplomatic standing. But 'she was discreet'.²⁰⁵

Including one who was employed at the Trade Commission in Johannesburg in 1954, it has been possible so far to identify fifty locally-engaged employees of the Australian High Commission between 1946 and 1961. (See Appendix I below). At least two, Misses S. Stuart and G.M. Wheaton, were Australian citizens.²⁰⁶ The turnover was less at the South African High Commission in Canberra. Seventeen locally-recruited staff have so far been identified as working there between 1949 and 1961. Appendix I also lists both countries' home-based officers. In some instances, locally-recruited employees make a career of their service with an Embassy. That was not the case with either the Australians or the South Africans in the 1940s and 1950s. In Buenos Aires, however, one employee worked for the South African mission, which was initially a Consulate-General then a Legation then an Embassy, for forty-three years, from its opening in 1939 until his own retirement in 1982. And at the South African High Commission in London the local staff are members of the South African Public Service.

In the beginning a locally-recruited temporary clerical assistant supervised the Australian High Commission's record system, apart from which he undertook coding and cypher work. That was considered unsatisfactory even in the relaxed atmosphere then prevailing and the 'early appointment from Australia of a permanent Cypher Clerk' was requested.²⁰⁷ That did not come to pass and until 1953 the locally-engaged Australian, Miss Wheaton, seems to have been occupied with coding and cyphering.²⁰⁸ Coding and cyphering were undertaken subsequently by the High Commissioner's Aus-

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 1348/1, Pt.1, Annual Report 1957, Part A, p. 1.

²⁰⁵ Letter, 15 December 1934.

²⁰⁶ M.J.S. Knowles, letter, 4 April 1995; AA, A1838/1, 1348/2, Pt. 1, Memo. 73, Hodgson/DEA, 4 March 1953.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, Marshall/DEA, 12 December 1947.

Kevin

²⁰⁸ AA, A1838/1, 1348/2, Pt. 1, Memo. 73, Hodgson/DEA, 4 March 1953.

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tralia-based Secretary-Typist, by the Third Secretary and, during Parliamentary Sessions, by the Attaché who was stationed permanently in Cape Town. Such duties were performed for the South Africans by the equivalent of the Australian Secretary-Typist, the Woman Clerk/Typist (later the Foreign Assistant) and by the Third Secretary. In Canberra, the first Woman Clerk/Typist, Miss J.M. Richards, left the country a month before Viljoen, and for the next two-and-a-half years the only South African staff in the High Commission were Nel and Killen who had therefore also to attend to coding and cyphering. (Not that it was excessive.)

Both countries had the other's police or security service 'vet' prospective local employees. In Canberra that was the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), a creation of the Chifley government.²⁰⁹ Of particular interest was a candidate's association with communists and other left-wingers and his or her political beliefs, not to mention membership of the Communist Party. In July 1957 the Australian High Commission engaged a new clerk archivist pending the receipt of her security report, only to suspend then dismiss her when the report showed that for nine months in England two years previously she had been a member of the British Communist Party.²¹⁰ In 1953 the Australians complained about incompetence and indiscretion in the investigation of the backgrounds of two appointees to the Trade Commissioner's Office in Johannesburg.²¹¹

The Australians also had to contend with something not faced by their South African counterparts - the domestic political loyalties of their locally-engaged staff. Thus Kelly complained to Kevin, the head of administration in Canberra, that he had two typists 'both excellent girls, extremely efficient and hardworking and, I think, loyal to us'. One was 'strongly United Party and anti-Nationalist'; the other 'strongly nationalist and anti-U.P.' The result was that he found 'it impossible to dictate' his 'off-the-record comments on an entrancing political situation, confidential remarks made to me by other diplomatic officers or by politicians or even to dictate a measured appreciation of the situation'.²¹² That is why Embassies have home-based Foreign Assistants. The last Australia-based confidential Secretary/Typist, Miss S.A Richardson, had left six months after the last High Commissioner up to that point, Stirling, and her successor,

²⁰⁹ The High Commission would write discreetly to PO Box 36, Canberra. See, *eg.*, BCB, Vol. 2, 6/3 (Vol. II), file copy of letter signed by J.C. Bosch dated 11 January 1961 and ASIO's reply dated 1 February 1961 signed by W.M. Phillipps, the organisation's ACT Regional Director.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1348/1, Pt.1, Annual Report 1957, Part A, p. 9, para. 8.

²¹¹ BTS, 130/10, Vol. 2, Forsyth/Commissioner of the South African Police, 27 July 1953.

²¹² AA, A1838/1, 1348/2, Pt. 1, Kelly/Kevin, 23 May 1952.

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Miss B.S. Tyler, arrived two years later, in October 1952, to work for the next High Commissioner, Hodgson. The myopia was therefore not confined to the South Africans.

Each country's domestic and international situations influenced the activities of the other's diplomats. The South Africans, who were required to promote 'a sympathetic understanding of the Union's problems',²¹³ did not, as did the Australians, have to negotiate the minefield of a divided white society let alone the cleavage between white and non-white. The Australian role was more traditional. As *The Canberra Times* put it at the time: '(1) To collect first-hand information about the country, (2) to analyse and evaluate these facts, and (3) to report them, long with political, economic and social trends, to the home government.'²¹⁴ In one respect, however, the Australian High Commission may have fallen short, at least to latter-day eyes. Because of the sensitivity of the South African government, its contacts with non-whites other than in the master and servant role were at best attenuated. The same applied to other diplomatic missions at the time.

That did not matter at the time because contact with non-whites was not the major issue it became later when foreign governments required their diplomatic representatives to maintain extensive contacts with them²¹⁵ even to the extent of placing government officials in a secondary position. That marked how far the South African government's diplomatic relations had by then diverged from normal practice. For, as Lord Strang observes, the 'prime duty of an embassy is to do business with the government, whatever kind of government it may be, and whether or not it is a government which enjoys the support of the people'.²¹⁶ Sir Llewellyn Woodward concurs: 'Even in a parliamentary democracy ... a diplomat has to remember that his first duty is to maintain good relations with the Government rather than to cultivate members of the Opposition. In particular, he must avoid giving cause for suspicion that he is using his position for purposes of political intrigue'.²¹⁷

²¹³ BTS, 1/25/1A, Vol. 1, Forsyth/Viljoen, 19 May 1949.

²¹⁴ *The Canberra Times*, 24 June 1959.

²¹⁵ See, for example, *The National Times* (Australia), 7 July 1979. (N. Ashford, 'How South Africa tried to blacken an Australian').

²¹⁶ Lord Strang, *The Diplomatic Career* (London, 1962), p. 19.

²¹⁷ L. Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War* (London, 1962), p. xxv, footnote 2.

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Addressing the forty-second session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1987 as Australian Permanent Representative, Richard Woolcott referred to his service in South Africa in the 1950s:

In 1956 I came to know people like Oliver Tambo, Professor Z.K. Matthews and Father Trevor Huddleston.

While it was more difficult, I also had interesting discussions with some black leaders and others in 1983.²¹⁸

In fact, it was easier in 1983; in 1956, Father Huddleston excepted, it was practically impossible and no documentary evidence has been found to support Woolcott's claim. Despite Hodgson's view that he had 'already done some original work at this post on the development of non-European political activities',²¹⁹ what evidence there is, tends to be against it.²²⁰ In support of his contention Hodgson cited Woolcott's nine page report 'The African National Congress and Native Political Activities', which went out over the former's name in February 1956. Appended to this were biographical notes on 'some leading Africans' including Z.K. Matthews and Oliver Tambo. These reveal no evidence of personal contact.²²¹ Nor does Hodgson's despatch at the end of that year on 'The Mass Arrest of the Treason Suspects' which was drafted by Woolcott and Gilchrist.²²² Woolcott left the country permanently a month later.

Prefacing the earlier notes was the comment that it was 'very difficult indeed to obtain much biographical information on the native political leaders in the Union'. The only source was 'occasional references to personalities in the non-European press and rare personal contacts'. Specifically in respect of Tambo, Woolcott wrote that little was known about him 'but the Institute of Race Relations has stated that although he is militant he believes in the nonviolent achievement of Congress objective[s]'.²²³

²¹⁸ UNGA 42 : Plenary : Item 33 : Policies of Apartheid of the Government of South Africa : Statement by H.E. Mr Richard Woolcott, AO., Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations (New York, 17 November 1987), p. 4.

²¹⁹ AA, A1838/1, 1348/2, Pt. 1, Memo. 336, Hodgson/Department of Foreign Affairs, 7 September 1956.

²²⁰ See, for example, AA, A1838/2, 852/10/2/3, Pt. 6, 'Notes for South African file (Prepared by H. Gilchrist early in 1959), South Africa: Social contacts with non-Europeans'; A1838/2, 201/8, Memo. 96, Nicholson/DEA, 21 February 1959; and A/1838/1, 1348/1, Pt. 1, Memo. 341, Davis/DEA, 3 August 1959.

²²¹ AA, A4231/2, Hodgson/DEA, Despatch 3/56, 23 February 1956, Annex B. Gilchrist told this writer in 1992 that in 1956 Woolcott would have 'known of' rather than 'known' Tambo and Matthews.

²²² AA, A4231/2, Pretoria Despatches, Ministerial Despatch 24/56, 13 December 1956.

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Two years after Woolcott's departure his successor, Nicholson, reported that the Australian mission's contacts with non-Europeans were of a similar nature but less extensive than those of the United Kingdom High Commission. The latter's reports on non-European political movements were 'based principally on contacts made at First Secretary level quite openly at the offices of a few selected non-European leaders and newspaper editors'.²²³ If, however, 'race relations deteriorate further in the Union, it would be more important for the Mission to make broader contacts with non-Europeans'. Nicholson mentioned a difference of opinion in the Canadian High Commission with the High Commissioner (J.J. Hurley - see Chapter One, pp. 65-66) seemingly 'anxious not to offend the Union Government in any way', while his staff was 'willing to increase its contacts with, and knowledge of, non-Europeans'.²²⁴

Interestingly, in May of the same year (1959) in Cape Town, L.E. Phillips had a discussion with three Africans at the home of an English Quaker couple, the Radleys, whom Nicholson, then a Third Secretary, had met in Durban at a conference of the South African Bureau of Racial Affairs (SABRA). The men were Joseph Nkatlo of the Liberal Party, Thomas Ngwenya of the ANC and Nana Mahomo of the PAC. Phillips recorded the occasion in a file note but refrained from reporting it to Canberra and possibly also to his High Commissioner, until mid-August.

Perhaps Davis's report of early August on the need for 'discreet contact with Coloured and African groups for the purpose of disseminating information about Australia or where possible picking up information on the local scene', was the catalyst. In the event, Phillips reported that the discussion revolved mainly 'around the divergent policies and aims of the ANC and the Africanists'. Mahomo strongly criticised the Congress of Democrats, alleging that 'they buy their way in and exert a rigid control of executive positions and are thus stultifying the A.N.C.' All three Africans 'expressed

²²³ J.O. Wright was the First Secretaries concerned. A copy of a report on African political activity he prepared for the then British High Commissioner, Sir Percivale Liesching, is in the Australian Archives. The report had been passed to the Australian High Commission on an eyes only basis but they copied it. Gilchrist's covering letter to Canberra claimed that the report drew on material in Woolcott's nine page report mentioned above. It also held that 'contact by members of the diplomatic corps with representative non-Europeans in the Union now presents some difficulty' which was likely to increase. See Liesching/Home, No. 12, 12 June 1958 attached to AA, A9421/1, 202/7, Memo. 393, Gilchrist/DEA, 20 June 1958.

²²⁴ AA, A1838/2, 201/8, Memo. 96, Nicholson/DEA, 21 February 1959.

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their disappointment at Australia's continued support of South Africa in the United Nations'.²²⁵

In his own report Davis was critical of the American approach: 'the American Ambassador, Mr. Phillip K. Crowe, has quite openly made calls on African leaders, including the banned ex-chief Luthuli. It seems to me that this course is unwise as it will undoubtedly antagonise the South African Government and it will give Luthuli a false impression of his own position'.²²⁶ Even then the Americans needed to assuage the feelings of a domestic constituency. The Australians did not have that problem. Officially their emphasis was twofold: firstly, not to give offence to the South African government; and secondly, making contact with non-whites would be primarily to provide them with information about Australia and only secondarily to gain a different perspective on South African political developments. Phillips's meeting fell into the latter category.

Davis's instructions had included the following paragraph:

An aspect of Mission information work which may assume increasing significance is the provision of information to non-White individuals and organizations. However, in view of the Union Government's susceptibilities regarding social and political contacts between Whites and non-Whites, this work doubtless poses practical problems and can be carried out only with great circumspection. A assessment of this problem by the Mission would be of some political interest to Department.²²⁷

Gilchrist, who complained to the writer in 1994 that 'it was made almost impossible to have any informative dialogue with black people',²²⁸ wrote at the time that Australia 'would probably not welcome sustained social contact between the diplomatic representatives of some countries and, let us say, the Melanesian villagers around Rabaul or Madang, or with the aborigines in Darwin'.²²⁹

²²⁵ AA, A9421/1, 202/12/1, Memo 371, Phillips/DEA, 12 August 1959, paras. 2, 5; 'Meeting with Africans, 22nd May, 1959'.

²²⁶ AA, A/1838/1, 1348/1, Pt. 1, Memo. 341, Davis/DEA, 3 August 1959.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 201/10/6/1, Pt. 1, Memo. 140, Heydon/High Commissioner, 22 May 1959, Annex, 'Guidance notes for Australian High Commission', 22 May 1959, p. 5, para. 20.

²²⁸ Letter, 15 December 1994.

²²⁹ AA, A1838/2, 852/10/2/3, Pt. 6, 'South Africa: social contacts with non-Europeans', p. 3.

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In the 1950s few people would have believed that an ANC-led government under Nelson Mandela would be in the saddle in South Africa by 1994;²³⁰ nor that the Australian Trust Territory of Papua New Guinea would achieve independence by 1975. In fact, independence was not contemplated at all. In respect of the three High Commission Territories in Southern Africa, 'it was quite misleading', the British High Commissioner, Sir John Maud, told Davis in December 1961, to suggest that the United Kingdom 'had in mind any period of years by which the Territories would have gained independence'. Indeed, 'No one in his senses would try to fix a date for independence in relation to the High Commission Territories'.²³¹ That was five years before Botswana and Lesotho joined the United Nations as independent states followed by Swaziland two years later.

Always on the look-out for friends, beleaguered governments such as South Africa's in the 1950s keep an eye open for well-disposed foreign diplomats, striving to turn potential friends into actual ones. That is not to say that they resort to the methods of blackmail and extortion attributed to the former communist governments of Eastern Europe. At least, the South African government of the 1950s did not do so. Also well-known is the phenomenon that the longer a representative is stationed in a foreign capital, the more likely he is to be influenced by the concerns of the receiving government rather than by those of his own. While their international situation was different, the Australians were not exempt from such preoccupations. Thus in commenting on Hamilton's appointment in 1957 Australian officials stressed that he and his wife were 'very well disposed towards Australia'.²³²

Eric Louw placed a premium on what he called 'objective reporting' both by media and by diplomats stationed in South Africa.²³³ On that basis, those Australian officials who would have qualified for the accolade 'objective' were Marshall, Quinn, Kelly, Hodgson and Kevin. They would then have qualified also for the further accolade 'friend of South Africa'. If not a friend such as these, Stirling was certainly one by virtue of his efforts to learn Afrikaans, always a way to Nationalist hearts. Knowles died before South Africa's need for friends became pressing. Davis tried to be neutral but with a bias towards keeping South Africa a monarchy and within the Common-

²³⁰ Those who professed to believe this would occur much earlier would have been influenced by their hearts not their heads.

²³¹ AA, A1838/2, 155/7/14, Pt. 1, Memo. 714, Davis/DEA, 11 December 1961, Attachment, Record of conversation Davis/Maud, 8 December 1961, pp. 1-2, para. 4.

²³² AA, A1838/T54, 1500/1/30/8, Kevin/Osborne, 30 August 1957.

²³³ See, for example, *The Times* (London), 5 May 1960.

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wealth. But the most articulate, productive and perhaps effective of them all, Gilchrist, was hostile not only towards National Party politicians and policies but, one has the impression, towards white South Africans in general. (It is only fair to say that he denies this.) Nonetheless, from his own recent account it seems that most of his contacts were on the other side of politics.²³⁴

Infusing much of his reporting, his hostility, presumably the product of liberal inclinations compounded by the attitudes prevalent in the circles in which he moved, was to some extent neutralised in Canberra by men such as A.R. Cutler, the Chief of Protocol. Cutler's comment about the need to appoint a High Commissioner if Australia took South Africa seriously (see p. 164 above) was in rebuttal of Gilchrist who recommended that an appointment be deferred until after the 1958 South African general election. Cutler had also earlier rejected Gilchrist's proposals about the Schoeman visit.²³⁵ B.G. Dexter, P.R. Killen's brother-in-law, was another in Canberra whose comments revealed a relatively sympathetic understanding of the white South African predicament.

It must be said of Gilchrist that his intentions were good if one-sided for he tested his ideas only on United Party luminaries and in terms which accorded with their political agenda. Reference was made in the Introduction (in another context) to Gilchrist's correspondence with Laurence Gandar, Editor of the *Rand Daily Mail* (Johannesburg). That had to do with his proposal, which Gandar wanted him to develop in the form of an article, concerning 'some sort of federation of black-majority and white-majority provinces, or even the separation of Natal and the Eastern Cape from the rest'.²³⁶ A file note of 16 March 1959 expanded on what he had proposed in one of his last formal despatches before his return to Australia in January.²³⁷

He envisaged a National Convention; the setting up of 'a federation of four or five predominantly White constituent States and about the same number of predominantly Black constituent States' which would evolve along their 'own preferred social lines'; and a multi-racial federal legislature. Regional devolution, he thought, 'could

²³⁴ Letter, 15 December 1994, paras. 12-13.

²³⁵ AA, A1838/1, 716/50/6/1, Pt. 2, Handwritten note on Memo. No. 541, Gilchrist/DEA, 19 October 1957.

²³⁶ H. Gilchrist, letter, 15 December 1994.

²³⁷ AA, A1838/1, 201/1/2, Pt. 3, a 'Note on regional devolution as a political device in South Africa', 16 March 1959 and A4231/2, South Africa 1958, 16/58, Gilchrist/Minister of External Affairs, 22 December 1958.

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provide a "cushion" or useful transitional stage to reduce tension during those difficult years before the ultimate choice between integration and partition'. Partition would mean white secession, 'writing-off Natal and Eastern Cape' and letting them and Basutoland and Swaziland form a Black State on their own (nothing less in size would be economically viable, even with massive foreign economic aid)'.

He felt Australia should encourage that line of thought 'without appearing to interfere gratuitously in South African domestic affairs'. The best way of proceeding, he thought, would be to have 'a distinguished Australian legal authority' - for example, Zelman Cowen (Governor-General of Australia in the late 1970s) - go to South Africa to lecture on the 'Australian experience of federation'. That could serve 'as an external focus around which constructive ideas of South African relevance might emerge from the minds of South Africans themselves'.²³⁸ At the end of March Gilchrist put up a submission to that effect to his superiors, recommending that the High Commission be informed.²³⁹ The department did so four months later, Barrie Dexter drafting the letter.²⁴⁰ This displayed hesitation - the fear of being accused of interfering with South Africa's domestic affairs would have loomed large:

Our feeling on the proposal is that, while there may be a good case for it in principle, we would need to have a fairly positive approach from some South African body before we could take it further.

Accordingly we should like you, if and when convenient opportunities present themselves to you and without committing any Australian authority, to bear the possibility of such a visit in kind in any discussions that may arise.²⁴¹

Conscious that it paid no heed to government thinking, Davis, then in South Africa for just over four months, poured cold water on the proposal, saying he saw little merit in it. The federal idea was not acceptable to the government nor, as Gilchrist himself had pointed out in his December 1958 despatch, did Sir de Villiers Graaff or Mrs Helen Suzman see much value in it. Its progressive element had split with the United Party leaving behind a strong conservative element which would insist on white supremacy. And for so long as the two major Parties were determined to maintain white supremacy, constitutional changes were not 'going to alter the position'. In any

²³⁸ *Ibid.*

²³⁹ AA, A1838/2, 201/10/11/1, Gilchrist/Assistant Sec. (Div. IV), 31 March 1959.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, Memo. 178, Hill/Australian High Commission, Pretoria, 28 July 1959.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

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case, Davis doubted that Australia's constitutional experience was relevant to South Africa which faced 'completely different problems'. He accordingly recommended that the matter should not be raised again.²⁴²

²⁴² *Ibid.*, Memo. 432, Davis/DEA, 14 September 1959.

CHAPTER FOUR

AUSTRALIANS & SOUTH AFRICANS

There is and no doubt always will be a debate about the value of political or non-career appointees as opposed to professional diplomats as heads of mission.¹ The British work mainly through professionals, believing that their interests are best served that way. (Bruce Lockhart said of the first post-Second World War Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, Sir Orme Sargent, that he 'would sooner have the biggest F.O. "dud" than the best outsider').² Hambloch's observations are not inappropriate: 'it is the amateur ambassador who sometimes imperils international relations. Previous careers in other callings do not always fit the amateur diplomatist to appreciate that ivory towers have their uses'.³ In South Africa's case, it was and is a matter of talent and personality. A.L. Geyer in the 1950s and Carel de Wet (twice) in the 1960s and 1970s were most successful High Commissioners in London (at least as seen from a white South African perspective), as were Te Water, Waterson, Heaton Nicholls and Leif Egeland before them, all of them political appointees. Deneys Reitz was less so. Australia has found itself in a similar position. As Crocker says, 'What matters is the quality of representation. The best Ambassador is always more than a civil servant.'⁴

Alfred Stirling, for eight years Australian liaison officer in London and, from 1948 to 1950, the second Australian High Commissioner to South Africa, wrote in retirement that S.M. Bruce, a former Prime Minister of Australia (1923-29) and High Commissioner in London between 1933 and 1945, 'found a succession of South Africa High Commissioners', all non-career men, easily the best of his allies in the Commonwealth'.⁵ While his relations with Te Water, a fellow-Cambridge man, were good, they were more intimate with Waterson and Heaton Nicholls. A South African for whom

¹ Clare Boothe Luce and Alan Watt addressed this issue, the former in 'The Ambassadorial Issue: Professionals or Amateurs?', *Foreign Affairs* (US), October 1957, Vol. 36, No. 1, pp. 105-21 and the latter in 'Australia and the Ambassadorial Issue', *The Australian Quarterly*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 4, December 1964, pp. 11-18. See also Lyall, 'Australia's Overseas Representation and Government Patronage', *Australian Outlook*, Vol. 23, No. 2, August 1969, pp. 120-43 and 'Politically appointed diplomats: do they work?', *The Bulletin* (Australia), 30 April 1991, pp. 38-42, 44.

² Young, ed., *The diaries of Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart*, Vol. 2, p. 520.

³ Hambloch, *British Consul*, p. 130.

⁴ Crocker, *Australian Ambassador*, p. 63.

⁵ Stirling, *Lord Bruce*, p. 213. See also Cumpston, *Lord Bruce of Melbourne*, p. 245.

Chapter Four: Australians & South Africans

Bruce 'developed a great respect' was Dr Gie, the Minister in Stockholm⁶ especially in respect of his 'close-up information on Russia and Germany'.⁷ In pre-war days the British Ambassador to Nazi Germany, Sir Nevile Henderson, also thought highly of Gie, writing later of his 'South African colleague, with whom I was on terms of the closest and friendliest co-operation throughout the whole of my residence in Berlin and whose balanced and sound judgment I always highly valued'.⁸

Because of a shortage of trained senior officials at the beginning of the period both the Australians and the South Africans placed greater reliance on non-career appointees than they did later. Even after they had built up a corps of trained officers, both countries used diplomatic postings from time to time, as they still do, as a device for removing unwanted government-supporting politicians from the political arena. The appointments of Blaar Coetzee and T.W. White fell into that category. (See the Introduction, p. 4 above). Eric Louw was, however, on record saying he was 'loath to fill up ... vacancies with political appointees, because of the very discouraging effect that this would have on the career officers in the Department'.⁹

The years 1946-1961 saw Australia and South Africa initially represented in each other's capital by one non-career appointee apiece, then by a slew of career officials.¹⁰ With one brief South African exception in the early 1980s,¹¹ career officials have prevailed ever since. The two non-career appointees had been senior Public Servants and became diplomats after heading other government departments. Immediately before his appointment in April 1946, the Australian Sir George Shaw Knowles had for fourteen years simultaneously worn the three hats of Commonwealth Solicitor-General, Head of the Attorney-General's Department and Parliamentary Draftsman. Dr P.R. Viljoen, who opened South Africa's High Commission in Canberra in June 1949,

⁶ Stirling, *Lord Bruce*, p. 283.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

⁸ N. Henderson, *Failure of a Mission: Berlin 1937-1939* (New York, 1940), p. 39.

⁹ AA, A1838/1, 201/10/6, Pt. 1, Memo. 27, Gilchrist/DEA, 10 January 1959, attachment (Record of conversation Louw/Gilchrist, 5 January 1959). Louw was referring specifically to vacancies in Cairo, Berne and Santiago. He had tried 'unobtrusively' to close the Legation in Chile 'which ... should never have been opened' but the Chileans had 'made an awful fuss, and threatened to withdraw their representation from South Africa'. In the hope of 'conciliat[ing] them, with a view to influencing them favourably regarding the "South African" items' at the UN General Assembly, Gert Nel was sent there from Madrid.

¹⁰ A list of Australian and South African heads of mission and their personnel including as many locally recruited staff as could be identified, is given in Appendix I.

¹¹ Dr Denis Worrall (1983-84).

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had been High Commissioner to Canada from 1945. Before that he was Secretary for Agriculture for twelve years.

In the euphoria of entering into relations and opening missions, both governments probably wanted to demonstrate by means of those particular appointments, separated though they were by a three year gap, that they took the new-found relationship seriously. In either case it is a moot point whether suitably qualified senior career officers were not then available.¹² More subterraneously, however, from the Australian side it seems that Evatt, as Attorney-General, wanted to rid himself of Knowles (as he did of Hodgson in his other department)¹³ in favour of someone like K.H. Bailey with whom he could work better.¹⁴ Knowles would have retired under normal circumstances at the age of sixty-five in March 1947. Evatt also offered Bailey External Affairs but he declined.¹⁵ At External Affairs Evatt was probably already aiming to appoint the brilliant, youthful and ideologically sound J.W. Burton, which he did after first having the administratively experienced W.E. Dunk oversee the massive departmental expansion that was planned.¹⁶ (Renouf calls Burton - 'a left-wing Labor Party man' - 'strong on policy and weak on management'.)¹⁷

That is not to say Evatt was unappreciative of Knowles's talents. He cabled Canberra before the San Francisco Conference which drafted the United Nations Charter (he was in London at the time) strongly recommending 'that Knowles be requested to fly to San Francisco so as to be available there in conjunction with Bailey. Knowles has already made several suggestions which have been valuable. He is very well acquainted with the charter of the League of Nations and his skill in drafting is

¹² In respect of the Australians, Hudson says not. See his 'The Department of Foreign Affairs: 1935-1985', *Australian Foreign Affairs Record*, Vol. 56, No. 11, November 1985, p. 1068. See also Lyall, 'Australia's Overseas Representation and Government Patronage', *Australian Outlook*, Vol. 23, No. 2, August 1969, p. 124.

¹³ Edwards, *Prime Ministers and Diplomats*, p. 179; p. 10. 'National Gallery: The unfussy auditor: First steps in Sir William Dunk's climb to the top of the Public Service', *Nation* (Australia), No. 20, 20 June 1959, p. 10. Mr Mervyn Knowles may disagree with this. Letter, 26 February 1994 and text of remarks made on the occasion of the inauguration of the Knowles Building in National Circuit, Canberra, on 10 November 1987. I am grateful to Mr Knowles for sending me a copy of his remarks.

¹⁴ See A. Dalziel, *Evatt the enigma* (Melbourne 1967), pp. 29-30.

¹⁵ Edwards, *Prime Ministers and Diplomats*, p. 179.

¹⁶ AA, A447/1, A1945/2291, Makin/Secretary, Public Service Board, 25 September 1945; A571/62, 45/244, Dunk/Acting Minister, 27 September 1945 (attached to draft internal Treasury submission to the Acting Assistant Secretary concerning the 'Re-organisation of Department of External Affairs', 16 October 1945); Edwards, *Prime Ministers and Diplomats*, p. 179-80. Details of the proposed reorganisation are set out in tabular form in A447/1, A1945/2291, 'Department of External Affairs. Proposed Reorganisation', 11 October 1945.

¹⁷ Renouf, *The Champagne Trail*, p. 11.

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unsurpassed'.¹⁸ Curtin rejected this appeal on grounds that Knowles's services were 'indispensable in Canberra for the parliamentary session'.¹⁹ Knowles's detailed analysis of the Dumbarton Oaks proposals which formed the basis of the UN Charter, prepared at Evatt's request, had already been cabled to London.²⁰ Knowles was, in fact, a Public Service lawyer of formidable qualities and it is fitting that his memory should be preserved in a legal setting, through the Knowles Building which houses part of the Commonwealth Attorney-General's department in Canberra and Knowles Place where the Canberra Law Courts are situated.

Knowles also contributed to the development of early Canberra. Before the Melbourne-based public servants commenced their trek to the ACT in the late 1920s, he chaired a committee to keep an eye on their interests. And he became known later as 'the father of the University movement in Canberra' for his work in that connection.²¹ His entry in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Vol. 9, p. 623) was written by former Prime Minister E.G. Whitlam whose father, H.F.E. Whitlam was, as Crown Solicitor, Knowles's subordinate when he was Solicitor-General.

Viljoen had already reached retirement age by the time of his appointment to Australia in February 1949. While he was probably the best available man at that particular juncture, there may have been other reasons for his appointment to Canada four years earlier. C.J. Burchell, the Canadian High Commissioner in South Africa, thought so, believing him to be a scape-goat for the poor food distribution system in South Africa during the later stages of the war. 'It appears that the sole reason for appointing this man to Canada is to get him out of the Civil Service ... and out of the country'. On the other hand, Forsyth said that Viljoen was not being 'stellenbosched'.²² Burchell's letter serves an example of the gossip that diplomats relay to their head offices. In it

¹⁸ W.J. Hudson & W. Way, eds., *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-49*, Vol. VIII: 1945 (Canberra, 1989), pp. 131-32. Knowles had been an adviser to the Australian delegations to the First and Fifth sessions of the League of Nations Assembly. Hudson, *Australia and the League of Nations*, pp. 193-94.

¹⁹ Hudson & Way, eds., *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, Vol. VIII, p. 132, fn. 4.

²⁰ Hudson, *Australia and the New World Order*, p. 44.

²¹ *The Canberra Times*, 24 November 1947; Knowles, 'Canberra in the early government period', *Canberra Historical Journal*, New Series, No. 19, March 1987, p. 7.

²² BTS, Viljoen, Vol. 3, Forsyth/Assistant Secretary, 10 February 1945. During the Anglo-Boer War incompetent British officers were sent to the main base camp at Stellenbosch, therefore 'Stellenbosched'. See Kipling's poem on the theme. *Rudyard Kipling's Verse: Definitive Edition* (London, 1989 (1940)), pp. 477-78.

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Viljoen was also described as the 'father of the Control Board system'²³ and was said to have been blackballed for membership of the Civil Service Club in Cape Town!²⁴ N.A. Robertson, the Under Secretary of State, told Burchell that there were no grounds on which an objection could be based to Viljoen's selection.²⁵

Burchell also claimed that Viljoen had 'rather strong Nationalist sympathies' and that he was a 'ranking member of the Broederbond'.²⁶ Both of these allegations are nonsensical, though General Kemp did appoint Viljoen Secretary for Agriculture during his time as Minister. As a boy he had been a member of Kemp's commando in the Anglo-Boer War.²⁷ News of Viljoen's appointment went down well in Australia. Menzies told the House of Representatives that he was very highly regarded in Canada.²⁸ Viljoen's Australian colleague in Ottawa, F.M. Forde,²⁹ had earlier reported on him favourably, saying that he had the highest regard for Viljoen whom he considered to be 'one of the outstanding personalities in diplomatic life in Ottawa'. Viljoen, 'a follower of General Smuts' made

no secret of his advocacy of a close link between South Africa and the remainder of the British Commonwealth. He has stated in public speeches in my hearing that the treatment which South Africa received from the United Kingdom Government after the Boer War was such that he is a convinced Imperialist.³⁰

Viljoen in fact did quite well in Canada after an early gaffe demonstrating a shaky grasp of protocol when he attached himself to his Australian colleague's courtesy call on the Governor of Quebec.³¹ When he left Canada early in 1949 the British High Commissioner, Sir Alexander Clutterbuck, organised a farewell banquet for him and

²³ He was Chairman of the National Marketing Board from 1937 to 1945 and a member of the National Food Council from 1940 to 1945. *DSAB*, Vol. IV, p. 746. See also Tothill, *The 1943 General Election*, pp. 138-39.

²⁴ CA, DEA Records, File 167(S), Burchell/Robertson, 6 November 1944. See also Tennyson, *Canadian Relations with South Africa*, p. 105.

²⁵ CA, DEA Records, File 167(S), Robertson/Burchell, 27 November 1944.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, Burchell/Robertson, 27 October 1944.

²⁷ *DSAB*, Vol. IV, p. 745.

²⁸ *CPD*, Vol. 201, 15 February 1949, p. 234.

²⁹ A former Deputy Leader of the ALP, Deputy Prime Minister and, for a few days after Curtin's death in 1945, Prime Minister. In 1935 Curtin had defeated him by only one vote for the leadership of the ALP. F. Alexander, *From Curtin to Menzies and after: continuity or confrontation?* (Melbourne, 1973), p. 3.

³⁰ AA, A1838/T17, 1500/1/30/1, Forde/DEA, 8 January 1949. There were, of course, few diplomats in Canada at the time.

³¹ Stirling, *Lord Bruce*, pp. 411-12. Stirling preceded Forde.

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even composed a poem in honour of the occasion.³² Clutterbuck had been Deputy High Commissioner in South Africa in 1939³³ and probably met Viljoen then. He was designated High Commissioner to Australia in 1952.³⁴ (In the old Commonwealth, at least so far as the British and the Canadians were concerned, it was almost customary for their representatives to serve in a junior capacity in South Africa and Australia before becoming heads of mission in one or the other or both).³⁵ The appointment was not consummated and Sir Stephen Holmes went to Australia. Clutterbuck became High Commissioner to India and later Permanent Under-Secretary at the Commonwealth Relations Office.

On paper Viljoen was the ideal envoy to an agricultural and pastoral country such as Australia. He was a qualified veterinarian, obtaining the MRCVS at the Royal Veterinary College in London in 1912 and his doctorate in Veterinary Medicine at Berne, Switzerland, in 1921. During the First World War he was awarded the Military Cross for his work with the horses used in the 1915 German South-West Africa campaign - none died of disease. He was successively Professor of Veterinary Science at the Transvaal University College (1919), Deputy Director, Veterinary Services (1920), Chief of Veterinary Field Services (1926), Deputy Director of Onderstepoort (1927), Under-Secretary for Agriculture (1931) and Secretary for Agriculture and Forestry (1933). Yet his best years lay behind him when he came to Australia and once there he gave few signs of what his entry in the *Dictionary of South African Biography*³⁶ calls his 'exceptional intellectual talents' and 'extraordinary capacity for work'. One has, however, no reason to doubt these descriptions. After all, his MRCVS and doctorate rested on a base of very little formal schooling.

He was in indifferent health when he arrived in Australia and within six months he was hospitalised for more than three weeks in Canberra and Sydney for an abnormal

³² I am indebted to Mrs L. Turbati of the South African High Commission, Ottawa, for sending me a copy of a letter dated 13 September 1993 addressed by L. Lang to the then Ambassador, forwarding a copy of the poem. Mrs Turbati, letter, 3 February 1994. It is an execrable poem!

³³ *Official Year Book of the Union of South Africa and of Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland*, No. 20-1939, p. 1201.

³⁴ *The Canberra Times*, 23 February 1952; J. Barder, 'Early British, Diplomatic Representation in Australia' (Unpublished, March 1993), pp. 13-14..

³⁵ Ben Cockram was a case in point. He was Political Secretary at the British High Commission in South Africa from 1939 to 1941 and Deputy High Commissioner in Canberra in the early 1950s. After his retirement he returned to South Africa as first Professor of International Relations at the University of the Witwatersrand. His daughter Gail-Maryse is the author of, *ia.*, *South West African Mandate*. Cape Town, 1976.

³⁶ Vol. IV, p. 746.

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heart rhythm. The condition was brought on by over-exertion when he had to change a car wheel while returning to Canberra from a visit to Wagga Wagga in southern New South Wales. (His term fell partly inside and partly outside the era of chauffeur-driven cars for heads of mission.) He was tired after 'an extremely heavy weekend meeting people, inspecting local institutions, attending two dinners and addressing two public meetings on South Africa'. The weather was also 'extremely hot' and the car was standing in an awkward position on wet ground.³⁷

Seeking to encourage, Forsyth spoke flatteringly when in July 1950 Viljoen gave notice of his intention to return to South Africa the following June, pleading Canberra's isolation: 'It will be a pity to lose you for Australia. All reports go to show that you have both done jolly well there'.³⁸ In reply, Viljoen quoted a letter he had received from Jooste, then Ambassador to the United States: 'Mr. Menzies spoke in the most glowing terms of yourself and Mrs. Viljoen and went out of his way to assure me how much he valued your friendship'.³⁹ Six months after his retirement Malan told the House of Assembly that Viljoen had done 'excellent work'.⁴⁰ Even so, considered retrospectively, his term was one of the least successful.

Viljoen did not, as the *Dictionary of South African Biography* suggests, return to South Africa for health reasons.⁴¹ Having lobbied for and obtained an extension of his term for a year, he subsequently cut it short by eight months. He had brought his pregnant younger daughter and her two children to Canberra during her husband's service with the South African squadron in Korea. When his son-in-law returned to Pretoria after an accident he felt that his daughter should join him. He did not want her to travel alone and he was unwilling to pay for his wife or himself to accompany her out of his own pocket. (This predated the establishment of the direct air link by more than a year).⁴²

Sole's feeling mentioned in the previous chapter (p. 146) that he lacked influence points to an important difference between career officers and non-career diplo-

³⁷ BTS, Viljoen, Vol. 7, Viljoen/Forsyth, 3 February 1950. The technical description of his condition was 'chronic rheumatic endocarditis and mitral regurgitation' according to the specialist's report attached to this letter.

³⁸ BTS, Viljoen, Vol. 7, Forsyth/Viljoen, 15 August 1950.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, Viljoen/Forsyth, 29 August 1950.

⁴⁰ *HA Deb.*, Vol. 78, 24 April 1952, Col. 4325.

⁴¹ Vol. IV, p. 746.

⁴² BTS, Viljoen, Vol. 7, Forsyth/Viljoen, 4 July 1951.

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mats, including non-career appointees, even if they are former Public Servants. In the case of the last-mentioned the bureaucracy feels obliged to 'look smart and hop to it', whereas the former tend to be fobbed off because, after all, they are just Public Servants and often junior to the administrative officials they are petitioning. The records of the Knowles and Viljoen appointments provide ample evidence of the truth of this proposition.

If there is a lack of attention paid him before his departure, the middle-ranking Public Service head of mission may also find that his head office ignores him at his post. Keith Officer's complaint as Australian Ambassador in Paris in the early 1950s⁴³ about the 'absence of guidance from Canberra' and that replies to his memoranda were seldom received, will probably strike a chord among foreign service officers generally. It is the sort of situation which supports the analogy drawn by a Canadian ambassador between a foreign service officer and a cultivated mushroom.⁴⁴ Senior Public Servants, however, command the status and authority (not the mention the experience and skills) to evade such treatment.

It was also mentioned in Chapter Three (p. 147) that senior Public Servants are probably even more sensitive than politicians to what they consider to be their rights. Viljoen in particular regularly bombarded Forsyth with personal letters about his situation from the beginning of his term in Canada until he left Australia six years later. The many subjects covered included his allowances when on conference duty and, particularly, recovering the amounts he had disbursed in tips to ship's personnel on ocean voyages.⁴⁵ Also, through Forsyth he prevailed on the authorities to pay his cook's transportation costs from Canada to Australia and back to Canada when she could not adjust to life in Canberra. (The cook was in his personal employ.) He was also something of a Hamlet in respect of the duration of his terms in both Ottawa and Canberra. He qualifies for the description 'prima donna', a term not infrequently applied to temperamental South African diplomats.

⁴³ Specifically in respect of his Embassy's information work. AA, A4231/2, UN, NY 1951/52, Ministerial Despatch No. 11, 25 February 1952.

⁴⁴ 'They keep him in the dark and every now and then they dump a load of [excrement] on him', a remark made in the writer's presence.

⁴⁵ While serving in Canada he led the South African delegations to the annual conferences of the Food and Agriculture Organization at Quebec (1945), Copenhagen (1946), Rome (1946) and Geneva (1947). *DSAB*, Vol. IV, p. 746. Tips to ships' personnel, then considered of some importance, regularly formed the subject of correspondence between the Department of External Affairs, the Public Service Commission and the Treasury.

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Despite a heavy schedule Forsyth personally, occasionally his immediate deputy, responded patiently and sometimes at length to these communications. No career foreign service officer would have dared burden his head of department that way if only for fear of jeopardising his career. Even given the department's small size at the time, its head would not have considered it incumbent upon himself to respond personally to subordinates about such matters. Forsyth's replies to Viljoen revealed a wealth of administrative experience. It is difficult to conceive of Jooste, admirable official though he was in many respects, emulating Forsyth in that regard.

If Knowles appeared less concerned about his personal circumstances than Viljoen, he knew his worth and he did not hesitate to state his requirements to Dunk, then the Secretary and by far his junior in the Public Service. He experienced no difficulty in having his son, Mervyn, detached from the Department of Post War Reconstruction where he was working on temporary transfer from the Department of Commerce and Agriculture, to accompany him to South Africa as Third Secretary⁴⁶ and he engaged his own typist. Subsequently, however, he did not succeed in having Mervyn's wife Beth taken on strength as an additional typist.⁴⁷

O.C.W. Fuhrman, a member of the Commonwealth Public Service since 1921,⁴⁸ accompanied Knowles to South Africa in the key post of Official Secretary or second-in-command. It was a three month assignment to get the High Commission off and running pending the arrival of the newly-recruited substantive Official Secretary, M.H. Marshall. Fuhrman had served in the First World War, attaining the rank of major and in accordance with the practice of the time he retained the title in civilian life. As mentioned in Chapter Two (p. 86, footnote 34), he had been Secretary to Australia's delegations to sessions of the League of Nations Assembly between 1922 and 1937, with a break in 1928. He was then employed by the Prime Minister's department and worked at the Australian High Commission in London. Most of the administrative burden of Australia's League work fell on his shoulders.⁴⁹ Knowles met

⁴⁶ AA, A1838/1, 1348/1, Pt. 1, Dunk/Secretary, PSB, 16 May 1946. This was not as 'nepotistic' as it may seem. There was a shortage of trained junior staff at the time and Mervyn Knowles had gained administrative experience in the army and the Departments Commerce and Agriculture and Post-War Reconstruction. M.J.S. Knowles CV.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, I. 22063, 6 September 1946 and O. 17688, 12 September 1946. Mr Mervyn Knowles indicates that the suggestion came from Fuhrman. Letter, 11 September 1995.

⁴⁸ AA, A167/1, S46/238, 'Department of External Affairs: Seniority of Officers', n.d. His Public Service seniority number was 1627.

⁴⁹ Edwards, *Prime Ministers and Diplomats*, p.76.

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Fuhrman when he attended the Fifth Assembly in 1924. Knowles himself had previously been an adviser to the delegation to the First Assembly in 1920.

Knowles was unlikely to have requested Fuhrman's services for South Africa on the strength of their past association for, according to Mervyn Knowles, their relations at the League of Nations had not been especially friendly. Mervyn Knowles sketches the circumstances of Fuhrman's temporary posting:

By the time it came to opening the South African post there was a lack of experienced staff at External Affairs and with a High Commissioner Designate without experience in a post it was decided to post Fuhrman. He, for his part, was feeling that he was overdue for a posting as head of mission himself⁵⁰ and thus agreed to take a short-term assignment, there being mutual doubt as to how well he and GSK [Sir George Knowles] would 'hit it off'. In the event, both had mellowed and they got along extremely well and there was, I know, genuine regret on [the side of] both parties ... when the time for parting came.⁵¹

The forty-seven year old Melville Henry Marshall, a career civil servant though not a career foreign service officer, replaced Fuhrman. Marshall had joined the Commonwealth Public Service in 1916, working in the Tax Branch of the Treasury until 1927. Thereafter he spent six years as economic adviser to the Development and Migration Commission, rejoining the Tax Branch in 1935. From 1940 to early 1942 he was Deputy Collector General of Taxes in the Federated Malay States. He returned to Australia after the Japanese invasion again working in the Tax Branch. When it was advertised in the Public Service early in 1946 he applied for the post of Official Secretary (equivalent to First Secretary) in the newly created High Commission in South Africa. By that time he held a Bachelor of Commerce degree from Melbourne University and was a grade six Tax Assessor.

The advertisement drew a 'disappointing' five applications, including one from C.T. Moodie, already a member of External Affairs, who would go to South Africa as Ambassador some twenty-five years later. Marshall was appointed.⁵² Dunk told Knowles later that while he was 'quite inexperienced' he struck him as 'a man of some

⁵⁰ He had transferred to External Affairs from the Department of Social Services in March 1946 at a salary of £856 per annum. He was promoted to First Secretary in April. On returning from South Africa he was appointed Consul-General in Shanghai (1947-48) then Australian Minister to Israel (1949-53). He died in November 1961. *Current Notes*, Vol. 32, No. 11, November 1961.

⁵¹ M.J.S. Knowles, letter, 22 July 1994.

⁵² AA, A1067/1, S46/199, Dunk/PSB, 25 June 1946.

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intelligence and should therefore soon assimilate the duties of his position'.⁵³ Dunk summed him up correctly. Apart from occasionally committing what a later generation of Australian officials would have viewed as political gaffes (such as publicly identifying himself closely with white South African aspirations - there again that was what the job was perceived to entail at the time) he was a good representative and his work attracted favourable comment from visiting Australian dignitaries such as Sir Earl Page in 1948.⁵⁴ On the other hand, Mervyn Knowles feels that he behaved discourteously towards his mother between Sir George's death and her departure ten weeks later.⁵⁵

If Nel was a man for all seasons in Canberra and what the situation required (Chapter Three, p. 167), Marshall held his end up well in the particular context in which he found himself in South Africa. It is evident from his reporting that he enjoyed his work, though his previous background in taxation (his neat, underlined signature suggests the accountant) left him ill-equipped to handle an increasingly sensitive relationship from the political point of view. He said in a radio broadcast on the occasion of Australia Day 1951:

Australians who have been privileged to live in South Africa cannot fail to be impressed by the great similarity between our two countries - geographically, climatically, economically, our peoples and our outlook on life. We are basically farming peoples with the same love for the land and the freedom of the wide open spaces. We grow similar products; we fight similar diseases; we suffer great lack of water in portions of our territories and surpluses in others. We have similar problems in handling our huge territory from a central administration. ...

Our defence presents similar problems because of our isolation from other western civilisations and by reason of our lengthy coast lines. Australia has always felt that South Africa's security and integrity are vital to Australia's life-line to Europe. Consequently any threat to that life-line has caused an immediate response on the part of Australia.⁵⁶

⁵³ AA, A1838/1, 1348/1, Pt. 1, Dunk/Knowles, 5 December 1946. Mervyn Knowles, who worked with him for a year in South Africa, feels that Marshall 'was not entirely out of his depth in diplomatic life' as a result of his experiences in Malaya. Letter, 16 March 1995.

⁵⁴ CPD, Vol. 197, 5 May 1948, p. 1407. See also Vol. 211, 29 November 1950, p. 3298.

⁵⁵ M.J.S. Knowles, letter, 16 March 1995. For example, she had specifically to ask for the use of the High Commission's second car whenever she wanted to go somewhere.

⁵⁶ 'Australia Day Jubilee Celebration, 1951. National Broadcast made by Mr M.H. Marshall', p. 3. Attached to AA, A4231/2, Cape Town 1951, 2/51, Marshall/Minister of State for External Affairs, 30 January 1951.

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That about epitomised the situation for Australian diplomats in South Africa until Gilchrist's arrival in 1955. Marshall was in charge of the High Commission from the time of Knowles's death in November 1947 until Stirling arrived in August 1948 and then for almost a year in 1950-51 after Stirling's departure. Marshall returned to Canberra in 1951. He was posted to New Zealand as Official Secretary in 1953 and to San Francisco in 1955 as Consul-General. In 1960 he went back to Canberra and spent the two years until his retirement in 1962 in the department's Information Branch. He died three years later.⁵⁷

Photographs of Marshall and his wife at the 1951 Australia Day dinner in the company respectively of Mr and Mrs B.J. Schoeman and Mrs and Mrs J.G. Strijdom appeared in *Die Burger* and *The Cape Times* on 29 January 1951.⁵⁸

The appointments of Stirling (1948-50), Quinn (1951-52) and Kelly (1952-55)⁵⁹ suggest that the Australian authorities were influenced by the need for officers who could communicate in Afrikaans. All three were linguists besides which Stirling and Quinn had previous experience in or with The Netherlands. Quinn had been Chargé d'Affaires there (1948-50) and Stirling Counsellor on the staff of the non-resident Minister, S.M. Bruce, during the war. Bruce, Stirling and the Dutch government were then resident in London. At that time Stirling spoke no Dutch but he had already learned to read the language fairly easily.⁶⁰ He said that when in South Africa he worked hard to learn Afrikaans, becoming 'fairly fluent' and reading 'widely in its very interesting literature'.⁶¹ Not only that but he translated Afrikaans poetry.

Against the background of the number of diplomats (not to mention South African English-speakers) who did not learn Afrikaans, Stirling made a favourable impression on his Afrikaans-speaking interlocutors. Piet Beukes, who interviewed him in October 1948 for eleven small newspapers in the Unie-Volkspers group including *Die Suiderstem* and *Ons Land*, reported that

⁵⁷ Undated departmental biography included among a batch Mr Chris Taylor of DFAT forwarded to Ms Sylvia Mackay under cover of his letter 94/9081, 11 January 1995 and *Who's Who in Australia*, XVth Ed., 1959.

⁵⁸ Attached to AA, A4231/2, South Africa 1951, No. 2/51, Marshall/Minister of State, 30 January 1951.

⁵⁹ Kelly acted as High Commissioner for four months between April and August 1952. See Appendix I.

⁶⁰ A.T. Stirling, *On the Fringe of Diplomacy* (Melbourne, 1973), p. 50.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

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he set a new record for learning Afrikaans: He arrived in South Africa by plane from America on 23 August 1948 and a month later he was already able to enjoy Afrikaans novels, poems and plays. He went further. Before the end of September he had translated four of Uys Krige's best-known poems into English and everyone who has read his translations acknowledges that he captured the deepest feelings of the poems.

This person who honoured Afrikaans and South Africa is none other than Mr Alfred Stirling, Australia's High Commissioner in the Union who succeeded Sir George Knowles.⁶²

Beukes's article juxtaposed one of Krige's poems 'Die Einde van die Pad' with Stirling's translation 'The End of the Road'. Stirling later included poem and translation in his memoir *On the Fringe of Diplomacy* (pp. 36-39.) The next year *Die Burger's* 'Van alle kante' ('From all sides') column reported that Stirling was the only foreign representative in the Union who had taken the trouble to learn Afrikaans. The newspaper had received from him a 'perfect letter in Afrikaans' about the Australian origins of Pretoria's jacaranda trees.⁶³ Stirling also visited various Afrikaans-language universities.⁶⁴

A former permanent head of the Australian Department of External Affairs, J.K. Waller, called Stirling

a very interesting character. A man of the widest possible culture, he had a high facility for absorbing new languages and an unusually fine memory. He never seemed to forget anything; he could see an opera once and sing half the arias in it. He was a man of considerable charm and private means, had long been interested in international affairs and had taken good degrees at Melbourne and Oxford. On paper he should have been one of the most brilliant people that External Affairs ever saw. He had all the paper qualifications - knowledge, linguistics, integrity, all of these things. But he seemed to lack a hard political nose. He was knowledgeable about the internal politics of the many countries in which he served, got on very well with the governments to which he was [p. 4] accredited and was universally admired. He was the kind of Australian representative that one would be proud of. For instance, when he was in South Africa he learnt Afrikaans and translated a lot of Afrikaans poetry into English, no mean achievement. And yet, many people with far fewer qualifications

⁶² AA, A1838/1, 201/10/6/1, Pt. 1, Marshall/DEA, 22 October 1948, attachment, P. Beukes, 'Australian learns Afrikaans in a month'. *Die Suidersstem* etc., 16 October 1948. (Original in Afrikaans). Marshall's covering letter consists largely of a translation of the article.

⁶³ *Die Burger*, 7 March 1949. One assumes the wording should have been 'a letter in perfect Afrikaans' but 'perfect letter in Afrikaans' was how it appeared in the original.

⁶⁴ *Die Transvaler*, 20 November 1948. A copy with translation is on AA, A1838/1, 201/10/6/1, Pt. 1.

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have turned out to be better Foreign Service Office officers. I always retained an immense affection for Stirling because he was very kind to me in those days; he was twelve or thirteen years older than I, and I was, and have always been, very grateful for his friendship. He had been Menzies' private secretary, and I think he read or the Bar in Menzies' Chambers. Menzies had a great affection for him, but it was a slightly contemptuous affection.⁶⁵

A fact Waller omits to mention but it may, if only subconsciously, inform his comments, is that Stirling's mother and sister Dorothy accompanied him to his posts, the latter acting as his official hostess. Stirling never married and he was particularly solicitous of his mother, delaying his arrival in South Africa by almost two months because of her ill-health in Washington, their last post..

Although he had been accepted in 1929 for the junior of two new External Affairs posts it was contemplated establishing in the Prime Minister's Department,⁶⁶ Stirling's career with the Department of External Affairs commenced only in 1936. For the two previous years he had been Menzies's Private Secretary when the latter was Commonwealth Attorney-General. Contemporary South African foreign service officers would have envied him his career. But for the year 1936-37 when he headed the department's Political Section, it lay entirely abroad - London (1937-45, External Affairs Officer); Canada (1945-47, High Commissioner); Washington (1947-48, Minister); South Africa (1948-50, High Commissioner); The Netherlands (1950-55, Ambassador); France (1955-59, Ambassador); Philippines (1959-62, Ambassador); Italy (1962-67, Ambassador, also to Greece 1964-67). He died in 1981, two months short of his seventy-ninth birthday.⁶⁷

Photographs of Stirling appear in the *Rand Daily Mail* of 5 November 1948⁶⁸ and *Die Suiderstem* and other Unie-Volkspers newspapers of 16 October 1948.

Stirling's *de facto* successor in South Africa, Marshall, was himself succeeded by the 'highly regarded'⁶⁹ John Paul Quinn who was considered to be one of the most promising Australian foreign service officers of his generation until his untimely death

⁶⁵ Waller, *A Diplomatic Life*, pp. 3-4.

⁶⁶ Edwards, *Prime Ministers and Diplomats*, p. 84. The matter fell through when the government lost the 1929 election.

⁶⁷ Undated departmental biography included among a batch Mr Chris Taylor of DFAT forwarded to Ms Sylvia Mackay under cover of his letter 94/9081, 11 January 1995 and *Who's Who in Australia*, XXIst Ed., 1974, p. 945.

⁶⁸ Copy on AA, A1838/1, 201/10/6/1, Pt. 1.

⁶⁹ W.J. Hudson, written comments, June 1995.

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in an air crash near Rabat, Morocco, in September 1961 at the age of 42. Menzies who was then both Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs paid tribute to him:

John Quinn has passed from us at the height of his powers and with the promise of adding greatly to his already considerable achievements in the service of Australia.

He combined great intellectual power, complete integrity of character, and a sympathetic approach to his fellows.

He showed great courage during his internment in Sumatra and Singapore, and recovered to give outstanding service both at home in the Department of External Affairs and abroad as a representative of Australia.⁷⁰

Quinn joined the Department of External Affairs in 1940. He had graduated from the University of Sydney in 1938 with First Class Honours in French and German and was awarded a French Government Travelling Scholarship which he took up at the University of the Sorbonne. The war cut short his studies and he returned to Australia. He was posted to Singapore in 1941 as Third Secretary at the Australian Commission. After the fall of Singapore the Australians tried to escape to Sumatra but were captured. In vain did the Commissioner, V.G. Bowden, a businessman, plead diplomatic immunity in accordance with his instructions. The Japanese shot him before Quinn's eyes, interning Quinn himself who spent the rest of the war in captivity, experiencing much hardship.⁷¹

The Dutch and English prisoners in the Sumatra prisoner-of-war camp taught each other their respective languages. Quinn possessed 'superb linguistic gifts' and he emerged from captivity with what Stirling calls 'a flawless knowledge of Dutch'.⁷² This was of considerable help to him during his two-year posting as Chargé d'Affaires in The Hague (1948-50) at a difficult time in view of Australia's support for Indonesian independence. From there he proceeded to London as External Affairs Officer with the rank of Counsellor, thence to South Africa where he spent just over a year as Acting High Commissioner, celebrating his thirty-third birthday in Cape Town on 26 February 1952. He was then appointed Australian Minister to Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. He

⁷⁰ *Current Notes*, September 1961, p. 56. A photograph of Quinn presenting his credentials as Ambassador to President Nasser of the United Arab Republic appears at p. 57; *John Paul Quinn*, p. 27.

⁷¹ See Watt, *Australian Diplomat*, p. 75.

⁷² Stirling, *On the Fringe of Diplomacy*, p. 52. See also R.H. Scott in *John Paul Quinn*, pp. 8-10. Quinn had achieved interpreter standard in French, German and Dutch.

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returned to Canberra in 1954 as Assistant Secretary in charge of the South and South East Asia Branch. After serving some six years in that capacity he became Minister, later Ambassador to the United Arab Republic, unfortunately perishing in the aforesaid air crash.

Some seven years after Quinn's death a former subordinate, R.W. Furlonger, wrote that 'uniquely' among 'first-class linguists, he also had a first-class political mind of great subtlety and comprehension'.⁷³ There is not much evidence of that from the few despatches Quinn sent from South Africa. (See Appendix Five below, p. 485). He was there at the beginning of the constitutional crisis triggered by the removal of Cape Coloured voters from the common role. Yet from the present vantage point his reports are pedestrian and routine. They show no evidence of research and they are altogether lacking in the penetration and depth evident, for example, in the German Rudolf Asmis's report on Australian Aborigines. (See Chapter Seven below, p. 349.)

Kelly, another linguist, died in Canberra in July 1994 at the age of eighty-four, eight days after the nineteenth anniversary of his retirement. He had joined External Affairs in 1945 at the ripe age of thirty-five after thirteen years with the Victorian Education Department and the Crown Solicitor's office in Melbourne (1928-41 - he held a BA LLB degree) and three years as a Lieutenant in naval intelligence (1942-45). His obituarist says he was fluent in French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian and he had a working knowledge of German, Afrikaans, Hindi, Chinese, Burmese, Javanese and Khmer.⁷⁴ He was head of mission in South Africa in succession to Quinn for only four months in 1952 and it is not clear (to this writer) whether it had already been decided to send W.R. Hodgson to South Africa on a final posting before retirement by the time Kelly took up duty there.

It was mentioned in the Introduction above (p. 23) that Dr W.J. Hudson, Head of the Historical Documents Branch in the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, had broken down the personnel of the Australian department into factions such as Masons, Marxists and Catholics. Kelly was leader of the Catholic faction. By the time of his death he was 'a kind of Catholic intellectual icon'⁷⁵ and 'a favourite son

⁷³ *John Paul Quinn*, p. 17.

⁷⁴ J.J. Eddy, 'Intellectual turned cultured diplomat', *The Australian*, 22 July 1994. See also *The Canberra Times*, 15 July 1994.

⁷⁵ H. Gilchrist, letter, 15 December 1994, para. 7.

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in Catholic circles'.⁷⁶ It was hardly surprising, therefore, that two bishops presided over his well-attended funeral.⁷⁷ at which 'many tributes were paid to his scholarship'.⁷⁸

Juddery writes that in his youth Kelly

had been a founder of the society at the University of Melbourne which gave birth to Catholic Action: indeed, another member of the group once told this writer that Archbishop Mannix's choice of B.A. Santamaria over Kelly to run what became 'The Movement' astounded most of their colleagues.⁷⁹

In view of his and the Movement's part in bringing about the split in the Australian Labor Party of 1955⁸⁰ (which in effect kept Labor out of office until 1972), Santamaria is an important figure in Australian political history. He writes of Kelly and the Campion Society (named after the Sixteenth Century English Jesuit martyr Edmund Campion):

The most influential of the new figures in the society ... was Kevin T. Kelly ... To an effervescent intellect, always bubbling with new insights, there was added a fine speaking ability which made him formidable in controversy and in all ways an inspiring figure to his Campion colleagues.⁸¹

The Catholic Evidence Guild, which 'provided a battery of trained speakers on Catholic doctrine and philosophy for Melbourne's Yarra Bank on a Sunday afternoon', was a off-shoot of the Campion Society. Kelly was 'without doubt its most able and challenging speaker'.⁸²

⁷⁶ Ms Moira Smythe, letter, 23 May 1995.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ H. Gilchrist, letter, 15 December 1994, para. 7.

⁷⁹ Juddery, *At the Centre*, p. 101. He was the first Master of the Catholic Evidence Guild, among the eight founders of the Campion Society, and prominent among the founders of the *Catholic Worker*. John J. Eddy, s.j., 'Kevin Thomas Kelly', 18 July 1994. Eddy's piece in the *Australian* four days later was drawn from this. I am indebted to Ms Moira Smythe for both versions. Archbishop Mannix asked Santamaria to be one of two members of the National Secretariat of Catholic Action. B.A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: Against the Tide* (Melbourne, 1981), p. 3.

⁸⁰ See R. Murray, *The Split: Australian Labor in the Fifties* (Sydney, 1984 (1970)).

⁸¹ Santamaria, *Against the Tide*, p. 15. Manning Clark records having heard a 'magnificent debate' that he would 'never forget' at Melbourne University in April 1937 involving Santamaria and Kelly among others. R.M. Crawford, C.M.H. Clark and G. Blainey, *Making History* (Ringwood, Vic., 1985), p. 57.

⁸² Santamaria, *Against the Tide*, p. 16.

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Seemingly straight-faced, Juddery said of him shortly before his retirement after three decades in foreign service:

Kelly's brilliance was not in question. In 1971 ... he sent to Canberra from Europe a summary of the situation of that continent which, for brevity and insight, is claimed by those fortunate enough to have read it (it was, of course, secret) to rank with the masterpieces of world literature.⁸³

Gilchrist, who does not project as a gullible man, writes:

Once he [Kelly] told me that he was writing 13 books; at another time, that he was writing an Australian history as a counter-blast to Manning Clark's.⁸⁴ But he does not appear to have published anything, except possibly a monograph on the French Revolution, read to the Newman Society.⁸⁵

Such comments may lend perspective to Kelly. Assuming their accuracy, one wonders whether he made a mistake following a foreign service career. For foreign service is not generally a vehicle for effervescent intellects and fine speaking abilities let alone brilliance. (See Chapter Two above, p. 107.) The British Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service may once have been one. The South African and Australian departments probably never were except that the latter attracted exceptional individuals like Hasluck and Burton in its early years.

It was suggested in Chapter One (p. 78) that what counts in the bureaucratic milieu is the ability and the connections to manipulate the system to personal advantage. Kelly's posts suggest he was deficient in those areas. The panegyric delivered after his death held that his advice (apparently in the context of the collapse of the Portuguese Empire) 'was not often appreciated because it seemed unwelcome news. In some ways he was the man who knew too much'. He was also said frequently to have 'faced opposition or misunderstanding from men of lesser intelligence and lower principle'. Yet '[a]lways his erudition came to the fore, not always to the satisfaction of shallower minds'.⁸⁶ Not exactly a description of a man capable of bending the Public Service machine to his will.

⁸³ Juddery, *At the Centre*, p. 101.

⁸⁴ See Chapter Two above, p. 80, footnote 120.

⁸⁵ H. Gilchrist, letter, 15 December 1994, para. 7.

⁸⁶ John J. Eddy, s.j., 'Kevin Thomas Kelly', 18 July 1994.

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As with Quinn, Kelly's reporting from South Africa displays little evidence of intellectual depth. Nor does it support the contention of his obituarist that he 'noted, as well as the inadmissibility of the principle, the hypocrisy of apartheid'.⁸⁷ If so, that would have been in retrospect because as a member of the Australian High Commission in South Africa from April 1952 to May 1955, Kelly was quite supportive of apartheid. (See Chapter Seven below, pp. 346-49.)

The reality of Kelly's diplomatic career contrasts strikingly with public perceptions of it. The contrast between his relatively mediocre foreign service record,⁸⁸ and the tributes to his intellectual brilliance by prominent outsiders not to mention his eminence in Catholic organisations, make Kelly an enigmatic and intriguing figure. It may indirectly also say something about the standing of Catholics in Australian society. Time and the requirements of space do not permit the exploration of this proposition in the detail it requires.

A recent photograph accompanied Kelly's obituary in *The Australian* of 22 July 1994.

Gilchrist tells the story he heard from Woolcott about Kelly, Hodgson and a long despatch on 'bag day' (which, like pay day, has its own dynamics):

Hodgson returned from a very wet lunch at the Mount Nelson Hotel on bag-closure afternoon and was handed an erudite 16-page despatch drafted by Kelly on the removal of Coloured voters from the Cape common roll. At about page 12 Hoddy, tiring, said 'It's bloody long, Kelly'. KTK replied: 'Well, a lot of work has gone into it, Colonel'. A bright thought then lit up Hoddy's face and he said: 'I don't suppose ya know what the Test cricket score is?' 'No', admitted the First Secretary. Hoddy then called Third Secretary Woolcott in: 'Woolcott, do you know the latest score from The Wanderers?' Woolcott: 'Yes, sir, 4 for 161, with Burke on (so-many) and Benaud on (so-many), and the bowling analysis' (more detail). Hoddy turned pitilessly on Kelly and said: 'There you are, Kelly -- 16 bloody pages, but ya don't know the cricket score'.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Eddy, 'Intellectual turned cultured diplomat', *The Australian*, 22 July 1994.

⁸⁸ In his thirty year career he occupied only two not exactly top flight ambassadorial posts for a total of about seven years (Buenos Aires (1964-66) and Lisbon (1970-74)).

⁸⁹ H. Gilchrist, letter, 20 January 1995. A nice story but inaccurate. There was no Australian cricket tour of South Africa during Woolcott's time and none of the formal despatches emanating from the high commission at the time fit the description. See Appendix V below, pp. 486-87.

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That brings us to Hodgson himself⁹⁰ whose appointment to South Africa, as is often the case in foreign service, had less to do with the perceived requirements of that post than with the situation at his previous post. (In any case, the South African post had been vacant since Stirling's departure two years earlier and the South Africans were undoubtedly delighted to receive any High Commissioner at all let alone one so experienced and distinguished as Hodgson.) From 1949 he had been British Commonwealth representative on the Allied Council for Japan. But when the Japanese Peace Treaty entered into force in 1952 it was felt that he could not appropriately stay on as Australian Ambassador. According to Watt:

Past membership of the Allied Council in Japan was scarcely the best background for an Australian Ambassador to Tokyo. A clean break with the past was desirable, and a different kind of person should be sent to try to develop a new relationship between the two countries. In 1952 such a change was in fact made, though it involved overriding Hodgson's own wish.⁹¹

Besides Tokyo, Hodgson's diplomatic posts prior to South Africa were Ottawa (1945) as Acting High Commissioner and Paris (1945-49) as Minister then Ambassador. He retired in 1957 dying of cancer in a Sydney hospital just over six months later after a major operation.⁹² He was involved with the United Nations in its early stages, attending the San Francisco Conference which drafted the Charter, representing Australia at the UN Preparatory Commission and the First Session of the General Assembly, in the Security Council and in the Commission of Human Rights. He was also an Australian delegate to the 1946 Paris Peace Conference.

It was in the Security Council in December 1948 that he made his famous intervention accusing the Dutch *inter alia* of duplicity in their dealings with the Indonesians. Again according to Watt, 'the Australian representative in the [UN] Security Council, Lt Col W.R. Hodgson, delivered a bitter attack upon Dutch policy ... and demanded the expulsion of the Netherlands from the United Nations'.⁹³ Geoffrey Sawyer said in that regard: 'Although the indignation of the Australian Government at

⁹⁰ Lt Col William Roy Hodgson, usually known to his friends as Hoddy. Supporters among his subordinates 'were pleased to call themselves 'Hoddy's Horse'. Edwards, *Prime Ministers and Diplomats*, p. 107.

⁹¹ Watt, *Australian Diplomat*, p. 189.

⁹² *The Canberra Times*, 10 January 1958. His obituary appeared in the newspaper's 25 January edition.

⁹³ Watt, *The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy*, p. 251.

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the duplicity which the Dutch had displayed was generous and understandable, it hardly excused the language in which the Australian representative condemned them'.⁹⁴

What Hodgson actually said at the Security Council's three hundred-and-ninetieth meeting on 23 December 1948 was: 'We thus have the first clear-cut deliberate violation of the Charter by a Member. As I shall show, two other decisions were violated, and the consequences must be - if the Council faces up to the matter - expulsion from the United Nations'.⁹⁵ (This wording does not seem linguistically extravagant.) However, he was apparently 'taken to task for exceeding his instructions'.⁹⁶ Yet today, almost fifty years after the event, his name features on a Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade list 'of Australians who aided the cause of Indonesian independence above and beyond simply doing their jobs and with some sense of personal commitment'.⁹⁷

Hodgson's name will live in the history of Australian diplomacy because he was the first Secretary for External Affairs after the department split from the Prime Minister's department in 1935, *ie.*, the first permanent head of an independent Australian 'foreign office'. Because of this, and largely related to it, there exist more published references to him than to any of the Australian diplomatic representatives in South Africa, including Knowles.⁹⁸ After Tange, who held the post for eleven years (1954-65), Hodgson, who held it for ten (1935-45, nine of them substantive; one at the end nominal) was also by far the longest-serving permanent head of the department to date, the other terms ranging from eighteen months to five years.

As Secretary, Watt writes, Hodgson 'contributed substantially to the development of a professional diplomatic service' in Australia.⁹⁹ Although Evatt is generally given the credit for the diplomatic cadet scheme, the idea may conceivably have originated with Hodgson who in any event set the scheme up and presided over its early development. Waller saw him in a different light:

⁹⁴ G. Sawyer, 'The United Nations', G. Greenwood & N. Harper, eds., *Australia in World Affairs 1950-55* (Melbourne, 1957), p. 109.

⁹⁵ *SCOR*, Third Year, No. 133, p. 7.

⁹⁶ Ms Moira Smythe, e-mail message, 11 September 1995.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Other examples are Edwards, *Prime Ministers and Diplomats*, especially the section 'W.R. Hodgson and the Department of External Affairs', pp. 104-09 and various references in Hasluck, *Diplomatic Witness*.

⁹⁹ *ADB*, Vol. 9, pp. 321-22.

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He had a quick mind, but a very simple one; he was essentially a soldier, and I think that had his health allowed, he would have been a very good soldier. His soldierly qualities went with quite a lot of brusquerie and he was not an easy or particularly companionable person. But he was good with paper; you could give him a submission and if it was foolish he picked the foolishness very quickly and set you on the right track.

I've never known how he was chosen as Secretary of External Affairs but he was basically quite unsuited for the purpose. Not just because he was undiplomatic, if I may use that tired word, but there was no sensitivity about him and I think sensitivity is a thing which anyone in foreign service needs to possess. He was a blunt, straightforward soldier with a gammie [sic] leg and complete lack of imagination. I think another sort of man would have developed the Department much more rapidly than he was prepared to do. He didn't see the future that lay ahead of Foreign Affairs; he didn't see the opportunity in the climate of the day to recruit and train the people who would be needed in five or ten years' time. Beyond his capacity to write crisp prose and to collate other people's crisp prose he didn't really contribute anything to the development of the Department or the Service; indeed I think in many ways he was a bad influence. He was a kind-hearted man and so on, but his outlook was much too limited for someone embarking on a task of that kind.¹⁰⁰

Hodgson was not just the bluff military man. After the wound to his leg at Gallipoli in 1915 effectively excluded him from an active military career, he took an LLB degree at Melbourne University and acquired accountancy qualifications, becoming an Associate of the Federal Institute of Accountants (Australia) and an Associate of the Australasian Institute of Cost Accountants.¹⁰¹ At the time he was Director of Military Intelligence, serving as such from 1918 to 1934. Watt says he was a 'voracious reader'¹⁰² and 'a connoisseur of old silver and Chinese porcelain'.¹⁰³ Apparently the disposition of his collection of silver gave rise to some controversy after his death.¹⁰⁴ In 1932 he applied unsuccessfully for the post of Liaison Officer in London.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ Waller, *A Diplomatic Life*, pp. 2-3.

¹⁰¹ AA, A3299/1, Folder 1, 'Historical Summary of the Department of External Affairs', p. 9.

¹⁰² The writer would occasionally encounter him in the Pretoria Public Library in 1954. See Tothill, 'Practising Diplomacy: A Working Diplomat's View', *World Review* (Australia), Vol. 29, No. 1, March 1990, p. 26.

¹⁰³ *ADB*, Vol. 9, p. 322.

¹⁰⁴ H. Gilchrist, letter, 20 January 1995.

¹⁰⁵ *ADB*, Vol. 9, p. 321.

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Like Viljoen, therefore, Hodgson had seen better days by the time of his arrival in South Africa at the age of sixty in 1952. Writing of a Casey reprimand, Hudson refrains from identifying Hodgson by name:

When one of his heads of mission, a man formerly of significant military and public service rank, gave rise to gossip in Canberra and overseas because of noisy drinking bouts, he came down hard, but with courtesy and concern: the man had known pain daily since being wounded at Gallipoli.¹⁰⁶

As Renouf records, the drinking bouts started well before Casey became Minister and, after the death of his wife in Paris in 1946, he also became enamoured of women.¹⁰⁷

In South Africa there were mixed feelings about Hodgson. He seemed to be viewed more positively by South Africans than by fellow Australians. In 1972 Prime Minister B.J. Vorster, who became an MP during Hodgson's term (and perhaps recalling an alcoholic or amatory escapade) called him 'quite a card'.¹⁰⁸ Dr Joan Rydon, who lived in Cape Town for some years in the 1950s while her husband taught at the University of Cape Town, says that 'Colonel Hodgson used to come [to meetings of the Australian-New Zealand Association] and I remember him as having predilections for drink and for pinching female bottoms. He used to come with a Mrs Alexander with whom I think he was living.'¹⁰⁹

A.J. Oxley, who met Gilchrist in Athens before his term in South Africa and who has kept in touch with him down the years, recalls that he 'had a tough time here as First Secretary under a difficult and somewhat alcoholic Head of Mission.'¹¹⁰ But Eric Louw liked Hodgson whom, he said when proposing the toast at the 1958 Australia Day reception, 'was on his way back to live at the Cape when he fell ill and died. He had been a true friend of South Africa.'¹¹¹ And Sole calls him 'a good friend whom I

¹⁰⁶ Hudson, *Casey*, p. 232. Perhaps this occurred during Hodgson's time in South Africa because Casey had been Minister for just over a year when Hodgson went to South Africa.

¹⁰⁷ *Champagne Trail*, pp. 24, 31. So far as is known, none of the South Africans had a drinking problem. J.K. Uys and E.M. Rhoodie were lifelong abstainers while the others appear to have been moderate drinkers.

¹⁰⁸ AA, A9421/1, 201/1, Pt. 1, C.T. Moodie, Record of conversation Moodie/Vorster, 27 September, 1972, p. 3, para. 10. Vorster became an MP during Hodgson's term.

¹⁰⁹ Dr Joan Rydon, letter, 9 December 1992.

¹¹⁰ A.J. Oxley, letter, 29 December 1990.

¹¹¹ *The Cape Argus*, 28 January 1958.

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regarded as the shrewdest head of the Australian Department of External Affairs I had ever met, despite his rather rough exterior.¹¹²

The aforementioned Mrs Alexander was in fact Enid Alexander, the widow of the United Party MP Morris Alexander. Born Enid Asenath Baumberg in Sydney, she had been associated with the provision of children's programmes to the Australian Broadcasting Commission before her marriage to Alexander in 1935. Hodgson probably met her in her capacity as estate agent concerned with obtaining rented accommodation for the diplomatic corps on its annual trek to Cape Town for the parliamentary session. They enjoyed a close if quarrelsome relationship. On his death she inherited his newly imported Austin car and possibly a legacy. Quick action on the part of Nicholson, the Third Secretary, prevented her from laying hands on a large quantity of liquor Hodgson had saved from official stock and stored in a garage in Cape Town. This prompted her to complain strongly to the High Commission and to the Department in Canberra.¹¹³ Mrs Alexander's abrasive personality led to the Australia and New Zealand Association in Cape Town splitting in two.

In Pretoria Hodgson lived at the Assembly Hotel on the corner of Van der Walt and Visagie Streets, a short block across and three longer ones up from the High Commission's premises in Central House at the corner of Central and Pretorius Streets. It was there in 1956 that, 'somewhat incapacitated', he fell in a corridor, breaking his right arm, 'making it impossible for him to sign documents'. Gilchrist says this was concealed from the department for at least a month.¹¹⁴

The *Cape Times* and the *Cape Argus* of 27 January 1955 published photographs of Hodgson at that year's Australia Day reception.

Nine other Australian diplomats served in South Africa between 1945 and 1961: J.H. Brook (1960-64) as Third Secretary, Second Secretary and Acting First Secretary; O.L. Davis (1959-62) as High Commissioner and Ambassador; K. Desmond (1948-51) as Third Secretary and Second Secretary; H. Gilchrist (1955-59) as First

¹¹² D.B. Sole, letter, 6 September 1990. It is not known to which period this refers, whether to Hodgson's time as Secretary or in South Africa. Sole also met Watt and Plimsoll, perhaps other permanent heads too.

¹¹³ Most of the information in this paragraph was derived from Hugh Gilchrist's letter of 20 January 1995. See also E. Alexander, *Morris Alexander: A Biography*. Cape Town & Johannesburg, 1953.

¹¹⁴ Letter, 20 January 1995.

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Secretary and Acting High Commissioner; I.E. Nicholson (1957-59) as Third Secretary; L.E. Phillips (1959-60) as First Secretary; Miss E.A. Warren (1951-54 as Third Secretary; and R.A. Woolcott (1954-57) as Third Secretary and Second Secretary. Brook, Desmond, Nicholson, Miss Warren and Woolcott were products of the diplomatic cadet scheme. In his career Woolcott clearly outshone his peers but Brook and Nicholson also became ambassadors. In terms of leaving a 'paper trail' Desmond was practically invisible in South Africa while Miss Warren, who was not, left the service in the early 1960s when she married.

Of the others, by the time of his retirement in the mid-1970s Davis was among the most experienced of all Australian foreign service officers, having served in a multitude of posts before his arrival in South Africa and thereafter. Most of his career lay abroad. Gilchrist, who in a sense is from the Australian side, as Nel is from the South African one, the protagonist of this study, also occupied several ambassadorial posts as well as senior positions in the department in Canberra before his retirement in 1979. The *Cape Argus* of 28 January 1958 published a photograph of him and his wife at the 1958 Australia Day reception. If not an historian by training (he holds a BA LLB degree from Sydney University), he has devoted some of his retirement years to writing historical works including a two volume study of Australian/Greek relations (*Australians and Greeks* - he was Ambassador to Greece from 1968 to 1972.) Of a literary bent, he edited the Sydney University newspaper *Honi Soit* in the 1930s and was a member of the Students Representative Council. Upon joining the Department of External Affairs he edited *Current Notes* for a while. The present study has undoubtedly been enriched by his help.

One who falls outside the period, J.C.G. Kevin (1962-68), who served as Ambassador until his relatively early death in South Africa at the age of fifty-eight, was probably the most influential and knowledgeable among Australian diplomats in terms of his own department because of his position in the 1950s as Assistant Secretary in charge of Administration and personnel. Watt, who says that Kevin was not his first choice for the job, as it were supplies a job description: 'For several years Kevin held this thankless post, dealing with such mundane matters as salaries, allowances, movement of staff, housing, leave, health, family educational problems etc.'¹¹⁵ What probably recommended Kevin for the post was his wartime experience with the

¹¹⁵ Watt, *Australian Diplomat*, p. 165.

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Security Service as head of its Organisation Section from 1942.¹¹⁶ Before the war he had spent five years with the Australian High Commission in London.¹¹⁷ He joined External Affairs after the war serving as Official Secretary at the Australia High Commission in India in 1947 and 1948 thereby receiving exposure to negative attitudes towards the South African government's racial policies. He served subsequently in Indonesia and as Australian High Commissioner to Ceylon (1959-61) and to Pakistan (1961-62).

It was mentioned in Chapter Two that Australian Ministers sang Nel's praises to Uys at the traditional Cabinet lunch given incoming heads of mission. He was, they said, 'always up with the job'.¹¹⁸ It was, in fact, Nel who was indirectly responsible not only for Uys's appointment to Australia but also those of his immediate successors, Hamilton and Woodward. More than a year after he commenced acting as High Commissioner he wrote Spies a personal letter giving his views of the importance to South Africa of its representation in Australia. He assumed that because the High Commissioner's post had been vacant for fourteen months, the department could then be considering an appointment.¹¹⁹ Senior posts in the Australian Public Service, including External Affairs (whose Secretary, Arthur Tange, was younger than he was)¹²⁰ were held by relatively young officials. It would, therefore, be appropriate to appoint one of the departmental Counsellors. If preference were to be given someone from outside the service, his age should be equivalent to that of a Counsellor¹²¹ - between forty-five and fifty. Viljoen was sixty-two and infirm when he arrived in Canberra. Nel had told Spies previously:

Australia is very, very big and Canberra is very, very small, but entertainment is on a large scale. In order to participate properly requires the powers of a young or at least an energetic person. Unfortunately Dr Viljoen was never in the best of health in Canberra and it must sometimes have affected him severely.¹²²

¹¹⁶ F. Cain, *The Origins of Political Surveillance in Australia*, (Sydney, 1983), pp. 288, 292-93.

¹¹⁷ 'Death of Mr Charles Kevin', *Current Notes*, Vol. 39, No. 2, p. 63.

¹¹⁸ BTS, Uys, Vol. 5, Uys/SEA, 8 July 1954. (Original in Afrikaans).

¹¹⁹ BTS, S4/5/45, Vol. 2, Nel/Spies, 28 February 1953. (Original in Afrikaans). A copy is also on BCB, Vol. 1, 2/1.

¹²⁰ BCB, Vol. 1, 2/1, Nel/Uys, 7 December 1953, p. 2. (Original in Afrikaans).

¹²¹ BTS, S4/5/45, Vol. 2, Nel/Spies, 28 February 1953.

¹²² BTS, 4/2/32, Vol. 2, Spies/Nel, 21 November 1951, pp. 6-7. Handwritten. (Original in Afrikaans).

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Spies passed Nel's letter of 21 November to Forsyth who seized on it with alacrity: 'Thank you! This letter will be brought to the attention of PM if the question of appointment again comes under discussion.'¹²³

Nel's suggestion was probably decisive. The department tended to follow the line of least resistance and when an appointment was made for the first time it followed almost automatically that all succeeding appointees would be officials of similar rank if not background. Also mentioned in Chapter Two was that Jones declined the appointment and the promotion, whereupon the department turned to Uys who had been earmarked for Ottawa. He had been a foreign service officer for twenty-five years. Leslie Blackwell, then about to retire from the Bench, had expressed an interest in the post but was told that the government was provisionally committed in respect of it. That may imply that a politician was under consideration or it may simply have been a way of putting him off.

Johann Kunz Uys was born in Swellendam, Cape Province, on 14 June 1907. His first job after graduating from Stellenbosch University in 1927 with a B Com degree was Second Grade Clerk in the library of the Department of Agriculture. He spent nine months there, joining the Department of External Affairs on 21 September 1928 as the first Probationer Diplomat. He worked at Head Office for the next four-and-a-half years. There followed a three-year posting to Washington (1933-37), a year-and-a-half at Head Office (1937-38) and almost three years in The Hague and London (1938-41) - he was moved to London after the Dutch collapse in May 1940.

From August 1941 to February 1943 he was seconded to the Department of Trade and Industry in Pretoria, serving under H.J. van Eck as Secretary of the Industrial and Agricultural Requirements Commission. He then returned to External Affairs moving in December 1943 to Elizabethville in the then Belgian Congo. He was Consul there until December 1945. He spent the next four years as First Secretary in The Hague, returning to Pretoria where he remained until his departure for Canberra in February 1954.¹²⁴ His rank of Counsellor in Pretoria was a senior one and he was in charge of the Economic, Trade and General Division.¹²⁵ To Uys's satisfaction one of his Cadets in the General Sub-Division, C.R. Roberts, succeeded Killen in Canberra in

¹²³ BTS, S4/5/45, Vol. 2, Nel/Spies, 28 February 1953. Handwritten copy of Forsyth's comment, 9 March 1953. Spies conveyed Forsyth's thanks to Nel in BCB, Vol. 1, 2/1, Spies/Nel, 13 March 1953.

¹²⁴ BTS, Uys, Vol. 6, *Curriculum Vitae*.

¹²⁵ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 14, Uys/Secretary, 16 April 1951.

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mid-1954 - like many people, Uys felt comfortable with men he had worked with previously. He would, however, have been less happy at the news that Roberts had resigned the service in June 1959 and was remaining in Australia. (He became a Commonwealth Public Servant, working in the Department of the Interior.)

Uys can certainly be viewed through the filter of Crocker's aphorism that the 'best Ambassador is always more than a civil servant'.¹²⁶ He was a supreme civil servant and for that reason an indifferent diplomat, at least in respect of his effectiveness in the diplomatic milieu. That was never a hindrance in a career which took him to a Deputy-Secretaryship in the department (1960-65) and as head of mission twice to the Federal Republic of Germany (1957-60; 1965-69) and to Australia (1954-57; 1969-71), his only ambassadorial posts. Uys is, in fact, the only South African to have served as head of mission twice in the same posts.¹²⁷ He was valued for his head office accomplishments, spending more than eighteen years of his forty-four year foreign service career at head office, an unusually lengthy span for members of the early department.

Uys was the epitome of the *virige* (fiery) Afrikaner in the sense that he tended to see the world through Afrikaner spectacles, weighing it against Afrikaner values. For him, only Afrikaners could be within the Covenant, though English-speaking South Africans could achieve a degree of righteousness by virtue of their command of Afrikaans and by an attitude of homage towards what he regarded as South Africa's dominant culture. That was an ethnic rather than a political position and, like his 'Public Servantness', it never harmed his career, at least not when perhaps it could - the years of Smuts's second Prime Ministership. Ironically, his daughter's marriage to an Australian made him an object of suspicion to similarly ethnocentric Afrikaners.¹²⁸

Despite revelling in Afrikaner ethnicity (perhaps because of it) he did not especially endear himself to his Afrikaans-speaking subordinates. One, the future Foreign Minister, R.F. Botha, never a man to sit back and await guidance or direction from seniors, was later inclined to reminisce about his experiences with Uys under whom he served in West Germany from January to October 1960. Finding Botha's raw enthu-

¹²⁶ Crocker, *Australian Ambassador*, p. 63.

¹²⁷ So far as is known, Carel de Wet is the only other South African to have been head of mission twice at the same post, London (1964-67; 1972-76). It is, however, common practice in diplomatic service for officers to serve in missions in a subordinate capacity before returning years later to head them.

¹²⁸ Sole, *Reminiscences*, p.211.

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siasm hard to deal with, Uys would sometimes remonstrate ineffectually, apparently more in sorrow than in anger, 'Remember, Botha, leadership moves from the top downwards!'¹²⁹

Botha does not agree with the above assessment of the ethnic Uys. He writes:

He was not an example of what I considered to be a forward-looking Afrikaner. ... It did not matter who was in power. It did not matter whether you were English or Afrikaans speaking. What mattered was his obsession to stay within the rules and to give the most restrictive interpretation to the rules. Politics did not matter. The rules. The regulations. He found his security within the letter of the rules. Prescriptions. An Ambassador abroad could not buy at State expense an ashtray if the transaction was not fully motivated and prior approval obtained. It was as simple as that. He was a pipe smoker. I remember seeing a page on file with a hole burnt in the middle. He encircled the hole with his pen adding at the bottom of the page... 'Much to my regret a spark from my pipe fell on the paper. I accept responsibility.' That epitomises Johann Kunz Uys.¹³⁰

Sole, whose section head Uys was when he joined the department in 1938, also emphasises his attachment to the regulations, saying that he 'had a heart of gold in personal relationships but otherwise had very much of a civil service mentality; everything had to be done according to the book; he was inclined to look askance at innovation'.¹³¹ Uys's successor as Deputy-Secretary, Sole says of his experiences as his subordinate in Pretoria in the 1960s:

I did not normally work through him but directly to Jooste, which was just as well because he was incapable of taking a decision on anything of importance and was a stickler for acting strictly according to the book. When he happened to be acting head of the department in Jooste's absence, I was always having confrontations with him about the policy submissions I had to route through him to the Minister.

The absence of rapport between Sole and Uys on official matters does not surprise those who knew them. As his reminiscences show, Sole is a man of intellectual depth. During his career he often found it difficult to suppress a desire to dominate his surroundings including his superiors, official as well as political. A *soupçon* of intellec-

¹²⁹ 'Onthou, Botha, leiding kom van bo, af!' R.F. Botha, letter, 2 November 1994.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.* It seems that the incident of the hole in the paper occurred when Uys was in Australia and Botha a cadet at Head Office. The report concerned did not come to the writer's notice.

¹³¹ *Reminiscences*, p. 18. See also p. 232.

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tual arrogance was never far from the surface. He certainly never gave the impression by word or deed that he regarded the pronouncements of his superiors as engraved on tablets of stone. Nor, as was Uys, was he especially deferential towards politicians.

If Australian Ministers were complimentary about Nel, a retrospective on Uys's first term in Canberra suggests they were less likely to have been so about Uys himself. They greeted Hamilton with a sigh of relief and no doubt heartily endorsed the opinion in the Australian High Commission's 1957 annual report that he 'was of much higher calibre than his predecessors'.¹³² Hamilton rightly describes Uys as 'immensely conscientious' and less accurately as possessing 'limited intellectual and aesthetic standards'.¹³³ That was in connection with the official residence which was planned and built during Uys's first term. In fact, apart from its furnishing (many of Uys's acquisitions - or at least items purchased when he was High Commissioner - remained in place up to the 1990s) his principal contribution to the residence was choosing its site. (See Chapter Six).

A hard-worker, a man of integrity, completely incorrupt and by no means unintelligent, Uys lacked subtlety and imagination not to mention political judgement. His reporting showed him to have been not infrequently out of his depth. Comments by his Australian interlocutors tended to show him in that light. Thus the Adviser on Commonwealth Relations in the Australian Department of External Affairs, J.E. Oldham,¹³⁴ recorded him asking soon after his arrival:

whether it was better to be factual in putting South Africa's case and problems to the people of Australia. I said that I had recently heard an address by Mr. Nel to the Canberra Branch of the A.I.I.A.,¹³⁵ and the view of the audience, which ... was a worthwhile one, was that they enjoyed the factual way Mr. Nel had spoken. Mr. Uys then stated that he was shortly to address a Rotary Club meeting outside Canberra and what line should he take. I said that Australians desired facts, rather than suave explanations. He asked me as to the Canberra Branch of the Rotary Club and I said it was an excellent high-grade body. He

¹³² AA, A1838/1, 1348/1, Pt 1, Annual Report 1957, Part B, p. 8, para. 39.

¹³³ A.M. Hamilton, letter, 2 October 1993.

¹³⁴ An imposing title for a rather inconsequential job, Casey having decreed that Oldham should not again serve abroad. Information obtained from Dr W.J. Hudson who refers discreetly to the Oldham case in *Casey*, p. 232.

¹³⁵ Australian Institute of International Affairs.

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said he did not intend to make any further speeches other than the Rotary one until he had seen more of the country.¹³⁶

Administratively, though, Uys enjoyed the confidence and respect of his department and subordinates. Refreshingly, he took full responsibility when mistakes were made and defended his subordinates. His *mea culpa* for the spark-produced hole which attracted R.F. Botha's attention was a somewhat extreme example. A more orthodox one was the way he handled a reprimand from Jooste over a memorandum setting out visa requirements. Roberts, the Third Secretary, prepared this pursuant to head office instructions and sent it to airlines, shipping lines and travel agents. The reason for the reprimand was that the memorandum revealed that some visa applications had to be referred to the Department of the Interior and that there were automatic restrictions against certain classes of people including Cypriots, Mauritians and Maltese. In all innocence a copy was sent to head office.¹³⁷ Jooste said that External Affairs and Interior were both extremely concerned about the extent of confidential information thereby made available to outsiders.¹³⁸

Uys rose to the occasion:

I accept full responsibility for everything that was done because I was the first to read your circular, to give instructions what had to be done and to satisfy myself that the memorandum that was drawn up contained no information of a confidential nature.¹³⁹

He was a kind man. In January 1955 *The Canberra Times*¹⁴⁰ recorded him hosting a dinner party in honour of a locally-engaged staff member, Valerie Townshend, who had resigned to get married after five-and-a-half years with the High Commission. A key to his rise as a foreign service officer may have been the awe in which he held his superiors, especially the politicians. While he just about scaled the heights in foreign service, he was more suited to the home civil service where he may conceivably have risen to head a department.

In retrospect, Uys's career confirms the soundness of the advice given the young David Kelly: 'the main thing, especially in the early stages of the career, [is] to

¹³⁶ AA, A1838, 201/10/7, Pt. 1, J.E. Oldham, 'Record of conversation with the High Commissioner for South Africa on 1 April 1954'.

¹³⁷ BCB, Vol. 12, 24/2, Roberts/SEA, 20 February 1957. (Original in Afrikaans.)

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, Jooste/High Commissioner, Canberra, 14 March 1957. (Original in Afrikaans.)

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, Uys/SEA, 28 March 1957. (Original in Afrikaans.)

¹⁴⁰ 27 January.

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please one's superiors'.¹⁴¹ The historian of the German diplomatic service has said that of young German diplomats before 1914: 'For a novice diplomat, nothing was more vital than an ability to ingratiate himself with his initial chief of mission'.¹⁴² Even more to the point is what an army colleague told Kelly: 'Whatever the General wants - however damn silly - you give that priority over everything else!'¹⁴³ Good advice, for the measure of a foreign service officer is not what foreigners think of him but how he is perceived by his departmental superiors if a career official and by his head of government and foreign minister if a politician. The same applies to foreign ministers. The corollary is what *The Economist* calls Cradock's first law of diplomacy: 'it is not the other side you need to worry about but your own'.¹⁴⁴

There were probably two reasons why Uys secured a second term in Australia. Firstly, the elder of his two daughters, Anna, had remained there (in Melbourne) after her marriage shortly before her parents departed for West Germany in June 1957. However, while he was fond of his daughter, perhaps the main reason was that he wanted to occupy the official residence, having left Australia on the eve of its completion. (See Chapter Six). His second term in Canberra was his last overseas posting before his retirement in 1972. He died in 1978. His death was mourned by the Canberra YMCA on whose Board of Directors he had served in the 1950s and whose meetings he sometimes hosted at his residence. The President of the YMCA told the then Ambassador, A.J. Oxley, that the Association was 'very grateful for the assistance' Uys had given it and 'regarded it as a privilege to have known him'.¹⁴⁵

The twenty year-old Anna Uys's wedding on 23 March 1957 to Flt Lt Ian Sutherland of the Royal Australian Air Force was one of the events of the Canberra season. The Governor-General and the Prime Minister and their wives were among the three hundred guests at the reception held at the Hotel Canberra.¹⁴⁶ Uys's Australian file contains a query from Casey to the Chief of Protocol, F.H. Stuart, whether, since

¹⁴¹ Kelly, *The Ruling Few*, p. 78.

¹⁴² Cecil, *The German Diplomatic Service*, p. 148.

¹⁴³ Kelly, *The Ruling Few*, p. 78.

¹⁴⁴ *The Economist*, Vol. 331, No. 7859, 16 April 1994, p. 105. Most diplomats command a fund of stories in support of this proposition. The Cradock referred to was a former British Ambassador to the Peoples' Republic of China and foreign policy adviser to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. A book review in a later edition of *The Economist* (Vol. 333, No. 7883, 1 October 1994, p. 114) held that in 1989 the American Embassy in London cabled the State Department that Cradock was "one of the most powerful and least understood men" in the British government'.

¹⁴⁵ BTS, Uys, Vol. 6, Duminy/Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 8 September 1978, forwarding Arscott/Oxley, 31 August 1978.

¹⁴⁶ *The Canberra Times*, 20, 23 & 25 March 1957 and *The Herald* (Melbourne), 23 March 1957.

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he and fellow-minister Philip McBride could not be present, they were expected 'to give a wedding present either individually or jointly with other ministers'. The conventional Stuart replied that it was accepted practice if asked to a wedding to give a present. Plimsoll, Waller and himself of the department could not attend but were sending cheques.¹⁴⁷ (The marriage subsequently ended in divorce.) Uys visited his daughter, son-in-law and grandchildren in London on his way back to South Africa after the 1961 session of the United Nations General Assembly.¹⁴⁸ Sutherland was attached to the Australian High Commission at the time.¹⁴⁹

Other highlights, at least for Uys, during his first term were the Australian leg of the 1956 Springbok rugby tour of Australia and New Zealand and that year's Olympic games in Melbourne. Uys was responsible for the addition of the opening, Canberra match to the Springbok team's schedule. He was approached by the New South Wales Rugby Union and he took the matter up with Dr Danie Craven, the South African team's manager. D.P. Olivier, the Official Secretary at the High Commission, who coached and captained the Northern Suburbs team, was Vice-Captain of the ACT team on that occasion.¹⁵⁰ The Springbok team arrived in Canberra on the morning of 15 May, played the match in the afternoon (which it won by 41 to 6) and attended Uys's reception at the Hotel Canberra that evening. This was in effect his annual Union Day reception which Eric Louw allowed him to hold early. It was also attended by the visiting South African Women's hockey team. The year 1956 was, therefore, a rather sporting one for Uys.

The 1950s were a less profligate time in South African diplomacy than the present one. Louw decreed that meeting the various South African teams on arrival at Sydney was not a legitimate object of official expenditure. Nor was Uys's attendance of the rugby tests!¹⁵¹ There would probably be an outcry if such standards were applied today. The Australians did things differently. Stirling flew to Durban from Pretoria to meet the 1949 Australian cricket team on arrival and gave a lunch in its honour which

¹⁴⁷ AA, A1838/T20, 1500/1/30/5, Inward & outward teletype messages 414 & 478 of 7 & 8 March 1957 respectively.

¹⁴⁸ BTS, 136/2/3/16, Vol. 1, Uys/Fourie, 15 January 1962.

¹⁴⁹ Information supplied to Ms Sylvia Mackay by Air Vice-Marshal Sutherland.

¹⁵⁰ Australians had difficulty with Olivier's nickname 'Daantjie'. In reporting on the rugby matches he played in, *The Canberra Times* would sometimes refer to him as 'Dankey' or 'Danky'.

¹⁵¹ BCB, Vol. 21, 44/1, Spies/High Commissioner, Canberra, 27 April 1956 (original in Afrikaans) and BTS, 4/3/32, Vol. 2, Spies/High Commissioner, Canberra, 13 August 1956.

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was attended by members of the Durban establishment.¹⁵² Then still in office, Evatt took a personal interest in the 1949 team and sent O.C.W. Fuhrman to Sydney to brief the manager and its members before their departure for Perth where they were to board the s.s. *Nestor* for South Africa.¹⁵³ Evatt was also instrumental in overcoming the reluctance of his colleague, the Minister of Customs, to grant a licence to the team's manager, E.A. Dwyer, to buy an American car (a Buick) in South Africa and import it into Australia after the tour.¹⁵⁴

Two months before the opening of the Olympic games Uys received a letter from W.S. Kent Hughes, a Federal MP, who was President of the Organising Committee for the 1956 games, about Ira Emery, the Australian-born General Manager of the South African team. Emery had managed the South African team at the 1938 Empire Games in Sydney. Kent Hughes said his purpose in writing was to solicit Uys's assistance to avoid a repetition of the 'several very unpleasant incidents as between the South Africans and the Jamaican team on the very vexed racial question' in 1938. One incident had been

entirely due to the lack of tact on the part of Mr. Emery, and even this is an understatement. I realise that on this occasion he was probably covering himself in that he was endeavouring to avoid any criticism on his return home. On the other hand, it was most embarrassing for all the other managers who were also present at this particular function.¹⁵⁵

Uys wrote in vague terms to Pretoria¹⁵⁶ and probably played no part in bringing this about, but Emery's report on the 1956 games, which he co-authored with his Assistant General Manager, F.H. Braun, recorded that the South African team shared a dining room with Nigerian, Kenyan, Ugandan, Canadian and Irish athletes: 'A friendly atmosphere prevailed ... and this was due entirely to the tact and friendliness of our team members shown towards the African competitors'.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵² Including the mayor, the editors of the local newspapers, the senior military officer and the Australian-born judge of the Natal division of the Supreme Court, Leslie Blackwell. AA, A4231/2, Pretoria 1949, No. 8/49, Stirling/Minister of State, 18 October 1949.

¹⁵³ AA, A1838/T204, 201/10/11/3, Fuhrman/Secretary, 19 September 1949.

¹⁵⁴ See various items on A1838/T204, 201/10/11/3, including Dwyer/Evatt, 23 August 1949 and O. 12073, 26 September 1949.

¹⁵⁵ BCB, Vol. 21, 44/1 (Secret), Kent Hughes/Uys, 29 August 1956.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, Uys/DEA, 6 September 1956.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 'Joint report of the General Manager and Assistant General Manager for publication', p. 4.

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The contrast between Hamilton and Uys suggests that the early Department of External Affairs was something of a 'broad church'. As individuals and officials the men could hardly have been less alike - Uys the bald, dour, unimaginative Afrikaner public servant and the balding, prematurely white-haired, English-speaking, Oxford-educated Hamilton, a 'cheerful and incessant conversationalist'¹⁵⁸ with a slight stammer. Hamilton was almost forty-eight and Uys almost forty-seven when they arrived in Canberra, their first head of mission post, but Hamilton's white hair made him seem much older.¹⁵⁹ Reporting the announcement of Hamilton's appointment, Gilchrist said the comparison with Uys, who was 'regarded by most of his departmental colleagues here as a pleasant fellow but not a very bright one', suggested Louw attached 'greater political importance to the post in Canberra than previously. It is also possible that he felt that the appointment of an officer with a non-Afrikaner background would be a desirable variation, since the two previous High Commissioners have been Afrikaners'.¹⁶⁰

That may have been so but the records give no indication of the reason for Uys's appointment to West Germany, the senior post, and Hamilton's to Australia. Louw may not have initiated the matter because he may not, at that time, have known either of them personally. Jooste knew them both well. The Public Service Commission was naturally involved. Hamilton was an inspired choice for rarely are foreign diplomat and host country so well matched. Gilchrist predicted correctly that the Hamiltons would be 'very popular in Australia'.¹⁶¹ In fact, of all South African ambassadorial couples in Canberra in the forty-six year history of the post (by 1995) they may well have been the most successful. Perhaps Hamilton's greatest asset was his wife, the former Emily Cardross Grant, an Anglican clergyman's daughter and a graduate of the University of Cape Town with a Master's degree in child psychology. She was always known as Jill and he had met her on board ship when returning to South Africa from England in the 1930s.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁸ AA, A1838/T54, 1500/1/30/8, Memo. 397, Gilchrist/DEA, 6 August 1957.

¹⁵⁹ He looked positively decrepit in the photograph in the 15 October 1959 issue of *The Border Morning Mail* (Albury). The photograph accompanying Crouch's 20 January 1959 article in the *Rand Daily Mail* (Johannesburg), taken when Hamilton had just turned forty-nine, gives the impression of a man some fifteen years older.

¹⁶⁰ AA, A1838/T54, 1500/1/30/8, Memo. 300, Gilchrist/DEA, 17 May 1957.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, Memo. 397, Gilchrist/DEA, 6 August 1957.

¹⁶² *Mainichi Daily News* (Tokyo), 22 January 1973.

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Just about wherever he went, so did she and they spent almost as much time travelling as all of his predecessors combined, in the process visiting most parts of Australia, even Cairns in the far north of Queensland, a thousand miles from Brisbane and almost as distant from that city as it is from Adelaide. As Hamilton himself puts it, they traversed the country 'from Cairns to Hobart and from Sydney to Perth'.¹⁶³ Not altogether flatteringly did Wally Crouch, a young Australian journalist who had worked in South Africa, call him the 'walkabout envoy'. Crouch disliked white South Africans and his use of the term in that context in a South African newspaper may have been a private joke.¹⁶⁴ The travelling was in pursuit of what Hamilton conceived to be his 'chief task', the 'political and public relations side', what could also be called the representational side:

I have reported regularly to the Department on my travels outside Canberra. These have involved a great deal of heavy going both in the actual travel and in speech-making and in contacts with groups and individuals. The South African flag has appeared in places where it had never been seen before!¹⁶⁵

Under the auspices of the Australian government the Hamiltons also went to New Guinea. En route to Australia to take up his post Hamilton represented the South African government at the Malayan Independence celebrations and in January/February 1958 in Colombo at the celebration of the tenth anniversary of Ceylon's Independence and at the unveiling of the Commonwealth War Memorial in Rangoon, Burma. Viljoen, who complained about his limited opportunities for travel (see Chapter Six), would have been disconcerted if he had known of Hamilton's mobility. Even so, Viljoen's and particularly Nel's representations about the need for internal travel would have helped set the parameters of the job from which Hamilton benefited.

A product of Rondebosch Boys' High School, Cape Town and Jeppe Boys' High School, Johannesburg, Hamilton read History and English at the University of the

¹⁶³ Hamilton, *Antipodean Days*, p. 2. There is no other record of him having visited Tasmania. His immediate predecessor, Uys, visited only the States of New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria. BTS, Olivier, PL M, Vol. 2, Uys/SEA, 29 May 1957. (Original in Afrikaans.)

¹⁶⁴ See Gilchrist's notes on their conversation in Durban in July 1957. AA, A1831, 201/2/5, Pt. 6, Annex to Memo. 367, 19 July 1957; and *Rand Daily Mail* (Johannesburg), 20 January 1959, 'The Walkabout Envoy - the name Australians give our ambassador'. The term 'walkabout', derived from perceived Aboriginal behaviour, has pejorative connotations in Australia implying shiftlessness and unreliability. The reference to Hamilton having succeeded 'Mr Stanley Uys', who was then the political correspondent of the *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg), may also have been a private joke. Crouch later joined the staff of *The Bulletin* (Australia).

¹⁶⁵ BTS, Hamilton, Vol. III, Hamilton/Scholtz, 20 November 1959.

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Witwatersrand (Wits), graduating in 1931 with first class Honours in History. An Ainsworth Scholarship took him to New College, Oxford, where he read Politics, Philosophy and Economics, going down with a second class degree in 1934. Thereafter he qualified for a diploma at the Geneva School of International Studies, later working in the League of Nations Secretariat in Geneva for six months. At Wits he had been among W.M. Macmillan's 'best pupils', whose number also included C.W. de Kiewiet and Lucy Sutherland, who were allowed to assist their professor sort through the papers of the missionary Dr John Philip, later destroyed in a 1931 fire.¹⁶⁶ At Wits one of his teachers was Margaret Hodgson, later Margaret Ballinger, whom he was to host when she came to Canberra in September 1960 to deliver that year's Dyason lecture.¹⁶⁷

Anthony Albert Mordaunt Hamilton¹⁶⁸ was born in Paarl on 9 December 1909 to an anglicised Afrikaner mother and an Australian father. The Cape Civil Service had recruited his father in Victoria just after the Anglo-Boer war. Stationed at Paarl, Hamilton *père* married the daughter of an old Cape Dutch family.¹⁶⁹ Anthony Hamilton joined the Department of External Affairs on 3 October 1944 as a Legation Secretary, a rank converted later to Second Secretary, at the age of almost thirty-five at a salary of £600 per annum. This was brought up by means of a personal non-pensionable allowance to £800, the maximum of the Second Secretary's scale. He had received £800 as locally-recruited press officer and political adviser at the British High Commission,¹⁷⁰ a capacity in which he was employed from 1939. He claimed to have written 'most of the political and economic despatches emanating from that Office' in that period.¹⁷¹ That may have been an exaggeration.¹⁷² Even so, his well-argued moti-

¹⁶⁶ W.M. Macmillan, *My South African Years* (Cape Town 1975), pp. 163, 218.

¹⁶⁷ An annual event between 1949 and 1977, the Dyason Lectures provided a prestigious forum. Earlier lecturers included Bertrand Russell, Salvador de Madariaga, Julian Huxley, William O. Douglas, Kenneth Younger, Arnold Toynbee, Gunnar Myrdal and Kingsley Martin. *The Canberra Times*, 6 November 1958 and 8 October 1959. Mrs Helen Suzman was the 1975 lecturer. For the text of Margaret Ballinger's 1960 lecture, 'South Africa: A problem in race relations - challenge and response', see *Australian Outlook*, Vol. 15, No.1, April 1961, pp. 5-28. Although the abolition of natives' representation had by that time brought about her retirement from politics, Mrs Ballinger was quite cautious in what she told her audiences. So was Mrs Suzman. Macmillan includes A.L. Geyer and Margaret Hodgson among 'three quite remarkable students' of his at Rhodes University College before the First World War. *My South African Years*, p. 115. Hamilton says the Macmillans stayed with him when he was Ambassador in Madrid in the 1960s. Letter, 28 October 1993.

¹⁶⁸ He dropped the name Albert as an adult.

¹⁶⁹ A.M. Hamilton, letter, 2 October 1993.

¹⁷⁰ In other words he was not, as Prof Muller claimed in an early draft chapter of the official history, a member of the British diplomatic service before joining the South African one.

¹⁷¹ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 7, 'Anthony Albert Mordaunt Hamilton', 1944.

¹⁷² His report on the Malayan independence celebrations, which the department circulated to all missions, is an example of his reporting. BTS, 91/8/1, Vol. 10, Circular Minute A.46 of 1957, 18

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vation of the proposal he made within days of joining the department for the establishment of a political section confirms his experience in the field.¹⁷³ His link with Jooste, his first boss, dated from that time. He later served briefly under Jooste in Washington, DC.

For three years before joining the British High Commission he wrote leading articles on international and economic subjects for the *Cape Times*. That brought him to the attention of General Smuts whom, he says, encouraged him to take the job at the High Commission.¹⁷⁴ Before that for a year he had assisted Sir Howard d'Egville, the longtime Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.¹⁷⁵ In 1944 he discussed possible employment with the Argus company¹⁷⁶ but External Affairs was 'very keen on getting' him and urged the Public Service Commission to give him 'as high an allowance or salary as possible'.¹⁷⁷ A week after he joined it the department supplied the Commission with *pro forma* reasons for his appointment which Dunk could have taken over without amendment to motivate his own out-of-pattern appointments to the Australian department:

The anticipated post-war reopening and extension of the Union's diplomatic representation abroad necessitates the addition to the nucleus of staff trained in diplomatic duties of a certain number of officers in the higher graded posts. Mr. Hamilton was considered to be the best qualified candidate available for appointment to the post in question.¹⁷⁸

That contradicted the department's previous line that the 'Diplomatic and Consular service was a specialised service and that in respect of promotion, for example, preference should be given to officials who were already in that service'.¹⁷⁹ Be that as it may, it was a lucky break for Hamilton because nine years earlier he had been among

October 1957. Another example is his personal letter to Scholtz of 20 November 1959 which is interesting for its content, *ie.*, the light it throws on various subjects including E.M. Rhodie, the illness of P.L.T. Snyman's wife, and the site of the future chancery. BTS, Hamilton, Vol. III.

¹⁷³ BTS, Hamilton, Vol. III., Hamilton/Assistant Secretary, 7 October 1944, 'Establishment of a Political Section in the Department'.

¹⁷⁴ A.M. Hamilton, letter, 28 October 1993

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.* Also BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 7, 'Anthony Albert Mordaunt Hamilton', 1944. Sir Howard d'Egville was Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association from 1911 to 1960. Hall, *Commonwealth*, p. xiv.

¹⁷⁶ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 7, Hamilton/Forsyth, 14 August 1944.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, Pohl/Swart, 12 May 1944.

¹⁷⁸ BTS, Hamilton, Vol. I, Pohl/Secretary, PSC, 11 October 1944.

¹⁷⁹ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 3, Muller/v.d. Walt, 11 March 1937. (Original in Afrikaans).

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sixty-four applicants for the position of Probationer Diplomat and had been rejected.¹⁸⁰ He had applied from London while working for the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. The four men who were accepted at that time included J.E. Bruce and R.H. Coaton who subsequently made their careers in the foreign service.

The holder of a BA and a B Com, Coaton had been a Clerical Assistant, Grade II, in the Department of Commerce and Industries, while External Affairs was Bruce's first job.¹⁸¹ G.J.J.F. Steyn, a member of the 'Sole generation', was rejected then but accepted two years later.¹⁸² Quite likely Hamilton and Piet Beukes, who applied from England in 1936 (see Chapter Two), were at a disadvantage for not being in South Africa when they submitted their applications. Charles te Water interviewed them both. He described Hamilton as 'above the average intelligence; well-educated and good address and manner'. His teacher at Oxford, Paves, had said that 'while he must admit Hamilton has not quite first class mind has nevertheless qualities which ought to stand him in good stead in diplomacy'.¹⁸³ They did. In any case, he did better for himself as a late entrant than if he had joined the department in his mid-twenties. For instance, on entry he was paid a higher salary than either Coaton or Bruce who were promoted to Second Secretary only in 1946, the former on 1 January and the latter on 1 October.¹⁸⁴ At the time of his promotion, Bruce's salary was £440¹⁸⁵ and Coaton's would have been similar.

Gregory Clark, a former Australian foreign service officer, stresses the importance to the sending country of a close relationship between its Ambassador and the head of government of the receiving country.¹⁸⁶ That was how it was in early modern diplomacy. Towards the end of his embassy in the second decade of the seventeenth century, the Spanish Ambassador to the Court of England's King James I, Don Diego

¹⁸⁰ A list of the sixty-four applicants is attached to BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 2, Secretary, PSC/SEA, 24 September 1935.

¹⁸¹ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 2, Secretary, PSC/SEA, 22 November 1935.

¹⁸² See Chapter Two, p. 80, fn 3.

¹⁸³ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 2, Telegram No. 410, Te Water/SEA, 5 November 1935. A departmental memorandum early the next year described Coaton as 'extremely able, and in all respects suitable for a post of attaché'. There were 'few officials of the rank of Second Grade Clerk who were in general so suitable as he for the purposes of our diplomatic services'. BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 2, Muller/Under-Secretary, 2 April 1936. (Original in Afrikaans).

¹⁸⁴ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 11, Departmental personnel around April 1947.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, Salary and other particulars regarding Montgomery, Viljoen, Van Heerden, Sole, Bruce, Stewart, Botha and Burger.

¹⁸⁶ G. Clark, 'The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs - What's wrong with our Diplomats', *The Australian Quarterly*, Vol. 47, No. 2, June 1975, especially pp. 27-28.

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Sarmiento de Acuna, Count of Gondomar, had achieved the position of 'the dictator of England's foreign policy, the chosen companion of the king's leisure hours, and his closest friend'.¹⁸⁷ While, as Mattingly says, it 'would be hard to name an ambassador before or since who had attained such a position, or exerted by sheer personal force such influence upon the affairs of Europe', close relationships between ambassadors and heads of state were not uncommon in nineteenth century diplomacy.

David Kelly tells of the British Ambassador in Berlin on whom the Kaiser called during a walk, finding him in holed pyjamas. The Kaiser would refer to the incident with amusement at their subsequent meetings. That was the sort of relationship Ambassadors were expected to cultivate.¹⁸⁸ These days, as it was perhaps in the 1950s, that is the counsel of perfection. But that is what Hamilton achieved and he deserves full marks for that aspect of his work in Australia. He was also on a friendly footing with the External Affairs Minister, Casey, whom he had met before he arrived in Australia. Suggesting that theirs was a close relationship, though Hamilton does not refer to it in his reporting, is that Casey put him up for honorary membership of the principal clubs in the six state capitals.¹⁸⁹

Hamilton told Scholtz in a personal letter two years into his Canberra posting that he had made it his

special job to cultivate a close relationship with the Prime Minister and many members of the Cabinet. In all modesty I am sure that I can say that I have established a closer relationship with these Ministers than any other member of the Diplomatic Corps; and I have done more than any other head of mission to entertain the members of Parliament and the press.

¹⁸⁷ Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*, p. 266. Truly does Mattingly remark: 'Only years of daily contacts, of careful study and preparation could have achieved so much. Gondomar's success illustrates the potential of the resident ambassador at its highest.'

¹⁸⁸ Kelly, *The Ruling Few*, pp. 117-18.

¹⁸⁹ *ie.*, Adelaide Club, Weld Club (Perth), Queensland Club, Melbourne Club, Tasmanian Club, Union Club (Sydney). AA, A1838/T54, 1500/1/30/8, Casey/Mitchell etc., 29 November 1957.

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And prophetically:

All this, I am sure, is of the greatest importance for the job; and, even if we don't see startling and dramatic results from it, it is obviously important in setting the tone of our relations and inducing a sympathetic approach to our affairs, which at moments of crisis could still be of special value to us.¹⁹⁰

It was, during the Sharpeville crisis the following year when he could report:

I have been immensely encouraged by the reactions of very many responsible people. Apart from the staunch friendship of the Prime Minister I have had messages or personal expressions of sympathy from the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. McEwen, most other members of the Cabinet, numerous Members of the Liberal and Country Parties in Parliament and a great number of friends all over Australia.

Even the Leader of the Opposition, Arthur Calwell, took 'the unusual step' of telephoning to assure him that 'he was not trying to make difficulties for us'. He was bound to express the Labour view on the shootings and South Africa's racial policies but would try to be 'helpful and constructive'. His speech was in fact relatively mild.¹⁹¹ Later, Calwell invited Hamilton 'into his office' and said that he did not want him 'to think that he was unfriendly to South Africa. He knew how much the Republics had suffered in the South African war and understood how complex our problem was'.¹⁹²

In respect of Menzies, Hamilton was helped by the fact that the Prime Minister liked and felt comfortable in the company of diplomats, a fact which A.W. Martin, the Menzies biographer, confirms: 'I think it is pretty clear that he had a close a relaxed friendship with many of them, especially the Americans. The two of whom there is clearest evidence for this are Amos Peaslee and Bill Battle.'¹⁹³ Sir Stephen Holmes, Lord Carrington's predecessor, also seems to have enjoyed a friendly relationship with the Prime Minister. He told a 1978 conference after Menzies death that he was

a man of immense kindness. He would frequently call by phone and invite one to come over to his office for a drink; long conver-

¹⁹⁰ BTS, Hamilton, Vol. III, Hamilton/Scholtz, 20 November 1959.

¹⁹¹ BTS, 136/3/10, Vol. 1, Cypher OTP telegram No. P.8, High Commissioner, Canberra/SEA, 31 March 1960.

¹⁹² BTS, 136/3/10, Vol. 7, second page, the only on file, of two page report by Hamilton probably dated 1 April 1960.

¹⁹³ Letter, 26 June 1995. Field-Marshal Sir William Slim was Governor-General of Australia from 1952 to 1959.

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sations would follow. The relationship had in some measure continued subsequently. He had felt moved to write to Menzies on occasion and had never failed to receive replies from the Prime Minister.¹⁹⁴

Conversely, Menzies was less at home with politicians, especially those of his own party, perhaps because he saw them as potential rivals. (Some say that perception lay behind his appointments of Casey and Spender and possibly also Latham to important posts outside politics.¹⁹⁵ However, Miller contradicts this: 'Menzies has been likened to the banyan tree, in the shade of which nothing else can grow, but this has always seemed unfair to me.'¹⁹⁶

Robert Kennedy, a member of Menzies' staff until early 1961, gives perspective to the Menzies/Hamilton relationship:

To be invited to the Lodge is an honor; to be invited to dinner is to walk with the mighty. Few people receive the accolade, because the Prime Minister is not a gregarious soul ...

He dines out only when he has to, or on rare occasions because he wants to. He holds a dinner party at the Lodge usually only when he has to ... Only one member of Cabinet can qualify as a regular diner at the Lodge: the amiable and earthily-amusing Athol Townley who, more than anybody else in Australia, has made a fine art of knowing how far to go with the Prime Minister - who is so perfect an actor, so accomplished a listener, that many fall into the trap of going beyond the bounds of what the Prime Minister considers a reasonable thing. Many a promising political career has foundered on this rock.¹⁹⁷

Such evidence as there is suggests that, apart from his liking for individual South African diplomats and even Eric Louw (see Chapter One), Menzies also liked (white) South Africans in general. This proposition is, however, difficult to document. After Sharpeville Hamilton told Jooste that Menzies had

shown a massive friendship for South Africa in these last anxious weeks ... It has cost him a great deal in the way of bitter personal

¹⁹⁴ Institute of Commonwealth Studies, *Sir Robert Menzies: Australian Minister and Commonwealth Statesman, Report of a conference, 14 June 1978*, p. 19.

¹⁹⁵ See Edwards, *Prime Ministers and Diplomats*, p. 122; Lyall, 'Australia's Overseas Representation and Government Patronage', *Australian Outlook*, Vol. 23, No. 2, August 1969, pp. 126-27; and Chapter One, pp. 74-75 above.

¹⁹⁶ J.D.B. Miller, *Sir Robert Menzies: Australian Minister and Commonwealth Statesman, Report of a conference, 14 June 1978*, p. 25

¹⁹⁷ Quoted in C. Hazlehurst, *Menzies Observed* (Sydney, 1979), p. 366.

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attacks from people who normally support him, widespread criticism in the press and, quite tangibly, as he said to me, at least 1,000 votes in the by-election in Mr. Casey's former constituency near Melbourne. He has had floods of abusive letters, one correspondent charging him with 'hypocrisy and cowardice'! He found some ironic amusement in this: as a politician, he thought it was going a bit far to be called a coward when he would have found it so much easier, and politically profitable, to have gone along with the violent of opinion. (Incidentally, his Cabinet colleagues, Mr. Menzies told me, were quite divided on the subject, but he had been able to persuade the waverers!)¹⁹⁸

A.W. Martin writes:

On the interesting question ... whether ... Menzies had some kind of special 'liking for (white) South Africans in general' I am afraid I have little evidence ... He clearly got on well with Viljoen and Hamilton. I would expect there to be in Uys' despatches remarks which offer clues to the relationship there;¹⁹⁹ and were there any other ambassadors in his time? These are, of course, particular people, and I have no way of knowing how many others - if any - of your countrymen he knew personally. Beyond that I'd guess that his general sympathy with South African whites (especially of British stock) stemmed from his regard for South Africa as one of the original countries of the Commonwealth, which had stood beside Britain in the two world wars and which shared traditional British institutions. He was also something of an old-fashioned racist and colonialist (though not more so than most Empire men of his class and generation) and, as you would know, not intrinsically sympathetic to black or brown independence movements: 'native' self-rule was something he was inclined to accept slowly and half-heartedly, though of course he was to good a politician to say much about it.²⁰⁰

Linking up with this is H.H. Woodward's contemporary observation that Menzies had 'very little sympathy' for the Commonwealth's 'new non-White members'. For him the value of the post-1961 Commonwealth lay 'only in the common bond of the Crown which unites the surviving old Commonwealth together in the acceptance of common traditions'.²⁰¹

Hamilton was also fortunate to be able to move immediately on arrival into a residence strategically situated between the Prime Ministerial Lodge and the Parliament building, within walking distance of both and probably not more than five min-

¹⁹⁸ BCB, Vol. 20, 32/13, Hamilton/Jooste, 22 April 1960.

¹⁹⁹ Uys's despatches do not suggest a personal friendship with Menzies.

²⁰⁰ Prof A.W. Martin, letter, 27 August 1995.

²⁰¹ BCB, Vol. 2, S6/4, Vol. VII, Woodward/Acting SEA, 11 January 1963, p. 2.

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utes from the first-mentioned. (See Chapter Six.) Geography therefore undoubtedly contributed to his relationship of easy familiarity with Menzies who would often stop by on his way home from parliament, sometimes arriving unannounced. One time he did so was in March 1960 to discuss the day's debate in Parliament on the Sharpeville shootings and to give Hamilton 'moral support'.²⁰² Michael Landale, the son of the contemporary Chief of Protocol W.G.A. Landale, and in 1994 himself a senior officer in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, a friend of the younger of the two Hamilton daughters and then in his teens, recalls opening the door to the Prime Minister one afternoon.²⁰³ Hamilton's predecessors, Viljoen and Uys, were less fortunately housed, living some distance off the route between The Lodge and Parliament. There were, however, other factors which would have told against them in Menzies' eyes.

Michael Landale describes the Menzies/Hamilton relationship as 'a close, personal one. I am sure it was Anthony Hamilton's judgement, historical perspectives and great good humour that appealed to the Prime Minister'.²⁰⁴ From what Hamilton himself says, one deduces that it was a matter of personal chemistry²⁰⁵ besides which they shared a Scottish background. Not to be overlooked is that Jill Hamilton also struck a chord with Menzies and his wife Dame Pattie. Circumstances permitting, the families settled into an informal routine of turn about Sunday suppers, which would have amazed the Canberra political establishment if they had known of it. The Hamiltons were included in intimate dinners at The Lodge such as, for example, when Menzies entertained the new Governor-General, Lord Dunrossil, on the day of his swearing-in. Only one other couple was present.²⁰⁶

Hamilton was, of course, not alone in cultivating the Australian head of government. Davis (Canada) and Johnson (US) had done so when John Curtin was Prime Minister in the 1940s.²⁰⁷ Canberra's small size facilitated such connections, as it did throughout the 1950s. That is not to suggest that Hamilton, as is sometimes the case with foreign diplomats, was an *éminence grise* or Rasputin in respect of Australian domestic politics. Quite clearly he was not.

²⁰² BCB, Vol. 20, 32/13, Hamilton/SEA, 1 April 1960.

²⁰³ Letter, 28 January 1994. He writes: 'I am not sure if the visit was unexpected. Perhaps the timing was'. The daughter concerned, Catherine, is the wife of the Editor of the *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg), Ken Owen.

²⁰⁴ M. Landale, letter, 28 January 1994.

²⁰⁵ See, for example, his *Antipodean Days*.

²⁰⁶ BTS, 1/25/1, Vol. 1, Hamilton/SEA, Cape Town, 9 February 1960. Hamilton singles this dinner out for special mention in his memoir *Antipodean Days* (p. 1).

²⁰⁷ Edwards, *Prime Ministers and Diplomats*, pp. 159-60.

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Not unnaturally, Menzies was loath to see his friend go and news of his impending departure for Stockholm, which Hamilton conveyed to him personally in January 1961, caused something of a stir in official Canberra. At the time Hamilton reported Menzies's reaction to Tange, the Secretary for External Affairs, and to Bunting, the Secretary of the Prime Minister's department. Menzies had taken over the External Affairs portfolio on Casey's retirement a year previously. He was, Tange noted Hamilton saying, 'upset at the news and had commented that the decision was poor timing. He had said that he was considering writing to Jooste'.²⁰⁸ The way Hamilton recalled this three decades later was that 'Mr Menzies burst out: "Your Government has done many stupid things. This is the most stupid. I'll send a message to Louw!"'²⁰⁹ Presumably the first version is definitive. Both imply that even so experienced an operator as Menzies, if only momentarily, overlooked the here today, gone tomorrow nature of foreign service where the place of individual envoys in the wider scheme of things is akin to that of 'the king is dead; long live the king'. There again, one does not have his side of the story.

Hamilton himself had queried his reassignment to Stockholm, cabling the department on 6 January 1961: 'I think that I could still do useful work here especially in view of imminent constitutional change and Australian elections later this year'.²¹⁰ Jooste drafted the departmental response, noting in Afrikaans on the draft: 'Approved by PM':

Government believe that your services required more urgently in Stockholm where our position continues to be most difficult despite excellent work done by Bruce. You have been specially selected for post and in making change great importance attached by Union Government to continuation of our good relations with Australia, which is due also to manner in which you carried out your mission, is not being overlooked.²¹¹

Hamilton showed this to Tange. To Menzies he had already poured cold water on the idea of his term being extended, saying that his family looked forward to going to Stockholm. In any case it was probably too late to change. That would have deflated Menzies.

²⁰⁸ AA, A1838/265, 1500/1/30/11, Record of conversation Tange/Hamilton, 6 January 1961. See also File note E.J. Bunting, 10 January; Bunting/Tange, 10 January and Tange/Minister, 11 January.

²⁰⁹ Hamilton, *Antipodean Days*, p. 7.

²¹⁰ BTS, Hamilton, Vol. III, Cypher OTP telegram No. 1, High Commissioner, Canberra/SEA, 6 January 1961.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, Cypher OTP telegram No. 1, SEA/High Commissioner, Canberra, 9 January 1961 and draft.

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It is not unusual for influential people who have been close to a diplomatic envoy to regret his departure and to want to take the matter up with his government.²¹² Albeit unusual for a head of government-cum-foreign minister, Menzies's attitude would have fallen into that category. It is also not every career official who receives from his head of department an accolade such as that which Jooste bestowed on Hamilton. At this juncture it is difficult to assess the value of the relationship to Menzies. He did not mention it in either of his autobiographical works, *Afternoon Light* (1967)²¹³ and *The Measure of the Years* (1970) although there are references to it in his unpublished papers.²¹⁴ Perhaps for him it was light relief from the cares of office, a manifestation of what Crocker called 'a characteristic which became increasingly marked with the years - to get recreation from boon companions, most of whom, like himself, could hold their liquor if not their tongues'.²¹⁵

Herbert Hans Woodward succeeded Hamilton in Canberra. It was during his term that South Africa left the Commonwealth. He was therefore South Africa's last High Commissioner and first Ambassador to Australia. In age he was two years Hamilton's junior (he was born on 19 November 1911) but he had seven more years experience in the department which he joined in 1937 after eight years in Customs and Excise. He was posted to Brussels less than a year later thence to Washington after the fall of Belgium in 1940.²¹⁶ Spending the next eight years in Washington, he was transferred to Ottawa in December 1948 and back to Pretoria in September 1951. He married a Canadian, Kathleen McNeish, in 1944. The holder of a B.Com, Woodward was engaged on a Masters degree when he joined External Affairs but he did not complete it.

²¹² In the old diplomacy, although rare, it was not unknown for Heads of State to insist on the appointment of specific individuals as envoys to them. Cecil cites the example of the Czar of Russia insisting on General von Werder even though the German Emperor preferred someone else. Emperor Wilhelm complied so as not to give offence. Cecil, *The German Diplomatic Service*, p. 171.

²¹³ In 1967 Hamilton wrote to the editor of *The Times* (London) about a misprint in an extract from *Afternoon Light*. Copies of the correspondence, including also a copy of a letter from Menzies to Hamilton is on BTS, 1/25/3, Vol. 2. See also *The Times*, 18 October & 18 December 1967.

²¹⁴ Hamilton and Menzies corresponded after the former left Australia. The Menzies Papers held by the National Library of Australia, reference ANL, MS. 4936/1/14/116, contain some of the correspondence. I am obliged to Prof A.W. Martin of Canberra, Menzies' biographer, for sending me copies.

²¹⁵ *Travelling back*, p. 185. The Hamilton/Menzies association was a family one. Ability to hold liquor would not have come into it.

²¹⁶ See Fourie, *Brandpunte*, pp. 14, 16 for references to him in that period.

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On the same level as Coaton and Bruce, he found himself at a disadvantage *vis-à-vis* Hamilton when the latter joined the department in 1944, being promoted to Second Secretary only in 1946. He lacked Hamilton's rapport with the head of the department, a *sine qua non* for success as it still is. His wife's Afrikaans or the lack of it was among the factors impeding the later stages of his career as also, perhaps, the fact that a former subordinate, B.G. Fourie, was then the head of the department. In the mid-1950s, however, Woodward was in the ascendant. On the occasion of his appointment to Cairo, for example, Louw described him to Gilchrist as 'a very good man'.²¹⁷ Canberra was Woodward's third head of mission post after Nairobi (1955-59) and Cairo (1959-61) where he was Commissioner and Minister respectively. His posting to Nairobi was indicative of the role chance plays in diplomatic affairs as well of the power South African Cabinet Ministers then enjoyed over Public Servants.

He succeeded J.K. Christie whom, having fallen foul of Eric Louw, was removed from his post at short notice and transferred to the Department of Commerce and Industries²¹⁸ soon after Louw became Minister of External Affairs in January 1955. At first it seemed that Christie would be appointed Superintendent of the Guano Islands off South Africa's east coast! The file contains no indication of Louw's reasons. A note from Forsyth to Spies recorded cryptically: 'Apparently this decision is based upon complaints, the nature and source of which I do not know'. A postscript suggested that he knew more than he was prepared to put in writing:

I understand Mr. Christie travelled on the same boat with the Minister as a fellow passenger as far as Mombasa last October, I think. Did Mr. Christie return from leave in the Union at about that time? If not, in what circumstances was he on the boat?²¹⁹

It was, however, common knowledge in the Department of External Affairs in the late 1950s that Christie, sailing tourist class, had omitted to pay his respects to Louw, a Cabinet Minister, albeit heading another department (Finance), who was a first class passenger on the same vessel. In the end matters probably worked out as Louw intended because Christie returned to the department after his forced departure, taking Woodward's place in Pretoria as Counsellor in charge of the International

²¹⁷ AA, A1838/1, 201/10/6, Pt. 1, Memo. 27, Gilchrist/DEA, 19 January 1959, attachment, Record of conversation Gilchrist/Louw, 5 January 1959. Gilchrist departed South Africa on 9 January and the report was signed by his successor, Phillips.

²¹⁸ In which he had spent almost a decade, serving *i.a.* in London and Singapore, before he joined External Affairs in 1944. He had worked in the Department of Labour between 1924 and 1935.

²¹⁹ BTS, Christie, Forsyth/Under Secretary, 24 January 1955.

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Organisations, Africa and Coding Sections.²²⁰ Just over a year later he was transferred on promotion to Berne, Switzerland, as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary²²¹ and subsequently to Lourenço Marques as Consul-General. He retired on grounds of health in 1960, three years prematurely.

Quite likely because the facts supported him, Woodward's role in the Tambo/Segal visa fiasco did him no harm. After Sharpeville Oliver Tambo, Deputy President-General of the African National Congress (ANC) and Ronald Segal, Editor of the quarterly magazine *Africa South*, fled the country without passports or valid travel documents with the intention of going to New York to address the United Nations Security Council. For the South African authorities they were 'agitators'²²² and earnest attempts were made to have them returned under the Fugitive Offenders Act. These efforts were probably foredoomed to failure because the men's route took them initially through British-controlled territory and, as Maud, the British High Commissioner, told Jooste at the time, that the British government would most likely be acutely embarrassed if it should be asked to return them to the Union.²²³

At the end of March and during the first half of April 1960 H.L.T. Taswell, the South African High Commissioner in Salisbury in the then Central African Federation, did what he could when Jooste asked him to intercede with the federal authorities to prevent the men, who later joined forces with another fugitive, Yussuf Dadoo, from entering the Federation.²²⁴ When they did so, he tried to have them returned to South Africa. Taswell's best efforts were unavailing. *The Rhodesia Herald* (18 April 1960) called the process, not that it was necessarily aware of his role, 'A Gilbertian tale'. In June the American Ambassador, Philip Crowe, complained separately to the department and to Louw personally that 'he had tried very hard to persuade the State Department not to grant Tambo a visa on the grounds that he was a communist, the Ambassador specifically saying that he had no doubt on this point'.²²⁵

²²⁰ BTS, S4/5/48, Scholtz/Christie, 23 November 1955.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, Jooste/Christie, 15 April 1947.

²²² BTS 136/3/10, Vol. 1, DEA/Permanent Delegation, New York, No. 35, 31 March 1960.

²²³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, File Note by G.P. Jooste, 1 April 1960.

²²⁴ See various items on BTS, 136/3/10, Vols. 1, 2, and 3 including Jooste's note of 31 March 1960 on Vol. 1 on his telephone conversation with Taswell and the latter's account of his actions (attached to Taswell/DEA, 19 April 1960).

²²⁵ BTS, 136/3/10, Vol. 5, Unsigned note to Stewart, 6 June 1960.

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But, having done his best, the South African Legation in Cairo had let him down because in effect it denied that Tambo was a communist. He had thereupon been granted a United States visa. According to Louw's note of his conversation with Crowe a week later, the latter had wanted to help in the Tambo case but his efforts were frustrated by the South African Minister in Cairo who told his United States colleague there that 'he had no reason to object if the American government wanted to help Tambo get to the United States'.²²⁶ At that time Crowe was himself under attack in *Die Transvaler* for his contacts with the extra-Parliamentary Opposition. Louw subsequently issued a statement repudiating the newspaper.²²⁷ In the first week of July a file note had Woodward denying the allegation. More importantly, however, the note referred to the existence of a secret American document, possibly a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) report, claiming that the South African government had never called Tambo a communist. There was also America's 'own revolutionary origins and consequent policy of keeping its doors open to political refugees'.²²⁸

Six years earlier Uys, whose assistant Woodward had been in the Economic, International Trade and General Division at Head Office, had described him as

tall and thin but commensurately built; hair light-brown and slightly greying; fine, sharp and well formed features with nice smile and friendly glance; calm appearance and restful attitude, a type who immediately gives the impression that he is someone of his profession.

He was then a forty-two year old First Secretary. Uys was impressed by him:

Given his versatile administrative experience, ability to remain calm under pressure and talent for working well with colleagues and the public irrespective of rank or position, I am of the opinion that Mr Woodward can be employed to best advantage as a generalist. Particular characteristics of his which have always struck me are his ability to think, display sound judgement and to accept responsibility, characteristics which would qualify him for practically any post where versatility is required.²²⁹

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, Louw/Acting Secretary, 17 June 1960. (Original in Afrikaans).

²²⁷ *Die Transvaler*, 26 March 1960; AA, A1838/2, 201/8, Memo. 155, Davis/DEA, 4 April 1960.

²²⁸ BTS, 136/3/10, Vol. 5, file note in Afrikaans, possibly drafted by K.E. Pakendorff, on Oliver Tambo, 6 July 1960.

²²⁹ A rather inconsequential description. BTS, Woodward, PL, Vol. 2, Staff Report, 29 June 1954.

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Forsyth supported Uys's 'assessment and report ... in its entirety'.²³⁰ Woodward's Australian colleague in Cairo, Quinn, who may have met him in Pretoria during his term as Acting High Commissioner in 1951-52 - they overlapped for six months - reported on him thus:

Since my arrival I have had fairly frequent contacts with Woodward who is English speaking (from Natal) career officer with good presence. Canadian born wife and two school age daughters. Political views similar to Hamilton's but he is temperamentally more reserved and less sanguine. Slightly hard of hearing. I know no reason why he should not be suitable for position.²³¹

The Woodward family arrived in Australia under dramatic circumstances - Mrs Woodward was taken to hospital when the ship on which they were travelling, the s.s. Arcadia, berthed at Fremantle, Western Australia, leaving her husband and daughters to continue the voyage to Sydney. She joined them in Canberra later, crossing the continent by train.²³² It was during Woodward's term that the first Commercial Representative was appointed to the Embassy (1961) as well as the first Military Attaché (1963). Hamilton had suggested the addition of these posts to the establishment.²³³ In respect of the Military Attaché, his November 1959 motivation was the classic one of the white bastions which gave the two countries' 'strategic positions ... fundamental points of similarity': 'We are determined to maintain a white nation at the foot of the African continent; the Australians must survive in an Asian environment'. In that connection he reported 'informal hints' from the heads of the army and the airforce 'that this is something that they themselves would like and that if we showed an interest they would put the matter up to their Ministers'.²³⁴

Word came back from Pretoria that the Minister of Defence, F.C. Erasmus, was not interested, both for reasons of cost-cutting and shortage of personnel.²³⁵ Four years later, however, Erasmus's successor J.J. Fouché thought it a good idea and

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

²³¹ AA, A1838/265, 1500/1/30/11, I. 884, 11 January 1961.

²³² *Ibid.*, EA Canberra 888, 6 April 1961; EA Canberra 1079, 10 April 1971.

²³³ BTS, Hamilton, Vol. III, Hamilton/Scholtz, 20 November 1959; BCB, Vol. 1, 2/1 (alternatively BTS, Vol. 229, 1/25/5, Vol. I), Hamilton/SEA, 20 November 1959; BCB, Vol. 9, 15/34, Vol. 1, Hamilton/SEA, 19 August 1960.

²³⁴ BCB, Vol. 1, 2/1, Hamilton/SEA, 20 November 1959.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, Botha/South African Ambassador, Canberra, 26 March 1962. (Original in Afrikaans).

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Woodward was instructed to take the matter up with the Australian authorities.²³⁶ If they would perhaps have been receptive in 1959, that was by no means the case in 1963 after Sharpeville and three years of the newly-independent African states flexing their muscles at the United Nations. Australian External Affairs officials accordingly made it clear, informally, that they wanted the South Africans to drop the proposal. Their grounds were that the appointment might be 'misinterpreted' by the Australian public, that the Australian armed services envisaged no gain from it and that it would be 'unwelcome to Australia's African Commonwealth associates'.²³⁷ The next month, July 1963, a ten-year projection prepared for the Chiefs of Staff of South Africa's strategic significance to Australia concluded that this would be minimal.²³⁸

Woodward's cable was shown to Verwoerd who commented acidly that 'Australia was clearly out to create an Asian image for itself. But no one knew how it was going to reconcile that with its White Australia policy. It was following the same road as all the others, namely, courting Afro-Asian goodwill (as well as US support) and to do that it had to give in more and more to demands that would affect its immigration policy'. He feared that Australia could not learn from what was going on elsewhere partly because of the strength of its Labor Party.²³⁹

Woodward persevered and on his own initiative discussed the matter with Menzies personally on the afternoon of 10 June. Menzies said he had no knowledge of the request which 'had not been discussed in Cabinet or reported to him in any way'. He accepted Woodward's view that the departmental attitude amounted to 'the beginning of punitive action against South Africa'. He 'was personally opposed to the imposition of sanctions in any form'. While he had made known 'his doubts on the wisdom of South Africa's policy toward the non-Whites', this 'did not qualify his own desire that relations between Australia and South Africa should continue on the friendliest terms'. He saw no objection to the appointment, thought Australia should reciprocate and undertook to raise the matter in cabinet. As for the Department of External Affairs, its officials were

²³⁶ BTS, 4/2/32/4, Vol. 1, De Villiers/Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 18 March 1963. (Original in Afrikaans); Cypher OTP telegram No 3, Secretary for Foreign Affairs/South African Embassy, Canberra, 4 April 1963.

²³⁷ BTS, 4/2/32/4, Vol. 1, Cypher OTP telegram No 8, South African Embassy, Canberra/Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 6 June 1963.

²³⁸ AA, A9421/1, 224/1, 'The strategic significance of the Republic of South Africa up to 1973', attached to Minute by the Chiefs of Staff Committee at a meeting held on 26 July 1963.

²³⁹ BTS, 4/2/32/4, Vol. 1, Verwoerd's handwritten comment dated 10 June 1963; also separately transcribed on the same file.

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to his regret, inclined to act at times, like a bevy of frightened clerks who scurried for shelter when the Afro-Asian states mentioned a racial issue in the United Nations and elsewhere. These tactics, he said, solved very little. They merely whetted the appetite of those who opposed South African policies. Within the Commonwealth family he found the demands of new members to be both dangerous and destructive.²⁴⁰

Woodward subsequently made written representations to Menzies²⁴¹ who indicated that he had discussed the matter with his Cabinet colleagues and that Woodward could 'shortly expect a favourable reply'.²⁴² And a few days later Woodward reported receipt of an External Affairs note that the appointment of a Military Attaché was acceptable to the Australian government.²⁴³

Woodward had a flair for expressing himself in English and his reports were perceptive. One, on his interview with the President of the United Arab Republic, Gamal Abdel Nasser, after presenting his credentials on 4 March 1959 was, on Jooste's instructions, given to the Australian department.²⁴⁴ (Australian/UAR diplomatic relations were severed after the Suez crisis. Quinn was the first Australian Minister after their restoration). He had, however, a tendency to obfuscate when challenged. His reply to Jooste's request in September 1961 for an explanation of remarks attributed to him by the Australian press certainly falls into that category. He was, Jooste said, reported to have said that many white South Africans were much in favour of returning to the Commonwealth and that he 'would personally welcome South Africa's re-entry'.²⁴⁵ Clearly political dynamite in the South Africa of the day: Verwoerd had told a National Party Congress at Vryheid that it was 'an unrealistic and foolish idea that South Africa should return' to what was now 'an Afro-Asian Commonwealth of which Britain [was] a member'.²⁴⁶

Jooste wanted the facts telegraphed immediately with an explanation followed by a full report by airmail. What he got was a telegram six days later purporting to

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, Woodward/SEA, 11 June 1963.

²⁴¹ AA, A1838/275, 1500/1/30/15, Woodward/Menzies, 25 July 1963.

²⁴² BTS 4/2/32/4, Vol. 1, Woodward/Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 23 August 1963.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 28 August 1963.

²⁴⁴ BCB, Vol. 20, 32/3 (Vol. II), Woodward/SEA, 4 February 1959; Jooste/Hamilton, 14 March 1959; and Hamilton/Jooste, 23 April 1959.

²⁴⁵ BCB, Vol. 12, 25/11, Cypher telegram No. 18, Jooste/Woodward, 12 September 1961. *The Age* (Melbourne), 12 September 1961, carries a report on Woodward's remarks.

²⁴⁶ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 August 1961.

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paraphrase Woodward's remarks on a question and answer basis, seemingly constructed from memory, and contradicting the essence of the charge.²⁴⁷ *Inter alia* because Woodward did not issue a rebuttal to the press and because of his delay in replying, one assumes the facts were as Jooste stated.

The following sentence in Woodward's 9 March 1962 report on the aftermath of the Australian federal elections provoked a departmental reaction, possibly because - albeit accurate - it contradicted the conventional wisdom: 'As I see it, this country has little direct interest in the African continent, apart from its Commonwealth affiliations'.²⁴⁸ Sole wrote him a personal letter saying that his report had been 'passed on to higher quarters'²⁴⁹ which had asked for further comment on that sentence: 'Could you expand on this in more detail and relate it to previous reports from your mission on Australian interest in Africa e.g. Australian representation at the Tanganyika independence celebrations and the visit of Mr. K.C.O. Shann to several African countries'.²⁵⁰

Despite 'higher quarters' continuing to hammer on the issue, Uys himself demanding to know from Woodward what he meant, the latter's replies would have left his interrogators none the wiser. Yet he was right, as Sole, if he remembered the incident, would have had to acknowledge. Reporting on his week-long visit to Australia in 1967, the excuse for which was provided by an inaugural flight, and after discussions with senior External Affairs officials and others, including Plimsoll, the Secretary, McIntyre, the Deputy Secretary, and O.L. Davis, Sole wrote:

Australia has no real interest in African problems and wants to free herself of any preoccupation with the complexities of Africa as far as this is feasible. In her approach to African problems Australia must perforce be guided by her position as a White outpost in Asia who must at all costs maintain good relations with her

²⁴⁷ BCB, Vol. 12, 25/11, Cypher telegram No. 16, Woodward/Jooste, 18 September 1961. The few telegrams exchanged on the South African side between Pretoria and Canberra up to September indicates as nothing else can the low degree of actual significance attached to the residential diplomatic relationship.

²⁴⁸ BCB, Vol. 3, 6/5, Vol. IV, Woodward/Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 9 March 1962.

²⁴⁹ Presumably Uys who, having had personal experience of Australia, may have been affronted by this casual dismissal of Africa's importance and by implication that of South Africa.

²⁵⁰ BCB, Vol. 3, 6/5, Vol. IV, Sole/Woodward, 19 April 1962.

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Asian neighbours. ... Australia holds no brief whatever for the African countries, and the so-called Commonwealth ties with Commonwealth African countries do not mean a thing.²⁵¹

²⁵¹ BTS, 1/25/3, Vol. 2, 'Visit to Australia, May 4-11, 1967: Some Notes and Impressions', p. 3. He mentions the visit in his *Reminiscences* (pp. 241-42) saying 'Australia was at that time not nearly so anti-South African as today and the visit provided a most invaluable insight into Australian thinking about Southern Africa and Africa generally'.

CHAPTER FIVE

INFORMATION

Anthony Hamilton was undoubtedly one of white South Africa's most successful career diplomats a man perceived, even two decades into retirement, to have brought lustre to the occupation. Yet a generation after they had worked together in Canberra his reputation was attacked by his Information Officer there, E.M. Rhoodie, who served in the High Commission for two-and-a-half years between November 1957 and June 1960. Rhoodie wrote in 1983 that Hamilton was 'a prime example of men at senior level in Foreign Affairs who did not want to promote South Africa's case, who deliberately kept the lowest possible profile, and who did not want to rock the boat'. Not only could Hamilton and his wife barely speak Afrikaans (see Chapter Two), but his 'political hostility towards the government of Dr Verwoerd could hardly be contained'.¹

The Information post on the establishment of the South African High Commission in Canberra was created in 1951 when Christo Albertyn Smith, holding an M Sc in Botany from the University of Stellenbosch and married to an Australian from Tasmania, was appointed Information Officer at a salary of £940 per annum, *ie.*, more than Nel was paid.² Viljoen had recommended the creation of the post on account of the many requests for information about South Africa that he received and the invitations to him and 'even the staff' to give lectures. It is interesting that Smith's appointment should have predated by more than a decade the appointment of Trade and Military personnel to the staff of the High Commission. Smith had commenced his career in the Department of Agriculture but in 1934 became Agricultural Editor of the *Natal Witness* in which capacity he worked until 1941. From 1942 to 1945 he was Editor and Co-Editor of *The Farmer* (Pietermaritzburg). From 1946 the State Information Office³ employed him continuously in various journalistic grades.⁴

¹ Rhoodie, *The real information scandal*, p. 44.

² BTS, 4/2/32/2, Vol. 1, Secretary to the Interior/SEA, 12 September 1951 (Original in Afrikaans). At that time State Information resorted under the Department of the Interior. Nel's basic annual salary was then £780. BTS, Nel, Vol. 3, Staff report, 24 October 1950.

³ So named until 1 June 1958 whereupon it became the South African Information Service. In 1961 this was transformed into the Department of Information, a move which in no way enhanced its efficiency and probably resulted from domestic political pressure. The fact that Verwoerd did not like Piet Meiring may have played a role.

⁴ BTS, 4/2/32/2, Vol. 1, Du Plessis/SEA, 25 July 1951 (Original in Afrikaans).

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His health prevented him from taking up the appointment in 1951.⁵ Two years later, however, he was fit enough to go to Australia and the post was again added to the establishment.⁶ The title 'Information Officer' was settled on after the Australians objected to him being named 'Director of Information', a title held by the head of the Australian Information Service.⁷ In 1961 the post was renamed Information Attaché. Smith held the job for just under three years until his death in Canberra on 23 November 1956. He had already been reassigned elsewhere.⁸ (To the Central African Federation.) From time to time he wrote or helped Uys, with his speeches. At least on paper he was, as Viljoen was, well-qualified to serve in an agricultural country. When he died, Australian External Affairs sent a wreath and a message of condolence and the Secretary, Tange, wrote to his widow.⁹

The statement Smith provided Uys at the latter's request on the work of his office for the year 1 April 1954 to 31 March 1955 gives an indication of the nature and extent of his activities in Canberra.¹⁰ Its contents hardly justified the expense of maintaining him there. For his principal concern was the number of films (131) and brochures (2157 copies of eleven separate items) distributed as well as the number of reports he sent to his head office (10). In Australian missions locally-engaged personnel were in charge of distributing films and brochures¹¹ as they were later in South African missions. Smith said he was not in a position to indicate 'the interest which Australians show in South Africa' because 'a canvas[s]' had yet to be made 'of the big cities and the larger towns'. (He had been in Canberra for almost eighteen months.)¹²

The contemporary white South African attitude towards interracial ('mixed') dancing was cited in Chapter Two (p. 101) as an example of the foreign service reflecting the mores of white society at large. Another example is Smith's alarm over a

⁵ *Ibid.*, Du Plessis/SEA, 17 October 1951 (Original in Afrikaans).

⁶ *Ibid.*, Acting Director/SEA, 17 August 1951 (Original in Afrikaans); BCB, Vol. 1, 2/1, Spies/Acting High Commissioner, Canberra, 27 August 1953.

⁷ See various items within the date range November 1953 to March 1954 on BTS, 4/2/32/2, Vol. 1.

⁸ AA, A1838/T13, 1500/1/30/3, South African High Commission/DEA, 11 October 1956.

⁹ As Assistant Secretary (Administration) Waller authorised expenditure of up to three guineas for the purpose. A wreath was also sent by the Acting Minister for External Affairs. AA, A1838/T13, 1500/1/30/3, Body/Accountant, 27 November 1956; Tange/Mrs Smith, 26 November 1956.

¹⁰ Attached to BCB, Vol. 1, 2/1, Smith/High Commissioner, 10 May 1955.

¹¹ See, *eg.*, Keith Officer's eleven page Ministerial Despatch No. 11 of 25 February 1952 from Paris. AA, A4231/2, UN, NY 1951/52. The Sixth Session of the UN General Assembly (1951-52) had been held in Paris. Officer was a member of the Australian delegation which was probably why his despatch is in the UN volume. His approach to the subject was more sophisticated than Uys's or Smith's.

¹² Contrast with Kevin's analysis of the press in India - p. 243 below.

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Moral Rearmament (MRA) film, 'African Tale', shown in Canberra in July 1955. He reported his impressions to his Director, P.J.G. Meiring. He said the implications were

most disturbing. Indeed, the message of the M.R.A., as conveyed by the film can only be said to be a complete contradiction of our Government's policy of Apartheid in that white and non-white are called to meet on the same social plane as equals ...¹³

He added ('nowise by way of any form of criticism') that the film depicted the Governor-General attending a MRA event in the Cape Town City Hall. Sir Godfrey Huggins was a principal guest at a similar affair in Salisbury. In Johannesburg, several scenes in the film 'showed *Afrikaners* on the platform of M.R.A. *in open advocacy of its objectives*'. (Italics added.)

Translate these as one might like, one inescapable deduction must logically be made, and that is, ultimately, complete social equality of white and anybody non-white.

... this highly dangerous doctrine affords the easiest possible channel for Communism to slide into all parts of Africa, without Russia lifting a single finger to promote its objectives by 'preparing the ground'. ...

I would not go so far as to say that the film deliberately sets out to 'preach' social equality ... but I do believe that it most certainly leads logically to the inference of social equality of white and other colours.¹⁴

Uys sent the letter to his own department saying that Smith had drafted it after discussion with him and that its contents carried his approval. Besides alerting the department to a possible approach by Meiring, he wanted to bring pertinently to the attention of the Union authorities the fact that MRA activities could in the long term be dangerous for the Union 'with its multiracial composition'.¹⁵ Smith told Meiring in a later letter that the film had not been favourably received in Canberra. In vain had MRA people (who would have included Kim E. Beazley, Minister of Education in the Whitlam government of the early 1970s) tried to have it included in the bi-weekly parliamentary film programme.¹⁶

¹³ No hint there of the later concept of 'separate but equal'.

¹⁴ BCB, Vol. 8, 8/12/ST, Smith/Meiring, 21 July 1955.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Uys/SEA, 21 July 1955. (Original in Afrikaans.)

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Smith/Meiring, 25 August 1955.

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If that was an exciting happening for Uys on the information front in 1955, another was the High Commission's subscription, on Smith's initiative, to a press cutting service. Uys reported on the first cuttings received with particular reference to South Africa's mini walk-out from the 1955 UN General Assembly.¹⁷ And in May of that year Dr Peter Wiener, Head of Current Affairs at St Peter's College, Adelaide (a high school) and five of his students had visited him at the official residence. Wiener was an acquaintance of the Minister of External Affairs, R.G. Casey, which probably explains the alacrity with which Uys responded to his initial approach in January. Wiener said he wanted to take fifteen [scaled down later to five] of his 'Leaving Honours students ... on a political study-tour to Canberra':

I was wondering whether you might conceivably be prepared to receive us and to talk to us informally about the political conditions prevailing in the Union of South Africa, especially about South Africa's relations with India, 'Apartheid', the possibility of becoming a Republic, and also perhaps answer some of the many questions [the] boys have to ask about your country.¹⁸

Talks of this nature were given in later years in most countries where South Africa was represented, by junior officials whether members of Information or Foreign Affairs. They were routine occasions. Uys did not see this as an everyday occurrence. He handled it personally, even notifying Pretoria of it: 'I presume there will be no objection to my giving the proposed talk in which I shall confine myself to officially published statements. Any material which the Department may care to supply for the talk will be gladly received'.¹⁹ Pretoria sent him publications which were mostly already available in the High Commission. He was accordingly rather reproachful in his acknowledgment:

your co-operation is greatly appreciated even though there was no mention in your letter or in the publications to the Union's relations with India, a question which Dr Wiener mentioned as one of the subjects for discussion. However, there is no need for you to trouble yourself further about the matter. The main thing is that you have no objection to the proposed discussion. There is enough data here, everything official, also to cover the Indian question.²⁰

¹⁷ BCB, Vol. 6, 8/0, Vol. II, Uys/SEA, 30 November 1955. (Original in Afrikaans.)

¹⁸ BCB, Vol. 5, 6/8/1, Wiener/Uys, 15 January 1955.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, endorsement on Uys/Wiener, 19 January 1955.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, Uys/SEA, 19 April 1955. (Original in Afrikaans).

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The session with Wiener and his boys took the form of a pre-dinner discussion at Uys's residence which was continued at dinner and after dinner. Olivier, the Official Secretary (second-in-command) substituted for Smith who was indisposed. Also present was A.D. Campbell, a newly-appointed Cadet from Adelaide in the Australian Department of External Affairs.²¹

Eschel Mostert Rhoodie, Smith's successor, though there was a ten month gap between them, was undoubtedly the post's most dynamic and inspired occupant until it was abolished in the 1980s. Indeed, he was probably the best Information Officer in the history of the white South African government's attempts to put a positive 'spin' on its policies and activities. His work certainly supported notions that Information was a defined Public Service career direction. The premature and bizarre termination of his career in the late 1970s lends interest to his early activities. Australia was the first of his three overseas assignments extending over a period of fourteen years. His work there, which had a formative influence on his thinking, was a prelude to his activities in Washington, New York and The Hague. The last-mentioned centre served as a spring-board for his meteoric six year career as Secretary for Information.

His actions live after him. *The Citizen* newspaper, one of his creations, is still published and until recently (1995) the composition of the Department of Foreign Affairs was a memorial to his failure.²² Rhoodie proved something of a prophet, writing in 1983: 'It would be a supreme irony if *The Rand Daily Mail* were now to fold, or to become, say, a financial newspaper, while *The Citizen* went from strength to strength as a middle of the road non-party newspaper as we always said it would be.'²³ He was right on most counts.

²¹ *Ibid.*, handwritten note by Uys, 11 May 1955, on Olivier/Wiener, 22 April 1955. See also BTS, 1/25/8, Vol. 1, PR 2, 6 January 1955, 'External Affairs Cadetships: Six Appointments'. I.E. Nicholson who succeeded R.A. Woolcott in South Africa in 1957 was in the same group.

²² The Department of Information was disbanded and its staff absorbed by the Department of Foreign Affairs which operated for some years as the Department of Foreign Affairs and Information.

²³ *The real information scandal*, p. 339. Perskor bought *The Citizen* at the time of the Information Scandal. For details of its founding see *The real information scandal*, pp. 314-39. Under its third editor, M.A. Johnson (September 1976 -), it is now held to be a better newspaper than *The Star* (Johannesburg), until recently considered to be South Africa's best English-language newspaper. That is the opinion of Ken Owen, Editor of the *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg) who, as Argus Group representative in Washington DC in the 1970s, strongly criticised the activities of Rhoodie and his department. See Owen's article 'Is the new SA killing the press?' in *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg), 6 August 1995 edition. The newspaper's 10 September 1995 edition ('Citizen eclipses The Star') indicated that, at 588 000, *The Citizen's* readership had overtaken that of *The Star* at 553 000.

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Stationed in Canberra between the ages of twenty-four and twenty-six, Rhodie brought to bear a maturity beyond his years in his approach to his job. He was hyperactive in that area, yet had time to coach and captain Northern Suburbs Rugby Union team, doing the same for the Australian Capital Territory team - he had been a provincial player in South Africa.²⁴ At other times he played tennis and, quite likely, cricket, then filled in gaps in his time with his MA on the New South Wales prison system²⁵ and early work on his PhD on the prison systems of select Commonwealth countries, both in the field of criminology. (His father was a superintendent of prisons.) He was appointed Secretary for Information at the age of thirty-nine in 1972, crashing in ruins six years later as a principal in the so-called Information Scandal. He fled abroad, was extradited by France and sentenced to twelve years in prison but released on appeal.

Until his death from a heart attack at the age of sixty in July 1993 while playing tennis he had lived for at least a decade in Atlanta, Ga. Having already published several books, one a 928 page exculpation of his role in the information scandal, called *The real information scandal* (Pretoria, 1983), he was at the time of his death in the process of bringing out another blockbuster (2400 pages of manuscript), to be called *Cultures in Conflict: A Global Survey of the Upsurge of Ethnic Linguistic Racial and Religious Strife*.²⁶

Both Gilchrist, then Acting High Commissioner, and his department took Rhodie's work and that of the State Information Office which employed him, seriously. While speaking highly of the professionalism of State Information under Piet Meiring, Gilchrist thought it faced an impossible task. 'The Service is right up to date with recent [technical] developments and has little to learn from any other country' and 'Technically the work of the South African Information Service is admirable; on a £350,000 budget it is astonishingly good. Its global impact, however, is obviously small, and in Asia and Africa almost nil'.²⁷ Asked by Canberra for his comments on

²⁴ *The real information scandal*, pp. 570-71, 885. As with D.P. Olivier before him, G.C. Nel's successor, who had also been North's captain/coach, Rhodie's name was often mentioned in *The Canberra Times*' reports of club rugby matches. Thus, 'Rhodie, for Norths, was by far the best player on the field, continually making openings for the outside backs to score'. *The Canberra Times*, 21 April 1958. As with Olivier, the newspaper had difficulty with his first name, rendering this phonetically firstly as 'Escull' then as 'Eschelle'.

²⁵ E.M. Rhodie, *Gevangenisstelsel van New South Wales*. MA thesis, University of Pretoria, 1959.

²⁶ Dr E.M. Rhodie, undated letter, 1993.

²⁷ AA, A4231/2, South Africa 1958, Despatch No. 12/58, Gilchrist/Acting Minister of External Affairs, pp. 1, 7.

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Rhodie's first article 'Survive and provide in South Africa' (*The Daily Telegraph* (Sydney), 6 February 1958), Gilchrist reported initially that while 'most of the physical facts' in the article were true, they did not tell 'the full story'. If 'the social services provided for non-Europeans in the Union' were 'more extensive than those provided elsewhere in Africa south of the Sahara' there had been 'a substantial diminution of non-European political rights ... over the last fifty years or more'.²⁸ He followed up three weeks later at a length greater than that of Rhodie's original article.²⁹

Australia was a fertile field for Rhodie's talents. Already in 1946 the precursor of the State Information Office, the Bureau of Information, had asked External Affairs whether the Union government intended appointing a representative in Australia through which the bureau could supply the Australian public with 'accurate information'. Local South African reporting on the 'distortions' about the country evident in the Australian press had prompted that.³⁰ The news item accompanying this approach said that three Malans were rolled into one: 'Words spoken by the late Senator F.S. Malan when he visited Australia in 1934 are attributed to Dr D.F. Malan, and are illustrated by a photograph of Mr C.W. Malan, former Minister of Railways, who died early in 1933'.³¹ If those were the extent of the 'distortions', there would have been had little to worry about.

Other 'distortions' were more disturbing. Well before Rhodie's time Labor Members of the Commonwealth House of Representatives and Senate were drawing attention to the dark side of the South African scene. Sir Earle Page of the Country Party had, after his 1948 visit, stressed South Africa's importance to Australia 'in maintaining our communications with the Mother Country and with Europe'.³² He even suggested that South Africa be drawn into the 'Anzac pact between Australia and New Zealand'.³³ Three years later, however, Senator Donald Grant (New South Wales), who claimed that two of his sisters lived in Natal, and with whom Rhodie would

²⁸ AA, A1838/2, 201/10/1, Pt. 2, Memo. 217, Gilchrist/DEA, 8 April 1958.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, Memo. 269, Gilchrist/DEA, 28 April 1958, Annexures A & B.

³⁰ BTS, 4/2/32, Vol. 1, Baber/Acting SEA, 12 December 1946.

³¹ *The Cape Times*, 29 November 1946.

³² CPD, Vol. 197, 5 May 1948, p. 1405. A print of his speech but not of the adjournment debate of which it formed part is on BTS, 1/25/2A, Vol. 1. The debate was on his motion: 'The importance of improving the existing means of communication and consultation with other portions of the British Commonwealth of Nations, especially between those in the southern hemisphere - Australia, South Africa and New Zealand.'

³³ CPD, Vol. 197, p. 1422.

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cross swords later,³⁴ also considered South Africa important but for quite different reasons. He told the Senate on the occasion of its 1951 debate on the External Affairs vote and at a time when the High Commissioner's post was vacant, that South Africa was:

one of the most important countries in the world to-day. There may be a flare up there at any moment. Dr. Malan is likely to seize the British protectorates of Swaziland, Basutoland, and Bechuanaland. In view of the delicate situation there, Australia should be represented in South Africa by the best man that we can obtain. ... Anybody who has studied the problems confronting South Africa knows that the Dutch have been intermingling with the natives for more than 300 years. ... About 60 per cent of the white population of South Africa are Boers. Predikants and Boer Brothers go about trying to get all the jobs for the Boers. All of these problems are very important, when linked with other problems concerning the coloured peoples throughout the world. They are very important to us. If we had a good man there, who could study the problems of the coloured people on the spot, he could keep the Australian Government well informed. Some people contend that the coloured peoples should be wiped out altogether. We are trying to prevent the coloured problem from arising in Australia.³⁵

Events such as the Treason Trial were grist to the mill. A few months before Rhoodie's arrival Senator W.E. Aylett (Tasmania) let loose as follows:

if there is not a dictator in South Africa, I have never seen a dictatorship anywhere. No other country has a worse dictatorship than has South Africa, and no other country is using its dictatorship to a more intolerable degree than is South Africa. If the authorities there thought that one said something which savoured of racialism, they would charge him, and they are charging people by the hundreds. I venture to say that the bone has just been pointed at people,³⁶ that they have been herded into compounds, and have to stand trial for treason. That is followed by cries of 'this is European territory; out you get'. They expect the Indian people there to suffer it without saying anything in retaliation. South Africa, a country with a white population of 2,500,000, has for years insulted India with a population of 350,000,000.³⁷

³⁴ See, eg., letters from Grant in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 & 16 April 1958. See also *The Star* (Johannesburg), 2 April 1958 (report: 'Australian Senator's view: Union elections so democratic that majority is voteless'), 11 April 1958 (letter: A.D. Keet, 'Can Australia criticize our colour policy?') and AA, A1838/2, 201/10/1, Pt. 2, Memo. 229, Gilchrist/DEA, 12 April 1958.

³⁵ CPD, Vol. 215, 22 November 1951, pp. 2484-85.

³⁶ An Aboriginal curse, meaning a death sentence.

³⁷ CPD, Senate, Vol. S. 11 - New Series, 28 August 1957, p. 58.

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And one of Aylett's colleagues, Senator O'Byrne told the Senate early in Rhoodie's term that J.G. Strijdom had

put a lot of Africans in concentration camps for treason, because they disagreed with his policy. I think that one of the churches there has even found it necessary to alter the Bible to read that God created the white man and then created the black man for the benefit of the white man. That sort of thing is tolerated in that part of the British Commonwealth. If ever a nation should be expelled from the United Nations, it is South Africa. What can we expect from those people?³⁸

As for the press, there were no formally-accredited journalists from either country in the other and use was generally made of news agency reports or those filed by the occasional 'stringer'. From time to time journalists visiting the countries on inaugural flights filed reports of a gee-whizz nature. The coverage given South Africa by the Australian press, scant though it may generally have been, greatly outweighed what appeared about Australia in the South African papers. It tended to be negative and apocalyptic and in some cases strangely suggestive of the 1990s.

Under the headline 'A city of fear', the New Year's Day 1955 edition of *The Sydney Morning Herald* carried a report by a special correspondent on what today would be known as the security aspects of living in Johannesburg: 'There's one business always booming in Johannesburg - burglar-proofing. Every white householder looks at life through bars'. 'Petting parties in cars', the reader was told, 'are unknown in Johannesburg. What couple would bother to see the moon rise over the veldt when there's a chance of being dragged from the car, clubbed, knifed, and left for dead, with clothes and wallet missing?' If in the succeeding forty years security measures have improved in proportion to the deterioration of the situation, the basic problem remains.

Douglas Wilkie, a guest on the 1952 Qantas inaugural flight, contributed a series of articles to *The Sun* and *The Herald* in Melbourne. He focused in the second article on 'South Africa's White Problem', calling himself a Boer War veteran after a fortnight in South Africa. 'The war is still being fought. There was never more than an armistice.' The caption of the accompanying photograph said of the group of veterans ('oudstryders') depicted: 'Typical Boer veterans at a recent national commemorative gathering. Note their stubborn appearance.'³⁹ In another of his articles the Voortrekker

³⁸ CPD, Senate, Vol. S. 13 - New Series, 19 August 1958, p. 82.

³⁹ *The Sun* (Melbourne), 25 September 1952.

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Monument was not unnaturally a 'Memorial to Fear'. While the monument's theme and the 'reverence it inspires' were understandable, the treatment of the theme was 'frightening'. Wilkie found it strange that the monument's Wagnerian proportions were 'larger than any monument erected in any country to the dead of two world wars'.⁴⁰

The Sun's readers were told the same day (24 September 1952) that it was 'one minute to midnight'. In the absence of a change of political direction in South Africa 'within the next few months', 'all hope of racial reconciliation' would be lost and a 'cauldron of hate [would] boil over into all corners of Africa and Asia'. 'The problems which South Africa fails to solve within its borders will become more difficult to solve by nations like Australia, which have racial problems outside their borders.' Sensitive to world opinion, Afrikaners were not 'amused by rebukes from an Australia which did its best to exterminate its own Blacks as long as they were regarded as a social "menace" or economic obstruction'.

Forwarding these reports to Pretoria, Nel commented that 'while fault could be found with various allegations, considered generally, the articles revealed a better grasp of and a more sympathetic attitude towards our problems. In contrast to the everyday news reports and opinions which are reflected in the local press, this was therefore encouraging'.⁴¹ Wilkie's third article, 'The black side of S. Africa', probably contributed to this comment. Wilkie had written that the

Bantu tribesman ... is not ripe for immediate entry into a modern European society, nor for the responsible application of such skills as he may learn from the White. He is still a savage ... and not always the noble savage whom Rider Haggard glamorised.

In the rare instances that he is allowed to complete a University course he often - but not always - lapses into instability of character'.⁴²

He said that apartheid or segregation was not new. It was not 'peculiar to Malan's Nationalists, nor even to the Whites'. For it was 'welcomed, in principle, by many intelligent Blacks, as a desirable pattern of social development at this phase of history'. An interesting feature of this article was its prescient forecast of later developments.

⁴⁰ *The Herald* (Melbourne), 27 September 1952.

⁴¹ BCB, Vol. 13, 27/4, Nel/Secretary for External Affairs, 16 October 1952. (Translation.) That was in the pre-photocopy days and Nel asked for the cuttings to be returned after perusal, also by the State Information Office. They were, however, placed on a head office file.

⁴² *The Sun* (Melbourne), 26 September 1952.

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Some Afrikaner intellectuals, Wilkie wrote, were urging 'the return of the Blacks to their reserves and the creation of all-black secondary industries, in a sort of self-sufficient Bantustan'.⁴³

The Australians were in their own way as interested in the information function of their overseas missions as the South Africans were in theirs. From time to time Australians and South Africans tended to attribute negative reporting about aspects of their situations to similar causes. Australian complaints in 1948 and 1949 about Reuter reports on the White Australia Policy⁴⁴ which appeared in the Indian press from time to time were couched in terms similar to those that would be used by South African officials concerning news agency treatment of the South African situation.⁴⁵

J.C.G. Kevin, then Acting High Commissioner in New Delhi, reported in November 1948 on 'Australian migration policy and the Indian press'. The Rhodie generation of South African Information Officers would not have disagreed with his approach or conclusions. Sketching the nature of the problem, he said:

It can be stated briefly that factual Australian news appearing in the Indian press generally comes to it through the medium of Reuters. ... Where news derives from Reuters ... it goes first to London where it is liable to be edited before being passed on to India.

Reuters seem to be well aware of the news value in India, and no doubt in Asia as a whole, of any references to 'White Australia' or anything that savours of restricted migration. Incidents under these headings are almost invariably given a good coverage by their representatives, and there is no discernible tendency to write any story down. These reports appear in due course in the Indian press.⁴⁶

The new High Commissioner, H.R. Gollan, took up the theme after his arrival. He wrote in February 1949 that references in the Indian press to Australia's migration policy generally emanated from Reuters and often incorporated the expression 'White

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ 'White Australia' was colloquial terminology. Official references to the policy were more euphemistic - immigration policy or immigration restriction policy. In a South African context, one is reminded of 'separate development' for 'apartheid'. For a discussion of the White Australia Policy see my article 'White man's country: an aspect of mid-twentieth-century Australia', *Kleio*, Vol. XXVII, 1995, pp. 165-95.

⁴⁵ See AA, A4231/2, India 1949, Departmental Despatches 7/49 and 21/49 dated 10 February and 19 May. For a later perspective on India and the White Australia Policy see A4231/2, India 1954, Despatch 1, Crocker/Casey, 8 January 1954.

⁴⁶ Departmental Despatch 70/48, 11 November 1948.

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Australia'. Such reports caused anxiety because 'their frequency and phrasing' - the reference to 'White Australia' in their titles and texts not to mention 'in the Australian comments which they carry' - aroused 'adverse comment among Indians and in Indian newspapers'.⁴⁷ The damage caused was cumulative. If the reports persisted

our relations with India are likely to be prejudiced. It is not without significance that Australia is now being specifically named with South Africa when the question of racial discrimination is ventilated in the Indian press or in some Indian forum. The racial issue itself is being brought more and more to the fore.⁴⁸

His proposed solution was unrealistic:

The initial remedy would seem ... to be for Reuters, when selecting their material for Asian consumption, to weigh the damaging effect to Australia generally against the news value of any particular item. Reuters is now partly an Australian concern and some patriotic obligation presumably attaches to it. ... both in the selecting of items and in the compilation of the reports themselves Reuters might endeavour to guard against imbalance.⁴⁹

With the possible exception of the Afrikaans-language press during the apartheid years, appeals to journalistic patriotism are not generally successful.

Where the Australians differed from the South Africans was that Casey insisted that public information activities abroad should be controlled by his department and the head of mission's supervisory role was to be direct.⁵⁰ He was helped by the closure of the wartime Department of Information in 1950.⁵¹ Eric Louw would have spared the South African Department of External Affairs later anguish if he had done likewise. At least in the mid-1950s under Strijdom he could perhaps have carried it off.

Casey argued that external information activities should be 'aimed consciously at the improvement of Australia's external relations'.⁵² They should in particular serve the purposes of

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 7/49, 10 February 1949.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 21/49, 19 May 1949.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 7/49, 10 February 1949.

⁵⁰ AA, A5818/2, Vol. 11, Submission No. 489, 23 November 1959, pp. 1-2, paras. 3-4.

⁵¹ *The Canberra Times*, 9 March 1950. It was replaced by a News and Information Bureau in the Department of the Interior.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 1, para. 2.

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(i) ensuring that Australian foreign and domestic policies are understood and, to the greatest degree possible, accepted in other countries;

(ii) reducing misconceptions about policies important to Australia's international relations (e.g., in relation to immigration, self-determination in dependent territories, military alliances, disarmament and nuclear weapons);

(iii) conducting, under appropriate safeguards, counter-propaganda, and distributing material for the countering of subversion, in countries where Australian security interests are involved;

(iv) countering the impact of communism by the exposure of communist propaganda, and by the exposition of Western policies, especially in the Asian area.⁵³

Such a definition could have covered what the South Africans had in mind.

It had originally been the intention of the Australian Department of Information to send a press attaché to South Africa.⁵⁴ That fell through but from their side, commencing with Knowles, various Australian heads of mission recommended the appointment of an Information Officer to their staff. Gilchrist did so in November and December 1957. He wrote in November:⁵⁵ 'South Africans and Rhodesians tend to regard Australia as just a big sheep country full of rabbits and kangaroos, and physically and socially as much the same as the Union and the Federation.' Australia's achievements needed to be filmed. In view of the 'insatiable demand' for Australian documentary films, 'a great opportunity' existed in South Africa 'to promote a better picture of Australia'. An information officer based in Pretoria was becoming increasingly necessary and provision should be made for one in the 1958/59 estimates. He said in December:⁵⁶

Extreme policies of the Union Government in certain fields have inclined a substantial number of residents in South Africa to look around for a new home elsewhere. This trend is likely to increase if the present Government is returned in the general election in 1958, as seems most probable. Factual information about social and economic conditions in Australia and about its policies could do much, unobtrusively, to persuade suitable potential emigrants to go to Australia, rather than to England or Rhodesia.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 2, para. 4.

⁵⁴ AA, A1838/1, 1348/10, Bonney/Dunk, 3 May 1946 and O. 19709, 15 October 1946.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 201/10/6/1, Pt. 1, Memo. 605, p. 2, para. 8.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 1348/10, Memo. 668, Gilchrist/DEA, 17 December 1957, p. 2, para. 3(d).

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Canberra's view was that while there was no doubt such a job to be done in South Africa 'the same job is to be done in countries of greater importance to us; in fact, the job to be done is greater elsewhere'.⁵⁷ A departmental submission held that if there was 'money to create a new post of Information Officer, we should give first consideration to the needs of South and South-East Asia'.⁵⁸

In retrospect and influenced by Rhoodie's later attitude one may be tempted to view the Hamilton/Rhodie association of the 1950s as an early manifestation of the friction which developed between the Departments of Foreign Affairs and Information in the 1970s. However, the men seem to have got on well enough at the time. Oldham of the Australian External Affairs department quoted Rhodie early in 1959 to the effect that 'the South African High Commissioner's Office has now a very congenial atmosphere as the High Commissioner and his assistants get on very well, a point which Mr. Rhodie mentioned was important at a small post'.⁵⁹ In the Foreword to his doctoral thesis Rhodie expressed his appreciation *inter alia* to the High Commissioner in Canberra for allowing him 'the necessary time off during 1957-62 to visit the countries included in the survey'.⁶⁰ Hamilton, though, was guarded in his reference to Rhodie in a contemporary letter to Scholtz:

Rhodie has done a good job here and has got our information work onto a sound basis; but I do not object particularly to the idea of his leaving, since we could look after such routine matters as the distribution of information material and films, and I would find it less complicated to handle the public relations side myself.⁶¹

It was not a matter of Hamilton 'hardly' containing his hostility towards the Verwoerd government. (See p. 233 above.) He did not contain it at all. According to Rhodie, Hamilton once told Menzies in his presence that it was 'time these damned Nationalists realise that they are not going to get away with their stupidities'.⁶² That observation would hardly have come as a surprise to Australian External Affairs

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, A. Renouf, Handwritten note, 20 January 1958 and D.O. Hay/Australian High Commission, Pretoria, 8 May 1958.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 201/10/6/1 Pt. 1, Morris/Kevin, 17 February 1958.

⁵⁹ AA, A1838/2, 201/10/1, Pt. 2, Record of conversation Oldham/Snyman, 27 January 1959, p. 2, para. 7. Snyman had succeeded Olivier earlier that month.

⁶⁰ E.M. Rhodie, *The Prison System of Certain Commonwealth Countries: A Criminological Survey Against the Background of the Cornerstones for a Progressive Correctional Policy*. D.Phil. thesis, University of Pretoria, 1964.

⁶¹ BTS, Hamilton, Vol. III, Hamilton/Scholtz, 20 November 1959.

⁶² Rhodie, *The real information scandal*, p. 43.

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officials because Hamilton's views were known even before he arrived in the country. A file note a week before he reached Sydney claimed that he had 'on a number of occasions made observations to members of our Embassy in Washington implying a lack of sympathy with the more extreme policies of his own Government'.⁶³ That came from a June 1957 report from the Australian Embassy in Washington. The Hamiltons, it was said, had 'maintained close relations' with various members of the Embassy, were 'very well disposed towards Australia' and were looking forward to their posting. Both were of British stock and apparently had 'no facility in speaking or writing Afrikaans'.⁶⁴ Gilchrist reported in August after he and his wife entertained the Hamiltons to lunch:

Hamilton is a self-confessed 'Smuts man', and regards himself as an atypical South African official but 'a good South African' for all that. ... In conversation Hamilton has made perfectly clear his own view that few racial problems (in South Africa or elsewhere) are improved by legislation, and he would be relieved - both personally and professionally - to see the disappearance of a good deal of the Nationalist Government's apartheid legislation and a return to the earlier more flexible system of customary racial separation.⁶⁵

And Hamilton told Davis in Pretoria during a visit in November 1961 that 'it was well known in the South African Government that he ... strongly disagreed with Government policy'.⁶⁶

In allegedly maintaining a low profile Hamilton was, Rhodie said, rarely 'seen or heard to address any meetings to promote South Africa's case, either on radio or television'. He also 'spent so much of his time in the garden' that 'his son Tim used to say to us: "My father is the highest paid gardener in Australia"'. Rhodie reported Hamilton's attitude to members of the South African delegation to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's 1959 meeting in Canberra. He was nonplussed when Piet Meiring wrote a few weeks later that Eric Louw was not concerned about Hamilton's political beliefs nor that he 'spent only three to four hours of his day at the office'.⁶⁷ (Louw knew it was more important Hamilton should enjoy access to the highest levels of the Australian government).

⁶³ AA, A1838/T54, 1500/1/30/8, file note dated 30 August 1957 by J.C.G. Kevin headed 'South African High Commissioner to Australia: A.M. Hamilton'.

⁶⁴ AA, A1838, 201/10/7, Pt. 1, Memo. 744/57, M.R. Booker/DEA, 11 June 1957. Hamilton had taken Afrikaans for Matric besides passing the *Afrikaanse Taaleksamen*, lower grade.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Memo. 397, Gilchrist/DEA, 6 August 1957.

⁶⁶ AA, A9421/1, 221/1, Record of conversation Davis/Hamilton, 16 November 1961.

⁶⁷ Rhodie, *The real information scandal*, pp. 43-44.

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Of Rhoodie's charges only one, that Hamilton was out of sympathy with the National Party government, has substance and it would have been more professional if he had kept his views to himself. Ideally, it should have been said of him as it was of J.P. Quinn as Australian Chargé d'Affaires in The Hague between 1948 and 1950: 'While remaining completely loyal to his Government's policy, [he] was able to present it to the Dutch in a way that, whil[e] not making it any more acceptable, reduced the offensive impact; and his own high personal standing with the Dutch was never impaired'.⁶⁸ (Of course, the policy objects were different. Australian policy was to promote the cause of Indonesian independence at a time when the Dutch were still dragging their feet on it.)

However, given the general opprobrium in which the South African government was held even then, Hamilton's attitude did not induce in his Australian interlocutors the contempt which normally would be the case in such circumstances. Instead, they seem to have considered his attitude commendable and a few months after his arrival the Australian High Commission said he was 'of much higher calibre than his predecessors'.⁶⁹ Canberra agreed with that assessment. Oldham, the Commonwealth Relations Adviser, called him 'one of the ablest diplomats sent to Australia'. He had 'a difficult task to perform' but carried it out 'with considerable skill'. He was also sufficiently wide in outlook to see what was 'ultimately the best for his country'.⁷⁰ That was a measure of how the National Party government was perceived abroad.

In respect of the other charges, Hamilton's profile was probably higher than that of any head of mission in Canberra at the time. And while the garden may, as he said later, have been his 'chief recreation',⁷¹ it was also very much part of his job. It could hardly have been otherwise in circumstances where the Australian Prime Minister himself 'spoke enthusiastically about the new residence, which is very close to his own and which he passes frequently each day. He said that he had been watching its building with great interest'.⁷²

⁶⁸ R.W. Furlonger in *John Paul Quinn*, p. 16. By way of contrast, refer to the Australian Trade Commissioner's comments in Chapter One above (p. 66) about the Canadian High Commissioner J.J. Hurley. Furlonger's reference to Quinn bearing the 'burden of defending an unpopular policy in a hostile and self-righteous environment' will strike a chord with South Africans who have tried to do the same in Australia.

⁶⁹ AA, A1838/1, 1348/1, Pt.1, Annual Report 1957, Part B, p. 8. See Chapter Four.

⁷⁰ AA, A9421, 223/1/1, Record of conversation Oldham/Hamilton, 17 September 1959.p. 2, para. 6.

⁷¹ Hamilton, *Antipodean Days 1957- to '61*, p. 7.

⁷² BTS, 4/2/32, Vol. 2, Hamilton/SEA, 20 September 1957.

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Hamilton's remark about being the highest paid gardener in Australia was a joke but Rhoodie took it literally.⁷³ And while Sir Francis Bertie's attitude to the press was outmoded even in his own day,⁷⁴ the practice of diplomats taking to the airwaves to put their point of view was not evident in the Australia of the time. Indeed, as late as 1978 it was held that 'On rare occasions a Canberra-based diplomat will actually speak out on some contentious issue, as when the British High Commissioner accepted an invitation to appear on television in 1977 to defend his country against statements that it was in a state of "economic collapse".'⁷⁵ Dr Joan Rydon, one-time Professor of Politics at La Trobe University, Melbourne, says that

There was little discussion of public affairs on radio or television in the 50s or 60s. There would have been little opportunity for any diplomat to use the media to promote his country. ... When television came, there was even less emphasis on current affairs and I know of no attempt by diplomats to make use of it.⁷⁶

It was apparently not at that time policy for even British diplomats 'to engage in public debate through letters to the press'.⁷⁷ That did not deter Gilchrist who, perhaps influenced by Thomas Boydell's contemporary letters to Australian newspapers (see p. 255 *et seq.* below), replied to what his annual report for 1957 said was 'a highly inaccurate article' in *The Star* (Johannesburg) 'about the status and treatment of the Australian Aborigines'.⁷⁸ That only one article and one letter to a newspaper's letters' page should have been considered worthy of a separate paragraph in the annual report was indicative of the rareness of the matter.

⁷³ Rhoodie, *The real information scandal*, p. 44; Hamilton, letter, 2 October 1993.

⁷⁴ Bertie, later Lord Bertie of Thame, was British Ambassador to France from 1905 to 1918. He is said to have amazed Lloyd George by the disparaging way he treated the editor of *Le Matin*, boasting that 'he had never given an interview nor made a statement to the press and had no wish even to make the acquaintance of the editor'. Gladwyn, *The Paris Embassy*, p. 172.

⁷⁵ G. Barrow, *Canberra's Embassies* (Canberra, 1978), pp. 6-7.

⁷⁶ Letter, 4 December 1994. Rhoodie, however, claimed to have made television appearances in Australia. *The real information scandal*, p. 884.

⁷⁷ *The Times* (London), 11 February 1964. ('Diplomatists anger cycle makers: "Unwilling to beat drum for U.K".')

⁷⁸ AA, A1838/1, 1348/1, Pt. 1, Annual Report 1957, Part B, p. 8, para. 41. A copy of the report is also on A1838/T184, 201/7/1, Pt. 2. The article complained of, 'Soul-searching in Australia: "Abos" want a place in their country's life', appeared in *The Star's* 27 November 1957 edition and Gilchrist's reply in the newspaper's 9 December edition. ('Australia's 74,000 Aborigines are not neglected'). Gilchrist said in the annual report that he replied to the article 'factually and in a quiet manner'. In retrospect the article, which charged discrimination against Aborigines, was not noticeably inaccurate. See, eg., Tothill, 'White man's country: an aspect of mid-twentieth-century Australia', *Kleio*, Vol. XXVII, 1995, pp. 178-90.

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Even rarer, no doubt, was the spirited defence one of Gilchrist's erstwhile colleagues in South Africa, Miss Betty Sybil Tyler, who had been Hodgson's Secretary, put up for Dr Verwoerd in 1958 in *The West Australian* (Perth). The newspaper had profiled Verwoerd on his accession to the Prime Ministership under the headline *Verwoerd Hates Blacks, British*.⁷⁹ Ignoring his allegedly anti-British feelings, Miss Tyler denied that Verwoerd hated black people. He was, she said, well-liked by tribal chiefs. If he did not have black servants in his home that was 'partly because, for absolute cleanliness, he prefers Europeans and also because he does not regard the African merely as a servant of the white man as many people in South Africa seem to'. Besides

The living conditions of South Africa's 10,000,000 non-Europeans have shown great improvement while he has held the portfolio of Native Affairs and millions of pounds have been spent on housing, hospitals and schooling. Millions more are being set aside for exclusively non-European universities.⁸⁰

Rhodie could hardly have put it better! (Gilchrist said recently that he was not aware of Sybil Tyler's political views!)⁸¹

Only seven years before Hamilton's term Forsyth had congratulated Viljoen for not writing directly to the *Sunday Sun* (Sydney) concerning its publication of an immigrant's criticism of the South African government in December 1950:

You were quite right not to correspond directly with the newspaper. That is an action which is justified only in exceptional cases. Thus the High Commissioner in London for example wrote personal letters to newspapers on one or two occasions about so important an aspect of the Union's policy as South West Africa.⁸²

Instead, Viljoen had drawn the offending article to the attention of Alan Watt, the Secretary for External Affairs, and put his own gloss on it.⁸³ In vain, therefore, did Mrs A. Kerr of Mount Hawthorn, Perth, look to him to correct what she considered to be journalistic misrepresentations in the press: 'I hoped the South African High Commissioner would reply through The Press to all adverse references to South Africa but am disappointed that I have not read any statement from him'. Instead she had to con-

⁷⁹ *The West Australian* (Perth), 3 September 1958.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 8 September 1958.

⁸¹ Letter, 22 February 1995.

⁸² BCB, Vol. 11, 20/8, Forsyth/High Commissioner, Canberra, 15 February 1951.

⁸³ AA, A1838/2, 201/120/1, P. 1, Viljoen/Watt, 20 December 1950. Watt was then Secretary for External Affairs.

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tent herself with Nel's (meaningless) assurance that 'instances of this nature' did not escape Viljoen's notice 'and appropriate action is taken'.⁸⁴

Viljoen's hesitation in information matters was further revealed by his attitude towards criticism of the Group Areas Act in the 'Daily News Review' issued by the Indian Information Officer in Canberra. He told Forsyth 'he is merely quoting from Indian publications and not submitting any remarks of his own. I do not feel that I can therefore attack him in any way or deal with the matter in Canberra'. (He would not have been expected to attack the Indian Information Officer; merely rebut what was being said about the Group Areas Act. As later generations of South African officials discovered, this was no easy task.) Nonetheless, he asked whether he should issue a statement 'to counteract the impression conveyed by these extracts from Indian newspapers'. Forsyth agreed that no action should be taken, adding that an Information Officer would soon be attached to Viljoen's staff. He would then be able 'to deal positively with the matter in his newsletter and other publications'.⁸⁵ (In respect of Smith, a case of wishful thinking.)

That was not an approach Eric Louw, known for hard-hitting correspondence with newspapers, would have endorsed. Nor did it accord with Bodenstein's 1938 (and presumably by that time forgotten) directive, on Hertzog's instructions, that missions should assume responsibility in their areas of jurisdiction for 'the tracing, and correction where necessary, of inaccurate reports about South Africa which may appear in newspapers, periodicals and other publications'. That had to do with the establishment of an Information Office in the Prime Minister's department. In cases where it was not possible to react immediately, the Information Office would, in consultation with the department concerned, furnish the necessary correction.⁸⁶

Louw's own style was not beyond reproach as Gilchrist had Hodgson point out in a January 1957 report: 'It is perhaps regrettable, but hardly surprising, that Mr. Louw should have written such an angry letter to the London 'Times' this week'⁸⁷At

⁸⁴ The exact nature of the report complained of is not known because Nel returned it to Mrs Kerr. BCB, Vol. 11, 20/8, Mrs Kerr/Nel, 7 September 1949 and Nel/Mrs Kerr, 16 September.

⁸⁵ BCB, Vol. 11, 20/8, Viljoen/SEA, 13 April 1951 and Forsyth/Viljoen, 10 May 1951.

⁸⁶ BTS, 91/8/1, Vol. 1, Circular minute to all overseas offices, 24 January 1938. P.W.A. Mulder treats of the appointment of the first Information Officer in *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Staatsinligtingsdiens, 1936-1975*, Chapter 2, pp. 10-18.

⁸⁷ 7 January 1957. He was responding to a letter by Canon John Collins and Gerald Gardiner QC published in *The Times* on 28 December 1956. AA, A1838/T184, 201/7/1, Pt. 1, Memo. No. 4, Hodgson/DEA, 12 January 1957.

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the end of that year Louw defended separate development in a lengthy interview broadcast in Australia by the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC).⁸⁸

Television reached Sydney and Melbourne, Australia's largest cities, only in 1956, in time for the Olympic Games. Regular transmissions commenced in Sydney on 17 September.⁸⁹ It had, however, long been the practice among political leaders to make use of commercial radio to convey their message.⁹⁰ Uys gave a farewell broadcast on the ABC network, *ie.* non-commercial radio and Hamilton delivered at least one radio address, introducing the ABC programme marking Union Day 1959. Rhodie could hardly have objected to the content of his message which was expressed more elegantly than he himself could have done:

South Africa stands at the centre of the great problem of our times - the adjustment of race relationships between peoples of immensely different backgrounds and achievements. Such an adjustment will not be attained except by a long and complex process; but white South Africans understand perfectly well that their future, as a community and a nation, is bound up with their success in helping forward an adjustment which will be fair to all the races that inhabit our beautiful and exciting country. At no time has the discussion of policy been so earnest, or so wide-ranging in its examination of fundamental factors.

In the meanwhile great progress is being made in the welfare of our native peoples - in the housing schemes which are rapidly eliminating the slums of the great cities, in education and health services. Much of this is lost to sight in the controversy over policies.⁹¹

Nor could Rhodie have objected to what Hamilton said in Cairns, Qld., during a visit in June 1959:

The South African Government fully realised that the time must inevitably come when the native people there would demand a share in running their own affairs ... the South African Government did believe - and had said so time and time again - that there was no limit to the development of the natives in their country. If that development was not controlled - remembering that outbreaks of nationalism tended to go to extremes - the white population in

⁸⁸ *The Star* (Johannesburg), 4 December 1957.

⁸⁹ *The Canberra Times*, 17 September 1956.

⁹⁰ Dr Joan Rydon, letter, 4 December 1994; BTS, 4/2/32/1, Vol. 1, Hamilton/Louw, 31 July 1958.

⁹¹ AA, A1838, 201/10/7, Pt. 1, 'Radio address by the High Commissioner for South Africa, Mr. A.M. Hamilton, Union Day, 1959'.

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South Africa (numbering only three million people in the entire country) would be absolutely swamped.⁹²

However, earlier during the same visit to Queensland Hamilton was reported to have said - it is not clear whether he volunteered this - that he had two views on apartheid, personal and official. His personal view was that he did not know whether it would work or not. Officially, the government believed that it 'will work, will enable the races to live together, and open the way for the native to develop to the extent of his capability'.⁹³

Hamilton told the present writer in 1993 that Rhodie could not forgive him 'for making him cut down on his highly provocative letters to the press and editing them when I let them through'.⁹⁴ If that was so, he let quite a few through. Rhodie's first article, 'Survive and provide in South Africa', (see p. 239 above) was published when Hamilton was out of the country visiting Ceylon and Burma. It had been inspired by articles which Crouch, then stringing from South Africa, had published in *The Daily Telegraph* (Sydney). On the basis of their message and as shown by the correspondence they generated, Rhodie's letters were certainly provocative to a liberal audience. But so were the South African government's domestic policies which the letters set out to elucidate. A full exposure of these policies to a sophisticated audience which included former South Africans, some of whom had left the country for political reasons, could hardly have avoided being considered provocative.

Be that as it may, Rhodie's *modus operandi* was not provocative. In Australia he was not, as a later generation of Information officials would have said, 'pro-active'. He did not generally take the initiative but reacted to what had already appeared in the press. He also responded to editorials in various newspapers such as, for example, *The Sydney Morning Herald's* 'The Abyss In South Africa' (18 March 1958) and 'Die Stem Van Suid Afrika' (21 April 1958) on the outcome of the 1958 general election, and *The Canberra Times's* 'Justice on Trial' (5 August 1958) about the Treason Trial. Then he reacted to an article W.A.P. (Peter) Phillips contributed to *The Advertiser* (Adelaide)

⁹² *The Cairns Post*, 17 June 1959. Interestingly, under the headline 'Problems of segregation: Not always fully appreciated', there appeared in that newspaper the next day a report on remarks made by the visiting assistant chief chemist of Shell, South Africa, R.C. Hickman, who seemed fully conversant with what its proponents would have considered the 'positive' aspects of apartheid. Like Boydell, he claimed that the 'South African native himself actually wanted the policy of segregation'.

⁹³ *The Courier-Mail* (Brisbane), 9 June 1959.

⁹⁴ Letter, 2 October 1993.

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after the 1958 general election, 'Tyranny looms in South Africa'.⁹⁵ That led to an exchange of letters with Phillips in *The Advertiser*.

Phillips was a British-born historian who had lectured in the Department of Politics and Government at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) from 1953 to 1957.⁹⁶ His background was not then generally known. He had served with the British forces in North Africa during the war, was captured at Tobruk and spent time in Italian and German prisoner-of-war camps.⁹⁷ An incorrigible escaper whom, according to himself, had been involved with the French Resistance, he was eventually sent to German concentration camps where he was treated with the same degree of brutality as other inmates.⁹⁸ He mentions in his book, *The Tragedy of Nazi Germany*, having stood helplessly by while his best friend was beaten and kicked to death before his eyes.⁹⁹

He emigrated to Australia after the war, reading for an undergraduate degree in History and English at the University of Western Australia in Perth. He was awarded a Hackett Studentship for 1951, worth £1000 annually, which he used to read history at Balliol College, Oxford.¹⁰⁰ There he encountered both G.H.L. le May who was to offer him a job at Wits when he went down from Oxford and Hugh Stretton who would be his Head of Department at the University of Adelaide where he taught from 1957 until the time of his retirement twenty-three years later.¹⁰¹ During his Wits years Phillips wrote articles of general academic interest for *The Forum* and various South African newspapers.¹⁰² Though of liberal bent he seems, so far as one can tell, to have

⁹⁵ *The Advertiser* (Adelaide), 22 April 1958.

⁹⁶ The present writer interviewed him at his home outside Adelaide in November 1992.

⁹⁷ *The News* (Adelaide), 20 June 1959.

⁹⁸ He does not identify the camps but internal evidence - his reference to Irma Grese (see K.G. Feig, *Hitler's Death Camps: The sanity of madness* (New York/London, 1979), pp. 137, 188, 381-82) - suggests they were Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen in 1944-45.

⁹⁹ W.A.P. Phillips, *The Tragedy of Nazi Germany* (London, 1969), p. 3. In the Preface he acknowledged having been encouraged to write the book *ia.* by the historian Blainey and his wife. Blainey acknowledged Phillips's observations in respect of the typescript of his article 'Lost Causes of the Jameson Raid', *The Economic History Review*, second series, Vol. XVIII, 1965, p. 366, fn. 2. In the mid to late 1960s Phillips supervised Janet Robertson's doctoral thesis which was published under the title *Liberalism in South Africa 1948-1963* (Oxford, 1971). J.P. Brits has described this as a particularly useful work. Brits, *Op die vooraand van apartheid*, p. x. Phillips and Robertson subsequently married.

¹⁰⁰ *The West Australian* (Perth), 20 December 1950; *The News* (Adelaide), 20 June 1959; and information obtained from Dr Hugh Stretton of Adelaide.

¹⁰¹ Information supplied by Dr Hugh Stretton.

¹⁰² Information supplied by W.A.P. Phillips. For his output in *The Forum* see Vol. 4, No. 12, March 1956, pp. 38-40; Vol. 5, No. 3, June 1956, pp. 30-33; No. 5, August 1956, pp. 36-39; No. 6, Sep-

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refrained from assuming a confrontational posture towards the government. He was less inhibited back in Australia. He was also a leading light in the 1959 campaign to nobble ex-Senator Tommy Boydell, then engaged on his third and last visit to Australia.

One of the ironies about Boydell was that his origins, background and political affiliations were quite similar to those of working class English migrants to Australia - William Morris Hughes and Andrew Fisher are examples - who became leaders of the Australian labour movement. He could as well have emigrated to Australia and become a labour luminary there instead of being viewed in his old age by Australian and South African liberals as a reactionary racist (as were, in fact, the surviving founder members of the Australian labour movement). A South Australian newspaper called him 'the Billy Hughes of South Africa'.¹⁰³ (He had met Hughes when he visited Australia in 1911.)

In retrospect, perhaps the most interesting aspect of the Boydell saga is what should have impelled a man of his age to undertake a series of exhausting overseas speaking tours as a self-appointed propagandist for South Africa (but one carrying Eric Louw's blessing) over a six year period (1953-1959), between his seventy-first and seventy-seventh years. To use an overworked cliché, men years his junior would have found his schedule daunting. If nothing else, his itinerary demonstrated his abundant, even demonic energy. In 1959 a Western Australian journalist saw him as 'A warm, smiling, little man of 5ft. 6in., with grey hair, twinkling eyes and an infectious smile, he's a bounding bundle of super-charged energy'.¹⁰⁴ He visited England and the United States in 1953, the US again in 1955, Australia in 1956, 1957 and 1959, Ghana in 1957, and Sweden, Denmark and England in 1958.¹⁰⁵ In Australia between September

tember 1956, pp. 35-37; No. 7, October 1956, pp. 43-46; No. 8, November 1956, pp. 38-41; No. 9, December 1956, pp. 45-49; No. 10, January 1957, pp. 12-15; No. 11, February 1957, pp. 32-35; No. 12, March 1957, pp. 43-46; Vol. 6, No. 1, April 1957, pp. 30-33; No. 2, May 1957, pp. 7-10; No. 3, June 1957, pp. 15-18; No. 5, August 1957, pp. 20-24; No. 6, September 1957, pp. 30-32; No. 7, October 1957, pp. 26-30; No. 8, November 1957, pp. 20-22; No. 9, December 1957, pp. 31-33; No. 10, January 1958, pp. 28-31; No. 11, February 1958, pp. 26-28; No. 12, March 1958, pp. 26-28; Vol. 7, No. 1, April 1958, pp. 17-19; No. 3, June 1958, pp. 17-19; No. 4, July 1958, pp. 26-29; No. 5, August 1958, pp. 28-30; No. 6, September 1958, pp. 26-28; No. 7, October 1958, pp. 18-21; No. 8, November 1958, pp. 20-23.

¹⁰³ *The Advertiser* (Adelaide), 1 April 1959.

¹⁰⁴ *Sunday Times* (Perth), 22 March 1959.

¹⁰⁵ *DSAB*, Vol. IV, pp. 53-54.

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and December 1956 he delivered according to one count forty-two lectures¹⁰⁶ and according to another some twenty-seven.¹⁰⁷

His 1957 tour was shorter, basically from 11 November to 10 December. Both his published account and his itinerary agree that he gave eighteen lectures, six in Canberra and twelve in Sydney.¹⁰⁸ The claim he made to his audiences that he paid his own way was misleading. While he may have paid his living expenses, he was usually successful in persuading airlines and other organisations to pay for his travel. There is, however, no evidence that he was subsidised by the South African State Information Office or its successor, the South African Information Service. Also, the High Commission in Canberra was not directly connected with his arrangements although when he visited Canberra it seems to have helped out with typing assistance. When the official residence was nearing completion he made a suggestion to Uys regarding the lettering to be used for the year 1956 which is inscribed on the front gable, indeed that the year be put on the gable.¹⁰⁹

Boydell's 1956 and 1957 visits to Australia were relatively uncontroversial because he confined himself mainly to Rotary clubs. But his 1959 programme, which was co-ordinated by the (Australian) Commonwealth Department of Education, took him into schools in Western Australia, South Australia and New South Wales. That was different and the controversy surrounding his tour mushroomed until the New South Wales Minister of Education, R.J. Heffron, representing an ALP government, found himself unable to resist the political pressure and denied him further access to that state's schools. Boydell thereupon called his tour off. The publicity attendant upon his 1959 visit and its premature end had the unintended effect of providing South Africa's critics in Australia with a dummy run for the Sharpeville shootings the following year and South Africa's departure from the Commonwealth in 1961.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ *The Star* (Johannesburg), 22 December 1956. That would have been roughly the same lecture forty-two times.

¹⁰⁷ AA, A1361/1, 4/15/37, 'The Hon. Thos. Boydell's Lecture Tour in Australia - 1956'.

¹⁰⁸ *The Star* (Johannesburg), 9 December 1957 and AA, A1361/1, 4/15/37, 'The Hon. Thos. Boydell's Lecture Tour - 1957. Second Tour'.

¹⁰⁹ BCB, Vol. 21, 44/1, Boydell/Uys, 21 October 1956; Uys/Boydell, 12 October [sic] 1956.

¹¹⁰ See J.M. Tilby, *Public opinion in Australia on South Africa's racial policies 1959-61*. Unpublished B.A. Honours thesis, University of Adelaide, 1963. I am indebted to Mrs P. Stretton of Adelaide for drawing my attention to this thesis and to Dr Janet Phillips, of Flinders University, Adelaide, for arranging for me to see a copy.

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In 1963 J.M. Tilby, a South Australian honours student, sought vainly to apportion responsibility for Boydell's 1959 tour.¹¹¹ Preparations were already in train for it before Boydell commenced his 1957 tour and were carried further by Boydell himself before he left Australia in December 1957. Archival papers reveal that Robert Menzies played a key role.¹¹² Uys had taken Boydell to see him in 1956.¹¹³ In July 1957 the Vice-Chairman of The Australian Club in Cape Town, S.W. Deane, wrote to him asking if the 'Australian Department of Education' could arrange and pay for internal transport for a lecture tour by Boydell of universities and high schools. Menzies said he would have the matter 'looked into'.

The Secretary of his department, A.S. Brown, referred it to the Director of the Commonwealth Department of Education, W.J. Weeden, who believed initially that 'the Government might save itself embarrassment by not offering a contribution towards the tour'. Later Menzies himself arranged for Boydell to speak to Weeden as a result of which the latter contacted the New South Wales, South Australian and Western Australian Departments of Education promoting the idea of a lecture tour. (Secondary Education was a State rather than a Federal matter.) Weeden described Boydell as 'an elderly man but exceedingly energetic and seems to have an interesting story about South Africa'. Inasmuch as Weeden commenced with a reference to Menzies: 'Some days ago the Prime Minister suggested to me that I may be able to give some assistance to the Honourable Thomas Boydell who wishes to arrange a lecture tour of Australian secondary schools and universities', it was not surprising that their response was positive.¹¹⁴ After Weeden made the introductions, Boydell communicated with the State Education Departments direct.

Eighteen months later, when the ALP's Clyde Cameron enquired in the Commonwealth House of Representatives whether Boydell's lectures 'to South Australian schools in support of South African racial laws' were 'sponsored by the Commonwealth Office of Education'¹¹⁵ Weeden's suggested reply, while admitting that contact had been made with them, denied either that pressure was exerted on State

¹¹¹ Appendix I of Tilby's thesis (pp. 157-58) contains a list of questions she put to the South Australian Education Department and the Commonwealth Office of Education. The latter who, as will be seen below, was greatly involved in the arrangements for the tour, returned an evasive reply.

¹¹² See various items on AA, A1361/1/, 4/15/37 - the Commonwealth Office of Education file held by the Australian Archives at Mitchell, ACT.

¹¹³ *The Canberra Times*, 18 October 1956.

¹¹⁴ AA, A1361/1, 4/15/37, Weeden/Robertson, 2 December 1957.

¹¹⁵ The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia. House of Representatives. Notices of Motion and Orders of the Day. No. 26, Question 22, 7 May 1959, p. 171.

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Education Departments or that topics were suggested on which Boydell might speak.¹¹⁶ Weeden told Tilby in 1963 that Boydell had approached his office for help in 1957, was referred to the States, and that he, Weeden, was not aware of the arrangements made for him. He was therefore 'not in a position to answer any of the questions posed in your letter'. These had included (1) 'From whom did the Department hear of Mr. Boydell, and on whose approval was his tour arranged?' and (4) 'Did the Department know what Boydell intended to speak on?'¹¹⁷

At least *vis-à-vis* Tilby Weeden was economical with the truth for copies of all Boydell's detailed programmes are on the Commonwealth Office of Education file at the Australian Archives. And he assumed responsibility for the 'overall organisation' of Boydell's tour in New South Wales at the request of that State's Education Department. His note of a telephone conversation with H.S. Wyndham, the NSW Director of Education, in September 1958 recorded that the latter was sending him 'a long letter asking us to arrange the itinerary for New South Wales'.¹¹⁸

For Gilchrist in Pretoria Boydell was at first 'a cheerful, quick-witted and practised speaker (although inclined to be garrulous), but we regard his explanations of the working of apartheid in South Africa as both idealistic and over-simplified'.¹¹⁹ He was obviously annoyed when it appeared (which Weeden denied) that, without consultation with himself, Boydell had been invited officially to lecture in Australia. His attitude thereupon hardened: 'Boydell's comments on South Africa ... seem to be highly propagandistic in favour of the National Party, and often lack objectivity and balance'.¹²⁰ He said later that Boydell was

so near to being an official propagandist for the present Union Government that his lectures are undistinguishable from official propaganda ... He paints a broad picture in his talks, and is entertaining and brisk in his delivery, but is much less impressive when pinned down to details by an informed questioner. The main point ... is that the States concerned might as well have hired someone on the payroll of the South African State Information Office.

¹¹⁶ AA, A1361/1, 4/15/37, Weeden/Prime Minister's Department, 8 May 1959.

¹¹⁷ Tilby, *Public opinion in Australia on South Africa's racial policies*, Appendix I, pp. 157-58.

¹¹⁸ AA, A1361/1, 4/15/37, Record of telephone conversation Wyndham/Weeden, 19 September 1958; letter Wyndham/Weeden, 25 September 1958.

¹¹⁹ AA, A1838/1, 201/2/5, Pt. 6, Memo. 651, Gilchrist/DEA, 11 December 1957, forwarding a copy of Boydell's article in *The Star* (Johannesburg), 9 December 1957.

¹²⁰ AA, A1838/2, 201/10/10/1, Pt. 1, Memo. 187, Gilchrist/DEA, 21 March 1958.

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However, it would be unwise 'to express any public criticism of statements by South African official or quasi-official propagandists'. Australia might itself want to appoint an Information Officer in South Africa, or accredit an Australian lecturer, and nothing should be done to 'prejudice the work of our own representatives'.¹²¹

His comments were drawn to Weeden's attention, who not unnaturally asked whether any action should be taken. A certain naivety marked External Affairs's response. No action was required except to mention 'in confidence' to the State Education Departments that Boydell was unlikely to give balanced account, but that they 'should not let it be known that they view Boydell's lecture tour with some reservation'¹²² (if that was indeed the case). Boydell commenced his 1959 tour in Western Australia early in March. On the twentieth of that month the Director of Education there, Dr T.I. Robertson, warned his New South Wales counterpart, H.S. Wyndham, that he had been

embarrassed by protests from the World Council of Churches and from individual ministers on the grounds that Mr. Boydell is making a defence of the apartheid policy in South Africa. He is quite fanatical on this subject and gets worked up about it. I have requested him to tone down his references in schools. The attitude of the clergymen is that he is presenting a case which is not tolerated in Australia ...

On other aspects of South African life he is most informative and very helpful. He is a very fluent speaker and holds his audiences very well indeed.

I thought I should warn you in case you felt you should have a word with him before he embarks on his tour. If you can keep him off racial relations and deal more with trade and industrial development, etc. I think his visit will be well worth while.¹²³

There lay the rub. Boydell's topic was 'South Africa: its peoples and its problems'. He had come to Australia to promote apartheid, not trade and industrial development. When he could not do that, his tour came to an end. Curiously, at the height

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, Memo. 279, 7 May 1958.

¹²² AA, A1361/1, 4/15/37, Cutts/Director, Commonwealth Office of Education, 23 May 1958. T.W. Cutts was Australian Ambassador to South Africa in the early 1970s.

¹²³ AA, A1361, 4/15/37, Robertson/Wyndham, 20 March 1959. Wyndham was a prominent educationist. He held the NSW job from 1952 to 1968. An historian writes that he 'went down in history as the author of a challenging experiment affecting the relationship between secondary and tertiary education. The Wyndham Scheme of 1961, it has been said, made concessions to elitist pretensions while providing a means of comprehensive secondary education along American lines'. Alexander, *From Curtin to Menzies*, p. 210.

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of the furore *The Sydney Morning Herald* editorialised on the subject: 'The ties this country has with South Africa are as firm as ever they were. Both countries have real affinities and a deep sense of friendship', a statement qualified in the next sentence: 'But these have not prevented the growth here since the war of the strongest feelings of aversion to the racialist policies of the Governments of Dr Malan, Mr Strijdom, and Dr Verwoerd'.¹²⁴

In 1963, perhaps inspired by W.A.P. Phillips - at any rate she interviewed him at length - Tilby devoted part of her BA (Hons) Thesis (what South African history departments would call a Long Essay) to the Boydell affair, outlining Phillips's role in it.¹²⁵ Eric Louw had blamed Phillips for Boydell's troubles claiming, wrongly, that he had taught history at the University of Natal.¹²⁶ But three decades later the feeling in Adelaide was that Boydell would have been in trouble even without Phillips. That is undoubtedly so, given the hostile clerical attitude to him in Western Australia. At the end of the day the significance of the Boydell affair was greater in the context of South African domestic politics than any positive impact it had on South African-Australian relations. In fact, by ending in controversy its impact was ultimately negative, highlighting the fact that South Africa was a controversial country. That was not infrequently the outcome of overseas information campaigns.

Boydell, a practised writer of letters to Australian newspapers, was probably Rhoodie's role model. His 1957 tour was under way when Rhoodie arrived in Australia. An aspect of Rhoodie's letters to editors which, at this remove, can only be the subject of speculation was that all but two of those that could be traced were published in 1958, within a year of his arrival in Australia.¹²⁷ Whether Hamilton succeeded in

¹²⁴ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 May 1959. (Editorial: 'School Lectures On Apartheid.')

¹²⁵ Tilby, *Public opinion in Australia on South Africa's racial policies*, pp. 25-42.

¹²⁶ *Sen Deb.*, 1959, Cols. 4670-85; *The News* (Adelaide), 19 June 1959.

¹²⁷ **Rhoodie's articles and letters:**

The Daily Telegraph (Sydney) 6 February 1958 (Article);

The Sydney Morning Herald, 28 March 1958 (Letter); 10 April 1958 (Letter); 16 April 1958 (Article); 25 April 1958 (Letter); 9 May 1958 (Letter);

The Canberra Times, 16 April 1958 (Article); 6 August 1958 (Article);

The Advertiser (Adelaide), 6 May 1958 (Letter); 22 May 1958 (Letter); 21 October 1958 (Letter); 13 November 1958 (Letter); 19 May 1959 (Letter);

The West Australian (Perth), 19 June 1959 (Letter);

The Advertiser (Adelaide), 21 March 1960 (Letter).

His critics:

The Daily Telegraph (Sydney) 20 February 1958 (Letter: R.T. Gooding);

The Sydney Morning Herald, 31 March 1958 (Letters: M.M. Braham; G. Hartenstein); 2 April 1958 (Letter: Senator D. Grant); 12 April 1958 (Letter: R. Gooding); 15 April 1958 (Letter: L.C. Rodd); 16

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putting a stop to the letters or for whatever reason, only two seem to have been published after 1958. One, in 1959, responded to a Phillips letter about the lack of African support for apartheid and that when the Boydell affair was gathering momentum, Boydell had earlier replied to the same letter.¹²⁸ The other, Rhoodie's last, took issue with an editorial in *The Advertiser* (Adelaide) of 11 March 1960.

The newspaper published his letter on the day of Sharpeville, 21 March. In it Rhoodie expressed the conventional wisdom of the time: 'white South Africans fear that any policy which would subject them to a vast black majority would mean inevitably their extinction as a nation, and endanger their economic or even physical survival as individuals'. (A year later W.C. Naude, then Ambassador to the United States, was reported in the Australian press as having articulated the rather more sophisticated view that the government's policy 'was to remove prejudice and to create harmony in the nation').¹²⁹

The fire-storm set off by Sharpeville would not have been dampened by letters to the editor. There are, in fact, times when even the most dynamic public relations officer must fold his tents and steal silently away and that was one of them. Rhoodie did so literally three months later when he was transferred to Washington.

As was to be expected in the climate of the times Rhoodie's message was, as indeed was Hamilton's if more subtly expressed, white supremacist in content. For example,

If South Africa were to yield to the opinion of others and accept a status of integration or partnership with the non-whites (who outnumber the whites by four to one), the white South African nation, after 300 years of strenuous effort for the establishment of a Western civilisation at the foot of the African continent, would be committing national suicide. ...

April 1958 (Letter: Senator D. Grant); 12 April 1958 (Letter: R. Gooding); 16 April 1958 (Letter: Senator D. Grant); 18 April 1958 (Letter: M.M. Braham); 28 April 1958 (Letter: J. and V. Fallding); 8 May 1958 (Letter: M.M. Braham); 13 May 1958 (Letter: L. Langford-Smith); *The Advertiser* (Adelaide), 22 April 1958 (Article: W.A.P. Phillips); 12 May 1958 (Letter: Phillips); 22 May 1958 (Letter: Phillips); 5 June 1958 (Letter: Phillips); 23 October 1958 (Letter: Phillips); 26 November 1958 (Letter: Phillips); 9 May 1959 (Letter: Phillips).

¹²⁸ See *The Advertiser* (Adelaide), 9 May 1959 (Letter: Phillips); 18 May (Letter: Boydell); 19 May (Letter: Rhoodie).

¹²⁹ *The Canberra Times*, 11 April 1961. It is interesting that this should have been picked up in Australia.

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Surely it is naive to expect a highly civilised white nation to accept a policy of full partnership with the overwhelming number of underdeveloped Bantu, thereby handing over the reins of government to another nation?¹³⁰

Hamilton sought to explain South African complexities by projecting that country's ratio of white to non-white on to Australia, saying at the commencement of a visit to Western Australia in April 1958: 'It is the same as if there were 40,000,000 aborigines here and 10,000,000 whites'. Therefore, 'Australia should be one of the few countries in the world capable of understanding the position in South Africa',¹³¹ an idea successive South African heads of mission would seek to convey to Australians until the 1990s.

Before Rhodie's death this writer asked him and Hamilton for their views of each other during their time together in Canberra. Rhodie said:¹³²

I'm sure Tony Hamilton was happy to see me go. Apart from gardening he did excel at entertaining other diplomats - but he did become good friends with Menzies. But I think it was more important that Menzies opened a S.A. Information exhibit in Parliament House¹³³ than plant a tree in Tony Hamilton's garden! As for his PRO work - he avoided the media and TV like the plague.

Hamilton wrote:¹³⁴

As for Rhodie, he was a pain in the neck from his arrival. He was attractive and talented, and dangerously ambitious. I knew he was trying to undermine me with Verwoerd; but V later complimented me on my achievement in Australia and said that it was my urgent advice from [Stockholm] that had persuaded him to grant Luthuli his passport to go to Oslo for the Nobel Prize.¹³⁵

In retrospect, it is legitimate to ask why Hamilton as Rhodie's head of mission did not write the letters or at least have them go out over his name. After all, in the eyes of the Australian authorities, he was responsible for the activities of his subordinates. Perhaps he wanted to maintain a posture of deniability; perhaps heads of mission

¹³⁰ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 April 1958.

¹³¹ *The West Australian* (Perth), 9 September 1958.

¹³² Dr E.M. Rhodie, undated letter, 1993. He may subsequently have wanted to express himself more elegantly but death intervened.

¹³³ See *The real information scandal*, p. 571.

¹³⁴ A.M. Hamilton, letter, 2 October 1993.

¹³⁵ See Davis's record of his conversation with Hamilton in November 1961. AA, A9421/1, 221/1, Record of conversation Davis/Hamilton, 16 November 1961.

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did not do that sort of thing at the time. (Most of them had no need to.) Perhaps, as Rhodie implied, he did not want to be associated in the public mind with the white supremacist policies of the National Party government. But that did not prevent him from expressing the white supremacist point of view in his public statements and more subtly than Rhodie could.

As his report on the Malayan Independence celebrations shows, Hamilton was a captive of the prejudices of his day:

The test will come if, in Malay hands, the administrative machine runs down and the economy of the country begins to suffer. The Malays are a pleasant and easy-going people, and none of their leaders gives the impression of any great drive or determination. The deplorable condition of the airport at Djarkarta, observed even at a superficial glance, was striking indication of what can happen when the firm hand of the European administrator is withdrawn. It would be an optimistic observer who could be sure that the Malays have an inherent quality which would preserve them from the Indonesian fate ...¹³⁶

Quite likely what he objected to was not so much the policies as the fact that they were the product of a rampant Afrikaner Nationalism. He was a good, even an excellent public speaker. If he did not make use of the media to the extent Rhodie considered appropriate three decades later, that would have been because of factors other than lack of confidence in his ability to do so, including the fact that was not the practice of the day.

It is also legitimate to speculate how Rhodie would have fared with Uys whom he missed by some four months. Hamilton called Rhodie 'a pain in the neck'. Uys may not have found him so, though Rhodie would not have enjoyed the same degree of latitude under Uys as he did under Hamilton. For one thing, while he would have agreed wholeheartedly with their content, the idea of himself or a member of his staff writing letters to newspapers would probably have offended Uys's sense of propriety. Sole tells us he was 'a stickler for acting strictly according to the book'¹³⁷ and writing letters to newspapers was hardly South African diplomatic orthodoxy at that time. Politicians like Louw did that and were criticised for it.

¹³⁶ BTS, 91/8/1, Vol. 10, Circular minute A46 of 1957, 18 October 1957, p. 6.

¹³⁷ Sole, *Reminiscences*, p. 232.

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Less than a week before Uys departed for West Germany he wrote in the course of a lengthy reply to an enquiry from the State Information Office about the best location for its Information Officer in Australia:

The best policy that this Mission can therefore follow, and indeed follows, is to say or do nothing in public that would embarrass the Australian Government and instead of reacting on every occasion that presents itself, rather to supply positive information especially where it touches on co-operation between the Union and Australia.¹³⁸

That could have been the key to Uys's attitude. Rhodie would have welcomed Uys's suggestion in the same letter that the Information Attaché accompany the new High Commissioner on his introductory official visits to the Australian States,¹³⁹ but it would have horrified Hamilton (and others) and it did not come to pass. As for location, while Rhodie was telling the Australians he was thinking of establishing himself in Sydney,¹⁴⁰ Uys came down firmly in favour of Canberra.

The perception of lackadaisical heads of mission unwilling to promote or defend apartheid entered white South African political mythology during Rhodie's term as Secretary for Information. It persisted for years and was not without foundation. But the matter was never as clear cut and unambiguous as it may have seemed. What Embassies do abroad is dependent upon both formal instruments and unwritten convention. Receiving countries set the parameters of what they consider acceptable behaviour. In 1964 the then Deputy Leader of the Opposition and future Prime Minister of Australia, E.G. Whitlam, asserted in the Australian House of Representatives that the South African Embassy was 'sending to Australian newspapers letters in defence of the policies of apartheid over names and addresses which do not appear in the telephone directories or on the electoral rolls'.¹⁴¹ He pointed out that

¹³⁸ BTS, 4/2/32/2, Vol. 1, Uys/Director, State Information Office, 4 June 1957. p. 7, para. 24. (Original in Afrikaans).

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 8, para. 30.

¹⁴⁰ AA, A1838, 224/3, Gilchrist/DEA, 6 June 1957.

¹⁴¹ The charge may have been exaggerated at the time but the Rhodie Department of Information was capable of that and worse. Reuter's report on the incident was picked up by SAPA and inspired the Department of Foreign Affairs to approach the Embassy for an immediate report of the 'true position'. The Embassy denied the allegation. BCB, Vol. 2, 6/3, (Vol. II), Cypher OTP telegrams Nos. 17 and 14, DFA/Embassy, Canberra, 22 October and Embassy, Canberra/Foreign Affairs, 26 October 1964. The Embassy was later cleared by the Commonwealth Attorney-General, the same Billy Mackie Snedden who had been rejected by External Affairs in the early 1950s. Van Niekerk/SFA, 20 November 1964.

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On some occasions in the past the Government has acted to restrain foreign missions from sending through the mails or to newspapers, propaganda which would arouse dissensions among Australians or ill will towards third countries.¹⁴²

The Australian government's attitude towards particular incidents reflected its political complexion. The Rhodie approach may have encountered resistance under an ALP government. In 1971 even a Liberal Party External Affairs Minister advised the newly-arrived South African Ambassador (J.B. Mills) 'to adopt a quiet posture'.¹⁴³ While Uys's desire not to embarrass the Australian government was well-founded, in the last resort that government itself would have taken steps against an offending mission. Not only in Australia, however, the prospect of that may have counted for less with some South African heads of mission than that they were victims of a latterday manifestation of Sir Francis Bertie's attitude and of their own inability, by virtue of a lack of the local language or self-confidence, to take to the airwaves. At bottom, however, is the degree of media culture in a given country. Few countries compare in that regard with the United States or Australia.

Sir Nicholas Henderson who represented the British government in France and the United States among other places remarks on the difference in approach needed in those countries. In the United States Ambassadors are required 'to make frequent speeches and press and TV appearances'. Failure to promote his country's case publicly would be regarded 'as a sign of lack of conviction' in it. But in Paris speeches of that nature

are not expected of him. Indeed it would be thought odd and might prove counter-productive with the French government for a foreign diplomat in Paris to appear to be advancing his country's cause in public or to be thought to be pressurising Congress or public opinion. An Ambassador in France is called upon from time to time to make speeches; but he is not expected to use them as a means of exerting influence on the French authorities.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² BCB, Vol. 2, 6/3, (Vol. II), Cypher OTP telegram, Embassy, Canberra/Foreign Affairs, 22 October 1964. See, for example, *CPD*, Vol. 201, 17 February 1949, p. 439. In reference to the activities of the Irish legation, Gullett said there were 'legations in Australia which are publishing and circulating propaganda, some of which is of the most controversial nature, and liable to cause a certain degree of unnecessary discord here'. He asked Evatt whether such action was correct. *The Canberra Times* of 19 February 1949 carries an interesting editorial on the subject under the headline 'Diplomatic Misbehaviour'.

¹⁴³ AA, A1838, 201/10/7, Pt. 1. Record of conversation Moodie/Mills, 22 July 1971.

¹⁴⁴ Henderson, *Mandarin*, pp. 287-88.

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In South Africa's case, the point of following a high profile approach was twofold. There was, firstly, the expectation that it would succeed in the long term and, secondly, government supporters were expecting action and had to be given it. The members of the 1961 Trade Mission to Australia and New Zealand were not unique among travelling South Africans to take note of the hostile press the government was receiving abroad and to draw their impressions to the attention of the authorities on their return to South Africa:

we were struck by the bad press South Africa was receiving in these countries, with particular reference to the separate development policies being followed by the South African Government. Since the advent of the Republic and its departure from the Commonwealth, the press would appear to have thrown any restraint, that there might have been previously, to the wind and has stepped up the tempo of its attacks.

A feature of press criticism - in some case amounting almost to vilification - was the appearance in newspapers of anti-South African articles emanating from correspondents in South Africa.¹⁴⁵

Nor was the Trade Mission's suggested palliative unique, the employment of outside public relations 'experts'.

There was a belief in governing circles that the government's problem in its international relations was caused not by the nature of its domestic policies but by wrong perceptions of them. That persisted from the 1950s practically to the time of the white handover of power in the 1990s. The solution was to project the right perceptions whereupon the problem would disappear. The real problem, therefore, was one of presentation not of content. All would be well once the correct formula was found. It was an approach fuelled from time to time by prominent visitors from abroad such as the Chairman of Australia's Macquarie Broadcasting Service who told Woodward in 1962 that 'South Africa undoubtedly has a "quality product" to sell. It is a pity it is so badly merchandised and advertised outside of the country'.¹⁴⁶ That was a manifestation of J.C.G. Kevin's feeling referred to later (see Chapter Seven) that the government had 'no gift of communication and seem[ed] incapable of putting its case to the world in its least unfavourable light'.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ BTS, 1/25/3, Vol. 1, Andrews/Director, State Information Service, 19 June 1961.

¹⁴⁶ BCB, Vol. 5, 6/10 (S), Ogilvy/Woodward, 11 October 1962.

¹⁴⁷ AA, A9421/1, 201/1, Pt. 1, High Commission paper 'Prospects for South Africa', p. 13, para. 53.

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In the end, however, Information was a domestic political sacred cow and that department's influence lay more in the realm of domestic politics than in anything it could achieve by way of changing perceptions abroad. Indeed, domestic political considerations quite likely dictated the bureaucratisation of an efficient and streamlined operation such as the State Information Office by turning it into a department of state in the early 1960s with its own Minister and Secretary. Piet Meiring who headed the operation until then was clearly more effective professionally than any of the three secretaries of department who succeeded him - W.C. du Plessis, B.G. Fourie and F.G. Barrie - until Eschel Rhoodie's appointment in 1972 transformed the situation. If, however, Verwoerd's intention was to merely to enhance the status of the information effort, whatever may have been achieved in that area was at the expense of professional efficiency.

At the height of the rivalry between the Departments of Information and Foreign Affairs in the mid-1970s speculation was rife that the Minister of Information, Dr C.P. Mulder, would add Foreign Affairs to his other portfolios with Rhoodie taking over from B.G. Fourie as Secretary.¹⁴⁸ That way, preferred Information officials would enjoy a fast-track to Ambassadorial status. As it happened some officers, though perhaps not those Rhoodie would have wished to see advanced, became Ambassadors through force of circumstances. For an unexpected by-product of the so-called Information Scandal of the 1970s, which brought about the collapse of the Department of Information and its merger with the Department of Foreign Affairs,¹⁴⁹ not to mention the fall of Mulder, Rhoodie and Vorster, was the career opportunities it opened up for middle-ranking Information officials.

The face of the Department of Foreign Affairs changed. Not only did it become the Department of Foreign Affairs and Information, a title it held for some years, but Information officers were thereafter completely interchangeable with their Foreign Affairs colleagues. Some were eventually appointed Ambassadors abroad, positions to which they could normally not have aspired. At time of writing (1995), Ambassadorial posts occupied by one-time Information officials from the mid to late 1980s to the mid-1990s have included Athens, Bangkok, Brasilia, Brussels, Helsinki, Lisbon, Madrid,

¹⁴⁸ See, eg., J.H.P. Serfontein, 'US trip may help SA's diplomacy'; 'U.S. visit was a triumph for Mulder'; 'Foreign policy row: Mulder and Muller face showdown'; and 'Growing row over foreign policy', *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg), 3, 10 & 24 February 1974.

¹⁴⁹ After an intermediate period when Information was renamed the Bureau of National and International Communication.

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Manama, Mbabane, Maseru, Montevideo, Prague, Santiago, Sofia, Tel Aviv, Vienna and Warsaw and Chicago, Houston and Los Angeles among Consulates-General. In that way were career opportunities for Information officers enhanced and those for foreign service officers reduced.

At least one British Information officer, Robert Marett, became an Ambassador through what he termed 'the back door'. He saw himself as 'living proof that it is possible for a back-door entrant to survive tolerably well in the Diplomatic Service; and that the stigma of having been an Information Officer for most of one's career is not a fatal bar to higher office in the Service'.¹⁵⁰ The British experience differed from the South African one because the various mergers which produced today's Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Diplomatic Service were career-enhancing rather than career-limiting for Foreign Office officials. The latter were the chief beneficiaries of the mergers because the former Foreign Office establishment by and large controlled the new Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Thus the former's Permanent Under-Secretary took charge of the new department while his counterpart at the former Commonwealth Relations Office became High Commissioner to Australia.

It was not a case of there being fewer jobs than people. Indeed, the balance tilted the other way. There were as many overseas posts to fill but fewer people to fill them because many former Commonwealth Relations Office officials opted to move to other Whitehall departments. And officials competing for Foreign and Commonwealth and Diplomatic Service posts from outside the old diplomatic system were few in number. Some had been Home Civil Servants in the old Colonial Office; others had been members of the old Overseas Colonial Service (serving the colonial governments in the colonial territories) and were distinct from the British Home Civil Service.¹⁵¹

It is a fallacy to attribute to individual representatives or even to foreign services as a whole the power to improve relations between countries. It was, however, one which contributed to the rivalry between the Departments of Information and Foreign Affairs in the 1970s up to the time of the former's absorption by the latter.¹⁵² Apart from personal animosities, the rivalry had to do with different perceptions of what South African representatives should be doing abroad. Although Rhodie as Secretary for Information and Mulder, his Minister, were brought low, that did not

¹⁵⁰ R. Marett, *Through the back door* (London, 1968), p. 216.

¹⁵¹ I am indebted to Sir Brian Barder for this information. e-mail message, 29 September 1995.

¹⁵² B.G. Fourie gives his perspective of the feud in *Brandpunte*, pp. 60-68.

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mean the Department of Foreign Affairs won the war. Its 'victory' derived from domestic political circumstances, not from the superiority of its personnel or approach.¹⁵³ Geldenhuys attributes the attitude of Foreign Affairs officials of the day in part to professional jealousy¹⁵⁴ and there is something in that.

Apart from their unwillingness to do so, few if any of contemporary Foreign Affairs senior officials were equipped to use the media to convey the government's message. Not for them the high profile stance of Sir Anthony Parsons at the United Nations and Sir Nicholas Henderson in Washington who put the Thatcher government's case to the American public before and during the 1982 Falklands/Malvinas war.¹⁵⁵ And because they were unable to manipulate the media, many South African officials tended to conceive of the diplomat's role as being to have as little as possible to do with it.¹⁵⁶ That conditioned their attitude, not fear of what Sir Eric Phipps called 'those limelight effects that momentarily flatter, but ultimately consume, the reputation of a public servant'.¹⁵⁷

More recently Sir Robin Renwick, British Ambassador to South Africa at the time of Nelson Mandela's release from prison in February 1990, manipulated the media so well it might have been thought it was the United Kingdom not Canada or Australia who was leading the Commonwealth offensive against the Botha government. That is ironic because until complete normalisation of relations with South Africa after the 27 April 1994 general election, the United Kingdom, especially under Margaret Thatcher, was odd country out on the South African issue in Commonwealth circles. Obviously, therefore, Renwick's term was highly successful from his and his government's point of view.¹⁵⁸ His services were recognised by his appointment to Washington DC, quite likely the premier ambassadorial post in the gift of the British government.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵³ The personnel of the two departments were quite similar in calibre.

¹⁵⁴ Geldenhuys, *The Diplomacy of Isolation*, p. 111.

¹⁵⁵ Sir Nicholas Henderson was another who established a close relationship with the head of the government to which he was accredited, in this case President Reagan. See Henderson's diaries and *The Weekly Telegraph, Plus*, Issue 150, 1994, pp. I, VIII-IX. He would have obtained a good grounding in media work during his time as press attaché to the British mission in Vienna in the early 1950s. A.J.P. Taylor, *A Personal History* (London, 1983), p. 200.

¹⁵⁶ Successful diplomatic or political manipulation of the media requires active solicitation of interviews, not sitting back waiting for approaches. If on a lesser scale, it is much the same as a book promotion tour.

¹⁵⁷ *The Times* (London), 31 May 1941. (Letter: 'Hereditary Diplomats'.)

¹⁵⁸ *The Star* (Johannesburg), 20 June 1995. ('Business Report', p. 1 ('Ex-ambassador joins merchant bank').)

¹⁵⁹ See the *Mail & Guardian* (Johannesburg), Vol. 11, No. 36, September 1-7, 1995, for a perspective on his activities in Washington. (Martin Walker, 'Robin Renwick - ambassador extraordinaire').

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His effective use of the media puts Renwick among the great Ambassadors of his time. The same is true of his senior colleagues Parsons and Henderson in their day and Gladwyn Jebb at the United Nations in the 1950s. In times of crisis an ability to manipulate the media is now as much a *sine qua non* of diplomacy as it is of politics and government.

As long ago as 1941 *The Round Table* referred to an Ambassador as a public figure, contrasting Sir Ronald Lindsay, 'a successful ambassador of the older type', with his successor in Washington, Lord Lothian, who 'embodied the idea of speaking to the whole nation on behalf of Great Britain'. Lindsay (who was not liked in the United States - see Chapter One)

as far as possible avoided public speaking. He had had little direct dealing with the press. His mission, he considered, was from Government to Government. It was accordingly his duty to establish close and confidential relations with the political leaders of the country; and he undoubtedly performed this duty very well.

Lothian, on the other hand (the former Philip Kerr, once a member of Milner's 'Kindergarten' in South Africa and himself the first editor of *The Round Table* - 1910-16)

without neglect of or detriment to his relations with the official hierarchy, made himself a public figure well-known by reputation over the whole of the United States, and personally acquainted with an exceptionally large number of politicians and journalists. When he died, he was popularly acclaimed as a great ambassador. It is probable that history will endorse the contemporary verdict, and Lord Lothian may be regarded as a pattern for future ambassadors not only in Washington but in other capitals.¹⁶⁰

The Round Table qualified its observations about Lindsay and Lothian with a reference to 'horses for courses' - 'what we may call the new school of ambassador will not be suitable for every post'. It should not, therefore,

be taken for granted that there will be no further need for the older type of diplomatist, who believes that the more inconspicuously he does his work the more he is likely to achieve results, and that excursions into anything like an address to the nation may be

¹⁶⁰ *The Round Table*, No. 125, December 1941, p. 49. The fact that he died in office would have contributed to the contemporary verdict. Watt says Lothian settled in well in Washington 'despite his earlier reputation as one who ... favoured appeasement of nazi Germany'. A Christian Scientist, Lothian refused medical attention during his last illness. Watt, *Australian Diplomat*, p. 37.

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unwelcome to the Government with whom he is dealing and detrimental to his own purposes.¹⁶¹

Among South Africans, Eric Louw and R.F. Botha can be placed among diplomatists of the new school; Hilgard Muller and most of the *ancien régime's* heads of mission pertained to the old.¹⁶² The latter were unlikely to have taken a conscious decision that the best results would be achieved by 'quiet diplomacy'. More likely, as suggested, their personalities combined with a perceived inability to manipulate the media determined their approach. That was too bad because the government's international situation in the decades leading up to the 1990s was such that it might have gained kudos from its western interlocutors if more of its representatives *had* adopted a high profile, go-for-broke approach.

That was what Rhoodie had in mind and he quoted the late Senator Edmund Muskie to the effect that 'if South African Ambassadors in the US acted like successive Israeli Ambassadors did, their [country's] voice would also be much better heard in high council'. Muskie said he 'had never even seen' the then South African Ambassador. Rhoodie accordingly applauded the R.F. Botha approach:

To his credit Pik Botha immediately aimed for the top of the totem pole in the USA. He was *not* going to maintain a low profile. He was *not* going to be a State Department yes-man. He *was* going to rock the boat, and rock it he did to such an extent in one year he made more public appearances, gave more speeches and appeared more on TV than [his predecessor] did in five years. For the first time the American administration took note of what South Africa's Ambassador said. For the first time millions of Americans realised South Africa actually had an Ambassador in Washington and that he had some points worth considering.¹⁶³

Lothian and the South Africans had specific situations to address and they would have been helped by media interest in what they had to say. An on-going problem (if it can be called that) for Australian representatives is the relatively uncon-

¹⁶¹ *The Round Table*, No. 125, December 1941, p. 50.

¹⁶² P.H. Philip, Consul in New Zealand in the late 1960s, early 1970s was 'new' rather than 'old' as was H.L.T. Taswell, Ambassador to the United States 1966-71. In respect of Philip, father of the publisher David Philip, see *The Argus* (Cape Town), 15 September 1972.

¹⁶³ Rhoodie, *The real information scandal*, p. 48. With R.F. Botha, Rhoodie was among the most creative South African Public Servants of his generation. Botha was a year older and more cautious. Yet Talleyrand's famous admonition *N'ayez pas de zèle* (Not too much zeal) is not inappropriate when one thinks of them as junior officials. That may have been what Uys had in mind when he tried to rein Botha in. (See Chapter Four.)

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troversial nature of their country. Not altogether tongue-in-the-cheek did a Canadian historian write of Australian history:

The children of Israel grumbled when they were required to make bricks without straw. The historians of Australia confront a task of similar difficulty. Australia's past is in large part devoid of those events which infuse cohesiveness and drama into other national histories.¹⁶⁴

What better evidence than that foreign universities should have to 'be *paid* to offer Australian courses'?¹⁶⁵ (Emphasis in original.) In drawing attention to that, the Scottish-born Donald Denoon, an immigrant to Australia with African experience, found it 'puzzling':

the experience of 16 million [ie. in 1986] relatively happy Australians should be as riveting as (say) that of 16 million relatively unhappy Tanzanians. Tanzanians, however, fit securely within the conceptual framework of the 'third world', and therefore do not need to pay people to study them.¹⁶⁶

The reverse could have applied to South Africa. It is not stretching credibility to suggest that previous South African governments would have welcomed an opportunity to pay foreigners *not* to study South Africa if the outcome of their work was going to be politically negative, as it invariably was.

The Australian federal government injects vast sums into the Institute of Sport in Canberra in the belief that the prowess of the young sportsmen and women it trains focuses favourable attention on the country. From the time of its creation by the Fraser Liberal Party/National Party government in 1981, the institute has received some \$A500 million of federal money.¹⁶⁷ A 1995 news item held that the government would

¹⁶⁴ K.A. MacKirdy, 'Australia', R.W. Winks, ed., *The Historiography of the British Empire-Commonwealth: Trends, Interpretations, and Resources* (Durham, N.C., 1966), p. 137.

¹⁶⁵ D. Denoon, 'The isolation of Australian history', *Historical Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 87, October 1986, p. 254. In 1976 the Australian government endowed a Chair in Australian Studies at Harvard University by means of a one-time grant of \$1 million. And from 1982 to July 1988 the government funded the Australian Studies Centre at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London, by an annual grant of \$160 000. I am indebted to Dr Joan Rydon for this information.

¹⁶⁶ 'The isolation of Australian history', *Historical Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 87, October 1986, p. 254. Born in Scotland in 1940, Denoon immigrated with his parents to South Africa in 1948. He received his secondary schooling at Michaelhouse thereafter reading for a BA (Hons) degree at the University of Natal, graduating in 1961. After taking his PhD degree at Cambridge University four years later, he taught for six years at Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda (1966-72). Denoon CV.

¹⁶⁷ *The Economist*, Vol. 333, No. 7894, 17 December 1994, p. 87.

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spend \$A350 million to secure even more medals than before at the 1996 and 2000 Olympic Games.¹⁶⁸ There is also an important domestic political dimension to that: Australian voters are perceived to be influenced in favour of the governing party by Australian successes in international arenas. It is, however, a perception which runs counter to Australian anti-elitist traditions because the Institute caters only to the sporting elite (*ie.* in terms of ability.)

The task of Australian representatives abroad is to raise the level of international consciousness about their country, not an easy one in the absence of issues that would automatically draw attention to it. As Minister in Washington in 1940, Casey considered it part of his task to make Australia 'as widely and as favourably known as possible' and 'as quickly' as he could. He mentioned that to Cordell Hull, the Secretary of State, asking whether it 'was legitimate and right'. Hull said it was 'completely right' and recommended he contact a public relations counsel, Earl Newsom, in New York. Newsom advised him 'most effectively and sympathetically', getting [him] 'coast-to-coast broadcast time on a hundred radio stations and much else'.¹⁶⁹

Casey's public relations campaign in the United States is considered to have succeeded handsomely.¹⁷⁰ Yet, at least in respect of the public relations counsel, he encountered resistance in his own legation. Watt, for one, though younger than Casey a diplomat of the old school, disapproved of his approach. He claimed thirty years later that Casey

was inclined to take more seriously than his staff the recommendation of one alleged expert who advised the insertion in American Newspapers of paid advertisements proclaiming the need for closer U.S.-Australia relations. The State Department was particularly sensitive to any such appeals to American public opinion over the heads of the American Administration, and made it clear that the latter would not be amused if such a publicity campaign were adopted by the Australian Legation.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ *International Herald Tribune*, 22 February 1995.

¹⁶⁹ R.G. Casey, *Personal Experience 1939-1946* (London, 1962), p. 12. The Australian War Memorial in Canberra has a copy of Newsom's eighty-four-page 'Summary of Findings and Recommendations' which he forwarded to Casey under cover of his letter dated 1 October 1940. AWM 254 [1]. Dr Siracusa of the University of Queensland put me on to this.

¹⁷⁰ C. Bridge, 'R.G. Casey, Australia's First Washington Legation, and the Origins of the Pacific War, 1940-42', *The Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol. 28, No. 2, 1982, p. 182.

¹⁷¹ Watt, *Australian Diplomat*, p. 37. For a retrospective on Watt's 'prickly' personality, see Peter Hastings' piece in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 September 1988, marking Watt's death a week earlier at the age of eighty-seven.

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Even so, it was the Secretary of State himself who suggested that Casey consult a public relations counsel. Against the background of the contemporary assessment of Lord Lothian in relation to Sir Ronald Lindsay as well as Sir Nicholas Henderson's more recent opinion, there can be little doubt Casey was right.

From Alfred Stirling's reporting during his brief term in South Africa (1948-50) one is conscious of the publicity value to Australia of the 1948 Qantas proving flight and of the tours of its tennis team in 1949 and cricket team in 1949-50.¹⁷² Stirling said the tennis team's visit 'created great interest and ... materially helped to keep Australia well in the forefront of the news'. The cricketers 'made numerous friends for Australia and kept our country well in the forefront of public interest'. Forwarding newspaper articles to Canberra in January 1949, Marshall said they illustrated 'the greatly increased interest in Australia which the South African press is taking'.¹⁷³ That had been triggered by Evatt's visit at the beginning of the month. Menzies's visit four years later had the same effect. After Stirling's departure, Marshall wrote of the visit by the Australian soccer team: 'Following so closely on the visits of the Australian Tennis and Cricket Teams the tour kept Australia well in the news of this country'.¹⁷⁴

That was the point for Stirling and Marshall who used the visits and tours as an arm of their diplomacy, riding as it were on the backs of the visitors to consolidate and extend their official contacts. In the same way, Hodgson benefited from the Menzies visit of 1953. He wrote afterwards that it gave him 'an opportunity of making many fresh contacts and acquiring valuable information about current events in South Africa'.¹⁷⁵ Not only Australian diplomats were conscious of sport as an arm of diplomacy. Dwyer, the manager of the cricket team, prefaced his request for Evatt's intercession in respect of the car he wanted to buy in South Africa (see Chapter Four) with:

as I will be asked to speak at many public functions I have been wondering whether there is any particular subject you or your Department would like me to refer to, or to exclude from my remarks. Should that be the case I would like to seek the advice of one of your officers prior to our departure ...¹⁷⁶

¹⁷² AA, A4231/2, South Africa, Ministerial despatches 31/48, 30 November 1948; 8/49, 18 October 1949; 8/50, 3 April 1949; and Departmental Despatch 10/49, 25 May 1949.

¹⁷³ AA, A1838/238, 201/10/1, Pt. 1, Marshall/DEA, 20 January 1949.

¹⁷⁴ AA, A4231/2, South Africa 1950, Departmental Despatch 13/50, 8 August 1950.

¹⁷⁵ AA, A1838/2, 201/10/11/1, Hodgson/Minister for External Affairs, 4 August 1953.

¹⁷⁶ AA, A1838/T204, 201/10/11/3, Dwyer/Evatt, 23 August 1949.

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He said he would be 'on duty for Australia in South Africa' and Evatt's 'intimate association with Australian cricket' would have made him 'aware of the importance of the duties' he would have to perform. Despite his ulterior motive, Dwyer's request for a briefing made sense and could be approved on its merits. The way he formulated it hinted at previous experience. No evidence is to hand of similar contact between the various South African teams and the authorities before the formers' departure for Australia. Uys, though, was aware of their value to the contact side of his work.

The Australians seem to have been more conscious than the South Africans of the value of the public relations gesture. There are several examples, including the following somewhat negative one on the South African side. W.M. Hughes, Australia's First World War Prime Minister, died in 1952 at the age of ninety.¹⁷⁷ He had served for more than fifty years in the Commonwealth House of Representatives following on seven in the New South Wales Assembly. His state funeral drew 100 000 people.¹⁷⁸ Though reported prominently in South African English-language morning newspapers,¹⁷⁹ his death passed unheeded in official circles.

Seeking *ex post facto* approval for his actions, Nel as South Africa's Acting High Commissioner in Canberra, reported personally to Forsyth that Hughes was 'a highly revered man in Australia. Messages of condolence from all over the world including the Commonwealth countries were received'. Because the 'absence of a message from the Union ... was rather conspicuous', Nel said he had written a letter 'expressing regret on the passing on of this great Australian'. He had also ordered a wreath in the government's name and had attended the funeral in Sydney. He hoped that his actions met 'with the approval of the Government and the Department'.¹⁸⁰

The department's Chief Clerk, E.J.L. Scholtz, drafted Forsyth's reply:

I fully endorse the action taken by you on the occasion of the passing of Mr. W.M. Hughes. The many preoccupations at Head Office make it difficult for us to keep abreast of everything which

¹⁷⁷ At some point in his career he subtracted two years from his age, giving the year of his birth as 1864. Thus his obituary (see *ia. The Times* (London), 28 October 1952) gives his date of birth as 25 September 1864. His entry in the *ADB*, Vol. 9, p. 393 supplies the correct year, 1862, as does C.A. Hughes in *Mr Prime Minister: Australian Prime Ministers 1901-1972* (Melbourne, 1976), p. 55.

¹⁷⁸ Hughes, *Australian Prime Ministers*, p. 63.

¹⁷⁹ See *Rand Daily Mail* (Johannesburg), *The Cape Times* and *The Natal Mercury*, of 28 October 1952.

¹⁸⁰ Nel, Vol. 3, 4/16, Nel/Forsyth, 22 November 1952. It is interesting that the correspondence should be on Nel's personal file, not on one of the subject files.

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is happening abroad and it is gratifying to know that our Missions can be relied upon to act with discretion.¹⁸¹

There is more to this than meets the eye. Nel would have solicited *ex post facto* approval to avoid being held personally liable for the expenditure he had incurred. By contrast, the death of Smuts (who was of course perceived to be a world figure as Hughes was not) was marked in Australia by a brief but fitting tribute by Menzies. ('It was never my personal honour to meet Field Marshal Smuts, but it is quite safe to say within the English speaking world he was one of the very great men of this century. He was in the most accurate sense a world figure and had a profound influence on the thinking of free men wherever they live.)¹⁸² Nel erred in expecting his department automatically to have noted Hughes's death. The onus was on him to ensure that head office knew of it and to propose the sending of a message of condolence. But the fact that the department did not itself initiate action is indicative of the insignificant place Australia then occupied in South African official thinking.

Demonstrating his greater experience, Stirling had drawn his department's attention to the inauguration of the Voortrekker Monument in December 1949, suggesting that

a message from the Australian Government paying tribute to the courage and achievement of the great Trek pioneers (either direct to the Department of External Affairs, or through this office to relay to Pretoria not later than 15th December) would be very welcome here.¹⁸³

Canberra left it to him, with felicitous results:

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, P.M. 3/3/167, Forsyth/Nel, 3 December 1951 [sic].

¹⁸² 'Death of Field Marshal Rt. Hon. J.C. Smuts: Statement by Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. R.G. Menzies, K.C., M.P., 12th September, 1950', *Current Notes*, Vol. 21, No. 9, September 1950, p. 655. Menzies commenced his Smuts Memorial Lecture at Cambridge University on 16 May 1960, 'The changing Commonwealth', with: 'Jan Christian Smuts was one of the most remarkable men in modern history. He was a scholar in the finest sense; a soldier of remarkable distinction; a South African statesman who made an imperishable contribution to the history and institutions of his own land; a Commonwealth Statesman whose towering abilities made him a commanding figure, the trusted confidant and adviser of the giant of the age, Winston Churchill; a world leader "the very wind of whose name" - if I may borrow that great phrase spoken by J.M. Barrie about the Scots - "has swept to the ultimate seas".' Office of the High Commissioner for Australia in the United Kingdom, Australian News and Information Bureau, 'The first Smuts Memorial Lecture by the Right Honourable R.G. Menzies, C.H., Q.C., M.P. Prime Minister of Australia' etc.

¹⁸³ AA, A1838/2, 201/10/1, Pt. 1, I. 18308, 12 December 1949.

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Union Government sends cordial thanks for greetings 'message read to vast assembly and this evidence of the interest of the Australian Nation was received with acclamation by all those who heard it'.¹⁸⁴

The Viljoens' departure for Australia by ship on 20 May 1949 had also provided Stirling with an opportunity for a public relations gesture. Besides seeing them off at the docks, he had earlier given a lunch in their honour at the Mount Nelson Hotel attended *inter alia* by the American Ambassador, the Canadian High Commissioner, the President and Honorary Secretary of the Australian Association in Cape Town, External Affairs officials, members of Viljoen's staff and of his own, 'and a large number of Australians who were to be fellow passengers of the High Commissioner in the "Dominion Monarch", including the Australian Tennis Team'.¹⁸⁵ The next day Stirling hosted a lunch for Dr and Mrs Malan on the occasion of their return from the 1949 Commonwealth Prime Ministers' conference. The guests included F.C. Erasmus, the Minister of Defence, Dr A.L. Geyer, Editor-in-Chief of *Nasionale Pers*, the Moderator of the Dutch Reformed Church, Dr. A.J. van der Merwe, Viljoen and Gert Nel, all with wives.¹⁸⁶

As revealed by the points Stirling believed could appropriately be included in Percy Spender's first policy speech,¹⁸⁷ those were times when the development of favourable white South African perceptions of Australia was considered a worthy objective of Australian diplomacy. He thought the speech should refer

to the very friendly relationship and spirit of co-operation existing between Australia and South Africa under the Malan no less than the Smuts Government. This has been shown, on the South African side, not only in the political sphere (e.g. Dr. Malan's early appointment of a High Commissioner to Australia) but also by the generous welcome and assistance extended to representative Australians. ...

Further development of this spirit of co-operation between these two close neighbors in the 'Southern Commonwealth' is essential. While each country has very special political and social problems of its own, they have a great deal in common, geographically, climatically, economically, and as a result many common problems.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, O. 15458, 14 December 1949 and I. 19133, 30 December 1949.

¹⁸⁵ AA, A4231/2, South Africa 1949, Ministerial Despatch No. 6/49, Stirling/Minister of State, 25 May 1949.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ None of them were. *CPD*, Vol. 206, 9 March 1950, pp. 621-40. A print of the speech appears as *Foreign Policy. Ministerial Statement, 9th March, 1950* (The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, No. 19 [Group E.]-F. 3152)). Spender later included the text as an appendix to his *Politics and a Man* (Sydney, 1972), pp. 307-29.

Chapter Five: Information

First, there are similar problems of defence because of our relative isolation and long coastlines, and the preservation of South Africa is vital to the maintenance of our communications with Europe.

Internally, we produce similar agricultural products notably wool, wine and dried and canned fruits; we have similar problems of water conservation and soil erosion; we have to fight similar diseases.¹⁸⁸

In his first interview with an Afrikaans language newspaper he had said that South Africa and Australia should do more to get to know each other especially by means of the intercession of their poets and writers.¹⁸⁹ Within half a decade it would be South African politicians and officials rather than Australians who would draw attention to the points of similarity and the need for co-operation.

Reporting on the cricket team's arrival, Stirling commented happily how its members were 'seizing opportunities to get into contact with individual [white] South Africans'. He heartily commended Dwyer's determination to make the tour 'an outstanding success for Commonwealth friendship'.

In 1954 Hodgson alerted Menzies to Malan's pending retirement recommending that he send him a message.¹⁹⁰ Menzies complied:

Personal to Malan. Your impending retirement moves me to send my greetings and good wishes for a good rest after arduous labours. My wife and I greatly enjoyed our South African visit and have the warmest memories of the kindness of your wife and yourself.¹⁹¹

The objective of standing well with the South African government receded as the 1950s advanced and South Africa's disenfranchised non-Whites, Indians in the vanguard, intensified their politics of protest to the concomitant deterioration of the South African government's position at the United Nations. (See Chapter Eight.) Gilchrist's term probably marked the watershed. Before him Australians courted the good opinion of the South African government and of white South Africans in general. After him what courting was done was done by South Africans of Australians.

¹⁸⁸ AA, A4231/2, South Africa 1950, 1/50, Stirling/Minister of State, 11 January 1950.

¹⁸⁹ P. Beukes, 'Australian learns Afrikaans in a month', attached to AA, A1838/1, 201/10/6/1, Pt. 1, Marshall/DEA, 22 October 1948.

¹⁹⁰ AA, A1838/2, 201/10/1, Pt. 1, I. 12276, 1 November 1954.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, O10529, 3 November 1954.

CHAPTER SIX

BACKDROPS

The first task of every new diplomatic mission is to find suitable office (known as the chancery) and residential accommodation.¹ The second is, having moved in, to administer it. 'Suitable' is the operative word because a diplomat's idea of what is suitable, predicated upon his and his head office's perception of his country's prestige, may not be shared by most of his tax-paying fellow-countrymen, at least not in a democratic country. In the event of the government owning the property the administrative tasks are probably more onerous than in the case of rented accommodation. In the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s when staffs were small, a major part of what a South African mission did, taking up practically all of the time of the most junior diplomatic officer, was to administer itself. (The 'we're here because we're here because we're here' syndrome in foreign service should not be dismissed lightly.)²

Encouraged to build chanceries and residences in the style of their countries, the diplomatic community helped Canberra to its present eminence on the domestic tourism circuit.³ While the new Parliament building may have displaced it from its position thirty years ago as Canberra's main tourist attraction,⁴ Embassy Row is today still a priority for some visitors. In 1992/93 1 301 944 domestic and 254 182 foreign tourists visited Canberra, injecting \$A580 million into the ACT economy. Eight per cent or 123 483 these indicated that they had looked at the Embassies.⁵ The Canberra Rotary Club's principal fund-raising activity is to organise open days at selected Embassies. On payment of a fee, members of the public are given a guided tour of the residence or chancery concerned. But for security reasons during the downswing in official relations, the South African buildings would have been high on the list.⁶ The absence of a defined Embassy Row in South Africa as well as the much larger size of

¹ See, for example, Stuart, *Towards-coming-of-age*, p. 243.

² According to Clark, 'one of the most cutting remarks any diplomat can make about another embassy is: "They spend most of their time administering themselves".' *Corps Diplomatique*, p. 67.

³ In established and important capitals such as Washington, DC the countries concerned need no encouragement from the host government. See *The Economist*, Vol. 336, No. 7929, p. 75. ('Prestige on the Potomac').

⁴ R. Boyd, *The Australian Ugliness* (Revised edition, Melbourne, 1968 (1960)), p. 30.

⁵ Information obtained from the ACT Tourism Commission by Ms S.J. Mackay and Y-T Chung of the South African High Commission, Canberra.

⁶ In 1961 the South African residence was one of five on a tour organised by the Women's Committee for the National Heart Campaign which was estimated to have raised £300. *The Canberra Times*, 24 April ('Embassies seen by 600') and 3 May 1961 (letter: 'Gratefully Theirs.')

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Pretoria and Cape Town, if not working against foreign diplomats, was not especially advantageous to them. The early post-war shortage of accommodation in both cities was a liability. In November 1949, more than three years after the establishment of the High Commission Alfred Stirling, complained to Canberra that 'the general question of accommodation in this country, difficult in itself and complicated by the dual capital system, is very embarrassing to me in my work'.⁷

In September 1946 Knowles's temporary Official Secretary, Fuhrman, had reported that 'the housing and accommodation problems in South Africa are even more acute than in Australia. Rents are abnormally high; the purchase prices of houses, when they are available for sale, are at least 100% higher than those obtaining in Australia, and, generally, the question of accommodation is particularly bad'.⁸ That would have been because of unresolved war-time housing shortages. At the end of 1948 Stirling told Forsyth that the cost of living in Canberra was about twenty per cent lower than in Pretoria.⁹ It did not remain so. In 1954 the Chief Architect of the South African Department of Public Works said that Australian housing costs were almost double those in South Africa.¹⁰ And Scholtz reported after his November 1957 visit that 'what appeared to be a normal suburban house of 5 rooms, and which would fetch between £4500 and £5000 in Pretoria, was up for sale for £A20,000 Australian or £S.A.15000'.¹¹

The accommodation problem was probably the most troublesome Knowles encountered during his short stay in South Africa. It was compounded for him by the peculiar South African system of dual capitals. Well before his departure from Australia, Australian External Affairs asked the South African department to arrange hotel accommodation for him and his party in Cape Town for a few days then in Pretoria.¹² While it was Australian practice to arrange accommodation for new arrivals where they had no mission to do it for them, the request took South African officials by surprise. 'Are we to obtain accommodation?', queried W.D. van Schalkwyk on the file copy of the incoming cable. 'We have never done so before'. Forsyth instructed that

⁷ AA, A4231/2, Departmental Despatch, 15 November 1949.

⁸ AA, A1067/1, M46/21/1, Fuhrman/DEA, 22 September 1946.

⁹ BTS, Viljoen, Vol. 5, Cypher OTP telegram No. 95, Forsyth/Viljoen, 24 December 1948.

¹⁰ *Rand Daily Mail* (Johannesburg), 1 June 1954.

¹¹ BTS, 4/6/36, Vol. 6, Scholtz/Secretary, n.d. p.8.

¹² BTS, 130/10, Vol. 1, Minister of External Affairs, Canberra/Minister of External Affairs, Pretoria, No. 51, 27 June 1946. On the Australian side, copies of this cable, O. 12660, are on AA, A1838/1, 1348/2, Pt. 1 and A1066/1, M45/21/6.

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accommodation be reserved in the Mount Nelson or Queens Hotels in Cape Town and in the Polleys or Union Hotels in Pretoria, the actual arrangements being left to the South African Railways and Harbours Tourist Bureau which bore the cost of the party's initial stay at the Mount Nelson Hotel.¹³

In Pretoria Knowles was booked into the Union Hotel on the north side of Church Street, a few yards down from Leyds Street and within walking distance of the Union Buildings on Meintjies Kop which, at that time, housed the Department of External Affairs (in its West Wing) and much of the Public Service besides. Knowles didn't know it then but the Union Hotel was to serve as his Pretoria office and residence for many months albeit not continuously because the accommodation was given up during the 1947 parliamentary session. The High Commission again worked out of the hotel from 23 June to 25 July 1947 before moving to its permanent accommodation. The hotel remained Knowles's residence until his death in November 1947.

The difficulties Viljoen was to experience paled to insignificance beside Knowles's. Knowles had the rougher time because he encountered the problem early in the post-war period. An important contributory factor in his case was that, unlike the Australians, the South Africans did not take it upon themselves to find accommodation for diplomatic representatives. They were aware of the resentment this caused. Thus Jooste commented to J.H. Hofmeyr, then Acting Prime Minister, about a letter Knowles had written the latter seeking his intervention:¹⁴ 'Whilst we have consistently endeavoured to keep aloof in these matters, I am afraid that our attitude is not appreciated by the foreign representatives who have in the past approached us, as in their countries apparently the authorities invariably requisition accommodation for external representatives where necessary'.¹⁵

Knowles wrote: 'I have, while at Pretoria, been working under difficulties under which, in my opinion, no representative of a member State of the British Commonwealth should expect to work. My staff has had to use a bedroom in the Union Hotel as one of its two office rooms and my Official Secretary has had three

¹³ BTS, 130/10, Vol. 1, Minister of External Affairs, Canberra/Minister of External Affairs, Pretoria, No. 51, 27 June 1946. M.J.S. Knowles, letter, 16 March 1995.

¹⁴ BTS, 130/10, Knowles/Hofmeyr, 27 November 1946. A copy is annexed to AA, A4231/2, Pretoria, 1-91, 1947, Cape Town Despatch No. 42/47, 28 April 1947.

¹⁵ BTS, 130/10, Vol. 1, Jooste/Acting Prime Minister, 28 November 1946.

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persons working in his bedroom. He has, in point of strict fact, had a bed in one of the two offices - that is what it has amounted to!¹⁶

In reply, Hofmeyr warned that because policy was to give 'discharged volunteers ... priority in the allocation of accommodation it would be inappropriate for me to intervene directly and override the administrative machinery which the Government has established with the purpose of ensuring that returned volunteers are accorded the treatment to which we stand committed'.¹⁷ Nonetheless, because the position was especially bad in Cape Town, he instructed the Department of External Affairs to ask the Directorate of Demobilisation to see what it could do. In the result, at least as from 20 January 1947,¹⁸ Knowles opened an office at 206 Dumbarton House, at the corner of Adderley and Church Streets which remained the Australian High Commission's Cape Town address until 30 April 1955.¹⁹ For the period 23 December 1946 to 26 January 1947 he occupied temporary accommodation at the Cape Town High School, Buitenkant Street.²⁰

Almost fifty years later Mervyn Knowles gave his impressions of the atmosphere at Dumbarton House, then under construction:

The builder had been persuaded to complete the suite on the second floor to accommodate the office. It was in absolute isolation with the open shell of the building behind, below and above it and access up two flights of rough concrete steps and along the full length of the building, wind, dust, planks and all. Apart from all the normal builder's noise you can imagine the disruption caused when they decided to remove, with jack-hammers, a lift well - top to bottom - they decided was surplus to requirements. It took over three weeks! By the time of our return to Pretoria the office could be said to have been established - just in time to go to Pretoria and do it all again!²¹

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Knowles/Hofmeyr, 27 November 1946, p.4, para. 6. A copy of the letter is annexed to Cape Town Despatch No. 42/47.

¹⁷ BTS, 130/10, Vol. 1, Hofmeyr/Knowles, 30 November 1946. Also annexed to Cape Town Despatch No. 42/47.

¹⁸ M.J.S. Knowles, letter, 16 March 1995.

¹⁹ BTS, 130/10, Vol. 2, Hodgson/SEA, 21 April 1955. With effect from 2 May 1955 it established itself at 1101, Regis House, Adderley Street thence, in 1960, at 1001 Colonial Mutual Building, 106 Adderley Street.

²⁰ BTS, 130/10, Vol. 1, Official Secretary/Secretary to the Prime Minister, 17 December 1946.

²¹ M.J.S. Knowles, letter, 16 March 1995.

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But Pretoria continued to be a problem and Knowles found himself unable to make headway. He complained bitterly to Evatt on the very day (28 April 1947) he turned to Smuts for help:

I have been very disappointed hitherto at the lack of responsibility exhibited by the Union Government in this matter of office accommodation for High Commissioners. It appears that the Government accepts no responsibility for the housing of High Commissioners. In this respect its attitude is in marked contrast to the attitude of the Australian Government concerning High Commissioners, and I have not hesitated to inform the South African authorities of the treatment accorded to High Commissioners by the Australian Government in the matters of office accommodation.²²

Knowles said as much to Smuts in the letter he handed him: 'I should like to point out that in Canberra the Australian Government provides such office accommodation as High Commissioners desire, and I understand provides it rent free'.²³ Smuts 'perused the letter ... then said he would give directions that every possible effort be made to find suitable accommodation'.²⁴ He was as good as his word and doors opened. The 'open sesame' would have been these words in Forsyth's letter the next day to Eales, the Secretary for Public Works: 'General Smuts would be grateful for anything you could do to assist the Australian High Commissioner and his staff to procure suitable accommodation'.²⁵ Knowles was appreciative of Smuts's influence. He noted in his diary during the negotiations a month later: 'this man is held in such reverence that when he gives such an instruction, the Public Service will do its utmost to carry it out'.²⁶ And when thanking Smuts he said he 'found the attitude of those with whom I had to deal much more sympathetic than had been the case'.²⁷

The Australians were allocated space in one of only two buildings then under construction in Pretoria - Central House, on the north-west corner of Central and Pretorius Streets.²⁸ This at first involved two separate groups of three rooms but, after

²² AA, A4231/2, South Africa 1947, Despatch 42/47, 28 April 1947, p. 2, para. 6. From what one knows of Evatt, he may have taken pleasure in Knowles's situation.

²³ Knowles/Smuts, 28 April 1947. Annexed to AA, A4231/2, South Africa 1947, Despatch 42/47, 28 April 1947.

²⁴ Despatch 42/47, 28 April 1947, p. 1, para. 4.

²⁵ BTS, 130/10, Vol. 1, Forsyth/Eales, 29 April 1947.

²⁶ Diary entry, 6 June 1947, p. 387, accompanying Mr M.J.S. Knowles's letter of 16 March 1947.

²⁷ BTS, 130/10, Vol. 1, Knowles/Smuts, 13 June 1947.

²⁸ For those who know Pretoria, between Van der Walt and Andries Streets. The building is still standing.

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negotiations, was consolidated into six rooms together.²⁹ They moved in towards the end of July 1947,³⁰ staying there for almost twelve years until they moved to 714 North Vaal, 220 Vermeulen Street, in March 1959.³¹ Disillusionment had set in by the end of the period and the 1957 Annual Report described the Pretoria offices as 'unsuitable (dirty, unsightly, inconvenient, badly-lit, ill-serviced, unhygienic, wasteful of staff time and insufficiently secure against intruders)'.³²

That solved the problem of the chanceries but there remained the matter of residential accommodation. In Cape Town Knowles and his wife were accommodated at the Queens Hotel, Sea Point, where they found conditions degrees cooler and less windy than at the Mount Nelson.³³ Eighteen months later Knowles's successor, Stirling, reported that he had found it 'quite impossible to secure even one room at the only city hotel in Capetown [sic] before the end of February'. While he had a room in a club for a few days from 28 December, there remained 'gaps for which I have no accommodation at all'.³⁴ A year after that, as mentioned, he complained of being embarrassed in his work by the accommodation question.³⁵

Inasmuch as the Australian government purchased residential accommodation for its head of mission in Pretoria only in 1960 (12 Marais Street, Bailey's Muckleneuk on 1 March for £SA18 750)³⁶ and in Cape Town in 1969 (Fair Acres, Belle Vue Avenue, Southern Cross Estate, Constantia on 29 January 1969) Stirling would have remained embarrassed until his departure the following year to take up his appointment as Ambassador to The Netherlands. Eighteen months after his arrival there, in response to Casey's request for his comment on a note on South Africa prepared by his former subordinate, M.H. Marshall, Stirling stressed

the desirability of having an official residence either in Cape Town
or Pretoria, preferably both. The U.K., U.S., France and, I think

²⁹ M.J.S. Knowles, letter, 16 March 1995. His father's diary entries for 4 to 6 June 1947, which accompanied this communication, confirm Mr Knowles's view that the negotiations about the Cape Town and Pretoria accommodation were complex.

³⁰ The first despatch from Central House, 63/47, was dated 29 July 1947.

³¹ The whole of North Vaal Building has for years accommodated sections of the South African Department of Foreign Affairs.

³² AA, A1838/1, 201/10/6/1, Pt. 1, Memo. 111, Gilchrist/DEA, 15 February 1958, Part A of Mission Annual Report for 1957, p. 7.

³³ M.J.S. Knowles, letter, 16 March 1995.

³⁴ AA, A1838/1, 201/10/6/1, Pt. 1, I. 20165, 21 December 1948.

³⁵ AA, A4231/2, Departmental Despatch, 15 November 1949.

³⁶ BTS, 90/6/25, Vol. 1, Davis/Jooste, 21 October 1959. See *The Pretoria News*, 8 March 1960. Both houses have accommodated the head of mission ever since.

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Netherlands are among the governments which have houses in both capitals. Canada has a house in Pretoria. Although the division of the year between the two capitals is generally about 7 months to 5 in favour of Pretoria, I would give the first priority for a house to Cape Town, despite the fact that hotel accommodation at the Cape is much better than in Pretoria. At the Cape, where Parliament meets and where there is a much larger population than in Pretoria, there is more opportunity for valuable contact with Ministers and Members of Parliament, journalists, professional men and two Universities. There is a large Australian colony and constant coming and going of Australian visitors.³⁷

Even so, for many years the Australians' residential accommodation was somewhat makeshift, being arranged on the basis of short term leases. In the absence of a permanent official residence, the annual Australia Day reception on 26 January, the major event on the Mission's calendar, was often held at the Kelvin Grove Club, Newlands, Cape Town. The 1949, 1950 and 1951 celebrations were considered sufficiently important to form the subject of despatches to the Minister of External Affairs, *ie.* Ministerial Despatches 3/49, 4/50 and 2/51 dated 27 January 1949, 27 January 1950 and 30 January 1951. When in Pretoria, Stirling's successor as High Commissioner, Hodgson, a widower, resided at the Assembly Hotel on Van der Walt Street, as did his Third Secretary, Miss E.A. Warren.

Even if, as the 1951 Australian Post report maintained, Cape Town was a summer resort, the dual capital system was at best a mixed blessing for those diplomats, politicians and Public Servants on the Parliamentary Session circuit who had school-going children. The Post report spoke of 'the dislocation in accommodation arrangements and the education of children brought about by this twice-yearly movement between the two capitals'.³⁸ And sketched the biannual scramble for housing:

Unless one is successful in securing a house in Cape Town for the following session while one is still there (the same applying *mutatis mutandis* to Pretoria) househunting has to be carried on at a distance entirely by correspondence. It is useful but not always possible to have a reliable personal agent on the spot to inspect the premises and form a judgement as to their suitability before a lease is agreed upon.³⁹

³⁷ AA, A1838/1, 1348/2, Pt. 1, Hague 61/52, Stirling/DEA, 7 March 1952.

³⁸ AA, A1838/1, 1348/5, 'Australian High Commissioner's Office in the Union of South Africa, Report on Post Conditions', 18 May 1951, p. 1, para. 2.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 6, para. 17.

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In 1953 the opening of Parliament in July and Menzies's visit in June required the entire staff of the Australian High Commission to transfer to Cape Town 'not later than the fourth week in June'. Kelly, the Official Secretary, faced a potential financial disaster because he could not find a sub-tenant for the unexpired seven week portion of his Pretoria lease: 'this officer faces approximate loss of £100 for rental, £34 for wages of two servants and £25 for night watchman. While resident in hotel and on duty at Capetown he will not be able to meet this liability'.⁴⁰

The 1955 Post report devoted a three-and-a-half page, thirteen paragraph section to 'The dual capital system and the housing problem' in which one of the points made was that 'uncertainty as to the frequency and duration of Parliamentary Sessions exercises a profound and disrupting influence, not only upon the work and establishments of diplomatic missions but also on the domestic lives of the diplomatists themselves'.⁴¹ The 1959 report sought to express the move in Australian terms, comparing it to moving a branch of the Department of External Affairs from Canberra to Adelaide every January and back every July. The move took up an inordinate amount of time and effort and cost around £A1800 (£SA1440) annually.

Quotations must be sought for packing and transportation by a road haulage and storage firm, postal and other authorities notified of changes of official and private addresses, and numerous other administrative details arranged regarding transport, security, communications and finance. ... it is necessary to pack, move and unpack every file and the contents of the safes and strongrooms, as well as the typewriters, accounting equipment and much stationary. Special arrangements are made for listing and packing all material classified above 'Restricted' and for continuously guarding it in transit between the strongrooms in the two capitals.⁴²

On the domestic side, the same report mentioned that one officer with dependent children had eleven changes of residence in three years and another ten in three-and-a-half years besides which officers had 'from time to time been involved in unpleasant and protracted disputes arising out of telegraphic or long-distance agreements in which conditions were not made clear on both sides'.⁴³ That presumably

⁴⁰ AA, A1838/1, 1348/1, Pt. 1, I. 6743, 20 May 1953.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 201/2/5, Pt. 5, 'Commonwealth of Australia, Department of External Affairs, Post Report, Cape Town - Pretoria, South Africa, February, 1955', p. 6, para. 3.

⁴² AA, A1838/1, 1348/5, 'Commonwealth of Australia, Department of External Affairs, Post Report: South Africa (Pretoria and Cape Town) February, 1959, p. 4.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 3. If that was a reference to the Woolcott/Eybers affair, it suggests that the compiler of the report did not accept Woolcott's version of events unreservedly. See below.

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referred to the experience of the twenty-nine year old Dick Woolcott, then on his second overseas posting⁴⁴ and about to commence his last six months in South Africa before reassignment to Australia, when he advertised in the flats or houses wanted column of the *Pretoria News* on 28 April 1956:

Modern house 3 b rs, garage, servants' quarters wanted for 5/6 months from the beginning of June. Please write Woolcott, Australian High Commission, Cape Town.

Thus Woolcott did not, as he claimed later, advertise for a 'modern, fully furnished house'.⁴⁵ In fact, imprecision in terminology on both sides in the month after Woolcott placed his advertisement contributed greatly to what happened.

Four of the eight advertisements in that day's column were placed by representatives of Commonwealth governments - Woolcott, Listowel and Mills of the British High Commission, and an unnamed 'Canadian Government official' who wanted a 'furnished bachelor flat'.⁴⁶ Dr G.W. Eybers of P.O. Box 80, Lynnwood, Pretoria, responded by letter the same day to Woolcott, Listowel and Mills, offering his house at 143 Eastwood Street at a monthly rental of £42.10.0d. Therefore, but for the fact that Woolcott was first with his telephone call asking for an option on the house, which Eybers granted,⁴⁷ the matter may never have been drawn to the attention of the Department of External Affairs, hence to that of latterday researchers.

Eybers was an experienced landlord whose house was at the upper end of the market and his tenants were accordingly people in a position to pay high rents. He had already let the same house to a German engineer employed by the South African Iron and Steel Corporation (Isacor), to a senior official in the British High Commission, to the Deputy Head of the Soviet Consulate-General and to the Consul-General himself until his departure from South Africa when the South African government closed the Consulate.⁴⁸ He later let it to the Chairman of the Public Service Commission.⁴⁹ Thus

⁴⁴ The first, to the Australian Embassy in Moscow, came to a premature end when relations between Australia and the Soviet Union were severed as a result of the Petrov Affair. Woolcott returned to Moscow after relations were restored in 1959, remaining there until June 1961. *The Canberra Times*, 23 July 1959; *Current Notes*, June 1961, p. 68. He then moved to the Australian High Commission in Kuala Lumpur.

⁴⁵ For example, in his letter of 25 June 1956 to Eybers. BTS, 130/10, Vol. 2.

⁴⁶ *The Pretoria News*, 28 April 1956.

⁴⁷ BTS, 130/10, Vol. 2, Eybers/Chief of Protocol, 12 October 1956.

⁴⁸ BTS, 90/6/25, Vol. 1, Eybers/SEA, 21 April 1959. On 1 February 1956 Eric Louw requested the Soviet Acting Consul-General to close the consular offices including a consular agency in Cape Town

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he was accustomed to dealing with diplomatic and important local house-seekers. Woolcott on the other hand was an experienced tenant, having in the two years he had been in South Africa already rented four houses - two in Pretoria and two in Cape Town - at rentals ranging from £35 to £45 monthly and, according to him, his relations with his landlords had been 'most cordial'.⁵⁰

Woolcott recognised the house immediately from Eybers's brief description of its location in his 28 April letter: 'Eastwood Street on the north side of Government Avenue with an East facing', and amplified it in his 3 May reply: 'We know Eastwood Street quite well as we lived at the top of Eastwood Street during the previous Parliamentary recess. From your letter I assume that your house is the third house up from Government Avenue, on the left-hand side of the road and that it was occupied by a member of the Russian Consulate, prior to their departure earlier this year.'⁵¹ He first raised the matter of furniture in that letter: 'We have no furniture of our own and we therefore require a fully furnished house.' He also mentioned appliances: 'I should also like to know whether all or some of the following items will go with the house - refrigerator, electric stove, washing machine, iron, kettle, cutlery, blankets and kitchen utensils'.⁵²

Eybers replied by telegram on 8 May: 'Prepared to meet you on points in your letter stop rental then fifty pounds writing'.⁵³ He said in his follow-up letter the next day: 'I am to confirm my wire sent in reply to your letter of 3rd. inst. We will have the items mentioned therein ready for you if you will please let us know when you wish to enter the house.' He also described the furniture.⁵⁴ Woolcott accepted by telegram on 14 May 'subject to confirmation that items listed end 2nd paragraph my letter 3rd May will be available as well as some crockery pleased to take house at £50 from 7th June'.⁵⁵ With the exception of the crockery, which was now mentioned for the first time, Eybers had already undertaken to supply the items mentioned.

and to withdraw all staff and families from the Union by 1 March 1956. AA, A1838/T184, 201/12, Pt. 2, I. 2256, 10 February 1956.

⁴⁹ BTS, 130/10, Vol. 2, Eybers/Woolcott, 6 July 1956.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, Woolcott/Eybers, 11 July 1956.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 3 May 1956.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*, Eybers/Woolcott, 8 May 1956. (Telegram.)

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, Eybers/Woolcott, 9 May 1956.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Woolcott/Eybers, 15 May 1956. (Telegram.)

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Eleven days passed whereupon Woolcott telegraphically requested confirmation.⁵⁶ Eybers replied by telegram on 28 May: 'Hereby confirm arrangements to let house for six months and supply items as per my letter ninth May also crockery usual lease conditions best regards'.⁵⁷ When the matter was subsequently referred to the State Attorney's Office it felt that Eybers had concluded the agreement by means of that telegram.⁵⁸ But presumably because he had second thoughts, Woolcott had a third party inspect the house on his behalf on 28 May who reported unfavourably. Woolcott and his family arrived from Cape Town on 8 June, ie. the day after he had offered to take the house, and he and his wife completed their inspection of it two days later, deciding that they would not take it. They notified Eybers accordingly by telephone on 11 June, Woolcott's twenty-ninth birthday.

Eybers suggested later that the Woolcotts found the two-storey house, which was larger than they had expected, unsuitable because of Mrs Woolcott's advanced pregnancy⁵⁹ - Woolcott told him in June that his wife was to give birth 'within six weeks'.⁶⁰ (The child, a son, Robert, was born on 10 August. Apart from his difficulty with Eybers, 1956 was not a bad year for Woolcott. He was promoted to Second Secretary with effect from 24 May and his wife was granted a certificate of Australian naturalisation on 14 September.)⁶¹ He also stated a preference for Scandinavian furniture. Whatever his reason for rejecting the house, assuming it was not frivolous (the sense of fun referred to in an earlier chapter), it does not emerge clearly from the documentation. Nonetheless, it may be there was something in Eybers's view that 'he entered into his obligation with mental reservations: though he took the house, he would feel himself free, apparently, at a later date to refuse to take it if it was not entirely to his liking'.⁶²

At this remove, however, as will be canvassed below, his reason as well as the facts of the case are of less interest than the attitude of the South African Department

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, Woolcott/Eybers, 25 May 1956. (Telegram.)

⁵⁷ BTS, 130/10, Vol. 2, Eybers/Woolcott, 28 May 1956. (Telegram.)

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, State Attorney/SEA, 20 December 1956; BTS, 90/6/25, Vol. 1, State Attorney/DEA, 6 November 1958.

⁵⁹ BTS, 90/6/25, Vol. 1, Eybers/SEA, 21 April 1959. She was pregnant with her second child. BTS, 130/10, Vol. 2, Woolcott/Eybers, 11 July 1956.

⁶⁰ BTS, 130/10, Vol. 2, 25 June 1956.

⁶¹ AA, A1838/1, 1500/2/18/3, Memo 18, 23 January 1957, Annex, p. 3.

⁶² BTS, 130/10, Vol. 2, Eybers/Australian High Commissioner, 20 July 1956. It is only fair to mention that Woolcott continues to hold that when he and his wife saw the house for the first time, 'it was clear that [it] and contents had been misrepresented to us in Cape Town'. Letter, 17 January 1995.

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of External Affairs. More than three years passed from the day Woolcott rejected the house until the date of the last item on file - 24 August 1959 - a letter from the Chief of Protocol advising Eybers that because he was about to depart for the UN General Assembly session Eric Louw could not receive him but that Gerhardt Jooste, the Secretary for External Affairs, was prepared to do so.⁶³ Between those markers Eybers - perhaps because, as he said, his income was dependent on letting the house - relentlessly sought to extract from Woolcott, who left South Africa permanently on 20 January 1957,⁶⁴ compensation for what he alleged was breach of contract. From his side Woolcott equally relentlessly denied the existence of a contract, citing in support of that contention an opinion he had obtained from the Pretoria firm of attorneys Hazelhurst, Galgut & Curtis.

Aware of Woolcott's diplomatic status and even before his departure, Eybers put pressure on the Department of External Affairs to obtain satisfaction for him. In November 1956, presumably in order to cover itself, the department referred the matter to the Department of Justice: 'As Mr. Woolcott enjoys diplomatic immunity he of course cannot be summoned to court. The Department would nevertheless be glad if the Law Advisers could give an opinion whether Dr. Eybers would, in the absence of immunity of the other party, have had a case for damages and if so, to what extent'.⁶⁵ Early on Woolcott had himself referred to his diplomatic status and with an air of menace:

while I have no wish whatever to take advantage of the immunity conferred upon me by my status as an accredited member of the staff of the Australian High Commissioner, especially as I am confident that my case could stand on its own merits, it is most unlikely that I should be permitted, by my Government to take any part in a civil legal action. This position is consequent upon the Diplomatic Privileges Act (Act No. 71 of 1951) and I suggest that in your own interests you consult your lawyer further about this Act under which any person who executes any legal process against a person entitled to diplomatic immunity is subject to a heavy fine.⁶⁶

⁶³ BTS, 90/6/25, Vol. 1, Maree/Eybers, 24 August 1959.

⁶⁴ He travelled on the *Dominion Monarch*. BTS, 130/10, Vol. 2, Hodgson/DEA, 13 November 1956. He would have taken leave after arriving in Australia because he got to Canberra only at the beginning of March. *The Canberra Times*, 6 March 1957. (Canberra Diary.)

⁶⁵ BTS, 130/10, Vol. 2, Jones/Secretary for Justice, 3 November 1956.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, Woolcott/Eybers, 25 June 1956.

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Section 11(1) of the Act read: 'Any person who wilfully or without the exercise of reasonable care sues out, obtains or executes any legal process against a person who is entitled to immunity under section *two*, and whose name has been published in terms of sub-section (2) of section *four* whether as party, as attorney or as an officer concerned in issuing or executing such process, shall be guilty of an offence.' The penalties were listed in Section 11(2): Any person who contravenes etc 'shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding five hundred pounds or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding three years or to both such fine and such imprisonment'. One will never know what the Australian government's position would have been because it was never asked to take a position. If it had been approached, it is always possible that its attitude may not have been as negative as Woolcott claimed.

Section 3(2)(a) of the Act provided for a waiver of immunity and Section 3(1) that a person 'immune from the civil and criminal jurisdiction of the courts of the Union' could not escape liability 'in connection with any transaction entered into by him in his private and personal capacity'. Was this a transaction in Woolcott's private and personal capacity? When protesting to Eybers for having approached his High Commissioner direct, Woolcott told him that it was 'a personal matter between ourselves'.⁶⁷ And W.C. Naude, the Deputy Secretary of the Department of External Affairs, collaborated with the Chief of Protocol, J.C.H. Maree, in May 1959 in drafting a letter to Eybers which incorporated the sentence: 'I may mention further that the transaction between you and Mr Woolcott was a *private one*, and that this department only intervenes in such cases when it appears that the normal judicial processes are not available to the claimant'. (Italics added.)

Eybers was naturally free, Naude said, to approach Woolcott directly. (He was then two months from departing Canberra for the Soviet Union.)⁶⁸ In any case the 'usual channels are open to you, through which your attorneys, if you so prefer, could take the matter further',⁶⁹ a suggestion Eybers not unreasonably dismissed out of hand.⁷⁰ It is in retrospect regrettable that no one thought to test whether what the Department of External Affairs considered to be a 'private' and Woolcott a 'personal', transaction between Eybers and himself in fact fell within the scope of Section 3(1) of the Act.

⁶⁷ BTS, 130/10, Vol. 2, Woolcott/Eybers, 25 June 1956.

⁶⁸ He arrived in Moscow on 22 July 1959. *The Canberra Times*, 23 July 1959.

⁶⁹ BTS, 90/6/25, Vol. 1, Naude/Eybers, 23 May 1959. (Translation.)

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, Eybers/SEA, 6 August 1959.

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Even though N.J. Best, the Assistant Chief of Protocol, thought Eybers's case had merit,⁷¹ and while there is nothing definite on file to that effect, one has a strong impression that the Department of External Affairs found this dispute embarrassing and wanted to restrict its involvement in it to the minimum. Either that or its behaviour bordered on incompetence. It was all very well for Jones to say 'As Mr. Woolcott enjoys diplomatic immunity he of course cannot be summoned to court'. Jones would have known that sending governments can and do lift the immunity of their diplomatic representatives to allow suit to be brought against them. In other words, diplomatic immunity is not immutable. Indeed, the Act provided for its waiver. It would have been easy enough for the department to instruct the High Commission in Canberra to ask the Australians whether they would be prepared to suspend Woolcott's immunity. In any event, there would have been no harm trying.

Eybers was never advised that was an option and it was an angle he didn't know enough about to explore. Instead of briefing attorneys, he himself put his case to the department which had a vested interest in seeing it die. It was easy to put him down. He suspected as much, writing in 1959 that he could not understand 'why your Department wants summarily to dispose of the matter and render me absolutely no further assistance'.⁷² Quite clearly Eric Louw, who wrote Casey annual letters of thanks for the Australian delegation's support on the South African items at the United Nations General Assembly,⁷³ would not want a civil action brought against an Australian diplomat in a South African court with the attendant, and presumably negative, publicity in Australia. Indeed, Louw cabled Canberra and Pretoria from New York at the end of November 1956:

Please convey to Australian Government Union Government's sincere appreciation of statement by Casey in Assembly yesterday following my announcement regarding South Africa's relations with United Nations.

Casey's statement is greatly valued as testimony to the warmth of friendship and depth of understanding between our two countries.

I have already thanked Casey personally.

⁷¹ BTS, 130/10, Vol. 2, Best/N.J.J. Jooste, Note, 25 October 1956.

⁷² BTS, 90/6/25, Vol. 1, Eybers/SEA, 21 April 1959. (Translation.)

⁷³ He also expressed his appreciation in public as in a radio interview reported by *The Canberra Times* on 5 December 1957.

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To Pretoria only. A suitable word to Hodgson would also be appropriate.⁷⁴

The Law Advisers passed Jones's original query to the State Attorney's Office which informed External Affairs on 20 December 1956 that the parties had indeed 'concluded a legal and binding lease as from the 7th June at a rental of £50 per month' and expressing the opinion that Eybers was entitled to £100 damages in respect of breach of contract. (Made up of £40 rent for the period 7-30 June and £15 per month for four months being the difference between the £50 Woolcott was prepared to pay and the £35 Eybers actually received from the Chairman of the Public Service Commission who rented the house unfurnished.) Eleven days later, on the last day of the year, the Chief of Protocol, N.J.J. Jooste, briefly recorded a file note on his meeting that day with Hugh Gilchrist, Woolcott's superior in the Australian High Commission. Jooste told Gilchrist about the State Attorney's opinion and his note had Gilchrist saying he would advise Woolcott to send Eybers 'a cheque before his departure. Mr. Gilchrist said that the amount of the cheque would naturally be decided upon by Mr. Woolcott [sic] but he hoped that he (Mr. Woolcott) would be able to settle the matter to Dr. Eybers' satisfaction'.⁷⁵

On the basis of what Gilchrist reported to him about this meeting, Woolcott accused the department of 'complete acceptance of Dr Eybers' position'.⁷⁶ That may have been why, two years later, the State Attorney's Office to whom the Protocol Section had sent the Aide Memoire,⁷⁷ seemed to hedge its bets. It said that there was indeed a binding contract, but that Woolcott would have been able to withdraw from it if the quality of the furniture and the modernity of the house were not as they had been represented. That a third person had inspected the house on Woolcott's behalf and had rejected it and the furniture supported Woolcott's objections on these points and created the impression that his withdrawal was justified.⁷⁸ Eybers declined to accept this.⁷⁹

In retrospect, since Woolcott could pinpoint the location of the house from a very sketchy description, he would have been aware of its external appearance even

⁷⁴ BCB, Vol. 6, 8/0, Vol. III, Immediate Code telegram, Louw/Uys, repeated Pretoria, 28 November 1956.

⁷⁵ BTS, 130/10, Vol. 2, Handwritten note initialled NJJ, 31 December 1956.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, Aide Memoire for the Chef de Protocol, 15 January 1957, p. 2, para. i).

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, Best/State Attorney, 28 January 1957.

⁷⁸ BTS, 90/6/25, Vol. 1, State Attorney/Department of Foreign Affairs, 6 November 1958.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, Eybers/Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 21 April 1959.

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before he inspected it in person. A handwritten comment by Eybers, adjacent to Woolcott's amplified description, on a copy of the latter's 3 May 1956 letter put it succinctly: 'He knew to what extent the house was 'modern' - whatever he may mean by the term'.⁸⁰ (Underlining in original.) The house is still standing. While it would obviously have undergone renovations during the intervening thirty-nine years, its appearance is perfectly acceptable today (1995). It is located in a select suburb and is in no way out of keeping with neighbouring properties. Now in retirement in Canberra, neither Woolcott nor Gilchrist can recall the details of the case.⁸¹

The Woolcott/Eybers affair points to the difficulty of hiring accommodation sight unseen as well as serving as a specific example of diplomatic immunity at work albeit distorted by political considerations on the part of the host government. It also illustrates the point made in the Introduction (p. 10) that foreign service is perhaps the only career where quite junior officers associate on a footing of equality with leading citizens of the countries where they are stationed. Here was a twenty-nine year old junior Australian Public Servant rejecting a house which was thereupon taken by the Chairman of the Public Service Commission. Woolcott's car, a 1955/56 model Jaguar 2.4,⁸² was itself suggestive of a much higher income level than that enjoyed by Public Servants of his age and rank back home in Australia or by his South African counterparts in Pretoria.⁸³

Another point to emerge indirectly from the affair is that the easy flow of correspondence between Pretoria and Cape Town by means of the public mails suggests delivery was more speedy in 1956 than it is today (1995). The same applies to overseas airmail. 'Canberra is one of the least accessible places where the Union enjoys diplomatic representation', wrote E.M. Rhoodie, the Information Attaché in South Africa's Canberra High Commission, in January 1959. 'Airmail letters from South Africa take up to ten days'.⁸⁴ They take longer now. Thus history is not necessarily the story of either liberty or progress.

⁸⁰ BTS, 130/10, Vol. 2, Woolcott/Eybers, 3 May 1956.

⁸¹ H. Gilchrist, letters 14 November and 15 December 1994 and R.A. Woolcott, letter, 17 January 1995.

⁸² BTS, 130/10, Vol. 2, Commissioner of Customs and Excise/SEA, 29 November 1956.

⁸³ By contrast J.P. Quinn, Australia's Acting High Commissioner in South Africa from April 1951 to May 1952, drove an Austin A40 which he brought to South Africa from London, his previous post. It accompanied him to Canberra, where it was later described as aging, at the end of his South African posting. R.N. Birch in *John Paul Quinn*, p. 15.

⁸⁴ *South African Panorama*, January 1959, p. 7. AA, A1838/T54, 1500/1/30/8, Memo. 19, Gilchrist/DEA, 6 January 1959.

* * *

The origins of the name Canberra are obscure. The author of a bicentennial project PhD thesis holds that it 'had been in general use by Europeans for nearly a hundred years and may have been used by Aborigines for centuries before'.⁸⁵ However, another researcher claims to have 'established beyond reasonable doubt' that it was 'probably not of Aboriginal origin', but most likely 'a minor variation of an old English place name'.⁸⁶ An entirely artificial capital, a compromise between the rival claims of Sydney and Melbourne at the time of federation, Canberra counted less than 20 000 inhabitants in 1949.⁸⁷ The compromise involved placing the 2400 sq km Australian Capital Territory enclave within New South Wales but at least 100 miles (161 km) from Sydney. Melbourne served as the federal capital until Canberra was inaugurated as the seat of government in 1927. Its general location was chosen in late 1908 and the particular site early in 1909. Construction formally commenced on 12 March 1913 according to the plan of the American architect, Walter Burley Griffin, the winner of an open competition.

At least until the late 1950s, however, Melbourne remained the *de facto* capital of Australia. The Depression, the Second World War and the reluctance of Public Service Departments to move to Canberra contributed to this. In the seven years between 1958 and 1965 the population more than doubled to 86 700 and the city changed in those years 'from a semi-rustic town to an integrated, if still small and incomplete, national capital'.⁸⁸ Small wonder that when he returned to Canberra in 1969 for his second term, Uys could write: 'It is wonderful to be back in Australia. Canberra has become a city. Unbelievable what noticeable progress has occurred here since I left in 1957'.⁸⁹ About that time the English poet, John Betjeman, called it 'an enormous Garden City from England and America set down in what looks like Italian hill scenery around Urbino'.⁹⁰

⁸⁵ J. Gibbney, *Canberra 1913-1953* (Canberra, 1988), p. 9. A related PhD thesis is E. Sparke's, *Canberra 1954-1980* (Canberra, 1988). These works were collectively initiated and funded by the federal Department of Territories and Local Government and supervised by the Australian National University in commemoration of the 200th anniversary of European settlement in Australia.

⁸⁶ G. Murphy, 'Canberra. What's in the name?', *Canberra Historical Journal*, New Series, No. 19, March 1987, p. 17.

⁸⁷ 1911: 1700; 1921: 2500; 1930 8700; 1939 12 000; 1946: 15 000; 1950: 22 500; 1953: 29 500; 1956: 33 000; 1957: 35 500; 1958: 39 500; 1959: 44 000; 1960: 51 3000; 1961: 56 530. *The Canberra Times*, 12 March 1962.

⁸⁸ Sparke, *Canberra 1954-1980*, pp. 103, 104.

⁸⁹ BTS, Uys, Vol. 6, Uys/Schimper, 7 May 1969.

⁹⁰ Foreword to Boyd's *The Australian Ugliness*, p. 7.

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In 1954 the Chief Architect of the South African Department of Public Works gave as apt a description as one would have found at the time: 'The master plan is conceived in the form of a series of villages, some of which are developed and others quite undeveloped, so that in travelling from one village to another it is possible to pass through large areas of bushland. Eventually these areas will become built-up but the intervention of two World Wars has had a slowing down effect upon the city's development'.⁹¹

For years only one Minister - the Prime Minister - lived in Canberra, a quite modest house (compared to *Libertas* or *Groote Schuur*) called *The Lodge* being provided for the holder of the office from 1926. In the late 1930s, though, a larger house was built for the Treasurer,⁹² R.G. Casey, who occupied it for just over a year whereupon it became the office of the new Canadian High Commission, serving as such until 1973.⁹³ Known as *Casey House*, it is situated at the end of a short *cul de sac* just off *State Circle*, *Rhodes Place*, where the South African chancery is located. In 1979 the Australian Heritage Commission took it over as its headquarters. For the four years of his Prime Ministership (1945-1949) J.B. Chifley stayed at the *Hotel Kurrajong*, a government-owned establishment run by the Department of the Interior,⁹⁴ returning home to *Bathurst, NSW* for the five month Parliamentary recesses. That was because his wife did not accompany him to Canberra.

Particularly as a result of Robert Menzies's policy, Canberra developed as a city during his second term as Prime Minister. While not a devotee of Canberra during his first term (1939-1941), Menzies became one during his second and he probably did more than anyone to turn the 'garden without a city' and the 'six suburbs' that had 'lost their way', as Canberra was called in 1954, into a true national capital.⁹⁵ Canberra's isolation as well as its small size in the 1940s and 1950s had pluses and minuses for the handful of foreign diplomats stationed there. An advantage would have been that members of the elite, of which the diplomats were part, were thrown together to an extent unknown in larger capitals such as Pretoria and Cape Town. Always on the

⁹¹ BTS, 4/6/36, Vol. 2, Macdonald/Director, 'Canberra, Australia: Residence of the High Commissioner of the Union', 4 June 1954.

⁹² Equivalent to Minister of Finance in South Africa.

⁹³ E. Thompson, *Casey House, Rhodes Place, Yarralumla, A.C.T.* (Australian Heritage Commission Background Notes, June 1984) and Gibbney, *Canberra 1913-1953*, p. 193.

⁹⁴ On the anniversary of his birth a waitress at the *Kurrajong* would put a bowl of pansies, his favourite flower, on the table at which he sat in the dining room. *The Canberra Times*, 23 September 1954.

⁹⁵ Sparke, *Canberra 1954-1980*, p. 1. Menzies gave a brief account of his role in *The Measure of the Years* (Melbourne, 1970), pp. 142-48.

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assumption that there was enough money for travel to relieve the boredom, Canberra's very intimacy favoured diplomatic life despite occasional complaints that the Prime Minister was the only cabinet member to live there.

Sailing from Cape Town on 20 May 1949 on board the 'Dominion Monarch', a ship which came to symbolise the Australian/South African connection because until the late 1950s it carried most travellers between the two countries, Viljoen and his party arrived in Sydney on 7 June. Before their departure Stirling hosted a farewell lunch for the Viljoens at the Mount Nelson Hotel and also saw them off at the ship.⁹⁶ For the first week it was uncertain 'whether the office would be established in Canberra or Sydney'⁹⁷ whereupon a decision was taken in favour of the former. Two weeks later Viljoen wrote that 'it would be wrong to have our headquarters anywhere else than in Canberra, as there is this advantage - of consulting other members of the Diplomatic Corps (the bulk is in Canberra) and all the Ministers who collect here for Parliamentary Sessions'.⁹⁸

The question arose because, unlike the South Africans in respect of Pretoria, the Australian authorities did not object to missions establishing themselves in centres other than Canberra, only a few government departments having yet moved there from Melbourne.⁹⁹ (The South Africans enforced their position by restricting diplomatic privileges to Embassy and Legation personnel resident in Pretoria. These were expected to move to Cape Town during the Parliamentary session.) Evatt himself had raised the possibility of the mission operating at least temporarily from Sydney, where he lived, because of the accommodation shortage in Canberra. Malan had no problem with that as a temporary measure.¹⁰⁰ Diplomatic missions located in Sydney at the time were those of Belgium, Finland, Israel, Italy, Norway and Sweden. There were then fourteen missions in Canberra.¹⁰¹ As late as 1958 there were still eight missions in

⁹⁶ AA, A4231/2, Ministerial Despatch No. 6/49, 25 May 1949.

⁹⁷ BTS, Viljoen, Vol. 7, Nel/SEA, 22 July 1949.

⁹⁸ BCB, Vol. 19, 31/6 (Secret), Viljoen/Forsyth, 5 July 1949.

⁹⁹ By 1957 only eleven of twenty-seven departments had their headquarters in Canberra. BTS, S4/7/2/1/5, 'Post Report - Canberra - 1957', Annexure 'C', p. 3.

¹⁰⁰ BTS, Viljoen, Vol. 5, Forsyth/Under-Secretary, 10 February 1949.

¹⁰¹ Brazil, Canada, Ceylon, Chile, China, Denmark, France, India, Ireland, Netherlands, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States and USSR. Information supplied by the Library of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Canberra, Australia (1994); also BTS, S4/7/2/1/5, Viljoen/SEA, 30 June 1950, 'Post Report: Canberra', p. 11.

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Sydney,¹⁰² one (Malta) in Melbourne and twenty-three in Canberra.¹⁰³ The Pakistani High Commission, which maintained a branch office in Canberra, moved there only in 1959, leaving the Belgian, Danish, Finnish, and Filipino missions to soldier on in Sydney.¹⁰⁴ They were joined by South Korea (1961) and Spain (1968). The last diplomatic mission to relocate from Sydney to Canberra was that of Lebanon on 31 October 1971.¹⁰⁵

Viljoen's circumstances subsequently caused him to change his mind about the advantages of Canberra over Sydney. He was ambivalent about the matter for the rest of his stay. He had also pointed out in his 5 July letter to Forsyth, quite correctly, that 'The decentralisation of Government and Administrative functions makes it necessary, however, to travel extensively in this country and all High Commissioners here visit other parts of Australia regularly. I am afraid I shall have to do the same.'¹⁰⁶ He was to be disappointed. The department kept him on a tight rein financially and, compared to his immediate successors, particularly Hamilton, he did relatively little travelling. As time passed he complained frequently to Forsyth about how little there was to do in Canberra for a man such as himself who liked to be busy. Thus: 'Canberra is a very isolated place with only a small population and, when Parliament is not sitting ... I would normally be visiting other parts of Australia ... but ... you have practically stopped all travelling, with the result that during the Parliamentary recess, which lasts several months, I have very little to do ... and this has given me this feeling of frustration'. And a month later: 'I hope you will try and let me do a little more travelling as it is deadly (for me!) to sit in a small place like Canberra with little work to do'.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² If one can include the Chilean and Danish Consulates, the diplomatic missions having closed in Canberra. Thus Belgium, Chile, Denmark, Finland, Israel, Norway, Pakistan and Philippines. Information supplied by the DFAT Library (1994).

¹⁰³ Austria, Brazil, Burma, Canada, Ceylon, China, France, West Germany, Greece, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Malaya, Netherlands, New Zealand, South Africa, Sweden, Thailand, United Kingdom, United States and Uruguay. The Maltese mission became a High Commission in 1965, the year it relocated to Canberra. Information supplied by the DFAT Library (1994).

¹⁰⁴ Information supplied by the DFAT Library (1994); *The Canberra Times*, 4 October 1960; *Commonwealth of Australia, DEA, Diplomatic List*, October 1960, p. 32.

¹⁰⁵ Information supplied by the DFAT Library (1994). Denmark and Chile returned to Canberra in 1966 and 1969 respectively; Philippines moved there in 1962, South Korea in 1966, Finland in 1967, Spain in 1968 and Norway in 1969.

¹⁰⁶ BCB, Vol. 19, 31/6 (Secret), Viljoen/Forsyth, 5 July 1949.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 16 March 1951.

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With seeming justification he complained about 'the curtailment of trips to Sydney and Melbourne' saying that he had recently 'to refuse some very important invitations, such as a dinner in honour of the Prime Minister at Melbourne, a reception in honour of the Minister of External Affairs at Sydney [and] the opening of the most important agricultural and industrial show in Australia which opens in Sydney today'.¹⁰⁸ He expanded on the rejected invitations in a letter to Forsyth on 18 May saying that they caused him embarrassment 'as the real reason for these refusals cannot be divulged'. On the other hand, at a time when airfares to Sydney and Melbourne were cheap - £2.10.0d to Sydney and £5 to Melbourne¹⁰⁹ - and Viljoen himself told Forsyth at their final interview that his representation allowance was 'on the over-generous side and could conveniently be reduced by £200 or £300 per annum',¹¹⁰ he could easily have afforded to pay for short distance air travel out of his own pocket.

Forsyth commented: 'I seem to remember that he said something very similar about the Canadian allowance when he left Canada. Perhaps it is permissible to comment that if he felt that the allowance was over-generous he might have said so while he was still enjoying it himself! - particularly after his Canadian experience!' Spies responded with a presumably heart-felt 'quite!'¹¹¹

Forsyth eventually gave way. He said that things 'should be a little easier' after the previous year's freeze on expenditure when even an officer 'found guilty of misconduct' could not be recalled to the Union 'because we had not the money to pay for his passage!'¹¹² However, apart from a ten day visit to Tasmania in April 1951 which was covered by a standing authorisation, Viljoen did not take him up on that for he decided to cut short his term¹¹³ and he returned to South Africa in October. He paid his first and only official visit to Western Australia when his ship called at Fremantle.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁸ BTS, Viljoen., Vol. 7, Viljoen/Forsyth, 8 February 1951.

¹⁰⁹ Gibbney, *Canberra 1913-1953*, p. 254. By late 1957 these had risen to £3.15.0d and £8.10.0d respectively. The visiting Scholtz considered them to be 'extraordinarily cheap'. BTS, 4/6/36, Vol. 6, Scholtz/Secretary, December 1957, p. 8.

¹¹⁰ BTS, 4/2/32, Vol. 2, Forsyth/Under-Secretary, 6 December 1951.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² BTS, Viljoen., Vol. 7, Forsyth/Viljoen, 5 April 1951. The situation had presumably deteriorated after Forsyth issued his circular minute PM 28/9; PM 45/1 of 7 November 1949 stipulating that the department would 'during the next twelve months at least, unhappily be unable to consider any proposals involving either the augmentation or the transfer of staff, save in the most exceptional and unavoidable circumstances'. BTS, 9/1/8/1, Vol. 3, Forsyth/All Heads of Mission.

¹¹³ At his urging this had been extended by a year.

¹¹⁴ BTS, Viljoen, Vol. 7, Forsyth/Under-Secretary, 6 December 1951.

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As Alan Watt's notes on their final lunch reveal, Viljoen also complained to the Australians about the life of diplomatic inaction in Canberra. He aired to Watt a head of mission's difficulties there as opposed to Sydney or Melbourne and he wondered what 'advice he should give to his Government as to where South Africa should plan her long-term representation in Australia'. Watt, then Secretary for External Affairs, thought that Viljoen was 'far from well and that his view may be coloured a little either by a feeling that he has not been able to do as much as he would have wished for his Government or by some suggestion from South Africa that he has not done as much as he should. Nevertheless, a very real problem is involved which I feel requires some consideration'.¹¹⁵ It was Australian practice then as it is now for the records of such conversations to find their way to the Minister's desk. Then only some six months into a term which was to last a record nine years Casey was inclined to be sympathetic:

I would believe that the lives of diplomatic representatives at Canberra must be very boring. I must say that if I was a Dominion High Commissioner, I would much sooner live in Sydney or Melbourne - coming to Canberra when occasion demanded - even if this had to be weekly. However, this is not the sort of thing that we could advise them, for obvious reasons.¹¹⁶

Under a first point 'Location of Mission', taking up three-and-a-half out of eight pages, the possibility of relocating the office to Sydney was canvassed in a memorandum Nel prepared for Viljoen on topics for discussion with the department on his return to South Africa.¹¹⁷ The wording suggested that Viljoen himself favoured a move to Sydney and that Nel opposed it. But a handwritten letter Nel addressed to Spies forwarding a copy of the memorandum suggested the opposite - that Nel favoured the move while Viljoen opposed it!¹¹⁸ Forsyth's notes on his final interview with Viljoen show that while the latter drew attention to the question 'he regretted his complete inability to make a recommendation as to whether the High Commissioner should live in Canberra or Sydney'.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵ AA, A1838/T17, 1500/1/30/1, 'Record of Conversation with High Commissioner for South Africa', 15 September 1951.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Casey/Watt, 26 September 1951.

¹¹⁷ BCB, Vol. 1, 2/1, Nel/High Commissioner, 'Matters to be discussed with Officials of the Department of External Affairs', 12 October 1951.

¹¹⁸ BTS, 4/2/32, Vol. 2, Nel/Spies, 21 November 1951. The letter is an example of the obsequiousness referred to in Chapter Two above (p. 109).

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Forsyth/Under-Secretary, 6 December 1951.

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There the matter rested, never to be raised again. In the latter part of the 1950s a proposal to open an Information Office or Sub-Office in Sydney was successfully resisted but not one by the Department of Commerce and Industries in the early 1960s to relocate its representative from Canberra to Melbourne which was then Australia's commercial capital.

On arrival Viljoen and his staff met with the reality that Canberra was to all intents and purposes a company town with one major employer, the federal government.¹²⁰ Just about all suitable accommodation, office and residential, lay within its gift, its agent being the Department of the Interior. Properties were not for sale, only for rent. Even today governments rent the land on which their diplomatic premises are built from the Australian government on ninety-nine year leases. The city had to be built from scratch and in such a way that Parliament, government departments and their staffs could commence operating at more or less the same time. In addition to erecting the obvious public buildings including office space to accommodate the influx of Public Servants from Melbourne, the federal government had to assume responsibility for constructing dwellings for the officials. These took two forms: houses for married couples and hotels, boarding houses and hostels for single people and since the houses were designed for Public Service occupation they were on a modest scale.

The Federal Capital Commission (FCC) was created in 1924 to attend to such matters. Its predecessor, the Advisory Council, had already made a start with the construction of the Hotel Canberra (now the Hyatt Hotel, Canberra's best) and the boarding houses which became famous under the names Brassey House, Beauchamp House and the Wellington Hotel. Work had also commenced on the Hotel Kurrajong and on the office building to be known as the East Block. Another office building, the West Block, was originally intended to house the National Library. In respect of domestic accommodation, the FCC at first sub-contracted this out to private builders, but later itself put up houses with its own workforce when the sub-contractors proved unreliable. In attempting to deal with the Great Depression the government followed a deflationary policy, drastically cutting expenditure, employment and services and most

¹²⁰ Viljoen observed in his first Post Report that 90 per cent of the population were Civil Servants. BTS, S4/7/2/1/5, Viljoen/SEA, 30 June 1950, 'Post Report: Canberra', p. 13. He meant the working population. Perhaps it wasn't as bad as that because in 1954 '8700 people, or 31 per cent of the population' were said to be 'employed in one way or another by the Commonwealth'. Sparke, *Canberra 1954-1980*, p. 25.

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construction work ceased. The resulting housing backlog continued through the Second World War and beyond.

By the time of Viljoen's arrival in mid-1949 there was a 'waiting list for houses of over 2,300 applicants including many senior and executive public servants'¹²¹ a figure which had increased to 2980 by the end of 1950.¹²² In his memoirs Alan Watt refers to his own difficulties in obtaining a house that year on his appointment as Secretary for External Affairs.¹²³ There being no private construction of houses, the backlog was directly to affect the staff of the new diplomatic missions opened during and after the war. From heads of mission down, the staffs of these were completely dependent for their office and living quarters on the federal government. In 1954, for example, thirty-eight government houses were occupied by sixteen diplomatic missions.¹²⁴

Negotiations for a suitable house for Viljoen commenced six months before his departure from South Africa on 22 May 1949. Their successful conclusion permitted him to depart at that juncture or at least to reside in Canberra. Therefore he could move almost immediately into a nine roomed house (five bedrooms) at 26 Balmain Crescent, Acton, on campus at the new Australian National University and later the university's property. The house is still standing and is used to accommodate two doctoral students besides housing an office for an association of post graduates. It is controlled by University House. Earlier it had been found unsuitable by the Belgian Minister who, then resident in Sydney, was contemplating a move to Canberra.¹²⁵ If the Belgian had taken it there would, according to the Australian authorities, have been no possibility of a suitable house for Viljoen for a 'considerable period' and he would have had 'to consider remaining in Sydney'.¹²⁶

The house was described as a 'relatively large Government house built in early days'.¹²⁷ Viljoen did not like it, cabling External Affairs on 14 June: 'Residence not very suitable, but at present, nothing better obtainable either here or Sydney'.¹²⁸ He

¹²¹ AA, A1838/T17, 1500/1/30/1, Edwards/Viljoen, 30 June 1949.

¹²² *The Canberra Times*, 27 December 1950.

¹²³ Watt, *Australian Diplomat*, pp. 198-200.

¹²⁴ BTS, 4/6/36, Vol. 2, Casey/Martensz, 28 January 1954; attached to Nel/SEA, 12 February 1954.

¹²⁵ AA, A1838/T17, 1500/1/30/1, Verstraeten/Oldham, 17 March 1949. Viljoen claimed that it had also been rejected by two other heads of mission. BTS, 4/6/36, Vol. 1, Viljoen/SEA, 1 July 1949.

¹²⁶ AA, A1838/T17, 1500/1/30/1, O. 3055, 7 March 1949.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ BTS, 4/2/32, Vol. 1, Code telegram No. 1, Viljoen/SEA, 14 June 1949..

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wanted to move to a larger residence but the Assistant Secretary in charge of Interior's Housing and Accommodation Branch told him that this was 'one of the largest owned by the Commonwealth'. Besides, there was a 'waiting list for houses of over 2,300 applicants including many senior and executive public servants'.¹²⁹

As far as Viljoen was concerned, the residence remained unsuitable. In August 1951, a few months before his departure from Australia, he wrote that while it had been 'made quite habitable' it was not 'really up to the standard and fit for a residence of the High Commissioner'. For him part of the problem could have been that the house was 'situated in a part of the city not selected for residential purposes by the select people of the town'.¹³⁰ From the government's point of view, though, one of its advantages would have been the low rent. Until September 1950 this was £A3.16.0d per week, rising that month by 1/9d to £A3.17.9d because of the installation of a stainless steel sink in the kitchen. Another 9d per week was added in November 1950 when Canberra's rates were increased. That brought the weekly rent to £A3.18.6d¹³¹ which had risen to £A5.13.9d or £A295.15.0d per annum by 1955.¹³²

The South Africans retained the house as their High Commissioner's residence until the completion in July 1957 of the double-storey Cape Dutch style house at 4 Perth Avenue, Yarralumla, just off State Circle, known as 'South Africa House', which has housed the head of mission ever since. The eight year South African tenancy of 26 Balmain Crescent produced a litany of complaints *inter alia* about the house's location as well as its layout and the size of its rooms. It was an ice-chest in winter and its dining room and lounge were too small. The former could seat only six for a formal dinner while, in the event of a cocktail party, all the furniture had to be removed from the latter.¹³³ (That is still the case with the present, 'custom-built' official residence.)

However, at least Viljoen was accommodated. His staff, Nel in particular who experienced five changes of residence during his first year in Australia, were less fortunate. Immediately on arrival in Sydney Nel took a two-bedroom flat for two weeks moving thereafter to an hotel in Canberra where he and his family resided for three months.¹³⁴ He was allocated a government house after a year.¹³⁵ Being single,

¹²⁹ AA, A1838/T17, 1500/1/30/1, Edwards/Viljoen, 30 June 1949.

¹³⁰ BTS, 4/6/36, Vol. 1, Viljoen/SEA, 2 August 1951.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, Nel/Secretary for External Affairs, 22 November 1950.

¹³² *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, Uys/SEA, 29 June 1955.

¹³³ BTS, 4/6/36, Vol. 3, Uys/SEA, 1 April 1955, pp. 3-4, para. 5.

¹³⁴ Nel, Vol. 3, Memorandum attached to Viljoen/SEA, 27 August 1950.

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Killen and the typist, Miss J.M. Richards, were easier to house and could be accommodated in a hostel.¹³⁶

Today (1995) the South African diplomatic compound is, as it has been for more than a quarter of a century, one of Canberra's showpieces. Containing the chancery and the official residence and taking up some five landscaped acres in the suburb of Yarralumla, it is bordered on three sides by Rhodes Place to the north, State Circle to the east and Perth Avenue to the south; and on the fourth, to the west, by an overgrown lot reserved since 1959 for Pakistan's chancery and official residence¹³⁷ and further down by the grounds of the Commonwealth Club.¹³⁸ Pakistan's vacant lot separates the French and South African compounds and runs from Perth Avenue to the club's grounds. A high wire fence separates the South African and club properties. The side window of the head of mission's office on the first floor of the chancery overlooks the club's tennis court. Though a Golden Cypress (*Cupressus Macrocarpa Brunniana*) hedge next to the fence keeps the court from sight, the sound of racket on ball and the players' merry cries are distracting. In the 1970s, when there was a low fence with a gate, it was but a short walk from the chancery to the club. Now the club can be reached only by a circuitous route of about a kilometre.

Designed in the Cape Dutch townhouse style with a neo-classical front portico, overlooking State Circle and overlooked by the new parliament building on Capital Hill, the chancery is one of the most prominently situated, handsome and admired in Canberra. Its very prominence - it is illuminated at night - would have been embarrassing to the Australian authorities during the years of the Australian-inspired political estrangement between the two countries. Not that the chancery and the residence which predates it by eleven years are universally admired. Thirty years ago a professional architect called the residence 'an inaccurately drawn cardboard backdrop for the finale of a musical comedy about Cecil Rhodes'.¹³⁹ That critic was not

¹³⁵ BTS, S4/7/2/1/5, Viljoen/SEA, 30 June 1950, 'Post Report: Canberra', p. 4.

¹³⁶ It is interesting that the 1950 Post Report does not identify these, referring only to Viljoen's and Nel's accommodation. BTS, S4/7/2/1/5, Viljoen/SEA, 30 June 1950, 'Post Report: Canberra', p. 4. But Australian sources reveal that Killen resided at Lawley House as perhaps also did Miss Richards.

¹³⁷ The then Pakistani Foreign Minister, Manzur Qadir, laid a foundation stone on 13 April 1959. *The Canberra Times*, 11 April 1959.

¹³⁸ The Commonwealth Club was founded in 1955 at the suggestion of the Indian High Commissioner, General K.M. Cariappa, a former Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army (*The Canberra Times*, 22 May 1953) who was its first Chairman. The name refers to the British not the Australian Commonwealth. Cariappa succeeded K.S. Duleepsinhji as Indian High Commissioner in Canberra.

¹³⁹ Boyd, *The Australian Ugliness*, p. 32.

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especially complimentary about the rest of Embassy Row. He argued that countries 'embarked on projects apparently calculated to make Canberra the architectural equivalent of a full-dress diplomatic levee. Unfortunately the falsity of the costumes becomes so apparent in the bright light that the effect is more like a fancy-dress party'.¹⁴⁰

One wonders what he would have made of the architectural discord the original plan for the ground now so harmoniously occupied by the South African chancery would have produced. It had been reserved for the Greek residence and chancery which would then have overlooked the back of the South African residence. The ground was, however, too small for the buildings the Greeks contemplated putting up.¹⁴¹ An interesting feature of Canberra's Embassy Row architecture is that in some cases the chancery is dwarfed by the head of mission's residence. That is certainly true of the Greek, Belgian and French residences in relation to their chanceries which are on the same lots. This suggests that those countries have no real interests in Australia. In the case of South Africa, however, even then struggling for international recognition, the intention was to make the point that it was a country of standing with business to transact in Australia.

In any event, the South African pioneers - Viljoen, Nel, Killen and Miss Richards - would have preferred the fancy-dress to the Cinderella-like working conditions they were required to endure. Such conditions persisted until February 1955 when the chancery relocated to a set of offices designed to the mission's requirements in Industry House, Barton, a building erected by the Associated Chambers of Manufactures of Australia. The building was opened amid fanfare by the Governor-General, Sir William Slim, on 25 November 1954.¹⁴² Apart from the South African High Commission, other diplomatic offices it contained were the Chinese Embassy and the Burmese Legation which had also been accommodated at the Old Community Hospital. According to the 1955 Post report, this was 'the first time since the mission was opened that it ha[d] been properly housed'.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

¹⁴¹ BTS, Hamilton, Vol. III, Hamilton/Scholtz, 20 November 1959.

¹⁴² *The Canberra Times*, 25 November 1954. A sketch of the proposed building had appeared on the front page of *The Canberra Times* on 20 June 1952.

¹⁴³ BTS, S4/7/2/1/5, Uys/SEA, 28 February 1955, 'Post Report : Canberra - 1955', p. 13.

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By then all four had left Australia: Viljoen and Miss Richards in 1951 and Killen and Nel in 1954. Nel, though, identified the Chambers of Manufactures as a potential supplier of office space¹⁴⁴ and was intimately involved in the negotiations with them besides initiating the process leading to Treasury approval for the construction of the residence. Unlike the Australians who, once they had moved into their offices in Cape Town and Pretoria, retained those premises for years, the South Africans experienced six changes of offices before they moved for the seventh and last time to the present chancery in 1968.

As Knowles said, the Australian government assumed responsibility for providing diplomatic missions with accommodation. On arrival in Canberra the South African party occupied a set of four offices in East Block which Viljoen considered 'very suitable for our purposes' and for which no rent was charged.¹⁴⁵ The following February, however, being required to give way to the Prime Minister's department, the South Africans were moved from East Block to five offices on the second floor of East Row, Sydney Building, Civic, a privately owned building leased to the Australian government and sub-let by it. The annual rental payable to the Australian government was £A210 including cleaning charges.¹⁴⁶ Viljoen reported that these offices were 'fairly suitable for our purposes' but lacked heating. He hoped it would not be necessary to move again until the South African government built its own offices.¹⁴⁷

Perhaps because it was dated three months later, at the beginning of the winter, the first Post report was less sanguine, calling the offices 'inadequate from every point of view'. The entrance, for example, was 'most unimposing, between a Greek green-grocer-cafe and a butcher shop. The staircase is of cement, unattractive and steep'.¹⁴⁸ Having to endure the 1950 winter in an unheated office was certainly a mark of the pioneer: 'due to intermittent power failures during the past winter months and the severe cold conditions prevailing, I found it impossible to occupy the office and to carry out my normal duties'.¹⁴⁹ Presumably aware that there would be a comeback Viljoen thereupon and without authorisation bought a kerosene heater.¹⁵⁰ External Affairs queried this purchase in November.

¹⁴⁴ See BTS, 4/6/36, Vol. 1, Nel/SEA, 13 March 1953.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Viljoen/SEA, 3 March 1950.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, Nel/SEA, 3 March 1950.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, Viljoen/SEA, 3 March 1950.

¹⁴⁸ S4/7/2/1/5, Viljoen/SEA, 30 June 1950, 'Post Report: Canberra', p. 13.

¹⁴⁹ BTS, 4/6/36, Vol. 1, Viljoen/SEA, 5 December 1950.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 5 May 1950.

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The ensuing four month correspondence until departmental resistance collapsed and *ex post facto* approval was given for the expenditure (£A11.9.3d), showed Viljoen to be a dab hand at picking his way through bureaucratic thickets. Not that Forsyth and Spies surrendered easily. He clinched the argument with this description:

It was so cold that I had to sit in the room with a heavy overcoat and a hat on. Even then I caught repeated colds, and simply could not carry on. My room was also the reception room for visitors and a climax was reached when a visitor could not remove his coat, and in fact could only stay a few minutes, as the cold in the room was unbearable.¹⁵¹

Two of his staff

also suffered severely, but occupying smaller rooms, they got some benefit from the electric heaters which came on only intermittently. They were, at any rate, able to carry on without their health being affected and there was no essential need for them to entertain visitors in their offices.¹⁵²

If not in respect of his staff, Viljoen had justice on his side because wintertime Canberra is much colder than Pretoria or Cape Town. As he pointed out in the Post report, the average temperature for June and July was 43.7° and 42.7° Fahrenheit respectively.¹⁵³ In addition to electric heaters and his own kerosene heater, his house was said to require forty-two tons of firewood to heat at a cost of £2.10.0d per ton, fires having to be kept going for 'seven months of the year'.¹⁵⁴

Any hope of semi-permanent occupation of the Sydney Building offices was dashed by a fire in the early hours of the morning of 28 December 1950 which completely gutted the South African premises and also the adjacent ones occupied by the Australian Superannuation Board. Viljoen called the fire as a calamity because it 'had destroyed practically all the legation records, and many private papers'¹⁵⁵ including the passports of himself and his wife. This fact was discovered less than a month before their departure from Australia in October of the following year.¹⁵⁶ The fire was among

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 8 February 1951, para. 3.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, para. 5.

¹⁵³ BTS, S4/7/2/1/5, Viljoen/SEA, 30 June 1950, 'Post Report: Canberra', p. 7.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹⁵⁵ *The Canberra Times*, 29 December 1950. For a survey of the damage caused by the fire see BTS, 4/6/36, Vol. 1, Viljoen/SEA, 1 March 1951 and Spies/Secretary to the Treasury and Controller and Auditor-General, 28 March 1951.

¹⁵⁶ BTS, Viljoen, Vol. 7, Nel/SEA, 21 September 1951.

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the most dramatic of the experiences to befall the South African High Commission and Embassy in the four and-a-half decades of their existence to date. It even showed signs of assuming career-damaging proportions.

Between them Nel and Miss Richards had omitted to lock the safe at the close of business the previous day. While the safe's contents were undamaged, its handle had snapped off. The department initially cast about for a scapegoat, giving thought to charging either or both with misconduct. In the end Forsyth accepted Viljoen's recommendation to let the matter rest. In keeping with the paternalistic and authoritarian style of the times Viljoen had said that both officers 'fully appreciate the seriousness of the unfortunate occurrence and I can assure you they have already been severely punished. ... They have learnt their lesson and for the rest of their lives you will find them most careful officers'.¹⁵⁷

Though Viljoen was assured that he and his staff would return to the Sydney Building once it had been rebuilt, it was thought this would take about nine months. Alternative accommodation was, therefore, necessary. The Department of the Interior accordingly found space at the Old Hospital Building, Acton, about 150 yards away from Viljoen's residence, then owned by the Australian National University and scheduled to be taken over by the university. Viljoen reported that 'The building in which the offices are situated is made of wood and was previously the residence of the Matron and Sisters of the Old Community Hospital of Canberra. Thereafter it was the offices of the Australian Department of Information and for a long time until we moved in has been used as a store for superfluous furniture'.¹⁵⁸ In the end the Australian authorities decided not to relocate the High Commission to the Sydney Building after its restoration and it operated rent free out of the Community Hospital Building for the next four years.

The only charge to the South African government was £A50 per annum for electricity, cleaning and a towel service. The High Commission 'improved' the premises by installing Venetian blinds for £A65 and partitioning the Information Officer's office for £A83.¹⁵⁹ When it moved to Industry House the South African Treasury was

¹⁵⁷ BTS, 4/6/36, Vol. 1, Viljoen/SEA, 6 April 1951 and Spies/High Commissioner, Canberra, 19 May 1951.

¹⁵⁸ BTS 4/2/32/2 Vol. 1, Viljoen/SEA, 29 June 1951. (Translation.)

¹⁵⁹ BTS, 4/6/36, Vol. 3, Uys/SEA, 16 February 1955.

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prevailed upon to authorise the donation of the blinds to the ANU as a gesture of good will. In any case, they could not be used at the new offices.¹⁶⁰

The low cost of the Old Community Hospital was seen as its principal advantage. For the premises themselves 'while adequate in terms of space, [were] quite inadequate in terms of fire risk, security, situation and appearance'.¹⁶¹ The location, far from banks, shops, government offices and the post office was a drawback. Even so the High Commission would probably have been prepared to stay there indefinitely but for the ANU's desire to assume control of its property in order to demolish the building and erect a new one suited to its own requirements. That prompted the move to Industry House. When that building was under construction, the Chief Architect of the South African Department of Public Works gave his imprimatur to the proposals for the High Commission's offices, calling them 'very good and worthy of our country'.¹⁶² The annual rental for eight offices for an initial three-year lease was £A1362.2.2d.¹⁶³ When that lease expired in February 1958 the rent was increased to £A2250 per annum or £187.10.0d per month.¹⁶⁴

By the time the High Commission was given notice to quit its offices in Industry House (the Chambers of Manufactures needed the space for their own expansion),¹⁶⁵ the number of offices rented had increased to fourteen and the rental to £A3402.0.0d. At that stage serious consideration was given to the construction of a chancery. One of Hamilton's last acts before his departure for Stockholm in March 1961 was to send Pretoria tentative plans prepared at his request by Malcolm Moir, the architect of the residence, for a chancery in the Cape town-house style. Hamilton mentioned that he had been given confirmation of the informal option Uys had obtained in respect of the site adjoining the back fence of the official residence¹⁶⁶ (which the Greeks thought too small).

Uys, then the Deputy-Secretary in Pretoria, put in a word for the retention of the option, saying that the residence 'was one of the ornaments of the Australian capital

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Scholtz/Secretary to the Treasury, 5 April 1955.

¹⁶¹ S4/7/2/1/5, Nel/SEA, 30 June 1952, 'Post Report: Canberra - 1952', p. 11.

¹⁶² BTS, 4/6/36, Vol. 2, Macdonald/Director, 'Canberra, Australia: Residence of the High Commissioner of the Union', 4 June 1954, p. 9.

¹⁶³ BTS, 4/6/36, Vol. 2, Scholtz/Secretary to the Treasury, 23 July 1954.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. 6, Hamilton/SEA, 2 January 1958.

¹⁶⁵ A subsidiary reason could have been the miscalculation on the part of the owners which led to the High Commission being undercharged in its rent for some years.

¹⁶⁶ BCB, Vol. 9, 15/34, Vol. 1, Hamilton/SEA, 20 February 1961.

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and the Australians were just as proud of it as we were'. The golden opportunity to build a chancery beside it should not be let slip: 'If a nice chancery should be built South Africans who might visit the Australian capital in the distant future might also say it was indeed an intelligent and far-sighted policy to take the opportunity to acquire such a beautiful site'.¹⁶⁷ Some inflation of expectations had occurred since the PWD architect, Macdonald, had inspected the residence site in May 1954. It was his feeling then that the future chancery could be built facing Perth Avenue in front of the house on the same site.¹⁶⁸ That had also been Uys's opinion.¹⁶⁹ Seven years and two further moves¹⁷⁰ lay ahead before the Canberra chancery achieved fruition but its course was set.

Although most of the documentation relating to the construction of the chancery seems to have been destroyed, much of that concerning the residence is intact. It is possible, therefore, to chart the residence's course in detail from the time it was a twinkle in Viljoen's eye in March 1950 until its completion in July 1957. This is not the place to do so - South Africa House, Canberra, must therefore await its Anita Worrall and William Lorimer¹⁷¹ - but enough material is available to support an account of its construction and furnishing for publication, perhaps in the *Canberra Historical Journal*. Diplomatic housing has never loomed large in the consciousness of the citizens of Pretoria or Cape Town. So South Africans might be surprised to hear that the story of the housing of their head of mission in Australia's federal capital forms an integral part of that city's history. If only for that reason, the telling of it is more likely to be of interest to Australian than to South African readers.

In April 1979 the then Ambassador to Australia, A.J. Oxley, referred to an aspect of the residence which has been apparent to its occupants ever since. Responding to a Head Office enquiry he said that 'from outside' it was 'regarded as one of the most beautiful homes in Canberra' and that, again 'from the outside', it looked 'far bigger than it actually is'. But it was 'not well planned for entertaining purposes'

¹⁶⁷ BTS, 4/6/36, Vol. 7, Uys/Steenkamp, 28 March 1961. (Translation.)

¹⁶⁸ It 'is large enough to accommodate a Chancery Block on the Perth Avenue side when such a building is required'. BTS, 4/6/36, Vol. 2, Macdonald/Director, 'Canberra, Australia: Residence of the High Commissioner of the Union', 4 June 1954, p. 5.

¹⁶⁹ BTS, 4/6/36, Vol. 2, Uys/SEA, 10 April 1954 and Uys/SEA, 9 July 1954, p. 2, para. 7.

¹⁷⁰ To Green Square, Jardine Street, Kingston from September 1961 to 1967, thence to 3 Zeehan Street, Red Hill for the balance of 1967 and 1968.

¹⁷¹ Authors of *Highveld - The Story of a House - The Residence of the South African Ambassador to the United Kingdom* (Johannesburg, 1986). The wife of Dr Denis Worrall, Anita Worrall lived in South Africa House, Canberra, during her husband's term as Ambassador to Australia, 1983-84.

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being able to accommodate only about a hundred guests for cocktail parties and fourteen for formal dinners.¹⁷² Although he was unaware of it, these seeming deficiencies were deliberate and accorded with the standards considered appropriate in the early 1950s.

The first of the residence's Chatelaines, Jill Hamilton, called it 'very suitable for entertaining'.¹⁷³ Being able to seat fourteen at dinner was the standard laid down for Australia's Secretary for External Affairs in respect of an official residence to be built for him in 1955. That house was expected to cost between £15 000 and £20 000.¹⁷⁴ Built in 1926, the dining room at the Australian Prime Minister's house, The Lodge, could seat only ten. It was not that South Africa House was cheap to build. At a cost of £SA44 602 17.7d (£A55 753 4.6d) up to the end of February 1960¹⁷⁵ it was not, but catering for the 'cast of thousands' held to require a backdrop by Oxley's time and thereafter, with their inflated standards, would have made it even more costly.

In March 1950 Viljoen recommended the building of a two storey house in the old Cape Dutch style 'with at least four bedrooms with bath rooms, and servants quarters consisting of three bed rooms plus a sitting room'. There would also have to be provision for two garages. He had accordingly 'taken steps to select a suitable building site which will be kept for us until we hear from you whether the Union Government agrees in principle to our own buildings being put up, and whether they agree that both residence and office blocks should be erected on the same plot of ground'.¹⁷⁶ The site he identified was adjacent to the Prime Minister's residence. The Department of External Affairs rejected his proposals on grounds of economy.¹⁷⁷ Some three years passed before Nel, who had acted as High Commissioner from October 1951 when Viljoen left Australia, informed the department that South Africa's mission was the only one of the eighteen in Canberra which had no permanent accommodation for its Head of Mission or office premises.¹⁷⁸ He could not hold out hope of 'obtaining suitable residential premises on a long term lease'. The best

¹⁷² Oxley/SFA, 2 April 1979. Document in the writer's possession.

¹⁷³ *The Advertiser* (Adelaide), 25 November 1959. Her husband indicted in 1993 that they had no problem with the ground floor where the public rooms are situated. Letter, 2 October 1993.

¹⁷⁴ *The Canberra Times*, 15 March 1955. See Scholtz's comments on p. 4 above about a house of that cost in 1957.

¹⁷⁵ BTS, 4/6/36, Vol. 6, Acting Secretary for Public Works/SEA, 14 November 1959 and Snyman/SEA, 16 February 1960.

¹⁷⁶ BTS, 4/6/36, Vol. 1, Viljoen/SEA, 3 March 1950.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, Viljoen/SEA, 3 October 1950.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, Nel/SEA, 13 March 1953, p. 2.

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alternative was to build, in which respect costs varied between £A400 and £A440 per hundred square feet.

It is not clear why this should have aroused departmental interest but Spies wrote back asking for replies to specific questions. Though the department was in no position 'to hold out any hope' that it could buy or build, any proposals it might wish to make would have to reach the Treasury 'in a little more than a month'.¹⁷⁹

So commenced the correspondence which culminated in the Treasury approving in early June 1953 the department's recommendation to apply the £36 000 made available for office and residential accommodation in Buenos Aires, this being insufficient for the purpose, to the erection of a residence for the High Commissioner in Canberra.¹⁸⁰ Nel having proposed it, the amount actually authorised by Treasury was £A35 000 (£SA28 000) to cover 'the total cost of the building, fencing and initial outlay of the gardens'.¹⁸¹ The number and size of 'the reception rooms which would be required in terms of local custom' had earlier been fixed in terms of Nel's response to a departmental query to that effect. Spies had stated the assumption that 'four bedrooms and two bathrooms would be adequate'¹⁸² which Nel confirmed provided the head of mission did not have a large family.

In regard to the reception rooms, Nel said that only the Americans, the Swedes and the British had as yet built their own premises. Other missions had bought houses and had extended their reception areas to suit their requirements. He made his proposals on the basis of discussions with such missions, with a leading local architect and with 'the officer of the British Ministry of Works in charge of building operations of the United Kingdom High Commissioner's offices and residence'. While these would not 'be adequate for a National Day reception attended by approximately four to five hundred guests' - only the American residence was sufficiently large to entertain on such a scale - he proposed

- (a) a dining room measuring 26' x 16'
- (b) a lounge measuring 30' x 18'
- (c) a study measuring 16' x 12'
- (d) a hall measuring 18' x 10'.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, Spies/Acting High Commissioner, Canberra, 31 March 1953.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, Spies/Secretary for Finance, 4 June 1953 and Jooste/Acting Secretary for External Affairs, 8 June 1953.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, Jooste/Acting Secretary for External Affairs, 8 June 1953.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, Spies/High Commissioner, Canberra, 7 May 1953.

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When missions other than the Americans entertained more than two hundred persons, they did so 'at the largest hotel or restaurant'.¹⁸³ These dimensions were not dissimilar either to those of the completed residence:

- (a) dining room : 24' x 15'
- (b) lounge : 33' x 19'
- (c) study : 9'8" x 9'3"
- (d) entrance hall 16' x 12'.¹⁸⁴

or to those indicated for the architect's guidance in mid-1954:

- (a) dining room 18' x 24' 6"
- (b) lounge 20' x 34'
- (c) study 9' 6" x 9' 6"
- (d) hall 14' x 22'.¹⁸⁵

If the dimensions did not experience an escalation, that was not the case with the cost which increased by sixty-three per cent between the time of Nel's first estimate in October 1953 and 16 February 1960 when the High Commission certified that the residence had been completed,¹⁸⁶ from £SA28 000 to £SA44 602 17.7d.

As for the cost of the land, Nel pointed out that there was no freehold in Canberra, only leasehold, properties being leased for ninety-nine years. Lessees paid rental at the rate of two per cent on the unimproved value of the land for the first twenty years. The assessment of value depended on the size of the site and the area in which it fell. The unimproved value of property in areas of interest to South Africa was around £A1500 per acre. Some two acres would be required for which the rental would be around £A60 annually. Rates of 1/2d in the pound were payable - 8d for general rates including garbage services and 6d for water and sewerage. The value for rating was about two-thirds of the unimproved value, or £A1200, putting total annual rates at £A30. Rent and rates combined would therefore amount to £A90.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, Nel/SEA, 22 May 1953, pp. 2, 3.

¹⁸⁴ I am indebted to Mr Martin Boswell, Administrative Officer at the South African High Commission, Canberra, for this information.

¹⁸⁵ BTS, 4/6/36, Vol. 2, 'Canberra: Residence for the High Commissioner for the Union of South Africa. Programme of work proposal to be executed.

¹⁸⁶ BTS, 4/6/36, Vol. 6, Snyman/SEA, 16 February 1960.

¹⁸⁷ BTS, 4/6/36, Vol. 1, Nel/SEA, 22 May 1953, pp. 2, 3.

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Subject to final consultation with it, the department thereupon instructed Nel in early September to 'take the necessary steps to procure a suitable building site.'¹⁸⁸ He reported a month later that after he, Killen and the Chief Government Surveyor in Canberra had inspected eight sites, their final choice had fallen on Block 2, Section 32, Yarralumla, a two and-a-half acre site fronting on Empire Circuit. Rental and rates would come to £A100 annually. While Viljoen's choice next to The Lodge was still available, its main disadvantage was that it had practically no view. The Australian authorities would therefore provisionally reserve Block 2 for the South African residence. The lease terms required a building conforming to local regulations to be erected within three years. A building of the size contemplated would probably take eighteen months. Nel said that the authorities were hopeful that the residence would be in the Cape Dutch style.¹⁸⁹ It was also the local view that the temporary presence of a South African architect would expedite such matters as the appointment of a suitable local architect.¹⁹⁰

Between them Viljoen and Nel, who had no other connection with the residence, recommended its style and the approximate dimensions of its public rooms. Excluding the furnishings it is rather ironic, therefore, that the unique contribution of the man who had every connection with it - he was the head of mission when it was planned and built - was merely to choose its site and therefore, by extension, that of the later chancery. Diplomatic achievement being of an ephemeral nature, this could well be the most important and lasting contribution J.K. Uys made during either of his two terms as South African High Commissioner (1954-57) and Ambassador (1969-71) to Australia. A plaque at the bottom of the residence garden in front of the second willow tree from the corner closest to State Circle records that Robert Menzies planted the tree on 31 August 1959. It would not be inappropriate similarly to commemorate Uys's choice of the site on which the chancery and residence now stand. ('If you would see the man's monument, look around.')¹⁹¹

Uys handed his letter of introduction to Menzies on 11 March 1954. A month later he was reporting on a new site for the residence, Block 6, Section 58, Acton,

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, Scholtz/Acting High Commissioner, Canberra, 11 September 1953.

¹⁸⁹ Menzies himself was supposed to have said later that a residence in the Cape-Dutch style would be an asset to Canberra. BTS, 4/6/36, Vol. 3, Scholtz/Secretary for Finance, 25 August 1955.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, Nel/SEA, 12 October 1953.

¹⁹¹ Inscription to Sir Christopher Wren in St Paul's Cathedral, London, written in Latin by his son.

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which had become available in the meantime.¹⁹² He was satisfied that 'no more suitable site' could be selected. He supplied a description: 'to the South West is the majestic building of the Embassy of the United States of America. ... Bordering on the North Eastern corner, but on a lower elevation, the Greek Legation has obtained a site with an area of approximately 1½ acres.¹⁹³ On the Southern side ... runs Perth Avenue, so that in effect the whole area would be a corner property'. There was also talk 'in certain planning circles' that the new Federal Parliament would be erected on Capital Hill in which event the residence would have a 'ringside seat'. It did, forty years later. The site was big enough (2.9 acres) to permit future expansion of the residence, the building of office premises or a residence for another official or for domestic staff. While there were a number of gum trees on the site, some could be retained to advantage when planning the garden.¹⁹⁴ None, however, survived.¹⁹⁵

Pursuant to Nel's earlier suggestion, the Chief Architect of the Department of Public Works, W.A. Macdonald, who was in Sydney for the Fourth Australian Architectural Convention, twice visited Canberra in May. Before he left South Africa it was agreed at an inter-departmental meeting that the residence would comprise 'a lounge, dining room, study, four bedrooms, two bathrooms, two garages and servant quarters'.¹⁹⁶ Macdonald concurred in Uys's choice of site but felt that the financial provision should be increased from the £SA28 000 recommended originally by Nel to £SA35 000 (£A43 750) *inter alia* because building costs would be £A550 per hundred square feet, not the £A400 to £A440 Nel had predicted.¹⁹⁷

A week later the Minister of Finance approved Forsyth's verbal representations to that effect 'provided the total cost of the residence, servants quarters, garages, central heating, driveways, levelling of grounds, etc., is limited to the increased amount'.¹⁹⁸ Macdonald's visit led to the appointment of Malcolm J. Moir of the Canberra firm Moir and Sutherland as local architect with effect from 2 June 1954.

¹⁹² The boundary between Acton and Yarralumla was readjusted in 1966. Block 6, Section 58, Acton became Block 6, Section 44, Yarralumla. I am indebted to Mr Martin Boswell of the South African High Commission, Canberra, for copies of the relevant correspondence.

¹⁹³ The first documentary reference found to the site of the present South African chancery.

¹⁹⁴ BTS, 4/6/36, Vol. 2, Uys/SEA, 10 April 1954.

¹⁹⁵ I am indebted to Mr Billy Hopkins, Head Gardener at the South African High Commission, Canberra, for this information.

¹⁹⁶ BTS, 4/6/36, Vol. 2, Memorandum dated 26 April 1954 prepared by E.J.L. Scholtz.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, Code telegram No. P.5, High Commissioner, Canberra/SEA, 7 May 1954 and Macdonald/Director, 'Canberra, Australia: Residence of the High Commissioner of the Union', 4 June 1954, p. 3, sect. 2(e).

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, Telex message PR356, 10 May 1954 and Steyn/SEA, 14 May 1954.

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Moir agreed that the building could be erected within a financial provision of £A38 000.¹⁹⁹ Formal application was also made to the Australian Department of the Interior for Block 6.

The next step was for the South African Department of Lands to approve the lease agreement. Uys signed this on 31 August 1954. It took effect on 7 September whereupon an annual rent of £A90 per annum for the first twenty years became payable to which was added another £A90 per annum for water and sewerage charges.²⁰⁰ In 1974 the rent was increased to \$A1600 and in 1994 to \$A14 900. (Decimal coinage was introduced in 1966.) The unimproved value of the land is currently (1994-95) \$A745 000 and the rates \$A6018.4. The water and sewerage charges currently amount to \$A130 (basic charge then 28 cents per kl up to 351 kl, thereafter 64 cents per kl) and \$A460 per annum respectively.²⁰¹

The selection of a builder proved complicated. Six concerns were invited to tender. Four did so including Simmie & Co. which had built the Australian War Memorial, the American Embassy, the Netherlands Chancery and the Institute of Anatomy, and D.C. Smith which had built the Library Annex and the Telephone Exchange.²⁰² Two tenders including Smith's, were invalid because of qualifying clauses inserted by the tenderer. All four grossly exceeded the set amount of £A38 000. The two valid tenders were for £A64 086 and £A64 339 and the invalid ones for £A57 339 and £A63 386. The architect was unable to account for the 'great discrepancy between the tenders and the estimate made in May of last year'.²⁰³ The Department of Public Works believed 'something unusual had occurred'. Its mind turned to the possibility of collusion between the tenderers. The prices quoted were 'highly excessive' and the architect had not furnished 'good reasons' for the large increase. But there was no evidence one way or the other. Clearly, though, it could not recommend that any of the tenders be accepted.²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, Macdonald/Director, 'Canberra, Australia: Residence of the High Commissioner of the Union', 4 June 1954, p. 8, sect. 9.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, Uys/SEA, 14 August 1954; Secretary for Lands/SEA, 19 August 1954; and Uys/SEA, 31 August 1954.

²⁰¹ I am indebted to Mr Martin Boswell of the South African High Commission, Canberra, for this information.

²⁰² BTS, 4/6/36, Vol. 3, Moir/Department of Public Works, 22 February 1955; Uys/SEA, 10 March 1955.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, Moir/Department of Public Works, 9 March 1955.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, Department of Public Works/DEA, 25 March 1955.

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Trying to salvage something from the apparent wreckage Uys and Moir, the architect, had a lengthy meeting on 31 March 1955 on the basis of Moir's proposals of two days previously to the PWD. In essence, these were: (a) abandon the project temporarily; (b) recast it; and (c) treat with the tenderers, commencing with the lowest to eliminate excessively expensive items. Uys reported to Pretoria the next day associating himself with the third proposal but on the assumption that quality would not be sacrificed. 'The impression that the building must create is that everything was made to last for hundreds of years'.²⁰⁵ Moir's subsequent negotiations with D.C. Smith, the lowest tenderer, produced a reduction of £A4279 in the latter's tender, from £A57 339 to £A53 060 (£SA42 448). The PWD's Macdonald found it difficult to reconcile Moir's attitude with the instructions given him: 'the Architect was told to design to a figure of £A38 000 the balance being held for garden development and other contingencies which might arise. You will note that he appears pleased to get down to about £A50 000 which is considerably in excess of £A38 000 although he now refers to it as 'about 14% above the figure used in the estimate'.

Even so, presumably feeling that by that time they had nowhere else to go, Macdonald and his department recommended that the approved amount of £SA35 000 be increased to £SA40 000.²⁰⁶ That was lower than the amended tender. More realistically, with the consent of Eric Louw and the PWD, External Affairs requested Treasury to increase the amount by £SA10 000 to £SA45 000 (£A56 250) which it did.²⁰⁷ The amended tender of £A53 060 (£SA42 448) was subsequently reduced to £A52 930 (£SA42 364) by the proposed use of red instead of green roof tiles and by eliminating the basement boiler room, store and cellar, providing instead for a boiler room in the garage block between the garage and the servants quarters.²⁰⁸ The architect was not told of the £SA2600 reserve.²⁰⁹ Uys's last communication for the year expressed the hope that his next one would report the conclusion of negotiations with D.C. Smith, and the commencement of work or that work would commence soon.²¹⁰

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, Uys/SEA, 1 April 1955. (Translation.)

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, Macdonald/CCB, 23 June 1955, attached to Slater-Kinghorn/SEA, 15 July 1955.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, Scholtz/Director, PWD, 13 July 1955 and Scholtz/Secretary for Finance, 25 August 1955.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, Moir/Uys, 18 October 1955 attached to Uys/SEA, 2 November 1955.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, Uys/SEA, 2 November 1955.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 29 December 1955.

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Dated 13 January 1956, his next report conveyed Smith's confirmation that he would build the residence for £A52 930.²¹¹ The exact date on which building operations commenced is not clear from the file but according to an undated submission from Spies to Eric Louw, it was 'early in February'.²¹² That was almost eighteen months after the lease agreement on the site became operative. Uys was then more than halfway through his three year three month term. Forwarding the architect's first progress report under cover of his letter of 26 March 1956, he reported that the builder had been handicapped from the start by exceptionally heavy rains.²¹³ The significance of that was that unlike in Europe, in Canberra 'bricklayers, carpenters etc. just do not work in the open when it rains'. Indeed, they went on strike when employers threatened to compel them to do so.²¹⁴ The second progress report, dated 30 April, accompanied his letter of 1 May. It was probably typical of Uys that he should have stated in this letter that he was 'on the site every morning before office hours to see for myself how the job is done without in any way interfering with operations'.

Copies of the first and second progress reports are not on the file. This contains the third to the thirteenth reports²¹⁵ as well as the practical completion report dated 6 November 1957 which indicated that the residence had been handed over to the Acting High Commissioner (D.P. Olivier) virtually complete on 15 July but for roller flyscreens, parchment light shades and external lanterns. With the exception of these items the residence was ready for occupation on the handing-over date.²¹⁶ By the date of the practical completion report it already had its first occupants, A.M. Hamilton and his wife and two daughters, who arrived in early September. The Hamiltons held their house-warming party on 20 November: 'One hundred and sixty guests were present, including the Prime Minister, most members of the Cabinet, a number of members of both Houses of Parliament, Australian Government officials and the Diplomatic

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 4, Uys/SEA, 13 January 1956. The building contract was signed in February. See BTS, 4/6/36, Vol. 5, Uys/SEA, 14 May 1957, p. 4, para. 12.

²¹² BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 19, Acting Secretary/Minister, 'Resumé of the Domestic Activities of the Department of External Affairs during the financial year 1955/56', n.d.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, Uys/SEA, 26 March 1956.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 28 August 1956.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.* Moir/High Commissioner, 17 May (3rd), 12 June (4th), 2 July (5th), 24 July (6th), 22 August (7th), 26 September (8th), 15 October (9th), 16 November (10th), 21 December 1956 (11th), 1 February (12th) and 2 April 1957 (13th). Uys's covering letters were dated 22 May, 13 June, 5 July, 25 July, 28 August, 28 September, 18 October, 19 November, 27 December 1956, 9 February and 4 April 1957.

²¹⁶ BTS, 4/6/36, Vol. 6, Moir/High Commissioner, 6 November 1957.

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Corps'.²¹⁷ Many were the 'commendations about the attractiveness of the house and the contribution it has made to the appearance of Canberra'.

Uys had left Australia on 10 June 1957. Three days earlier, *The Canberra Times* published a photograph of him and his wife and daughters against the background of the almost completed house.²¹⁸ At the commencement of his second term (1969-71), that newspaper published an illustrated article on the residence including a ground floor plan. The accompanying photographs showed the front facade and the dining room.²¹⁹ An illustrated article by Eschel Rhoodie in *South African Panorama* of January 1959²²⁰ had included photographs of the rear facade, Hamilton and family relaxing on the stoep, and an interior shot of Mr and Mrs Hamilton in conversation with Robert Menzies.

There remained the garden. Turning the untamed lot into a settled garden was a priority and Hamilton achieved that within two years. His wife said: 'Our garden, a real wilderness when we arrived two years ago, has now become quite an attraction ... my husband had to work and plan for quite a while before the garden took its present shape. Now people are always popping in to see it'.²²¹ Hamilton had told Scholtz a few days earlier: 'South Africa House and the success we have made of our garden develop a lot of good will for South Africa and a friendly impression of our country'.²²² At the end of August 1959 Menzies planted a willow tree in the corner of the garden closest to State Circle. It was altogether typical of the times that the occasion was a private one attended only by Menzies himself and Dame Pattie, the MacDermots (the Canadian High Commissioner, who recited a poem he had written in honour of the occasion), the Hamiltons and their son and elder daughter.²²³ Not even *The Canberra*

²¹⁷ BTS, 4/2/32/1, Vol. 1, Hamilton/SEA, 13 December 1957. See also *The Canberra Times*, 21 November 1957. Tommy Boydell was among the guests. *The Star*, 9 December 1957; also AA, A1361/1, 4/15/37, 'The Hon. Thos. Boydell's tour in Australia - 1957. Second Tour'.

²¹⁸ *The Canberra Times*, 7 June 1957.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 17 June 1969.

²²⁰ 'Union's diplomats in Canberra', pp. 6-7.

²²¹ *The News* (Adelaide), 26 November 1959, interview with Mrs Hamilton.

²²² BTS, Hamilton, Vol. III, Hamilton/Scholtz, 20 November 1959.

²²³ The MacDermots' absent son, Galt, a trained musician who was a student at the University of Cape Town during his parents' posting to South Africa, wrote the music for the world famous rock musical 'Hair'. He is said, *ia.*, to have drawn 'heavily on his knowledge of African rhythms to which he had been exposed as a child in South Africa to create the feeling of freedom for the show's lyrics'. He 'heard "the melodies of the Bantus" in his head, and the score was completed in two weeks'. B.L. Horn, *The Age of Hair: Evolution and impact of Broadway's first rock musical* (New York/Westport, Conn./London, 1991), pp. 27, 28. Years earlier the Australian foreign service officer Stewart

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Times was present to record the ceremony for posterity.²²⁴ Hamilton sent Scholtz a snapshot taken by MacDermot which now reposes on his personal file. He had the bronze plaque which marks the tree cast in Sweden during his term there.²²⁵

Jamieson said of MacDermot himself that he was 'one of those lucky people who can be erudite and human at the same time'. AA, A9421, 9/2/3, Pt. 1, Jamieson/Quinn, 26 November 1951.

²²⁴ Hasluck relates that Menzies was 'allergic to public relations gimmickry'. He did 'in a natural and unpremeditated way' the 'simple and homely things that most public relations men would have planned, contrived and organized' and 'there would not be a photographer in sight. He never had a public relations man on his staff and I have heard him speak with contempt of that particular craft in contemporary Australian politics'. P.M.C. Hasluck, *Sir Robert Menzies* (Melbourne, 1980), p. 28.

²²⁵ A.M. Hamilton, letter, 28 October 1993.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THROUGH EACH OTHER'S EYES

Still a core aspect of a foreign service officer's work abroad, political and economic reporting provides a direct link between modern diplomacy and its immediate ancestor, the diplomacy of the fourteenth and fifteenth century Italian states. In those times the 'overriding importance attached to the quick receipt of news' was the main reason for the establishment of resident Embassies. One of 'the chief functions of the fourteenth century resident ambassador came to be to keep a continuous stream of foreign political news flowing to his home government'.¹ For the most part 'he had to rely on his own wits and industry' to collect it and 'his own judgment to evaluate it'.² The quality of his reporting determined the degree of influence he exercised over policy.³ That has a modern ring to it as well as negative connotations. Sir Nevile Henderson's 'tailored reporting' from Hitler's Germany, what his namesake Sir Nicholas Henderson called 'a study in scarlet for every postwar diplomat', lent encouragement to the policy of appeasement.⁴

Australian representatives were generally prolific and assiduous reporters from South Africa from the late 1940s to the late 1960s. But they may have been outperformed by the Venetian Ambassador in Rome who wrote four-hundred and seventy-two despatches in the twelve months between 1 May 1503 and 30 April 1504. And

if some of these are hasty notes of only three or four lines, others are detailed (as nearly as possible verbatim) accounts of long conversations, or patient, laborious analyses of complicated political imbroglios, or bulging budgets of miscellaneous gossip; so that one wonders how he ever got time to do anything else than listen and write.⁵

¹ Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*, p. 67.

² *Ibid.*, p. 114.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

⁴ 'Sir Nicholas Henderson's valedictory despatch: Britain's decline; its causes and consequences', *The Economist*, 2 June 1979, p. 40. See also Rose, *Vansittart*, pp. 202-03, 206, 227, 233. A.W. Martin gives Robert Menzies's contemporary view of Henderson as 'an extremely clear-headed and sensible fellow with a frank and even breezy method of putting the British view to the Germans'. *Robert Menzies*, p. 234. Anthony Eden, who appointed Henderson, said later: 'It was an international misfortune that we should have been represented in Berlin at this time by a man who, so far from warning the Nazis, was constantly making excuses for them, often in their company'. *The Eden Memoirs: Facing the Dictators* (London, 1962), p. 504.

⁵ Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*, p. 110.

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Besides his regular despatches, a resident Ambassador in Renaissance Italy would from time to time prepare reports on the political situation at his post, 'filling in the background, with special attention to the character and motives of the important persons and factions, summarizing recent developments, indicating future expectations, and sometimes suggesting possible lines of action'.⁶ Modern Ambassadors do the same thereby heightening the sense of continuity between early modern and present day diplomacy. Their interest in minutiae encourages Mattingly in the belief that Renaissance Italian politicians had 'not only an obsessive anxiety about the doings of their contemporaries, not only an almost pathological fear of being surprised, or anticipated or over-reached, but also an insatiable appetite for mere gossip'.

They also had the 'political wisdom' to encourage 'a constant, even if indiscriminate, flow of news. By making the mesh fine, fewer items were likely to escape because the man on the spot missed a significance clear enough to a minister who had the run of dispatches from all over Italy'.⁷

The products of fifteen years of diplomatic reporting on the Australian side and twelve on the South African, some of them lengthy epistles, are too voluminous to be addressed in a single chapter. To do the subject justice would require a separate study. This chapter has the more limited aim of giving perspective to diplomatic reporting by examining the Australian and South African approach to it in the context of their bilateral relations from the 1940s to the 1960s. Apart from that, aspects of it are revealing of the attitudes of the Australian and South African foreign services towards the development of junior personnel. That will be touched on as will the light the Australian reporting throws on aspects of the internal administration of the South African department and some of its personalities. It illuminates hitherto ill-lit corners.

The best contemporary diplomatic reporting provides insights into a country's political history not available elsewhere. That is especially true if the writers' sources were close to the centre of power and willing to share their information. As Mattingly says, 'the art of diplomacy would become impossible if more people knew how to hold their tongues'.⁸ In the year he represented the United States in South Africa (1942-43),

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 114-15.

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American Minister⁹ Lincoln MacVeagh's association with Louis Esselen enriched his reporting. Esselen was unquestionably Smuts's right hand man, more influential than any cabinet minister and (inside the country) with John Martin, the closest to what passed for a Smuts' confidant.¹⁰ Without him, MacVeagh's reports would have been less deserving of the State Department commendations they received.

It has been said that of all American heads of mission in South Africa, MacVeagh stood out 'for combining perceptive observation and diligent scholarship with literary skill'.¹¹ He had a literary background and was a successful literary agent and publisher. He founded and was President of Dial Press from 1925 to 1931. He was respected in the State Department 'for both the quality and the wit of his reporting'¹² which was held to be 'profound and interesting'.¹³ Franklin Delano Roosevelt had rewarded him with his first diplomatic post, Minister to Greece, after the 1932 presidential campaign. He also assisted with the 1936 campaign. He left South Africa in late 1943 to take up appointments to the Greek and Yugoslav governments in exile. He was later Ambassador to Greece,¹⁴ Portugal and Spain. He retired in 1953 and died in 1972.

Enjoying access to the president, he regularly wrote Roosevelt long personal letters from his posts, about seventy in all.¹⁵ Five from South Africa were published in the year of his death in the *Munger Africana Library Notes*, No. 12, March 1972, taking up the whole issue.¹⁶ The 1940s State Department described his fifth and final letter as 'a brilliant summary of South Africa and the South Africans'.¹⁷ In it he put Louis Esselen among 'the best of the real Boers, trained to the saddle, the gun and the

⁹ It was only after the war that the United States and South African Legations were upgraded to Embassies.

¹⁰ Smuts's English friend Margaret Gillett was probably closer to him than either of these.

¹¹ *Munger Africana Library Notes*, No. 12, March 1972, pp. 5-6.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹³ USNA, RG 59, DS 848A.00/647-1/2, Note, Freeman Matthews/Stettinius, 30 October 1943. See also J.O. Iatrides, ed., *Ambassador MacVeagh Reports: Greece, 1933-1947* (Princeton, NJ., 1980), p. 383.

¹⁴ References to his activities there in connection with the so-called 'Truman Doctrine' in the late 1940s are contained in J.O. Iatrides, *Greece in the 1940s: A Nation in Crisis* (Hanover, US/London, 1981) and H. Jones, *"A new kind of war": America's Global Strategy and The Truman Doctrine in Greece* (New York/Oxford, 1989). See particularly Iatrides, *Ambassador MacVeagh Reports*, p. ix.

¹⁵ Iatrides, *Ambassador MacVeagh Reports*, p. x. He also corresponded with Eleanor Roosevelt and her brother.

¹⁶ Nine of his letters from Greece in the 1930s are reproduced in E.B. Nixon, ed., *Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969), Vol. II, pp. 6-7, 94-97, 172-75, 176-77, 301-05 and Vol. III, pp. 26-28, 223-27, 284-89, 319-23.

¹⁷ USNA, RG 59, DS 848A.00/647-1/2, Note, Freeman Matthews/Stettinius, 30 October 1943.

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frontier, with clear eyes still, and clear heads'. He also called Dr Malan 'the Satan of the Dutch Paradise Lost', a 'figure whose eventual comeback is so possible as to be dreaded still'.¹⁸ Even so, because of his reliance on Esselen as a source, MacVeagh tended to underplay the significance of the Afrikaner opposition to the Smuts government.¹⁹ Based on Esselen's comments, his descriptions of cabinet members were perceptive and amusing:

The Government of South Africa is today, as Louis ESSELEN complained to me only yesterday, 'a one-man show'. The General's associates are all poor politicians with brains, like Hofmeyr, or good politicians without, like Steyn; or they are anachronisms, like STALLARD, dodos, like Collins, noisy blunderers, like CONROY, or infant prodigies 'with no language but a cry,' like WATERSON or LAWRENCE. Not to be forgotten, too, is Major Piet VAN DER BYL, in connection with whom it is said that Smuts outdid the Roman Emperor, since the latter made his horse a Consul but Smuts made his clotheshorse a Minister. All these gentlemen, as Esselen has said to me, run to Smuts for their decisions, but cooperate together not at all.²⁰

Later MacVeagh quoted the Indian High Commissioner, Sir Shafa'at Ahmed Khan, to the effect that while socially charming most of Smuts's Cabinet Ministers were 'nonentities'.²¹ This rounded off a picture with which informed modern observers will not disagree. It is not farfetched to suggest that MacVeagh's reporting contained hints of the electoral disaster which befell the Smuts government five years later. Writing of the depressing 'picture of his party's future' that Esselen had drawn in one of their last conversations, MacVeagh had him saying: 'we must do something - a lot of things - constructive in this country, and that soon, or people will turn against us'.²² It was advice Smuts did not heed.

Suggestive of Australian introspection, P.G. Edwards holds that bygone diplomatic reporting illuminates present-day concerns, the theme of his 1992 retrospective article²³ on his 1979 book *Australia through American eyes 1935-1945: Observations by American Diplomats*. (St. Lucia, Qld., 1979.) He feels that much of the American

¹⁸ *Munger Africana Library Notes*, No. 12, March 1972, pp. 41, 42-43.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

²⁰ USNA, RG 59, DS 848A.00/654, MacVeagh/Secretary of State, No. 370, 9 November 1943, p. 2; Tothill, *The 1943 General Election*, p. 134.

²¹ USNA, RG 59, DS 848A.00/654, DS 848A.00/600, MacVeagh/Secretary of State, No. 173, 22 April 1943, enclosure, 15 February 1943).

²² *Ibid.*, DS 848A.00/654, MacVeagh/Secretary of State, No. 370, 9 November 1943, pp. 2, 3.

²³ P.G. Edwards, 'Australia Through the Eyes of American Diplomats in the 1930s and 1940s', *Australian Studies Association*, No. 18, October 1992, pp. 16-22.

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reporting on the Australia of the 1930s and 1940s prefigured the 'navel-picking' domestic debates of recent years. It was 'sad', therefore, that the reports were 'addressed to the White House and State Department in Washington, not to the Australian people who needed to hear these injunctions'. We can only wonder, he concludes somewhat wistfully, 'what reports are being sent at this moment' by the 'various embassies and high commissions in Canberra to their home capitals'.²⁴

South African journalist W.A. Bellwood²⁵ wondered the same about diplomatic reporting from 1970s South Africa. He argued in a newspaper article that the press reported events and 'made criticisms openly'. What they said was 'available to anybody'. But that was not the case with reports 'which go out from diplomats'. If the Vorster government complained about the accuracy of press reporting, how much 'more uninformed and misleading' might some of the diplomatic reports be?²⁶ What gave rise to that was one of Lord Harlech's pre-1943 general election despatches²⁷ then newly released from the thirty-year rule. This contradicted Bellwood's memories of the period and of some of its personalities.

A former Secretary of State for the Colonies (1936-38), Lord Harlech succeeded Sir William Clark as British High Commissioner in 1941. Bellwood challenged his views: 'What the British War Cabinet was told by Lord Harlech ... has largely an academic interest now. Yet the opinions expressed in his confidential report for 1943, just made public, are bound to cause many raised eyebrows; and perhaps some uneasiness about the contents of other secret reports from diplomats'.²⁸

What irritated Bellwood was Harlech's reference to the unpopularity of the Smuts government's war-time domestic measures, and especially, his description of J.H. Hofmeyr as 'a lonely and unsympathetic figure, contemptuous of the amenities of friendly intercourse and altogether lacking a personal following'.²⁹ Bellwood said that was 'contentious and superficial'. And if the government's policies were unpopular,

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

²⁵ Whom Louis Esselen offered the post of government Information Officer at the outbreak of war, not knowing that Smuts wanted A.N. Wilson, his friend John Martin's personal assistant, to have it. See Tothill, *The 1943 General Election*, p. 109.

²⁶ W.A. Bellwood, 'Diplomatic aim was not so clear', *The Star* (Johannesburg), 11 January 1972.

²⁷ PRO, DO 35/1119/G-581/18, Despatch from Lord Harlech, 4 June 1943.

²⁸ *The Star* (Johannesburg), 11 January 1972.

²⁹ PRO, DO 35/1119/G. 581/18, 4 June 1943, p. 3, para. 12. Alan Paton's biographer, P.F. Alexander, writes of Hofmeyr that he 'had virtually no understanding of or sympathy with other human beings'. *Alan Paton: A biography* (Cape Town & Oxford, 1995 (1994)), p. 185.

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Smuts had won an overwhelming victory at the 1943 general election. So they could not have been as unpopular as all that. Events had, therefore, done 'nothing to show that Lord Harlech's observations were very perceptive'.³⁰

Bellwood even sprang to the defence of Piet van der Byl, Deneys Reitz's successor as Minister of Native Affairs. Harlech had said that his appointment 'confirmed most people's worst fears' and that as Minister 'he had made a bad beginning'. He was 'quite incapable of understanding the implications of policy' and had 'More than once foolishly played up to the race prejudice of the Opposition'. He had also 'gratuitously confirmed the Government's adherence to the general policy of "segregation" which General Smuts himself only a year before had declared to be hopelessly out of date'.³¹ For Bellwood, that was just not true. Van der Byl, 'probably the most under-estimated man in Smuts's Cabinet', was 'a shrewd and practical Minister whose admiration for and devotion to his Chief was such that he would not dream of flying in the face of policy laid down by Smuts'.

If Bellwood thought Harlech's despatch was uninformed, he would presumably have been shocked by Esselen's views as MacVeagh reported them to Washington.

It must be said that the Australian reporting did not in general testify to inside information, and was not of the same quality, literary or otherwise, as Lincoln MacVeagh's or Lord Harlech's. It was also less incisive than the despatches P.G. Edwards included in his *Australia through American eyes*. Edwards said of the Americans (p.19) that they 'cultivated good sources of information. Arthur Calwell³² often leaked Cabinet secrets' to their legation. Towards the end of the period the British High Commissioner in South Africa, Sir John Maud, was an interpreter of events for his Australian colleague, O.L. Davis. Davis would interview him from time to time, reporting what he gleaned to Canberra.

Though Maud enjoyed better access to South African politicians, it was another matter how good an analyst he was. His strong political and humanistic convictions distorted his perspectives. In his memoirs Maud himself quoted Paul Sauer to the effect that he was 'the most intelligent man' the United Kingdom had ever sent to rep-

³⁰ My MA demonstrated, I believe convincingly, that the 1943 victory was a contrived one which did not reflect the government's true standing in the country. The 1948 result reflected that better.

³¹ DO 35/1119/G. 581/18, 4 June 1943, p. 4, para. 18.

³² Minister for Information; from 13 July 1945 Minister for Immigration.

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resent it in South Africa but no-one had done bilateral relations more harm.³³ Sole who was present on the occasion recorded the incident and its immediate aftermath in some detail in a letter to his parents.³⁴

With the possible exception of Stirling and Dr Malan³⁵ Australian representatives may not, in fact, have established close relations with any of the South African Prime Ministers of the time or their ministerial colleagues. Most National Party Cabinet Ministers were probably unfamiliar with the role of diplomats and didn't like them anyway. At least Ministers and other prominent Afrikaners lacked Menzies's rapport with diplomats. Thus Davis recorded Mordekhai Nurock, the Israeli Chargé d'Affaires, telling him that de Wet Nel, the Minister of Bantu Affairs, and one of his officials had attacked him 'with all the fervour of pulpit orators' over the attitude of the South African Jewish community. They accused it of 'absorbing English ideas' instead of supporting the National Party point of view. They seemed to assume, Nurock said, that he was 'anti-British and did not know that he had spent most of his life in the British Colonial Service'.³⁶

Reporting the view of his Commonwealth colleagues in 1960, Davis said 'access to the Prime Minister was a rare privilege obtained only after much pressure'.³⁷ That may have been after Verwoerd gained experience. For, as Acting Australian High Commissioners, Hugh Gilchrist and Lionel Phillips seem to have obtained interviews with him without difficulty, the former within three weeks of his becoming Prime Minister and the latter six months later.³⁸ In his time Malan had received Quinn and Kelly.³⁹ As Minister of Native Affairs in 1951 Verwoerd had been accompanied on his first official visit to the Transkei and Ciskei by T.W.L. MacDermot and M.H. Marshall,

³³ J.P.R. Maud, *Experiences of an Optimist* (London, 1981), p. 94.

³⁴ Sole *Reminiscences*, pp. 257-58. Sole considers Maud to have been 'the outstanding intellect' among foreign Ambassadors in South Africa at the time. He says Maud was reported to have drafted Macmillan's 'winds of change' speech in Cape Town on 3 February 1960, an honour Maud does not claim for himself. See *Experiences*, p. 87.

³⁵ Malan was on sufficiently good terms with Stirling to write him a four page letter in his own hand on the occasion of the latter's transfer to The Hague in 1950. Stirling, *On the Fringe of Diplomacy* pp. 52-53.

³⁶ AA, A1838/1, 201/2/5, Pt. 7, Memo. 450, Davis/DEA, 24 September 1959, Record of conversation Davis/Nurock, 23 September 1959.

³⁷ AA, A1838/2, 201/11/1, Pt. 3, Memo. 323, Davis/DEA, 6 July 1960.

³⁸ See AA, A1838/2, 852/10/2/3 Pt. 6, Annex to Memo. 578, Gilchrist/DEA, 29 September 1958 and A9421/1, 202/1, Pt. 1, Memo. 122, Phillips/DEA, 7 March 1959.

³⁹ AA, A1838/2, 916/1/2, I. 6880, 12 May 1952. See also handwritten notes by Forsyth and Taljaard on BTS, 130/10, Vol. 1, Quinn/SEA, Cape Town, 23 April 1952. It may have been Taljaard's idea that Malan receive them.

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respectively Canadian High Commissioner and Acting Australian High Commissioner. (See pp. 165-66 above.) And Davis had a relaxed enough relationship with N. Diederichs, P.M.K. le Roux and B.J. Schoeman to have them attend a costume party he gave in March 1960.⁴⁰

Also suggestive of some intimacy was Moodie's report on his first call on Prime Minister B.J. Vorster in 1972. Moodie said Vorster talked about previous Australian heads of mission 'displaying some familiarity in the process; including Colonel Hodgson whom he described as "quite a card".⁴¹ Gilchrist, however, conceived an active dislike for Eric Louw which was reflected in his reporting. Louw was for him 'a sour, suspicious and pompous little man'.⁴² He said recently that Louw was the only South African politician for whom he felt 'any dislike'. He considered him 'mean and devious'.⁴³

Munger mentions a complaint voiced by most diplomatic missions in the mid-1960s that they could not 'get to know South African officials as individuals'. Though there were exceptions, the general rule was for them to keep their distance. Officials and prominent Nationalists accepted invitations, yet a formal Embassy dinner could pass 'with precious little real conversation'. Even Maud had 'commented on how little serious conversation he had with South African officials until the end of his tour'. Munger felt that the reserve was 'not so much cold rigidity on the part of Afrikaners as it is their concept of diplomacy'. Citing a Cape backbencher, he thought another reason was lack of fluency in English on the part of an individual or his wife.⁴⁴ That would not have applied to Cabinet Ministers. In fact, Stirling commented on the fluency in English of the 1948 Cabinet.⁴⁵

Besides the limitations resulting from the above factors, the Australians were structured in their reporting, doing it within a tripartite framework: formal despatches from the head of mission to the Minister of External Affairs (ministerial despatches) or, between 1948 and 1951, to the Secretary of the Department (departmental des-

⁴⁰ A1838/2, 774/1, Pt. 2, J.L. Chapman, 'Report on Visit to Bloemfontein, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, March 1960', p. 1.

⁴¹ AA, A9421/1, 201/1, Pt. 1, C.T. Moodie, Record of conversation Moodie/Vorster, 27 September, 1972, p. 3, para. 10. Vorster had been only a backbencher during Hodgson's term.

⁴² AA, A/1838/2, 201/10/1, Pt.2, Memorandum Gilchrist/Rowland, South Africa: Commonwealth Relations, 5 November 1959, para. 5.

⁴³ H. Gilchrist, letter, 15 December 1994, para. 12.

⁴⁴ Munger, *South African Foreign Policy*, pp. 69-71.

⁴⁵ A4231/2 Pretoria 1948, Ministerial Despatch No. 28/48, 14 September 1948, p. 5.

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patches)⁴⁶ which were gradually displaced by memoranda⁴⁷ to the department. Whatever their file numbers the memoranda were also numbered consecutively, much as in the case of incoming and outgoing cables.⁴⁸ As the Australians gained experience of diplomacy, the requirement of regular formal despatches (which they would have taken over from the British) was relaxed. After Knowles and Stirling most reporting was done less formally by way of memoranda or cables including weekly or fortnightly summaries of events.

The latter were despatched as 'Savingsgrams' meaning that they were encoded as if they were cables but despatched in the diplomatic bag or airmail. In the early years, the summaries reproduced the regular bulletins of the State Information Office. In the sense that they covered the main points, the summaries could be used today to construct a political history of the country in the 1950s much as E.A. Walker based sections of his *History of Southern Africa*⁴⁹ on *The Round Table*. Then there were cabled reports in respect of more urgent and sensitive matters and sometimes cabled and written reports on the same subject. The coverage of what Davis called 'African riots at Sharpeville and Langa' in March 1960 involved both.

As reporters the Australians outdid the South Africans in volume and in variety. Theirs was an information-gathering exercise in accordance with diplomatic tradition. What lay behind it was the perceived need to formulate 'a coherent ... foreign policy based upon accurate and informed reports from overseas posts and skilled correlation in the Department in Canberra'.⁵⁰ At any rate, that was the theory. They could not count automatically on receiving the British High Commission's reports because South Africa was still a member of the Commonwealth. They had therefore usually to rely on their own efforts. The occasions they were shown British reports were supposedly on an eyes only basis (which did not prevent them from making copies to send to Canberra).

⁴⁶ Apart from the file numbers they carried according to subject, the despatches were identified as such, eg., Despatch No. 6/56, 7th April, 1956. A note appended to the list of contents in the 1951 volume of despatches from South Africa reads: 'Prior to August, 1951, all despatches arriving in External Affairs were divided into either Ministerial or Departmental. As from 1st August this distinction was abolished and a new series was commenced'.

⁴⁷ Minutes in South African terminology.

⁴⁸ See Chapter One, p. 59.

⁴⁹ See, eg., the Third Edition. London, 1957. (New impression with corrections 1962).

⁵⁰ 'The External Affairs Cadet Scheme', *Current Notes*, Vol. 20, No. 7, 1949, p. 808.

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However British officials, especially Maud, had no objection to having their brains picked (indeed, it was mentioned in the Introduction that that formed part of Davis's instructions.) It was Gilchrist's practice to pass despatches from Australia's Asian missions and 'political intelligence bulletins on Asian developments' to the South African department's Political (East) Section.⁵¹ Canberra seems to have concurred with this example of practical Commonwealth co-operation.

In retrospect, a useful aspect of Australian reporting was the practice, evident also in Canberra, of recording conversations with contacts and informants on a specially designed form. That way their interlocutors are easily identifiable as well as what was said. The South Africans sometimes did that too but in a less structured way. Some of the records are illustrative of why diplomats attend social functions. (Refer pp. 332-33 below to Uys's view).⁵² Gilchrist's visit to Durban in July 1957 to attend the Governor-General's annual banquet for the diplomatic corps produced *inter alia* the record of a conversation with Walter Crouch, a young Sydney journalist who was sub-editor on *The Sunday Tribune*.⁵³ (See Chapter Four.) Crouch, 'a decent lad with a reasonable standard of professional ethics' and his wife 'said frankly that they detested South Africa and would be glad to be out of it soon'.

According to Crouch (who at least seemed even-handed in his criticism), whites in the Union 'refused to look realities in the face', 'took refuge in slogans', were 'soft and gutless' and 'so corrupted by the easy life provided by Native servants that they were unwilling to make any adaptations which might threaten this life of comparative ease'. Natal Indians were 'not particularly scrupulous as to how they made their money (e.g. by chiselling the poor-living native); few made any decent contribution to civic affairs; on the whole they were limp and unreliable people'. The 'more-British-than-the-British' attitude of some Natalians 'also irritated him; some of them were not South African in their outlook at all, but English residents in the Union; they carped at the Government but contributed little towards a solution of the country's problems; and this played into the hands of the extreme Nationalists'.

⁵¹ AA, A1050/2, 201/8, Memo. 401, Gilchrist/DEA, 9 August 1957.

⁵² See, eg., the records of O.L. Davis's and R.L.C. Cotton's conversations with A.M. Hamilton and N.P. van Heerden, respectively. AA, A9421, 221/1, Record of conversation Davis/Hamilton, 16 November 1961 and A9421/1, 202/1, Pt. 1, Record of conversation Cotton/Van Heerden, 21 August 1970.

⁵³ AA, A1838/1, 201/10/6, Pt. 1, Record of conversation Gilchrist/Crouch, attached to Memo. 367, Gilchrist/DEA, 19 July 1957.

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Piet Cillié, Editor of *Die Burger*, was later a favourite source as was Stanley Uys, Political Correspondent of the *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg). As late as September 1959 Uys was saying it was possible 'South Africa might never become a republic'.⁵⁴ He was also one of the sources for Davis's reporting on the disturbances of March 1960. Davis said that the information and views contained in his first cables on the subject

were based substantially on press reports appearing in the English-language press of Cape Town; on conversations with Mr. Stanley Uys, correspondent of the Johannesburg 'Sunday Times'; on lengthy discussion with both the United Kingdom Deputy High Commissioner and the United States Ambassador; and the statements by the Prime Minister in Parliament and the debates in the House.⁵⁵

Cillié (an exception to Australian lack of access to purveyors of inside information) supplied such titbits as 'Smuts was a much stronger and more determined man than any of the present regime. He had not hesitated to shoot down even Whites where law and order was at stake'; Verwoerd was 'a brilliant mind but unfortunately ... relied solely on intellectual processes and never listened to his heart'; Malan 'was not a great brain but ... a great character'; Strijdom was 'not Prime Minister material';⁵⁶ and Eric Louw 'preferred to be disliked rather than liked'.⁵⁷ The most frequently cited source in Davis's time, though, was Sir John Maud, the British High Commissioner and Ambassador (1959-63).

Retired Chief Tax Commissioner L.S. Jackson who toured South Africa for three months in 1952-53 as a member of the Australian bowling team gave an interesting if unorthodox perspective to the value of Australian reporting from South Africa in the early 1950s. He denigrated the High Commission's capacity, expressing doubt that 'with its limited contacts and small staff' it could supply 'the reliable picture of current S.A. affairs' that was available in South African newspapers, *The Times* (London) and *The Round Table*. In respect of the first-mentioned, Jackson thought an External Affairs officer 'could review and pot these weekly for you [the Department of

⁵⁴ AA, A1838/2, 201/11/1, Pt. 3, Record of conversation Davis/Uys, attached to Memo. 449, Davis/DEA, 24 September 1959.

⁵⁵ AA, A9421/1, 202/7/1, Memo. 140, Davis/DEA, 25 March 1960.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, Record of conversation Davis/Cillié, 27 January 1960, attached to Memo. 71, Davis/DEA, 8 February 1960. He did not say this of Strijdom in his 25 August 1958 leading article on the occasion of the latter's death. See P.J. Cillié, 'n Held is ons ontval' (A hero is lost to us), *Tydgenote* (Contemporaries) (Cape Town, 1980), pp. 48-50.

⁵⁷ AA, A1838/1, 201/1/2, Pt. 3, Record of conversation Davis/Cillié, 17th May 1960.

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External Affairs] if filed at the office of the South African High Commissioner'. Otherwise, the Australian High Commission could do that in South Africa. *The Times* contained 'much interesting comment on S.A. Affairs', while *The Round Table* usually put 'controversial matters in their proper perspective'.⁵⁸

The file does not indicate what gave rise to this or how it was received. But Jackson's views link up with the comments of that better placed and more informed critic of Australian reporting in general, Walter Crocker. The cynical, cost-cutting Crocker who put an end to National Day receptions at his missions only to find the practice revived by his successors,⁵⁹ rightly says that much reporting is 'superficial and copied from the local newspapers or diplomatic gossip and has an insufficient basis of real knowledge or grasp'.⁶⁰ Much Australian and South African reporting over the period falls into that category. There was a further dimension, especially to the Australian reporting:

Ambassadors going newly to a post, especially if on their first appointment or two as head of Mission, report as though they had arrived there like Columbus in the New World, discovering the country concerned and that nothing had been known about it before. ... The system of promotion encourages it as officers feel that their standing is related to the volume of paper bearing their name.⁶¹

If not in the Crocker sense, some of Uys's reports from 1950s Canberra are certainly attention-getters today.⁶² They tend to confirm that he was out of his depth in the diplomatic milieu. Consider his comments on the attitude of the Australian government towards the withdrawal of the South African delegation from the tenth session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1955:

it will interest the department to know that the day after the reception of the report of the Union's decision, and on the same day that the State Information Office's telegram with the statement of the Honourable the Prime Minister was received here, to wit 11 November (your telegram was not yet to hand) I attended a reception at the Swedish Legation in celebration of the King of Sweden's birthday and met the Right Honourable the Prime Minister, Mr Menzies, there. ...

⁵⁸ AA, A1838/T204, 201/10/11/3, 'Extract from letter dated 24.6.53 from Mr L.S. Jackson'.

⁵⁹ Crocker, *Australian Ambassador*, p. 46.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

⁶² Refer to R.F. Botha's comment in Chapter Four on the pipe-spark-induced hole in one of Uys's despatches.

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The Prime Minister, and I would say he is the highest authority in this country, completely unsolicited and unexpectedly referred to what had happened in New York. With striking emphasis he said that they (Australia) supported us and left it at that. I thanked him then and there just by saying 'Thank you, Sir.' The discussion then switched to the coming election here in Australia and comment that Mr Menzies made in that regard, especially about the Leader of the Opposition's election promises, appeared the next day in the press by way of a release. I mention this to show that even Ministers speak easily here and that I am therefore sorry that I did not make use of the occasion to ask the Prime Minister what he thought of the Union's action in New York. But as already mentioned, the Prime Minister disclosed unasked that he was completely satisfied with Australia's vote against the resolution in question. And, if I can help it, I do not speak of political and official matters when I meet members of the government at functions. If they raise such questions first, that is naturally their affair.⁶³

That defeats the purpose of attending receptions. (See Sir Rodric Braithwaite's comment in the Introduction and the reference above to Cotton's conversation with Van Heerden.) The Belgian and Brazilian Ministers⁶⁴ were less inhibited. Both raised the walkout with Uys at receptions, the former at the Swedish reception and the latter a few days later. Uys may have restricted his policy of self-denial to Cabinet Ministers. Even so, that was to pass up a golden opportunity to give and receive information.

Hamilton was more sophisticated. His personal letters to Jooste - one to Louw - on his contacts with Robert Menzies were unquestionably attention-getters.⁶⁵ After all, how many heads of mission have the opportunity to commence a letter to their Foreign Minister: 'In the ten months that we have been here my wife and I have been fortunate in developing a friendly and informal relationship with the Australian Prime Minister and Dame Pattie Menzies. Lately we have been exchanging visits on Sunday evenings at our houses and last Sunday Mr Menzies and Dame Pattie had an informal supper with us'.⁶⁶ The letters to Jooste support the impression that the Hamiltons and the Menzies enjoyed a relationship of some intimacy. With exceptions, including the light they throw on the private Menzies, that is perhaps of more interest at this remove

⁶³ BCB, Vol. 6, 8/0, Vol. II, Uys/SEA, 30 November 1955. (Original in Afrikaans.)

⁶⁴ *ie.* the diplomatic rank Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary. Ministers head Legations, Ambassadors Embassies.

⁶⁵ The letters to Jooste that came to the writer's notice in the South African Archives were dated 10 March 1959 (BCB, 4/2/32/1, Vol. 1); 4 August 1959 (BCB, Vol. 12, 25/11); 22 April 1960 (BCB, Vol. 20, 32/13); 21 October 1960 (BCB, Vol. 5, 6/10 (S)). There was one letter to Louw dated 31 July 1958 (BTS, 4/2/32/1, Vol. 1) which Louw had passed to the Prime Minister (Strijdom) and a minute Hamilton addressed to the department on 27 October 1960 (BCB, Vol. 6, 8/0, Vol. III).

⁶⁶ BTS, 4/2/32/1, Vol. 1, Hamilton/Louw, 31 July 1958.

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than their content. An exception is the reference in the letter to Louw that when Menzies retired as Prime Minister he would be 'very tempted' to take the High Commissioner's post in South Africa. In the face of Hamilton's scepticism he said 'he was very interested in our affairs and ... felt that in such a post he could be of service to both our countries'. He had mentioned that previously.

Of course nothing came of it but what prevents us from dismissing the matter out of hand is Menzies's claim years earlier that the newly-established Australian legation in Washington was so important that he contemplated resigning as Prime Minister in 1940 to head it.⁶⁷ R.G. Casey was appointed instead. (Australian politics requires from those familiar with (white) South African politics a certain suspension of disbelief. No doubt *vice versa*.)⁶⁸ Another point of interest in the same letter is that Menzies believed 'a great mistake had been made in allowing India to maintain its Commonwealth association in 1949' (*ie.*, when it became a republic). In retrospect, however, perhaps Hamilton's most interesting personal letter, dealing as it did with a variety of subjects including the choice of the site for the chancery, was addressed neither to Jooste nor Louw, but to E.J.L. Scholtz.⁶⁹

The way the originals of the formal Australian despatches are preserved - in bound volumes under the same general series number (A4231) - makes them readily accessible to modern researchers. (The rumour that the volumes in the series were discovered by chance in a locked room in the Department of Foreign Affairs turns out to be just that.)⁷⁰ A list of formal Australian despatches from South Africa over the period 1946 to 1964 is given in Appendix V below. That they are kept together in the Australian Archives while the South African despatches, unindexed, are scattered over a multitude of files contributes to the impression of greater volume. This writer is in little doubt, however, that the Australian reports were indeed more numerous besides being more focused and better structured. If the South Africans were less focused and structured, that could have been because they tended to view their reporting not so much as information-gathering but as a ritual to which they were obliged to submit.

⁶⁷ Edwards, *Prime Ministers and Diplomats*, p. 121; N. Harper, *A great and powerful friend: A study of Australian American relations between 1900 and 1975* (St. Lucia, Qld., 1987), p. 87; and AA, A3299/1, Folder 1, Notes on the news by Prof. Fred Alexander, 1.11.72.

⁶⁸ See, *eg.*, R.W. Parsons, 'South African Affairs: An Impression', *The Australian Outlook*, Vol. 6, No. 1, March 1952, p. 40.

⁶⁹ BTS, Hamilton, Vol. III, Hamilton/Scholtz, 20 November 1959.

⁷⁰ Ms Moira Smythe, letter, 23 May 1995.

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Information-gathering was not mentioned in the reporting guidelines Forsyth issued in October 1949.⁷¹ What was required from missions was 'analysis and appreciation of events in the light of their international importance and relation to the Union's interests'. Commonwealth Relations Office telegrams and press reports satisfied the department's need for background information. The guidelines were not meant to 'discourage the submission to Head Office of useful information'. Their purpose was rather to bring about 'a better classification of reports and more precision and brevity in their preparation'. Reports should 'trace important worthwhile opinions or developments rather than actual events'. These should be analysed 'in the light of their international importance and relation to the Union's interests'. Reports should be 'in summary form', 'as concise as possible' with individual subjects 'dealt with in separate Minutes'.

In the result, South African researchers into aspects of Australian history will not learn much from their diplomats' contemporary reporting. South Africans who want to 'pin down' Australia will have to fall back on such works as D.H. Lawrence's *Kangaroo* (written during ten weeks in the country in 1922) and E.E. Kisch's *Australian Landfall*.⁷² One reader believed Kisch's book provided 'as much insight into [Australian] society' as the first-mentioned 'and more laughs'.⁷³ Nor should John Bryson's *Evil Angels*⁷⁴ about the Chamberlain case be overlooked. One will therefore never know what the South Africans made of the Orr case, that most interesting and perhaps uniquely Australian phenomenon. (Not its basic ingredient - a professor accused by a female student and her father of initiating a sexual relationship with her - but the way it developed.) It commenced in Tasmania in 1955, resonating later not only throughout Australian academia in the late 1950s and early 1960s, but among the public at large. It even achieved international dimensions - there was for some years an academic boycott of the Philosophy Department at the University of Tasmania where Orr had been professor.⁷⁵

As with the Australians on South Africa, the South Africans were in the same position in respect of British reporting on Australia and they did not enjoy access to it.

⁷¹ BTS, 91/8/1, Vol. 3, Forsyth/All Union Representatives Abroad, 31 October 1949.

⁷² Trans. J. Fisher and I. and K. Fitzgerald. London, 1937.

⁷³ K.S. Inglis, 'Australia Day', *Historical Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 49, October 1967, p. 24.

⁷⁴ Ringwood, Vic., 1988 (1985).

⁷⁵ For a brief reference to the Orr case see G. Bolton, *The Oxford History of Australia*, Vol. 5 (Melbourne, 1990), p. 118. A recent work on the subject is C. Pybus, *Gross Moral Turpitude: The Orr case reconsidered* (Port Melbourne, 1993). The contemporary article material is considerable.

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In any case, except where these suggested parallels with their own situation they were not especially interested in developments on the Australian domestic scene. Topics they covered included the government's attitude towards Communism and the 1950 outlawing of the Communist Party which predated South Africa's own action in that regard,⁷⁶ the overturning of the legislation by the High Court, and the failure of the subsequent referendum to amend the Constitution by including in it a provision outlawing the Communist Party; aspects of the White Australia Policy including the O'Keefe case of 1949 and the 1949 Immigration Act;⁷⁷ the treatment of Aborigines; matters of parliamentary privilege (the Bankstown case);⁷⁸ the Petrov case;⁷⁹ the split in the Labor Party; and developments in respect of the Australia economy such as import control and, of course, various elections.⁸⁰

In the matters it covered the South African reporting can be put into two categories: self-initiated and in response to specific requests from Head Office. An early example of the latter was Forsyth's instruction to Viljoen of 7 June 1949, the day the latter set foot in Australia, for an urgent report on the new uranium discoveries there. ('It is ... of the utmost importance to us, having regard to the development work that is going on here, that we should have up-to-date information concerning discoveries of uranium in other countries, as the opening up of easily mined and cheap deposits in such countries may have an important bearing on the question of the exploitation of our own supplies'.)⁸¹

Where South African heads of mission did tend to report in detail, particularly by way of the appendices which accompanied their reports, was on the speech-making tours they undertook periodically. The emphasis in such speeches was on points of similarity between the two countries⁸² and their historical connections including the

⁷⁶ Unlike the South African party, the Australian Communist Party was banned during the early stages of the Second World War, from June 1940 to December 1942. See Hasluck, *The Government and the People*, Vol. 1, Appendix 3, pp. 583-92.

⁷⁷ See, eg., BCB, Vol. 1, 6/2, Viljoen/SEA, 26 September 1949.

⁷⁸ See various items on BCB, Vol. 3, 6/5, Vol. III including Uys/SEA, 22 June 1955.

⁷⁹ Uys's one-and-a-half page report on Evatt's famous statement in the House of Representatives on 19 October 1955 is completely superficial. See BCB, Vol. 3, 6/5, Vol. III, Uys/SEA, 29 October 1955. (Original in Afrikaans). Compare with Manne's treatment of the subject. R. Manne, *The Petrov affair: Politics and espionage* (Rushcutters Bay, NSW, 1987), pp. 258-63.

⁸⁰ In respect of elections, see Hamilton's series of three reports, of 23 October and 4 and 26 November 1958, on the 1958 general election. BTS, 1/25/1, Vol. 1.

⁸¹ BCB, Vol. 19, 31/6 (Secret), Forsyth/Viljoen, 7 June 1949.

⁸² That was also the line B.J. Schoeman followed in his radio talk on the occasion of his November 1957 visit to Australia. See BCB, Vol. 13, 27/4 (Vol. II), 'Notes for broadcast speech by the Hon. Mr. B.J. Schoeman', attached to Meiring/Hamilton, 19 October 1957.

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fact that the Australian wool industry was in a sense founded from the Cape. The white man's determination to maintain his position in South Africa featured prominently. As mentioned earlier (Chapter Four, p. 214), Hamilton saw speech-making outside Canberra as part of his 'chief task' - the 'political and public relations side'. ('I have reported regularly to the Department on my travels outside Canberra. ... The South African flag has appeared in places where it had never been seen before!')⁸³

If the tours broke the monotony of the writers having to spend their time uninterrupted in Canberra, the reports on them perhaps confirm Crocker's point that some reporting is intended to draw attention to the reporter.⁸⁴ However, they did not always land on the desks of the department's top echelon. One that went up to Jooste, though, was Uys's report of 7 August 1956 on his visit to Sydney *inter alia* to address the English Public Schools Association of New South Wales. Given his ethnic and cultural disposition, he may have felt in the presence of the enemy!

At least for so long as the South African department could rely on receiving Commonwealth Relations Office material, the reporting of its diplomats was generally less of a priority than the need to promote the government's racial policies. That was part of the decades-long drive for recognition and acceptance. Suspended like a shadow over South African diplomacy even in the 1950s was the reality of the government's international situation. This had not achieved the dimensions of the 1970s when South African missions were instructed to discontinue the practice of general political and economic reporting and to report exclusively on the way South African issues were 'playing' in individual countries. Nonetheless it was a major distraction.

In Australia, apart from being there and administering themselves (see Chapter Six), the South Africans' principal task was to put the best possible gloss on developments in their country to the Australian 'establishment'. The idea (and propriety) of diplomats communicating with a mass audience through radio or television had not yet taken hold. (See Chapter Five.) Television in fact came to Australia only in 1956, shortly before the Melbourne Olympics. The audiences they reached were minute. Apart from Ministers and officials in Canberra,⁸⁵ they consisted *inter alia* of Rotary

⁸³ BTS, Hamilton, Vol. III, Hamilton/Scholtz, 20 November 1959.

⁸⁴ Many of these reports are on BTS, 4/2/32/1, Vol. 1. The twenty-four pages of notes appended to Uys's report on his visit to Queensland from 1-9 September 1955 capture something of the flavour of these visits. Uys/SEA, 5 October 1955.

⁸⁵ Miss E.A. Warren of Australian External Affairs reported after a conversation with C.A. Smith, the South African Information Attaché, her impression 'that much of his activity here will be to put the

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Clubs in various parts of the country and the crowds at the agricultural and other shows they opened. Hamilton said recently that he 'became something of a specialist in opening the smaller agricultural shows in the outback and addressed innumerable Rotary Clubs and town meetings'.⁸⁶ If, therefore, the flag was seen where it had not been seen before, that was often in hamlets out in the Australian bush.⁸⁷ Not being a target of international criticism the Australians after Knowles and Stirling paid less attention to the public relations side of their work. In some cases they addressed only a few gatherings annually. Even so, they were also concerned about 'image'.

Besides his criticism of the quality of Australian reporting, Walter Crocker correctly pointed out that 'the staff in Canberra [was] too small for processing the volume of paper coming in'.⁸⁸ It certainly was in respect of the material received from South Africa. That was not passed automatically to the top level of the department let alone to the political level of government. (Unlike the lengthy despatches on the local political scene the Canadian High Commissioner would send his head office from South Africa in the mid-1940s. At least those reached the head of the department, Norman Robertson, who complained in 1944: 'I wish there were some means of curbing the prolixity of the S. Af. Office. I find it very hard to read these despatches'.)⁸⁹ Some irony therefore attaches to the fact that whatever Hamilton was saying to Menzies was actual and had impact, while the latter would not have been exposed to the detail of what his diplomats were reporting. (In short, why Ambassadors should ideally establish a close relationship with the head of the government to which they are accredited.)

Officials in the Australian department who benefited most from their High Commission's reporting were those such as Killen's brother-in-law, Barrie Dexter, who worked on the Africa and Middle Eastern desk. It informed their submissions to senior staff. If there was a difference of perspective between the department and the High Commission or Embassy, there was also a dialogue which maintained the level of interest of both.⁹⁰

South African "Colour line" across'. AA, A1838, 201/10/7, Pt. 1, Record of conversation Warren/Smith, 9 July 1954.

⁸⁶ *Antipodean Days*, p. 2.

⁸⁷ The Australian equivalent of the South African *platteland*.

⁸⁸ Crocker, *Australian Ambassador*, pp. 58-59.

⁸⁹ Tennyson, *Canadian Relations with South Africa*, pp. 102-03.

⁹⁰ See, eg., the departmental paper 'Prospects for South Africa' with the Embassy's paper of the same title. AA, A9421/1, 201/1, Pt. 1, Memo. 213, Lee/Australian Embassy, Pretoria and Kevin/DEA, Memo. 450, 26 September 1963.

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To counter Menzies's known liking for South Africa and South Africans, one External Affairs official observed to another in 1954 that it 'might be worthwhile' to pass him a particular Hodgson despatch because it 'might help show the South Africans to him in their true light!'⁹¹ The despatch concerned *inter alia* National Party policy towards the establishment of a republic. Menzies never saw the South Africans in 'their true light' in that sense. He had obviously also made up his mind about South Africa well before he met Hamilton⁹² and officially if not personally and privately he was as accessible to Viljoen, Nel and Uys as he was to Hamilton. Viljoen told Forsyth after a dinner at The Lodge in March 1950 that Menzies was 'one of the nicest men one can meet'. He had been on 'very friendly terms' with him from even before he became Prime Minister.⁹³ Difficulties Viljoen had experienced in gaining access to Ministers, Evatt in particular, cleared up immediately on Menzies's assumption of office. Chifley, though, had been 'particularly accessible'.⁹⁴

Menzies's farewell letter to Viljoen suggests a relationship which transcended the purely formal: 'On behalf of Mrs. Menzies, my daughter and myself, I should like to say how warmly we have appreciated the very cordial personal relations which we have enjoyed with Mrs. Viljoen and yourself.' The previous year Jooste, then Ambassador to the United States, had, according to Viljoen, told him that 'Mr Menzies spoke in the most glowing terms of yourself and Mrs Viljoen and went out of his way to assure me how much he valued your friendship'.⁹⁵ Casey's letter was couched in similar terms: 'If I may say so, I have received your letter with regret because it will mean the end of an association which has been most cordial and pleasant. Your position of dignity and respect in the Australian community has been most justifiably earned and both in the personal and official sense you will be missed at Canberra.'⁹⁶ Besides being indicative of intimacy, the content of these letters implies that heads of mission and ministers were thrown more into each other's company in 1950s Canberra than would have been the case in larger capitals.

⁹¹ AA, A1838/2, 201/11/1, Pt.2, Handwritten note to Shaw, 10 November 1954. The despatch was A4231/2 Pretoria 1-16 1954, Ministerial Despatch No. 10/1954 (undated) dealing with the unveiling of the Kruger Statue on Church Square and Malan's retirement.

⁹² His 1935 article as Commonwealth Attorney-General reveals understanding of the constitutional motivations of South Africa's Afrikaners *vis-à-vis* the British Commonwealth. See R.G. Menzies, 'The Relations Between the British Dominions', *The Australian Quarterly*, No. 28, December 1935, pp. 5-9.

⁹³ BCB, Vol. 2, 6/5, Vol. I, Viljoen/Forsyth, 3 March 1950.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, Viljoen/Forsyth, 30 September 1949; Forsyth/Viljoen, 14 October 1949; Viljoen/Forsyth, 15 & 22 December 1949.

⁹⁵ BTS, Viljoen, Vol. 7, Viljoen/Forsyth, 29 August 1950.

⁹⁶ BTS, 4/2/32, Vol. 2, Menzies/Viljoen, 3 October 1951 and Casey/Viljoen, 21 September 1951.

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Uys did not enjoy a personal relationship with Menzies but he experienced no difficulty in gaining access to him when Jooste instructed him to enlist the Prime Minister's assistance to have the Russian defector Vladimir Petrov or his wife testify at the Treason Trial. Menzies put him in touch with Col Charles Spry, head of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO).⁹⁷ The Petrovs were thought to have first-hand knowledge of communist activity in South Africa. They declined to testify personally or by deposition *ia*. because they did not want further to provoke the Soviet Union.⁹⁸ In any case, Petrov's only experience of South Africa was the few months he spent there in 1942 after his ship had been torpedoed and he was awaiting another ship to take him to London. The Australians had informed Uys of that in mid-1955.⁹⁹

Pursuant to instructions, Australians and South Africans prepared Post reports, updating them at regular intervals. The purpose of the reports was two-fold: to assist head office to determine the amount of the allowances payable at its missions and to give officers posted to a mission an idea of the conditions they could expect. The South African department told its missions in 1947 that it wanted 'a complete overall picture of conditions at its various overseas offices'. They were required to report under the headings Living conditions, Social and General, covering such aspects as food, housing, heating, medical and dental, climate, clothing and schooling.¹⁰⁰ The Australians covered much the same ground in addition to which they were required to give a profile of the city where the mission was located.¹⁰¹

Whatever their value at the time, the reports are useful to researchers for the picture they present of the living conditions of the day, at least for diplomats resident in the capital cities. From them we learn, for example, the contemporary prices of a wide range of consumer goods. Also, for just about the entire period covered by this

⁹⁷ See various items on BCB, Vol. 12, 23/14 (S). The Petrov defection, a *cause célèbre* in mid-1950s Australia, has echoed down the years. For details see Manne, *The Petrov affair*; also Manne, 'Is There an End to the Petrov Affair?', *Quadrant*, Vol. XXXV, No. 7-8, July-August 1991, pp. 15-21; A.W. Martin, 'New Light on the Petrov Affair: Evatt's Absence from the House', *Quadrant*, June 1995, pp. 46-50; and J.R. Nethercote, 'New Light on the Petrov Affair: The Timing of the 1954 Election', *Quadrant*, June 1995, pp. 50-52.

⁹⁸ BCB, Vol. 12, 23/14 (S), Note handed Uys by the head of ASIO's ACT office.

⁹⁹ AA, A9421/1, 202/3, Pt. 1, Wynes/High Commissioner, Cape Town, 1 June 1955.

¹⁰⁰ BTS, S4/7/2/1/5, Circular DA. 57-1, 4 July 1947.

¹⁰¹ AA, A1838/1, 1348/5, Circular dated 15 June 1948, signed by Burton, referring to an earlier one of 1945 and Administration Circular No. 99/50, 9 January 1950.

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thesis the Australian pound (£) was worth only eighty per cent of the South African pound.¹⁰² Today the value of the South African rand verges on three to the Australian dollar.

From 1956, apparently on its own initiative,¹⁰³ the Australian High Commission prepared two-part annual reports. Part A summarised developments in the mission and part B political developments in South Africa. Part A of the four annual reports to hand - 1956, 1957, 1958 and, to a lesser extent 1959 - provides a useful profile of the High Commission and its activities in those years. The annual South African post report touched on part of the ground covered by part A of the Australian reports. But it did not seem to have occurred to the High Commission/Embassy to send Pretoria an annual review. In 1962 it was instructed to do so in a twenty-six point 'shopping list' of the department's reporting requirements.¹⁰⁴ That was part of the latter's efforts to define its requirements in respect of each of its missions as a result of South Africa's departure from the Commonwealth.¹⁰⁵

Canberra received an eight-page set of customised instructions signed by Uys which Sole probably drew up. It emphasised that the Embassy's despatches should give 'the broad picture', eschewing details 'in favour of the trend which they collectively bring forth'. The 'primary object of furnishing political intelligence' was 'to enable the Department accurately to interpret world events with specific reference to South Africa's policy and interests'. Despatches that made this possible were the most helpful ones.¹⁰⁶ Notwithstanding such attempts to itemise its needs, the department was not particularly well-served with information from Canberra.

More than indiscretion or altruism may lie behind the disclosure of information to diplomats. The sources may have in mind influencing the content of the reporting. Perhaps that was why Louis Esselen spoke freely to MacVeagh. During J.C.G. Kevin's term as Australian Ambassador South African officials such as Sole perceived him to report favourably 'on the development of our Bantustan policy'.¹⁰⁷ They therefore did

¹⁰² BTS, S4/7/21/5. Uys/SEA, 28 February 1995, 'Post Report: Canberra - 1955', p. 1.

¹⁰³ Gilchrist may have been behind this. In any case, he drafted the 1956, 1957 and 1958 reports. The last report seen by this researcher was that for 1959, prepared by Phillips, who lacked Gilchrist's flair.

¹⁰⁴ The first annual review was dated 11 January 1963. BCB, Vol. 2, S6/4, Woodward/Acting SEA. It was despatched in response to a 'reminder' dated 29 November 1962 signed by Sole. BCB, Vol. 2, S6/4, Vol. VII.

¹⁰⁵ BTS, 91/8/1, Vol. 13, Uys/All Heads of Mission, 24 February 1962.

¹⁰⁶ BCB, Vol. 2, S6/4, Vol. VII, Uys/Ambassador, Canberra, 11 May 1962.

¹⁰⁷ BTS, 1/25/3, Vol. 1, Sole/Jooste, 2 September 1965.

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what they could to give him access to the right sources including the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development. In the result his reporting, though alive to its inadequacies, shortcomings and injustices, projected a more sympathetic and understanding view of apartheid, especially the 'Bantustans', than that held by some of his predecessors, especially Gilchrist. Kevin felt that the 'Bantustan experiment might succeed given time as well as greater effort'.¹⁰⁸

The Africa and Middle East Branch in Canberra agreed with him. 'If the Government is prepared to spend more money and energy in the developing areas the chances of economic viability are quite good'. It was in fact conceivable that the Bantustans would 'eventually emerge as fully independent states'.¹⁰⁹ Thus Durban 'could one day be the capital of an independent African nation in what is now the Republic of South Africa'¹¹⁰ Undoubtedly, 'given the likely continuation of white rule for some time - the main hope for African development lies in their acceptance (of the principle if not the speed and extent) of the Nationalist policy'.¹¹¹ In short, both Kevin and the branch at that time took Verwoerdian separate development seriously.

In effect Kevin's reporting tried to make up for what he called the South African's government's lack of a 'gift of communication' and its seeming incapability 'of putting its case to the world in its least unfavourable light'. The government could be expected 'because of neglect or pure maladroitness, to delineate still more precisely the already unhappy image it has created (and had created for it) abroad'.¹¹² He was worried about South Africa's image and devoted an early despatch to the subject. The image was not entirely of white South Africa's 'own making and some of the delineations' were inaccurate. There was 'no active race conflict, no advanced police state, no organised brutality and not the degree of exploitation seen in the image'. Few of the 'reformists outside the Republic' understood, or attempted to do so what apartheid was about. 'The main feature of the policy - separate development through the creation of Bantustans' was 'unobjectionable except on the ground of practicality'.¹¹³

¹⁰⁸ AA, A9421/1, 201/1, Pt. 1, High Commission paper 'Prospects for South Africa', p. 6, para. 20. Attached to Memo. 450, Kevin/DEA, 26 September 1963.

¹⁰⁹ AA, A9421/1, 201/1, Pt. 1, Departmental general paper 'Prospects for South Africa', Summary. Attached to Memo. 213, Lee/Australian Embassy, Pretoria, 2 September 1963.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Departmental general paper 'Prospects for South Africa', p. 6.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹¹² AA, A9421/1, 201/1, Pt. 1, High Commission paper 'Prospects for South Africa', p. 13, para. 53.

¹¹³ A4231/2, 1961/62, Kevin/Barwick, No. 10/62, 28 December 1962, 'The South African Image', p. 1, paras. 1, 3.

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He commented negatively on the Myrdal report, so named after Mrs Alva Myrdal who chaired the Group of Experts appointed in terms of the Security Council's resolution of 4 December 1963.¹¹⁴ He said it contained 'many emotive passages and some which disguise the facts'. It was 'a threatening and, in a number of respects, a dishonest document' which seemed to be 'directed not towards soliciting South African co-operation but instead towards ensuring South African rejection and towards bringing further pressure on Britain and the United States, the Republic's main trading partners'.¹¹⁵ Be that as it may, three decades later the principal features of the report were to achieve something of an echo in the South African political and constitutional settlement.

Kevin's reporting reflected the conventional wisdom of the time. A contemporary myth about the South African past was that of the 'empty land' into which white and black moved practically simultaneously in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. What seemed to support it was that white and black as opposed to white and Khoikhoi or San first encountered each other in strength at the Fish River in the Eastern Cape in the course of the eighteenth century. An article of faith in National Party circles, the myth was often cited as moral justification for the white man's presence in Southern Africa. It is not clear whether National Party spokesmen invented it. If so, it was remarkably effective propaganda because it was widespread in the 1950s.

Variations of the myth are to be found *inter alia* in such diverse documents as the report of the Santa Cruz Commission,¹¹⁶ British diplomatic reporting¹¹⁷ and a New Zealand background paper prepared for the 1953 Prime Ministers' conference.¹¹⁸ Gilchrist held in 1957 that it was 'true that when the first White settlers arrived at the Cape in 1652 the Bantu were probably still up around Lake Nyasa and that sustained

¹¹⁴ UN Doc. S/5471, 4 December 1963, in *SCOR*, 18th year, Sup. for October, November and December 1963, pp. 103-05 and UN Doc. S/5658, 20 April 1964, Annex, in *SCOR*, 19th year, Sup. for April, May and June 1964, pp. 22-43.

¹¹⁵ A4231/2, Africa and Middle East, 1964, Kevin/Gorton, No. 7/64, 3 June 1964, 'The Myrdal Report', Summary and p. 3, para. 15.

¹¹⁶ *GAOR*, Eighth Sess., Sup. No. 16 (A/2505 & A/2505/Add. 1), 'Report of the United Nations Commission on the Racial Situation in the Union of South Africa', pp. 37-39.

¹¹⁷ Liesching/Home, No. 12, 12 June 1958, p. 1, paras. 2-3, attached to AA, A9421, 202/7, Memo. 393, Gilchrist/DEA, 20 June 1958.

¹¹⁸ AA, A1838/2, 201/2/5/4, Pt. 1, Department of External Affairs, Wellington, 5 May 1953, 'Prime Ministers' Conference, London, Apartheid Policies in South Africa: Background details'.

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contact between the Europeans and Bantu did not occur until around 130 years later, in the eastern Cape'.¹¹⁹ Sir Percivale Liesching, the British High Commissioner, stated categorically in a section of his 12 June 1958 report (prepared by Oliver Wright, a First Secretary on his staff)¹²⁰ he called 'The Native Problem', that the southern part of Africa was virtually empty when the white man arrived. Consequently 'he had as much right' to be there 'as the Bantu who were themselves immigrants from Central Africa'. The New Zealand document went further, holding that the Africans of the Union had less 'claim to be native than most of the whites since they came there later'.

Thus Kevin was in good company when he relied on a magazine article by Professor Röpke of the Graduate School of International Studies, Geneva, in support of his argument that South Africa could not be treated in isolation simply as a moral issue. The whites had 'not merely a doubtful right to the land which they settled and brought to prosperity, but, rather, are justified in owning and controlling it. When the Europeans, setting out from the Cape, began to undertake their settlements in the middle of the 17th century, they came to a practically empty country at approximately the same time as the Bantu tribes from Central Africa arrived in South Africa from the opposite direction'.¹²¹

Monica Wilson of the University of Cape Town was an early questioner of the myth. She demonstrated in 1959 that it rested on insubstantial foundations.¹²² For Bantu settlement of, for example, the Transkei and Ciskei, predated white settlement at the Cape by centuries. Commenting on her work D.V. Cowen, Professor of Comparative Law at the same university, said later that the claim white and black had arrived in the country simultaneously was 'a piece of myth-making conjured up to support apartheid'.¹²³ He and Wilson were reacting to reports of Eric Louw's statement opening the Tenth Annual Congress of SABRA in 1959.¹²⁴ They were not aware how widespread the myth really was.

¹¹⁹ AA, A1832/2, 201/10/1, Pt. 2, Memo 269, Gilchrist/DEA, 28 April 1958, Annexure B, p. 3.

¹²⁰ Wright had a very successful career, at its conclusion spending six years (1982-88) as Ambassador to the United States in succession to Sir Nicholas Henderson.

¹²¹ AA, A4231/2, Africa and Middle East, 1964, Kevin/Hasluck, No. 10/64, 20 August 1964, 'South Africa as a moral issue', p. 4, para. 16(a).

¹²² 'The early history of the Transkei and Ciskei', *African Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 4, 1959, pp. 167-79.

¹²³ D.V. Cowen, *The Foundations of Freedom with Special Reference to Southern Africa* (Cape Town, 1961), p. 35.

¹²⁴ *Die Burger*, 1 April 1959.

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There was less for Kevin's predecessors to be sympathetic about. Verwoerd had yet to embark upon his grand design and apartheid was as Malan described it in his 'widely published'¹²⁵ five page letter to the Reverend John Piersma of Oakdale Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan, in 1954. South African diplomats touted this as 'the first official statement on the policy of apartheid'.¹²⁶ Malan had referred to the 'deep-rooted colour consciousness of the White South Africans' and the 'impenetrable armour' of 'racial purity and self-preservation' with which they had surrounded themselves. If they 'had succumbed to the temptation of assimilation, they would have been submerged in the Black heathendom of Africa as effectively as if they had been completely annihilated'. That was the basis of Apartheid. He went on to expound 'another and more positive aspect [of] this creed'. All of this drew from K.C.O. Shann the comment 'Sometimes I think it's not so much what Malan is trying to do as the awful way he tries to justify it.'¹²⁷

Even so, some of Kevin's predecessors *were* sympathetic and they saw the two countries more or less as Paul Sauer had depicted them in 1952. ('I found in Australia ... keen sympathy and understanding of the Australians towards South Africa's efforts at keeping the southern part of South Africa white, just as Australia on the southern fringe of Asia aims at keeping the continent European'. See Chapter Three above - p. 161). J.P. Quinn said after his one year term as Acting High Commissioner:

In many ways the problems of South Africa and Australia are similar. In Australia we face the need to preserve our civilisation and the homogeneity of our people in an area inhabited by populations of different race whose living standards are lower than ours. South Africa's problem is more direct insofar as the populations which threaten her cultural security are within her own borders and playing a vital part in the economy of the country.¹²⁸

He also believed that 'experiments in the reserves aimed at increasing native responsibilities in the administration' were of interest to Australia in relation to its administration of New Guinea.¹²⁹

¹²⁵ Munger, *South African Foreign Policy*, p. 88.

¹²⁶ AA, A1838/1, 201/2/5, Pt. 4, Handwritten note to Secretary, 1 April 1954.

¹²⁷ AA, A1838/2, 852/10/2/3, Pt. 3, Malan/Piersma, 12 February 1954; Shann/Hickey, handwritten note, 12 April 1954.

¹²⁸ AA, A1838/T184, 201/7/1, Pt. 1, Quinn/McIntyre, Notes on South Africa, 22 August 1952. p. 4, para. 13.

¹²⁹ AA, A1838/2, 201/10/1, Pt. 1, Quinn/McIntyre, 22 August 1952.

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Quinn's successor, Kelly, also came down firmly on the side of the white man as he was to do later in respect of the Portuguese in Timor.¹³⁰ He cautioned that a paper by Muriel Horrell of the South African Institute of Race Relations¹³¹ should 'be used with considerable discretion'. For it emanated 'from the chief centre in the Union opposed [to] the apartheid policy of the present Government'. Horrell 'made many comments in the course of her paper which an objective student would find difficult in supporting'.¹³² Reporting the same day (19 August 1954) on 'Apartheid in legislation and practice', he claimed that almost all of the government's measures 'to implement the principle of apartheid [were] developments of legislation enacted by previous national and provincial governments in the Union'. Many of the apartheid laws dated back 'to the legislation of the old South African Colonies or Republics'.

Opposition to apartheid came more from 'the large capitalist groups' who were 'chiefly concerned with retaining a continuous supply of Native labour and only to a lesser degree from liberally-minded Europeans and radically-minded Africans, Indians and Coloureds'. There were grounds for believing that about 95 per cent of the European electorate in South Africa is firmly convinced that there should be two South Africas, a White South Africa and a Black South Africa'.¹³³ It was also Kelly who contradicted the assumption of the English-language press that foreign diplomats in South Africa were automatically reporting unfavourably about the government.¹³⁴

The 'pre-Gilchrist' Australians were not alone in finding apartheid or aspects of it unexceptionable around that time. In 1956 H.S.H. Stanley of the British High Commission sent a colleague in the Commonwealth Relations Office a five-and-a-half page exposition of the Group Areas Act. He advised him to treat 'with reserve' statements 'about the hardship and dislocation' that the Act had 'inflicted on the different sections of the population'.¹³⁵

¹³⁰ Juddery, *At the Centre*, p. 101.

¹³¹ AA, A1838/1, 201/2/5, Pt. 5, M. Horrell, 'Non-European policies in the Union, and the measure of their success', RR. 43/1954, March 1954.

¹³² *Ibid.*, Memo. 284, Kelly/DEA, 19 August 1954.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, Memo. 283, Kelly/DEA, 19 August 1954.

¹³⁴ AA, A1838/2, 1348/2, Pt. 1, Kelly/Kevin, 23 May 1952.

¹³⁵ Stanley/Jasper, 18 October 1956, p. 5, para. 11. Copy on AA, A1838/2, 852/10/2/3, Pt. 5. At the UN, this acquired the status of a British delegation paper, being circulated without indication of its origins under the heading 'Unofficial C.R.O. note on Group Areas Act (Question of Indians in South Africa) From U.K. Delegation informally 7/1/57, UNGA XI'. A copy is on A1838/1, 201/2/5, Pt. 6.

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Quinn warned against 'buying into the Indian business'¹³⁶ but Marshall and Kelly did so to the extent that they accepted the South African government's view of India's foreign policy objectives. Marshall claimed that 'the lands adjacent to the western shores of the Indian Ocean [South Africa, the Rhodesias, East Africa and Mauritius] are now serving India as an outlet for a considerable portion of her surplus population [which] may lead in time to a demand by India for political control of large areas of Southern Africa'.¹³⁷ That was the conventional white South African wisdom of the day shared by government and parliamentary opposition alike.¹³⁸ And not only by them. None other than Mahatma Gandhi's son, Manilal, associated himself with it. 'To-day India is more in need of South Africa than South Africa is of India. India has not been able to make South Africa feel the pinch of her needs not being supplied whereas South Africa is making India feel the pinch. India is badly in need of outlets for her surplus population which is a great need and that has been met in comparatively a large degree by South Africa.'¹³⁹

Malan said that more than once in the House of Assembly. He also claimed that Nehru wanted the whites out of Africa and he blamed him for the 1952 passive resistance campaign.¹⁴⁰ Strijdom told the House in 1955 that 'Nehru has two great objects. The one is ... to oust all the Whites from Asia; and in the second place to oust all the Whites from Africa ... it is quite clear that he regards Africa as a dumping ground for the superfluous population of India. Hence the continuous infiltration of Indians in the various parts of Africa'.¹⁴¹ That attracted a sceptical comment from the Australian High Commission in New Delhi: 'From here it is difficult to imagine anyone, let alone a man of intelligence enjoying access to adequate sources of information, believing that Mr. Nehru regards Africa as an area for the disposal of India's surplus population; but that is what Mr. Strijdom is reported to have told the South African Parliament.'¹⁴²

¹³⁶ AA, A1838/2, 201/10/1, Memo. 83, Marshall/DEA, 3 April 1950.

¹³⁷ AA, A1838/1, 1348/2, Pt. 1, 'For the Secretary and the Minister', M.H. Marshall, 30 January 1952, para. 5.

¹³⁸ See *HA Deb.*, Vol. 68, 12 May 1949, Col. 5666 for the opposition's view as expressed by Waterson.

¹³⁹ *Indian Opinion*, Vol. XLVII, No. 16, 22 April 1949. ('My visit to India'). Douglas Mitchell referred to this in the House of Assembly. *HA Deb.*, Vol. 68, 11 May 1949, Col. 5580.

¹⁴⁰ *HA Deb.*, Vol. 82, 11 August 1953, Col. 1327 and Vol. 85, 4 May 1954, Col. 4494-95.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 88, 18 April 1955, Col. 4024.; AA, A1838/2, 169/11/128, Pt. 1, Hodgson/Casey, 22 April 1955.

¹⁴² AA, A1838/2, 169/11/128, Pt. 1, 28 April 1955, Memo. 541, Acting High Commissioner/DEA, 28 April 1955.

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Kelly said of local Indians: 'it is unquestionable that South African subjects of Indian origin are endeavouring to do their utmost to influence Bantu opinion against Europeans in the Union, and not only in the Union'.¹⁴³ It was, however, 'perhaps indicative of Hindu shrewdness that few, if any, of the wealthy Indians of Natal appear to have chosen to risk imprisonment by participating in the passive resistance movement'.¹⁴⁴ Not merely were 'the Indian residents of Eastern and Southern Africa ... concerned with a campaign for the acquisition of political rights within the existing political structures of this part of Africa', they were 'even more concerned with taking action to ensure that Eastern and Southern Africa will come, in the long run, under the hegemony of the Republic of India'.¹⁴⁵ Walter Crocker, then Australian High Commissioner in New Delhi, commented sarcastically: 'Mr. Kelly has the advantage over me of being in Africa and of being able to see at first hand what is going on. Presumably he has collected and analysed the relevant facts to justify so severe a conclusion.' He went on to demonstrate that Kelly had indeed failed to collect and analyse the facts, concluding:

One of the most significant facts of the situation is that the recent policy in South Africa, having adopted a blanket attitude to peoples of non-European colour, has achieved the miracle of uniting African to African, of uniting Muslims and Hindus and outcastes to one another under the generic name of Indian, and of uniting these 'Indians' with Africans. It has also achieved the stroke of passionately interesting the Government of India and the Government of Pakistan in the fate of all these coloured peoples and of bringing them together on the question. The further miracle, of bringing Eastern and Southern Africa within the hegemony of India, however, does not seem to me to be within sight yet.¹⁴⁶

It is difficult to fault his logic, though he was saying two years later:

what Indians ... don't realize is the cumulative effect of Indian statements and attitudes on both the Europeans and the Africans in Africa. ... Nehru and Company, do not want to drive the Europeans out of Africa. But it is not altogether unnatural that many Europeans (who in Africa already live under the shadow of a great fear) should think that they do want to drive the Europeans out and even ... to take the place of the Europeans.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ AA, A1838/2, 201/2/5/2, Pt. 2, Memo. 146, Kelly/DEA, 17 May 1952.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Memo. 276, 25 July 1952.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Memo. 233, Kelly/DEA, 2 July 1952.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, Memo. 569, Stuart/DEA, 21 July 1952.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 169/11/128, Pt. 1, W.R. Crocker, Minute 'India and Africa', 21 August 1954.

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So perhaps white South Africans were not entirely unjustified in their perceptions.¹⁴⁸ (Such allegations of course also lent themselves to party political propaganda).

Quite likely with an eye to the calibre of the political appointees United States administrations sent to represent them in Australia from the 1950s to the present day, Edwards calls the career diplomats who did so in the 1930s and 1940s 'highly trained observers'.¹⁴⁹ That may be another of the myths attaching to diplomacy. While the best diplomats are no doubt good observers, many are not noticeably so. White South African foreign service officers were never given any special training in that regard. Whatever his training Rudolf Asmis, German Consul-General in Sydney from 1932 to 1939, was a keen observer of the Australian scene. In 1935 he reported on Aboriginal policy, drawing 'upon the data, observations and opinions which formed the core of public and academic debate at that time'. For his sources he maintained 'manifold contacts ... with anthropologists, missionaries, officials, merchants and cattle dealers' who made up 'the small group of people concerned with the research on, the conversion, social welfare and exploitation of the Aborigines'.¹⁵⁰

Despite the nature of the government he represented and the immediate inspiration for his report - an instruction of 24 April 1933 to German missions abroad for material on discrimination in countries which protested Germany's 'Jewish boycott' - Asmis produced a good report. In fact, if it were not for its associations, it could almost serve as a model of what old style foreign service reporting was about. For penetration and depth it was not equalled by Australian or South African reporting in the 1940s and 1950s.

Diplomats with time on their hands sometimes compose pieces about the 'national character' of their country of accreditation. Decades after the event these probably have more impact on the academics and journalists of the country concerned than they had on the original recipients. It says something about the nature of Australian society that the national character is a matter of ongoing concern and has formed the subject of at least one influential doctoral thesis, Russel Ward's *The*

¹⁴⁸ On his return from one of his trips as 'roving ambassador' Te Water told Stirling that 'India was suffering from lack of "Lebensraum" and her population, increasing by five million annually, was spilling westwards all over the Indian Ocean'. AA, A1838/2, 774, Pt. 1, I. 3822, 3818, 8 March 1949.

¹⁴⁹ P.G. Edwards, ed., *Australia through American Eyes: Observations by American Diplomats* (St. Lucia, Qld., 1979), p. 3.

¹⁵⁰ K. Kwiet & O. Reinhardt, 'A "nazi" assessment of Australian racial policy from 1935', *The Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol. 34, No. 3, 1989, pp. 388-89.

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Australian Legend. First published in 1958, this has so far gone through three editions and many re-printings.¹⁵¹ In June 1962, after two years in Australia, Frank Snowden Hopkins, United States Consul-General in Melbourne, sent the State Department a thirty-six page, single-spaced assessment of the 'Australian character, psychology and attitudes'. As mentioned in the Preface above he had once been associated with the State Department's Foreign Service Institute.

Dr J.M. Siracusa, an American academic at the University of Queensland, discovered a copy of this despatch in the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, Boston, Massachusetts in the 1980s and published it as an article under the title 'In search of the Australian character'.¹⁵² A related news item held that the State Department had classified the despatch 'believing parts of it would not help US-Australian relations' and that Dr Siracusa obtained its release with 'some difficulty'.¹⁵³ If that was the case, it was probably due to the fact that the thirty-year rule still had eight years to run before the document would have been released in the normal course of events.

Hopkins touched on such aspects as general characteristics; the 'mateship' concept;¹⁵⁴ segregation of the sexes on social occasions; attitudes towards Europeans and Asians; the Common Market issue; and 'the Australian dream'. The latter, he thought, was 'a dream of demographic and economic development as a North Atlantic white man's civilization in the South Pacific'. Australians saw their country as 'an outpost of the Western world'. If it was to remain so 'they must populate it with immigrants of European stock'. Australians felt that they were

flying the flag for the white race in dangerous proximity to the colored hordes of Asia. And they also feel that what they are doing is wholly in the interests of the other white nations, and deserves European and American support. They make an unconscious assumption that we of the North Atlantic countries are as color conscious and as race conscious as they are themselves. They are prejudiced in our favor because we are white, and they assume that

¹⁵¹ R. Ward, *The Australian Legend*. Melbourne, 1989 (1958).

¹⁵² J.M. Siracusa, 'In search of the Australian character', *World Review* (Australia), Vol. 23, No. 4, October 1984, pp. 4-30. I am grateful to Dr Siracusa for sending me a copy of the original despatch. Dated 13 June 1962, it was titled 'Australian Character, Psychology and Attitudes: A Personal Interpretation.' The quotations are to be found at pp. 24, 31 of the original and pp. 20, 26-27 of the article.

¹⁵³ *The Age* (Melbourne), 10 January 1985. ('News Diary: A delicate Melbourne essay.')

¹⁵⁴ Close, non-homosexual relationships between males, thought to have originated in the nineteenth century outback or rural areas. Ward supplies examples of the phenomenon in *The Australian Legend*.

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we should be equally prejudiced in their favor because they are white.

... this kind of thinking. ... has its correspondences, no doubt, with the attitudes of European populations in Algeria, Rhodesia, and the Republic of South Africa. The obvious difference is that in Australia the besieged whites are in total and undisputed possession of a large territory, and intend to keep all non-whites at arm's length.

The Australian attitude toward Asians was 'most ambivalent'. The 'typical Australian' definitely wanted to keep Australia 'a white man's country', and was not 'even too happy with the migrants from Southern Europe he has admitted in such large numbers since 1945'.¹⁵⁵

One will search the Australian and South African Archives in vain for despatches of a similar kind by Australians on South Africans or *vice versa*. In fact, but for isolated references in individual documents, the South Africans do not appear to have addressed the character issue at all. One thinks in that regard of Hamilton's fleeting reference to the 'tall poppy' syndrome which Australians themselves see as a national characteristic. He called it 'the tendency, so marked in the Australian character, to drag everyone down to a uniform level in the public estimation'.¹⁵⁶ His observations about Australian reactions to the Sharpeville shootings may likewise be pertinent, striking as they do a chord with South African diplomats who served in Australia at a later date and in respect of other issues:

These have been bad weeks for South Africa in this country. The torrents of abuse and self-righteous denunciation have been almost unbelievable: from the press, churches, universities and, inevitably, the trade union movement. The ABC news services have been so partial and hostile in their selection of news that at times one has found it hardly bearable to turn on the radio.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ This last is part of the 'wogs begin at Calais' syndrome. The Australian-born have tended in the past to refer to non-English or Irish immigrants as 'wogs'. In the late 1980s there was an incident in the Australian parliament involving the use of the word. An ALP Senator from Queensland allegedly called a Parliament House barmaid such when she corrected his pronunciation of 'Riesling', a wine dispensed by the glass in the non-Members bar. (He had asked for 'Riseling'.) The Opposition not unnaturally drew attention to the incident. The unfortunate Senator compounded his error in a statement of personal explanation. He denied calling the barmaid a 'wog' because she was obviously an Australian-born person. While the word was not part of his current vocabulary, he said he had previously applied it to immigrants! *Historic Senate Hansard*, 29 September 1988, pp. 1021, 1027. See also *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 September and 1 October and *The Canberra Times*, 30 September 1988. I am indebted to Ms Lisa Gates and Ms Sylvia Mackay for this material.

¹⁵⁶ BTS, 4/2/32/1, Hamilton/Jooste, 4 August 1959.

¹⁵⁷ BCB, Vol. 20, 32/13, Hamilton/Jooste, 22 April 1960.

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Perhaps it would have been better if South African diplomats *had* tried to analyse the Australian character. The course of bilateral relations in the 1970s and 1980s could then have come as less of a surprise to them and their department.

Gilchrist seems to have been the only Australian who tackled the character issue. His views were not consolidated in one document but scattered over several including post reports, annual reports and material he prepared on his return to Canberra. His hand can be detected in the 1959 post report. This called Pretoria/Cape Town a pleasant post for an officer without dependents 'unless he is troubled by the possession of a liberal humanitarian conscience'.¹⁵⁸ The report resorted to stereotypes:

Compared with the 'average Australian', many White South Africans seem physically softer, emotionally more tense, quicker tempered, rather less efficient and less capable of taking new initiatives, but more politically-minded, and more inclined to appeal to history and to hark back to what their forefathers did. By comparison, Australians tend to be relaxed in attitude, and more empirical, individualistic, egalitarian and libertarian in their philosophy, and to show more optimism about their future.¹⁵⁹

Though South Africa was a powder-keg, Australian officers 'need have no qualms about bringing their families to live in Pretoria or Cape Town, within the next two or three years at least, and perhaps for a good deal longer'.¹⁶⁰

Gilchrist's views contradicted the (English-speaking) white South African belief, which persists to this day, that Australians 'are just like us'. The post report held that 'Australia is regarded by White South Africans as a friendly and fortunate country, whose people are "just like South Africans", but whose life without servants, they think, must be very arduous'.¹⁶¹ Gilchrist had said in briefing notes on B.J. Schoeman's visit in 1957:

There is a widespread notion among White South Africans that 'Australians think and feel just like South Africans'; differences in

¹⁵⁸ AA, A1838/1, 1348/5, Post Report: South Africa (Pretoria and Cape Town) February 1959, p. 1. He drew on the post report for his later paper 'Living in South Africa' dated 11 April 1960. A copy is on A1838/1, 201/10/6/1, Pt. 1.

¹⁵⁹ Post Report: South Africa (Pretoria and Cape Town) February 1959, p. 2. See also the record of his conversation with Crouch, attached to AA, A1838/1, 201/10/6, Pt. 1, Memo. 367, Gilchrist/DEA, 19 July 1957.

¹⁶⁰ Post Report: South Africa (Pretoria and Cape Town) February 1959, p. 7.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p 3.

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outlook due to one country having a White proletariat and the other a Black proletariat are scarcely imagined; the irritation aroused in some Australian visitors to South Africa by the sloth, inefficiency, self-pity, 'softness', and lack of a sense of common fraternity in many White South Africans is not generally known in the Union.¹⁶²

He referred on another occasion to 'the widespread South African failing of self-deception and wishful thinking'.¹⁶³

Not all Australians would have agreed with him. T.C. Cowdrey, the leader of a large trade mission to South Africa in 1968 said on his return that South Africans were 'so much like Australians it's hard to tell the difference'.¹⁶⁴ Gilchrist's colleague J.P. Quinn, observed after his year-long tour of duty in South Africa (1951-52) that 'there are many temperamental affinities between South Africans and Australians who usually "get on" well'.¹⁶⁵ In any case, the perception today of white South African immigrants to Australia is of people who work harder than native born Australians and who, of all immigrant communities, make perhaps the most significant contribution to Australian national life. It has been said of South Africans that they 'are the best educated and most highly skilled migrants Australia has seen'.¹⁶⁶ Be that as it may, if stereotypes like comparisons are odious, they can be amusing. Gilchrist's observation a few months after his return to Australia that South African whites needed not political advice but 'psychiatric treatment' falls into that category.¹⁶⁷

If Australian official and public perceptions of South Africa tilted towards the negative as early as the 1940s and 1950s,¹⁶⁸ South African officials were caught in a time-warp about Australia. Apart from the restrictive guidelines, that may have related to the quality of the reporting the department received from its High Commission and Embassy. It is also possible that what reached it was not, after Hamilton, passed automatically to senior officials. Reference was made in Chapter Four to Woodward's

¹⁶² AA, A1838/1, 716/50/6/1, Pt.2, Annex to Memo. 541, 19 October 1957, p. 1.

¹⁶³ AA, A1838/2, 201/9/1, Pt. 2, Memo. 733, Gilchrist/DEA, 17 September 1958, p. 3, para. 10.

¹⁶⁴ Quoted by K. Good, 'The Intimacy of Australia and South Africa', *The African Review*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1972, p. 417.

¹⁶⁵ AA, A1838/T184, 201/7/1, Pt. 1, 'For Mr. McIntyre: Notes on South Africa', 22 August 1952.

¹⁶⁶ See *The Australian*, 22 June 1995 ('The new Voortrekkers'); *The Bulletin* (Australia), 7 April 1992, pp. 24-26.

¹⁶⁷ AA, A1838/2, 201/10/1, Pt. 2, 'South Africa: United Nations and Apartheid', 22 July 1959, para. 2. Note from Gilchrist to Munro and Hill of the UN Branch.

¹⁶⁸ For instance, South Africa was described in *The Canberra Times* editorial of 15 November 1948 as 'A danger to democracy'.

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initiative in 1963 to secure acceptance of a Military Attaché. Negotiations extended over several months. While they were in progress Kevin called on Sole for a *tour d'horizon*. In the course of it he asked 'whether he had heard much from Woodward, expecting that he might mention Woodward's discussion in Canberra about a South African Military Attache'. Sole replied that 'they had not had much from Woodward except a useful paper on Malaysia'. He did not mention the Military Attaché.¹⁶⁹

Sole's week-long visit to Australia in 1967 was also referred to in Chapter Four. He commented in his report: 'Even a fleeting visit to Australia brings home to any South African the extent of the similarities between Australia and the Republic, between our respective peoples and between the problems which both countries face in varying degree. Both countries are outposts of Western civilisation in Continents which have a very different orientation.'¹⁷⁰ One detects in this a hint of Sir Ralph Cilento's views on the occasion of his May 1966 visit to South Africa:

Australia's former indifference to South Africa, which was based on ignorance of the true situation here, is giving way to strong feelings of 'comradeship'. We have suddenly realised that there is great similarity between the problems facing both our countries. We are both European communities at the southern extremities of the world and both have to the north of us big non-White populations. I think the time has come for our two governments to get together for discussions in the economic, political and strategic fields.¹⁷¹

Visitors, especially sponsored ones, often felt the need to 'sing for their supper', into which category Cilento's reported remarks obviously fall:

The fact that prominent Australians from time to time gave vent to such sentiments unreflective of the views of their government tended to confirm South African officials in their own attitudes. In any event, Sole's comments revealed that he had not moved beyond Hamilton's 1959 motivation of the Military Attaché's post (which he would not have been aware of because he was Minister to Austria at the time). That is, the countries were white bastions which gave their 'strategic positions ... fundamental points of similarity': 'We are determined to maintain a white nation at the

¹⁶⁹ AA, A9421/1, 202/1, Pt. 1, p. 2, Record of conversation Kevin/Sole, 28 May 1963, para. 4.

¹⁷⁰ BTS, 1/25/3, Vol. 2, 'Visit to Australia, May 4-11, 1967: Some Notes and Impressions', pp. 9-10.

¹⁷¹ *The Star* (Johannesburg), 11 May 1966. Cilento was an expert of tropical medicine as well as a political commentator. He had been Director of the UN Department of Social Affairs.

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foot of the African continent; the Australians must survive in an Asian environment'.¹⁷² In fact, neither Sole nor Hamilton had progressed beyond Sauer's view of fifteen years before. As Kevin said in 1963, 'The White South African tends to equate the Australian position at the bottom of Asia with his own in Africa'.¹⁷³

In 1966, the year Harold Holt became Prime Minister, the Liberal/Country Party government liberalised the White Australia Policy as a first step towards abandoning it altogether.¹⁷⁴ Yet Sole could write almost halfway through the following year: 'Australia remains wedded to the "White Australia" policy, although this cannot be admitted publicly'.¹⁷⁵ A background document prepared in the South African Department of External Affairs for official and semi-official participants in the 1967 South African Airways' inaugural flight, whose number included Sole, contained the sentence: 'Australia and South Africa are thus clearly and consciously identified with the West in the conduct of their foreign relations and are concerned with the maintenance of Western civilization, standards and culture'.¹⁷⁶ Sole personally contributed to the document the passage:

While Australia is an anti-Communist bastion in Asia just as South Africa is an anti-Communist bastion in Africa, their common interest in the Indian Ocean provides a link and a basis for co-operation which will become of steadily increasing importance in the years ahead. Australians too are not unmindful of the strategic value of South Africa in the event of their current shipping and air links to Europe via the Middle East being endangered.¹⁷⁷

Nothing in Sole's account displays perceptiveness about Australian foreign policy imperatives in the mid to late 1960s. It was seen in Chapter Three that by 1963 the Australian armed services had begun to discount South Africa's strategic importance to Australia. And not only the services. The paper 'Prospects for South Africa', prepared by the Africa and Middle East Branch of the Department of External Affairs, stated categorically the same year that 'The airfields and facilities in the Republic of South Africa are of no direct strategic significance to Australia as there are

¹⁷² BCB, Vol. 1, 2/1 (alternatively BTS, Vol. 229, 1/25/5, Vol. 1), Hamilton/SEA, 20 November 1959.

¹⁷³ AA, A9421/1, 201/1, Pt. 1, High Commission paper 'Prospects for South Africa', p. 10, para. 42.

¹⁷⁴ H.S. Albinski, *Australian Policy under Labor: Content, Process and The National Debate* (St Lucia, Qld., 1977), pp. 19-20.

¹⁷⁵ BTS, 1/25/3, Vol. 2, 'Visit to Australia, May 4-11, 1967: Some Notes and Impressions', p. 6 (g).

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 'Supplement: Australia and South Africa', p. 3.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, handwritten corrections by Sole on draft 'Australia and South Africa', p. 3.

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adequate alternate routes to Europe'.¹⁷⁸ There is also nothing to suggest Sole recalled Woodward's warning in a personal letter two years earlier that Australians resented 'any suggestion that the white Australia policy and apartheid [had] anything in common'.¹⁷⁹

In keeping with the traditional interest in diplomatic gossip, the Australians and the South Africans both displayed a somewhat morbid curiosity about the structure and personnel of the other's head office. In the 1950s that probably applied more to the former than to the latter.¹⁸⁰ As early as July 1947 Knowles was reporting on the movements of such relatively junior officials as B.G. Fourie, A.M. Hamilton, R. Jones, W.C. Naude and D.B. Sole.¹⁸¹ On the South African side, extending even to the December 1943 examination paper for aspirant Cadets,¹⁸² Sole and Jones had supplied Pretoria from war-time London with a reasonably detailed account of the Australian Diplomatic Cadet Scheme which Evatt and Hodgson had devised at the end of 1942. From time to time both missions sent their head offices on request or otherwise details of the other's scales of pay and allowances.¹⁸³

In 1957 and 1960,¹⁸⁴ the Australians drew up and forwarded to Canberra organisational charts of the South African department (which the South Africans now call by the unlovely name 'organigrams'). Gilchrist supplemented his 1957 chart with brief descriptions of senior officials. In some cases, including his attempts at their Christian names or nicknames, his comments would raise a smile on the faces of those with first hand knowledge of the people;¹⁸⁵ in others he had the facts wrong. Mostly he was on the mark. He said he had insufficient information about H.P. Martin, D.C.M.

¹⁷⁸ AA, A9421/1, 201/1, Pt. 1, Departmental general paper 'Prospects for South Africa', p. 14.

¹⁷⁹ BTS, 4/2/32/2, Vol. 1, Woodward/Sole, 13 April 1965, p. 3.

¹⁸⁰ See, however, BTS 1/25/8, Vol. 1, Nel/SEA, 2 March 1951. ('Re-organisation of the Australian Department of External Affairs'). A copy is on BCB, Vol. 4, 6/5/1 SR.

¹⁸¹ AA, A4231/2, Pretoria 1-91 1947, No. 61/47, 22 July 1947.

¹⁸² BTS 1/25/8, Vol. 1, Jones/SEA, Pretoria, 17 September 1943 and 11 August 1944. To the latter were attached a press notice inviting applications, a memorandum on the working of the scheme after it had been in operation for two years and a copy of the 18 December 1943 entrance examination.

¹⁸³ See, for example, BCB, Vol. 4, 6/5/1 SR, Viljoen/SEA, 16 November 1949. ('Salary and Allowances - Australian Foreign Service Personnel') and other correspondence on that file; AA, A1838/1, 1348/5/1, 'Department of External Affairs, Pretoria. Cadetships in the Union's Diplomatic and Consular Service', n.d.; 'Diplomatic and Consular Service', n.d.; 'Extra-territorial Allowances payable to members of the Union's Diplomatic Service when serving outside the borders of the Union', *circa* March 1953; 'The South African Foreign Service', 23 September 1953; and BTS 24/2, Kelly/Taljaard, 10 February 1953 and related items on that file.

¹⁸⁴ Attached to AA, A1838/1, 1348/5/1, Memo. 585, Brook/SEA, 27 October 1960.

¹⁸⁵ W.C. Naude was not 'Christopher' but Christiaan and M.I. Botha was not 'Tees' but Thys, short for Matthys.

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van der Merwe and J. Fourie to express an opinion and he did not refer to the department's administrative staff with whom he presumably had no contact.

3 July 1957¹⁸⁶

UNION DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Minister of External Affairs
(The Hon. Eric H. Louw)

Secretary for External Affairs
(G.P. Jooste)

I. Political and Economic (General) Branch

Under-Secretary for External Affairs
(Dr. W.C. Naude)

Division A:

Political and Economic Organisations

Assistant Secretary
(M.I. Botha, Counsellor)

Political (East) Section
G.G/ Lawrie, 1st Secretary)

Political (West) Section
(A.G. Dunn, 1st Secretary)

International Organisations Section
(H.P. Martin, 1st Secretary)

Division B:

Economic Relations, General, Consular and Treaties

Assistant Secretary
(A.B.F. Burger, Counsellor)

Economic Relations Section
(K.E. Pakendorff, 1st Secretary)

General, Consular and Treaties Section
(D.C.M. van der Merwe, 1st Secretary)

Division C:

Protocol

Chief of Protocol
(Col. N.J. Jooste, Counsellor)

Assistant Chief of Protocol
(N.J. Best, 1st Secretary)

II. Africa Branch

Senior Assistant Secretary
(R. Jones, personal rank of Minister)

Assistant Secretary
(B.G. Fourie, Counsellor)

Technical Co-operation
(J. Fourie, 1st Secretary)

Political
(A.J.F. Viljoen,
1st Secretary)

Special Problems
(D.V. Fischer, 1st Secretary)
(A.J. Oxley, acting)

III. Administration Branch

Assistant Secretary
(E.J. Scholtz)

Principal Administrative Officer
(S. Potgieter)

Accountant
(G.S.P. Oosthuizen)

¹⁸⁶ AA, A1838/1, 1348/2, Pt.1, Memo. 459, Gilchrist/DEA, 6 September 1957, Attachment.

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He worked through the list starting with the head of the department: G.P. Jooste (Strongly Afrikaner Nationalist in outlook); W.C. Naude ('A strong energetic character but according to some of his colleagues is inclined to "flap" in a crisis'); R. Jones ('There is some friction between him and Naude, resulting from Naude's higher status (the "personal rank of Minister" was apparently a sop to Jones' dignity); M.I. Botha ('Old-world courtesy'); A.B.F. Burger ('Practical and energetic'); N.J.J. Jooste ('A talkative and rather inefficient hand-shaker'); B.G. Fourie ('Pleasant and uncommunicative personality, unceasing worker and generally regarded as the "man of all work" in the Department. ... Regarded as a possible head of department'); G.G. Lawrie ('Recently divorced. Quiet and conservative'); A.G. Dunn ('Australian born. Hearty type');¹⁸⁷ K.E. Pakendorff ('German wife.¹⁸⁸ Well-informed economist'); N.J. Best ('Anglicized. Efficient'); A.J.F. Viljoen ('heavy footballer type, getting on in years. Pleasant but not impressive'); D.A.V. Fischer ('Although listed at a headquarters desk, has now been designated to assist Donald Sole in Vienna on Atomic Energy Agency matters in which he has had considerable experience.¹⁸⁹ Dynamic personality'); A.J. Oxley ('Acting head of "Africa (Special Problems)" desk, which includes Antarctica and special international problems which have an impact on Africa. Divorce pending').

Earlier Gilchrist had reported Spies's departure from the department at his own request on Jooste's appointment as Secretary. Spies was, he said, 'highly regarded' among members of the department 'as efficient and just'.¹⁹⁰ (Later he said of Spies's successor, Naude, that he had 'a more dynamic personality' than Jones and was 'likely to instil a more visible sense of urgency into the Department than ha[d] hitherto been noticeable'.)¹⁹¹ Gilchrist did not confine himself to senior officials. In July 1957 he wrote of Patrick van Rensburg, a Cadet who had resigned:

Van Rensburg, aged about 26, was a diplomatic cadet in Pretoria two years ago when he was posted to Leopoldville as Vice-Consul.

¹⁸⁷ A.G. Dunn was South African not Australian born. He spent part of his childhood in Australia. In 1980 he was kidnapped in El Salvador by the Farabundo Martí revolutionary movement and apparently murdered there. See his entry in the *DSAB*, Vol. V, pp. 213-14. Perhaps because of the circumstances of his death, he is the only professional South African foreign service officer to have been accorded an entry in the first series of the *DSAB*.

¹⁸⁸ Because of his marriage to a German, Pakendorff was transferred at the outbreak of war from the Department of External Affairs to the Department of Native Affairs where he spent the war years.

¹⁸⁹ Fischer joined the secretariat of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) later that year. AA, A9421/1, 221/1, Memo. 551, Gilchrist/DEA, 1 November 1957. He held senior positions in the agency until his retirement in the 1980s. Gilchrist reported G.G. Lawrie's resignation in the same memorandum.

¹⁹⁰ AA, A1050/2, 201/10, Memo. 370, Gilchrist/DEA, 5 October 1956.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 201/8, Memo. 401. Gilchrist/DEA, 9 August 1957.

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(Mr. Woolcott of our Department knew him well). He comes from an English-speaking Catholic family, despite his Afrikaner name. In Leopoldville he had personal problems, and also clashed with the Consul-General (Van Lille), an ardent Afrikaner Nationalist. The combination of circumstances, including his own liberal views, ended in his resigning from the Department of External Affairs in June this year, just before the Parliamentary debate on the external affairs vote. (An Opposition speaker referred incidentally to the resignation, in the context of Mr. Louw's Africa policy).¹⁹²

In respect of his political reporting Gilchrist's arguments and analyses sometimes put one in mind of the preoccupation attributed to medieval philosophers with the number of angels able to dance simultaneously on the point of a needle.¹⁹³ But he was quite acute in his comments about people. He excelled himself on the announcement of B.G. Fourie's appointment as Permanent Representative to the United Nations in 1958 which ended the two year period of token representation. (See Chapter Eight.) This was Fourie's first and only Ambassadorial post before his retirement twenty-four years later.¹⁹⁴ Gilchrist's remarks are worth quoting *in extenso* in illustration not only of his keen eye but for their illumination of a remarkable official. His portrait of Fourie was not equalled (or even attempted) from the South African side in respect of Australian officials. C.F.G. von Hirschberg, who knew Fourie well in the 1950s besides being one of his Deputy Directors-General between 1978 and 1982, said of it in 1994: 'The 1958 Australian view of Brand Fourie is spot on. It is a remarkably exact analysis of him.'¹⁹⁵

Gilchrist set the scene with these earlier observations:

¹⁹² AA, A9421/1, 221/1, Memo. 357, Gilchrist/DEA, 25 July 1957. The inspiration for his report was an article critical of South African foreign policy that Van Rensburg published in *The Star* (Johannesburg) on 11 July 1957.

¹⁹³ An example is his comments on the article 'Apartheid debate at Uno: New approach of moderation analysed' in the 27 December 1958 issue of the *Digest of South African Affairs* (pp. 10-12). AA, A1838/2, 201/10/1, Pt. 2, Gilchrist/Munro/Hill, 'South Africa: United Nations and Apartheid', 22 July 1959. He was then serving in the Intelligence Co-ordination Branch of the Department of External Affairs in Canberra. An earlier example is his view about the possibility of B.J. Schoeman visiting Australia in 1957. AA, A1838/1, 716/50/6/1, Pt.2, Memo. 425, Gilchrist/DEA, 22 August 1957.

¹⁹⁴ He returned to South Africa at the beginning of 1963, was appointed Secretary for Information that year and in 1966, upon G.P. Jooste's retirement, Secretary for Foreign Affairs, a post subsequently renamed Director-General for Foreign Affairs. On his retirement in 1982, he succeeded D.B. Sole as Ambassador to the United States, only his second time as Ambassador in a thirty-six year career in the department's diplomatic wing. He had been on the clerical staff for some twelve years before that.

¹⁹⁵ C.F.G. von Hirschberg, letter, 18 August 1994.

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Fourie is an ambitious and inscrutable man of about 42, deferential and smiling to members of the diplomatic corps, but much disliked by his departmental colleagues, some of whom consider him to be a ruthless little opportunist. *He is of little value to us as a source of information on his department's thinking, since he evades virtually all types of question.* Some of his colleagues have expressed the opinion that he is at least as close to Louw in the formulation of policy as Jooste is, if not closer.¹⁹⁶ (Italics added.)

He rounded off his portrait after the announcement of the appointment:

By comparison with that of most of his colleagues in the Union Department of External Affairs, Fourie's rise has been rapid. Allowing for a natural element of jealousy on the part of some of his colleagues, it cannot be said that Fourie is well liked by many of them. From hints dropped to us from time to time, it appears that his working methods aroused some hostility at the Counsellor and First Secretary level. It seems fair to say that Fourie is extremely ambitious and has pursued the ideal of departmental advancement with considerable determination.

Early in 1957 a 'Special Problems' Section was created in the Africa Branch. Fourie is said to have utilised this section as a means of attracting to himself, by familiar departmental devices, a good deal of control over other branches of the Department.¹⁹⁷ This created so much trouble with other Assistant Secretaries that eventually the 'Special Problems' Section was abolished.

Fourie is undoubtedly a hard worker, and is reputed to be something of a perfectionist as regards drafts submitted to him. His memory of detail is extremely good. He is pleasant and extremely courteous in manner, but often diffident in conversation with foreign representatives. Despite an ever-ready smile, his personality is rather negative and elusive. He speaks in a rather high-pitched voice with a noticeable Afrikaans accent.¹⁹⁸ As a rule, he is not a good conversationalist, and we have found it difficult to detect in him a continuing interest in any subjects except his work and his golf (at which game he is proficient) and the contemplation of flora and fauna, especially in remote bushland places.

A notable characteristic of Fourie is the rather obvious manner in which he steers the conversation away from any matter which he does not wish to discuss. We, and others, have found him preternaturally cautious about expressing any views on official matters, even of a non-confidential nature. If he has any personal views on

¹⁹⁶ AA, A1838/2, 201/9/1, Memo. 349, 30 May 1958, p. 2, para. 6.

¹⁹⁷ The extensive listing of the section's tasks on BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 19, *ie.*, 'Political Section (Special Problems', nd.) suggests this allegation was not unfounded.

¹⁹⁸ There was, however, nothing wrong with his English. For an example of his written English at an early stage in his diplomatic career, see his memorandum dated 1 April 1948 on the Atomic Energy Commission attached to BTS, 136/4/26, Vol. 2, Jacklin/SEA, 2 April 1948.

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South African party politics, he keeps them closely to himself; possibly they are opportunistically formed. His own colleagues state that he does not discuss official matters with them except on a 'need-to-know' basis. Members of Commonwealth diplomatic missions in South Africa have felt that his evasiveness in conversation on minor matters has sometimes been overdone to an irritating degree. It is possible, of course, that in his new post he will blossom out and be more forthcoming.

It has long been obvious that Fourie has the full confidence of his Minister, Eric Louw, and undoubtedly exercises much influence in the presentation of policy matters for Louw's consideration. He is generally regarded by the diplomatic corps here as a possible future Secretary for External Affairs.

Fourie is married, but has no children. His wife, Bronwen, is an English girl whom he met during the War. She works professionally in Pretoria as a physiotherapist. It seems to us that her political views incline to those of the United Party rather than the National Party. While we cannot say that there is any estrangement between herself and her husband, they appear to go their own ways very independently.¹⁹⁹ (Emphasis added.)

The italicised passages point to some of Fourie's diplomatic strengths. (See the reference above to the art of diplomacy being impossible 'if more people knew how to hold their tongues'.) Gilchrist also accurately identified Fourie's dislike of competition and his desire to nobble it.

The files contain many accolades to Fourie, one of the most competent and internationally respected South African foreign service officers of his generation. (He was born in 1916, the same year as Gilchrist himself.) Knowles reported in 1947 that he was 'stated to be a capable officer'.²⁰⁰ In 1948 Jacklin, Fourie's superior at the Permanent Mission in New York, told Andrews, the Minister in Paris, who had recommended that 'young Brand Fourie be made available for the Paris Assembly',²⁰¹ 'I agree with you that Fourie would be very valuable in Paris, but I would not be doing my duty if I reported that the office could run without him or a competent replacement'.²⁰² From Jooste in 1950:

¹⁹⁹ AA, A1838/2, 916/1/2, Memo. 519, Gilchrist/DEA, 29 August 1958. The first Mrs Fourie was killed in a car crash outside Cape Town in March 1960. Fourie subsequently remarried. He and his second wife, the former Daphne Doyle, have two children.

²⁰⁰ AA, A4231/2, Pretoria 1-91 1947, No. 61/47, 22 July 1947, p. 2, para. 5.

²⁰¹ The Third Session of the UN General Assembly.

²⁰² BTS, 136/2/3/2, Vol. 1, Jacklin/Andrews, 9 August 1948 and Andrews/Forsyth, 10 August 1948.

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I should make special mention of the manner in which [Fourie] represented the Union on the Fifth Committee and his willing cooperation and assistance in the other work of the Delegation, including the administrative work. Fourie is without a doubt one of our ablest foreign service officials. His charm in personal relations is quite exceptional.²⁰³

In 1952 from another South African source: 'Brand Fourie took charge of the 4th Committee most efficiently and made a very good impression on his colleagues.'²⁰⁴ K.C.O. (Mick) Shann reported from New York in 1959 that the South Africans 'had the advantage of a most capable and well-liked representative, Mr. Fourie, who had good relations with all of his Commonwealth colleagues'.²⁰⁵ Brian Urquhart, a former UN Under Secretary-General for Special Political Affairs said of him in connection with the South West Africa/Namibia negotiations of the 1970s and 1980s: 'I had known Brand Fourie since 1945. He was a decent and honorable man, personally dedicated to finding a proper solution for the Namibian problem, but constricted by the policy and politics of South Africa.'²⁰⁶ Even Eschel Rhoodie, an opponent, called him 'one of the most intelligent and hard working Government officials in the entire service'.²⁰⁷

Staff attached for lengthy periods to sections or divisions of a foreign office constitute, as Steiner says, a 'reservoir of expertise' and a 'departmental memory bank'. They provide continuity.²⁰⁸ She writes of nineteenth century Foreign Office senior clerks that each was 'in charge of only one department and frequently stayed there for eight to twelve years. All the business of the department passed through their hands and they gradually built up funds of detailed knowledge about their areas. In the African, American and Asiatic Departments, they were the office experts.'²⁰⁹ Lack of continuity in personnel and approach was traditionally a weakness of the old South African department; also, it would seem, of the Australian department. If the South Africans were thereby put in the position of having continually to 'reinvent the wheel', the following passage from Millar suggests that the Australians were not far behind:

²⁰³ BTS, 136/2/3/4, Jooste/Forsyth, 21 March 1950.

²⁰⁴ BTS, 136/2/3/7, Roberts/Forsyth, 30 December 1952.

²⁰⁵ AA, A1838/2, 201/9/1 Pt. 2, Memo. 1221, Shann/DEA, 2 December 1959. According to Von Hirschberg: 'In New York, he had a different role to play and Mick Shann's description of him in that environment is also probably accurate'. Letter, 18 August 1994.

²⁰⁶ Urquhart, *A life in peace and war*, p. 310.

²⁰⁷ Rhoodie, *The real information scandal*, p. 600.

²⁰⁸ Steiner, ed., *The Times Survey of Foreign Ministries of the World*, p. 12.

²⁰⁹ Steiner, *The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy*, p. 13; also Steiner, 'The Last Years of the old Foreign Office, 1898-1905', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. VI, No. 1, 1963, p. 71.

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The Department of External Affairs has expanded so rapidly that it has had a continuing shortage of experienced people at most levels. The result is a game of musical chairs ... in which members of the department change their field of interest with great frequency. From being a First Secretary in Ghana, one may come back and deal with SEATO and in a year or two be posted to Brazil. This gives a splendid range of experience, and would not matter so much if there were a proper research organisation to provide regular, up-to-the-minute as well as background analyses. But there is in effect no such division, and today's 'expert' on South America may have only had time to read the previous two or three days' telegrams when he took over.²¹⁰

Millar wrote that in the 1960s. Almost a quarter-of-a-century later he was saying:

In the British FCO there is a Research Department, where either erstwhile academics or academically minded public servants can concentrate their efforts on an area or an issue, and write papers or be available for consultation. There is something similar in the US State Department. In the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs there is no such division, and the Department 'memory' consists of the latest part of the file. Sometimes this will have only a few weeks' or months' material on it. Officers are switched from subject to subject, region to region. This gives them a wider experience but it does not make for continuity or a deep understanding of the context of decisions.²¹¹

To this day that applies to the South African department. At least in the case of the Australian department the deficiency has been rectified, if only partially, by the setting up within W.J. Hudson's Historical Documents Branch of an Historical Records Information and Access Section with a staff of seven.²¹²

It was mentioned in Chapter Two that set phrases such as 'the present staff is totally inadequate' tended to recur in departmental submissions to the South African Public Service Commission and the Treasury. The staff was rarely held to be adequate. Despite that structures were frequently created on paper, only to collapse *inter alia* because of insufficient staff to man them. Steps taken in respect of the reporting function in the 1950s illustrate these weaknesses.

²¹⁰ Millar, *Australia's Foreign Policy*, Sydney, 1968, pp. 16-17.

²¹¹ Millar, 'Academics and Practitioners in Foreign Affairs', *The Round Table*, No. 319, July 1991, p. 278.

²¹² See the Introduction, p. 29 above.

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In September 1956 Jones recorded a series of decisions in respect of the department's political section which had been split in two in January 1955 to take account of the general increase both in 'the volume of work' and the 'intensity of the criticism of the Union's policies'.²¹³ The first of the new sections, 'Political: Special Problems' was, intentionally or otherwise, to provide B.G. Fourie with a 'vehicle' or springboard to higher rank in the department. That may conceivably have been the first but it was certainly not the last time vehicles were created within the structure of the South African department to accommodate the aspirations of favoured and upwardly mobile officials. When the incumbent moved on (and up) to other work, the justification for the vehicle disappeared whereupon it was eliminated from the structure; or if it remained it was but a pale shadow of its former self and in no way a fast-track to preferment for the new incumbent.

The establishment of the second section, 'Political: General', hinted at the beginnings of a move away from reliance on British reporting because its principal duty was 'the study of international political events and trends and the collation and evaluation of information received'. At the time of Jones's note, the section discharged its functions by studying (a) reports received from South African missions abroad and from British and other sources; (b) national and international newspapers and other publications; whereupon it prepared (c) special memoranda on matters of importance to the Union; and (d) a 'Weekly Review of International Events'. Copies of (c) and (d) were sent to Cabinet Ministers because Eric Louw was 'particularly anxious that they should be kept informed of international developments'.²¹⁴ At the time the staff consisted of a First Secretary (A.B.F. Burger), a Second Secretary (A.G. Dunn) and a Third Secretary (P.R. Killen).

Jones said it was contemplated expanding the section by at least one experienced officer, an 'intelligent Second Secretary' who would study mission reports, comment 'intelligently' on them and make 'accurate and intelligent summaries'.²¹⁵ That was, however, subject to the 'availability of staff'. Lack of staff, Jones argued, had until then prevented the department from performing 'certain important functions'. The perception of such an hiatus had inspired the creation of the Political (General) Section

²¹³ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 19, 'Staff position of the Political (General) Section', 27 September 1956.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6, para. 19.

²¹⁵ In other words, a precis writer, an important position in other services including the nineteenth century Foreign Office. Applicants to the Australian department in the 1940s were tested in precis writing.

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in the first place. The matters concerned would be attended to in stages depending, *inter alia*, on 'availability of staff', *ie.*, improving the standard of mission reporting by 'commenting constructively' on reports received and supplying missions 'with information we have and may not be in their possession'; preparing an annual report; serving as a research section; and later as a planning section.

In the event, an intelligent Second Secretary was not made available to strengthen the section and the matters adverted to remained unaddressed. Jones dated his note 27 September 1956. Some time during the next nine months, in fact by 3 July 1957 the date of and as revealed by, Gilchrist's 'organigram', Political: General had split into Political (East) under G.G. Lawrie as First Secretary and Political (West) under A.G. Dunn, who had in the meantime been promoted to First Secretary. A.B.F. Burger had been promoted to Counsellor and was acting as Assistant Secretary in charge of the Economic Relations, General, Consular and Treaties Division. And Killen was assisting Dunn in Political (West). Jones himself had been promoted to Senior Assistant Secretary in charge of the Africa Branch with the personal rank of Minister while Special Problems had followed Fourie to the Africa Branch. There, as Assistant Secretary under Jones, he also supervised the Technical Co-operation (J. Fourie, First Secretary) and Political (A.J.F. Viljoen, First Secretary) Sections.

Nominally under D.A.V. Fischer, but with A.J. Oxley as its effective head, the Special Problems Section was soon disbanded. It had served its purpose. By 1958 Oxley was Deputy Chief of Protocol.²¹⁶ In the course of these personnel shifts the perceived importance of reporting subsided, to be revived when circumstances were more propitious only to be dropped again (and again).²¹⁷ The South Africans would have done better to follow the 1930s Australian example of publishing their own *Current Notes on International Affairs*. The discipline imposed by the production of a regular publication could have enforced a degree of continuity at least among the departmental staff involved with it.

The ambivalence with which young South African diplomats were beheld by their seniors from the 1930s to the 1950s was mentioned in Chapter Two. If the South

²¹⁶ See the 1957 statement of departmental diplomatic personnel on BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 19.

²¹⁷ 'They never go far. They never do what they set out to do. Always pecking at new things are the *Bandar-log*'. Chil the Kite in 'Kaa's Hunting'. R. Kipling, *The Jungle Books* (London, 1989 (1987)), p. 62. This Penguin edition joins the *First* and *Second Jungle Books* in one volume. Chil and the *Bandar-log* are not the only Kipling creations whose words or deeds can be applied to a Department of Foreign Affairs. There is also Chuchundra the musk-rat in 'Rikki-tikki-tavi'.

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African Department of External Affairs did not follow the post-1906 British practice of having clerks sit in judgement on despatches,²¹⁸ it was also inattentive to the Foreign Office reforms which relieved junior diplomatic personnel of the routine work which 'stultified their education, dulled their wits and deprived them of every kind of initiative'.²¹⁹ Arthur Ponsonby, then a Member of Parliament, gave the 1914 Royal Commission this example:

I had been nearly nine years in the Service, and my work was still to copy out despatches, to put numbers on papers, to sort confidential prints, and, more especially, to do up, dispatch bags with sealing-wax and red tape. That occupied my whole time day by day, and the resentment caused by that inspired me to draw up this memorandum, which I presented to Sir Thomas Sanderson ...²²⁰

Gie complained from Washington in 1944: 'The present position is that all the diplomatic members of my staff have their hands so full with administrative duties that I am afraid that much really important diplomatic work has per force to be neglected'.²²¹ A decade later E.F. Horn, the Minister in Stockholm, expressed anxiety 'about the mounting burden of routine administrative work which now makes so great a demand on the time of the diplomatic personnel'.²²² After four years in the department including three in Australia, P.R. Killen described his duties in 1952 as: 'Immigration and consular work, accounts, cyphers, general correspondence and general office administration, locally recruited staff, assisting with the drafting and writing of political and economic reports, social'.²²³

Shortly after his own arrival in Canberra in 1954, pressing for a replacement for Killen who was about to return to South Africa, Uys wrote: 'In the month that I have worked here with Mr Killen, he was occupied day after day only with accounts, passport, visa and purely administrative tasks. So it was before my arrival and so it will

²¹⁸ See Chapter One, p. 50.

²¹⁹ J.D. Gregory, *On the Edge of Diplomacy; Rambles and Reflections, 1902-1928*, London, 1928, p. 18.

²²⁰ Cd. 7749, *Royal Commission on the Civil Service: Appendix to Fifth Report of the Commissioners: Minutes of Evidence, 29th April 1914-16th July 1914, Q.36,551-Q.43,890, with Appendices*. London, 1914, Q.39,397, pp. 119-20. Ponsonby's famous memorandum of 17 October 1900, with comments, is reproduced in Steiner, *The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy*, Appendix 4, pp. 222-30. See also Steiner, 'The Last Years of the old Foreign Office, 1898-1905', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. VI, No. 1, 1963, p. 72 and Jones, *The British Diplomatic Service*, pp. 164-65.

²²¹ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 7, Gie/Forsyth, 19 October 1944.

²²² BCB, Vol. 1, 2/1, Horn/SEA, 1 July 1954.

²²³ BTS, Killen, Vol. 1A, Staff report, 6 June 1952.

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be with his successor'.²²⁴ He explained in the same minute why Killen's post should be filled by a home-based officer and not by a locally-recruited unit. The department concurred.²²⁵

So it was indeed. When E.J.L. Scholtz, who by then had risen to Assistant Secretary (Administrative), inspected the Canberra High Commission in November 1957²²⁶ he reported that the time of the Third Secretary, C.R. Roberts (Killen's successor) was 'fully occupied with administrative duties'. He also worked overtime.²²⁷ That was the only inspection of the Canberra office during the period covered by this study.²²⁸ (Only the missions in Buenos Aires, Canberra, Luanda and Rio de Janeiro were not visited by the 1956 Van Veen/Parminster inspection mission.)²²⁹ Some months after Roberts's resignation in June 1959 Hamilton told Scholtz it was essential 'to have a junior officer sent here to look after our administration and consular work'.²³⁰ Hamilton had also been under pressure the previous year during Roberts's convalescence after a serious motor accident especially since that coincided with Olivier's pending transfer to Pretoria. Advising the department that Roberts's return to duty could not be counted on for some time, Hamilton claimed that in the absence of a replacement for Olivier, 'it might not be possible to carry on the work' of the High Commission 'even on an emergency basis'.²³¹

²²⁴ BCB, Vol. 1, 2/1, Uys/SEA, 21 April 1954, p. 3, para. 12. (Original in Afrikaans.) Uys qualified the reference to the successor, saying that would be the case unless he were assisted by a fulltime locally-recruited unit.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, Spies/High Commissioner, Canberra, 12 May 1954.

²²⁶ With B.J. Schoeman and Thomas Boydell, Scholtz was a passenger on the South African Airways 'Goodwill Flight' which inaugurated the airline's fortnightly service to Australia.

²²⁷ BTS, 4/6/36, Vol. 6, Scholtz/Secretary, n.d. p. 3. See also Hamilton, Vol. III, Hamilton/Scholtz, 20 November 1959 pleading for a replacement for Roberts who had resigned the previous June and remained in Australia.

²²⁸ The Australians seem to have been inspected twice during the period: once by W.J. Thorley of the Public Service Board in 1956 and once by a Mr Nienaber of ASIO in 1959. The latter recommended measures to strengthen security at the Cape Town and Pretoria offices. Thorley inspected only the Cape Town office, between 15 and 26 May 1956 - the Pretoria office was closed for the Parliamentary session. See AA, A1838/1, 201/10/6/1, Pt. 1, Memo. 18, Hodgson/Department of External Affairs, 23 January 1957, Annex, p. 2 (Annual Report for 1956) and A1838/T184, 1348/8, Memo. 163, Phillips/Department of External Affairs, 13 April 1960, Annex, p. 2. (Annual Report for 1959). A Public Service Board Inspector also visited the post in May 1963. A9421/2, 2/1/3, Pt.1, Memo. 320, Kevin/Department of External Affairs, 19 July 1963.

²²⁹ BTS, S4/5/45, Vol. 2, 'Grading of Diplomatic Posts in the Department of External Affairs', 30 October 1956. See Chapter One, p. 55.

²³⁰ BTS, Hamilton, Vol. III, Hamilton/Scholtz, 20 November 1959.

²³¹ BTS, Olivier, Vol. 2, Hamilton/SEA, 7 August 1958 and Vol. 1, Hamilton/SEA, 15 August 1958.

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At that time, while South African Cadets and Third Secretaries in missions abroad were fully occupied with administrative duties, their colleagues at home found themselves prohibited from signing even what were known as 'reminders' to other government departments.²³² But neither of their ranks included an Arthur Ponsonby unless the future Foreign Minister, R.F. Botha, could be considered to fall into that category. Almost the antithesis of the normal entrant into the Department of External Affairs in the 1950s, Botha certainly caused trouble and made waves. That would have contributed to his rise. His account of his relationship with the administrative section during his Cadet years (1953-56) before his first posting to Stockholm in 1956 suggests those traditional Public Servants would have been glad to see the back of him.²³³

Not only the most junior diplomatic officer was involved with administration. In 1950s Canberra the Official Secretary, *ie.* the second-in-command, was 'responsible to the High Commissioner for all administrative matters' including the 'most effective execution of the duties of members of the staff'.²³⁴ The High Commissioner himself, apart from being ultimately responsible, also did much hands-on administering, especially during J.K. Uys's first term (1954-57) when the official residence was built.²³⁵ Obviously in his element, Uys reported in 1956:

Correspondence and related duties in connection with the building and furnishing of the new residence are attended to by me personally as these duties can, in the nature of things, not be delegated to the junior staff of the Mission. This work takes up quite a bit of my time but it is interesting to follow operations step by step. In the long run it will save time, and maybe money.²³⁶

Australian heads of mission were ostensibly less occupied with administration.²³⁷ O.L. Davis listed as his duties in June 1959:

1. Overall responsibility for conduct of Mission; 2. Liaison with Union Government at Cabinet and Head of Department Level and

²³² These were usually worded along the lines of 'It would be appreciated if you would indicate when a reply to my minute so-and-so dated such-and-such could be expected'.

²³³ R.F. Botha, telephonic communication, 1 July 1994.

²³⁴ Olivier, Vol. 1, 'Duties of Second Secretary. Office of the High Commissioner of the Union of South Africa, Canberra. Post occupied since 12/1/1955 by Mr D.P. Olivier - 3rd Secretary'. (Original in Afrikaans.)

²³⁵ Throughout his career Uys was known for his administrative talents rather than his political insight.

²³⁶ BTS, 4/6/36, Vol. 4, Uys/Acting SEA, 1 May 1956.

²³⁷ See, however, Crocker, *Australian Diplomat*, p. 61.

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with Heads of Diplomatic Missions; Representation of Australia at official diplomatic and social functions and entertainment of guests at Head of Mission level; 4. Correspondence with Union Government and other Missions on policy questions; 5. Political Intelligence and political reporting; 6. Representation when in, and political intelligence reporting on, other territories in Africa south of the Sahara, including official tours of those territories, especially the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland and the Protectorates.²³⁸

Even so, the High Commissioner's staff could not avoid administrative entanglements. Hodgson complained in 1953: 'It is not too much to say that the staff of this office finds its energies consumed in administrative work for our own and other Departments and that the lack of a trained clerical officer is preventing this Mission from discharging its primary political functions'.²³⁹ Gilchrist took up the refrain in 1957: 'the amount of administrative, accounting, consular, information and post-office work' precluded 'political officers from giving due thought to reporting, let alone to evolution of policy'.²⁴⁰

Putting aside the opinion Uys formed after only a month's acquaintance with Killen (see above), it may seem from the latter's job description ('assisting with the drafting and writing of political and economic reports')²⁴¹ that, if not in Colin Roberts's case, then *his* work had a dimension beyond the administrative. That is hard to substantiate because the South Africans did not follow Lincoln MacVeagh's custom of having the initials of those who drafted a document which he subsequently edited and signed appear on the final version.²⁴² For the last three years of Hodgson's term practice at the Australian High Commission was to have the initials of the person who drafted it appear on the final page of the original of a despatch to the Minister or the Secretary. (See Appendix V).

²³⁸ AA, 1838/1, 1348/2, Pt. 2, 'Mission: Australian High Commission, Cape Town - Permanent staff as at 30th June, 1959, Form "A".' Dating back to Dunk's term as Secretary, Australian missions were required to submit half yearly returns of home based and locally engaged staff. Part A of the prescribed form related to the former and part B to the latter. The purpose, Dunk said, was to 'maintain central control of overseas staff'. Stating the position as at 30 June and 31 December, the returns listed the duties performed by the occupants of each post. In Hodgson's time the Head of Mission's duties were not given. Those quoted above appeared in the first return after Davis's assumption of duty.

²³⁹ AA, A1838/1, 1348/2, Pt. 1, Memo. 73, Hodgson/DEA, 4 March 1953.

²⁴⁰ AA, A1838/1, 201/10/6/1, Pt. 1, Memo. 605, Gilchrist/DEA, 27 November 1957.

²⁴¹ BTS, Killen, Vol. 1A, Staff report, 6 June 1952.

²⁴² Iatrides, *Ambassador MacVeagh Reports*, p. vii. Such reports were additional to 'several hundred long despatches' MacVeagh himself wrote 'covering every conceivable topic of possible interest to his superiors' during his first term in Greece up to 1940.

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That first occurred in November 1954 when Woolcott's initials appeared on Hodgson's eleventh despatch of the year.²⁴³ Woolcott prepared Hodgson's comments on the announcement that Jooste would succeed Forsyth as Secretary for External Affairs.²⁴⁴ If junior officers did not sign despatches, the presence of their initials at least made it clear who had drafted them. The practice is not evident after Hodgson.

Aware of the facts, the department sometimes congratulated Hodgson on despatches his subordinates had prepared.²⁴⁵ Perhaps Hodgson could afford to be relaxed about having the identities of those who drafted his despatches disclosed. After all, he was on the eve of retirement after what casual observers would have regarded as a successful two-decade career with the Department of External Affairs. In the early 1960s the Australian mission's smaller size - it was then basically a two man post - suggests that those who drafted the despatches also signed them. South African heads of mission were traditionally unenthusiastic about letting it be known who had written their despatches and did not follow this practice.

Woolcott gave his duties in 1954 as:

1. Liaison with Union Government Departments and foreign missions and correspondence in which matters of policy are involved.
2. Security; coding and cyphering.
3. General interviewing of public.
4. Consular matters referred to High Commission.
5. Political research.
6. Compiling economic reports for the Department of External Affairs.
7. Representation.
8. Publicity.
9. Paymaster.
10. General work on behalf of other Departments.
11. Clerical duties, including registration of all inwards correspondence.²⁴⁶

Within that framework, besides his economic reports, which were ten to twelve pages long and despatched quarterly,²⁴⁷ he reported on 'non-European political activities'. The department liked these reports, which were usually prepared for Hodgson's signature, and from time to time sent Hodgson congratulatory messages. Woolcott's successor, Nicholson, inherited those aspects of his work. Woolcott's immediate predecessor, Miss E.A. Warren, had researched and written a lengthy 'Report on the basic industries in the Union of South Africa'. Copies were sent to the Departments of

²⁴³ Dated 19 November 1954 entitled 'Speculation on Dr Malan's Successor'.

²⁴⁴ AA, A1838/T184, 201/7/1, Pt. 1, Memo. 496, 14 December 1955.

²⁴⁵ See, *eg.*, AA, A1838/1, 201/10/6, Pt. 1, Kevin/Hodgson, 30 July 1956.

²⁴⁶ AA, A1838/1, 1348/2, Pt. 1, 'Australian High Commission, Pretoria. Permanent Staff as at 1st July, 1954', Form A. See also permanent staff as at 1 July 1955 and 1 January 1957 on the same file.

²⁴⁷ Examples are on AA, A1838/274, 774/2, Pt. 4.

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National Development, Treasury, Commerce and Agriculture, and Trade and Customs. Hodgson's memorandum forwarding to Canberra the introductory and mining chapters credited Miss Warren with primary responsibility for the survey.²⁴⁸

When Woolcott was invited for a visit by a friend in the Indian Commission in Nairobi whom he had met in Moscow during his first posting, Hodgson recommended that his travel costs and expenses be paid. The department concurred.²⁴⁹ Accompanied by his wife who had given birth to her second child two months before, Woolcott visited British East Africa for the first eighteen days of October 1956. His twenty page report on his visit was dated 19 January 1957,²⁵⁰ the day before he sailed for Australia on board the 'Dominion Monarch'.

The department was less generous to Gilchrist who had sought earlier in 1956 to take up an invitation from the South African Consul in Elizabethville, A.J. Oxley,²⁵¹ to visit him. That provided an opportunity 'to investigate the Belgian Congo' and Hodgson recommended that Gilchrist also visit Bukavu and Leopoldville. The total cost of the tour would amount to some £A300 but at least the journey to Elizabethville would cost nothing because Oxley, who was returning there after a visit to the Union, would provide transportation. The department replied that no money was available.²⁵² Notwithstanding the rebuff Gilchrist accepted Oxley's offer, hitch-hiking back to Pretoria on the return journey.²⁵³ (As he put it in his report, 'I sought and obtained a succession of lifts along the road'²⁵⁴ - unorthodox and challengeable activity for a foreign service officer which perhaps influenced the department in its decision a month later to pay for Woolcott's visit.)

²⁴⁸ AA, A1831/1, 201/4/8, Memo. 39, Hodgson/DEA, 15 February 1954. Somewhat 'Freudianly', 'Miss Warren' became 'Mr Warren' in the copy of Hodgson's covering letter on the Treasury file A571/69, 56/640, Pt. 1. That file contains a more comprehensive copy of the survey than is apparently available on the External Affairs file.

²⁴⁹ AA, A1838/1, 1348/2, Pt. 1, Memo. 336, Hodgson/DEA, 7 September 1956.

²⁵⁰ A copy is on AA, A1838/2, 169/11/128, Pt. 1.

²⁵¹ He and Gilchrist had first met in Athens in the early 1950s when the latter was a member of the UN Special Commission on the Balkans. Oxley was Ambassador to Australia from 1977 to 1983, his last post before retirement.

²⁵² AA, A1838/1, 201/10/6, Pt. 1, I. 9316 and Memo. 259, Hodgson/DEA, both of 12 July 1956.

²⁵³ H. Gilchrist, letter, 15 December 1994.

²⁵⁴ AA, A1838/1, 201/10/6/1, Pt. 1, Memo. 312, Gilchrist/DEA, 16 August 1956, p. 2, para. 8. He told the writer recently: 'Hitch-hiking back provided some good stories and cost me only about a fiver'. Letter, 20 January 1995.

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Gilchrist accompanied H.D. Mitchell, a First Secretary in the British High Commission, by road to the Bechuanaland Protectorate in November of that year. Perhaps as a precaution he advised the department of the visit only after the event. Somewhat pointedly he annexed to the report on his itinerary a statement itemising his out-of-pocket expenses which came to £4.6.9 including £2.15.9 for a 'single second-class ticket on "mixed goods" train Francistown to Mafeking' and £1.2.0 for six gallons of petrol for Mitchell's car on the return journey from Mafeking to Pretoria.²⁵⁵ No doubt the department considered this good value when it received the product of the visit, a twenty-one page, single-spaced report on the Bechuanaland Protectorate to which was annexed a five-page 'Historical Summary of the Dispute Regarding the Chieftainship of the Bamangwato Tribe (Seretse Khama's Case)',²⁵⁶ this being a leading political issue of the day.

The case of E.H. Hanfield detracts from the perception that the Australians did more than the South Africans to bring their junior staff along. It arose during Hodgson's term and also involved K.T. Kelly. Hanfield, who was not a foreign service officer, went to South Africa in 1953 as a consular clerk. Before his posting he had been the departmental Travel Officer in Canberra, there turning out work of 'a very high standard'.²⁵⁷ He had spirit and caused a stir shortly after assuming duty in South Africa. Having clashed with Kelly, the Official Secretary, about what he should do and where, he wrote A.S. Watt, the Secretary for External Affairs, under whom he had served in Moscow in the 1940s, a three page letter of complaint.²⁵⁸ It would, he said, 'be a waste of Commonwealth funds' to keep him in South Africa 'under the arrangements the Official Secretary' proposed for him, an office dogsbody and substitute chauffeur ('to save taxi fares') in Pretoria, not Cape Town where the department wanted to place him.

Some of the work Kelly had in mind for him, such as packing trunks for despatch to Pretoria after a parliamentary session, had previously been undertaken by a temporarily engaged African. It was also apparent that Hodgson, the High Commissioner, 'couldn't care less' what he did. J.K. Waller, then Assistant Secretary for Personnel Affairs in Canberra, minuted Watt that he considered it 'most improper that

²⁵⁵ 1348/2, Pt. 1, Memo. 406, Gilchrist/DEA, 28 November 1956.

²⁵⁶ AA, A1838/2, 155/7/14, Pt. 1, Memo 405 (previously 438), Gilchrist/DEA, 21 December 1956. The Annex was dated 28 December.

²⁵⁷ AA, A1838/1, 1348/2, Pt. 1, Hartley/Assistant Secretary, 1257/24, 11 February 1953.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 1348/1, Pt. 1, Hanfield/Watt, 24 September 1953.

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a consular clerk should write to you in this way' and suggested he ignore the letter. 'However, I think there is little doubt that Hanfield's charges are correct and that Kelly is not making proper use of his services'.²⁵⁹

Hodgson's best efforts to prise Hanfield loose from Cape Town and attach him to the High Commission in Pretoria, including correspondence with Tange, Watt's successor as Secretary, proved unavailing. Hanfield stayed where he was. Not that he was content with his lot. A year later he wrote in terms reminiscent of Ponsonby's turn of the century complaint. This writer has not come across similar correspondence from junior South African officials.

The greater part of my time is taken up with typing and allied duties, and I very much doubt whether the wastages inherent in the running of an office by a single person were clearly seen when the arrangement was originally made. I would emphasize that I am entirely alone in the office, and every single operation is carried out by me personally. So far as correspondence is concerned, this is everything from opening envelopes, indexing inward mail, typing replies and envelopes, stamping envelopes, postage book entry, sealing envelopes and filing, to, finally, closing the office to take the mail to the post office. During last month I typed 194 outward, and received 178 inward, communications ... These figures do not include daily newspaper cuttings for the Trade Commissioner, mail re-addressed to the High Commission and the Trade Commissioner, consular and administrative circulars from Canberra, and sundry typing for office records in migration cases. During the same month I had an average of 25 visitors per week to the office.²⁶⁰

Hanfield's 'chutzpah' should have brought him more than the consular posts he occupied for much of his career, including Deputy Consul-General in New York and Consul-General in Bombay not to mention the Administratorship of the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, his last post before retirement in 1983.²⁶¹ Perhaps it would if he had turned to politics, as Arthur Ponsonby did fifty years earlier in the United Kingdom. There again, his progress was not bad for someone who had started out in the Public

²⁵⁹ AA, A1838/1, 1348/1, Pt. 1, Waller/Watt, 18 November 1953.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Pt. 1, Hanfield/DEA, 11 September 1954.

²⁶¹ DFAT, Dept of Foreign Affairs, *Appointments and Biographies*, Sixth ed., 1984, p. 475. I am indebted to Ms Moira Smythe for a copy of his entry.

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Service as a male typist²⁶² and he quite likely had a more fulfilling career than many 'low flying' foreign service officers with university degrees including Kelly.²⁶³

²⁶² AA, A1838/1, 1348/1, Pt. 1, Tange/Hodgson, 1 April 1954.

²⁶³ As mentioned in Chapter Four (p.197, footnote 88) Kelly occupied only two minor Ambassadorial posts in the course of his career: Buenos Aires (1964-66) and Lisbon (1970-74) for a total of less than seven years.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE UNITED NATIONS DIMENSION

Australia's feeling that members of the British Commonwealth should be 'fully informed' of 'each other's attitudes, policies and problems' in 'the work of the United Nations and its various constituent bodies' was among the reasons behind its proposal to establish diplomatic relations with South Africa.¹ However, if anything was to strain the relationship it was precisely the United Nations connection and particularly after 1960. Even before that the perceived importance to Australia of the relationship declined as the 1950s advanced, notwithstanding Robert Menzies's ideal of a Commonwealth united under the crown with South Africa a key member. (Indeed, it was Smuts himself who had suggested the name British Commonwealth in 1917).² Two factors were at play: the relationship's basic lack of substance which Evatt and Burton should have anticipated but did not (Curtin suspected it)³ and the fact that South Africa was becoming increasingly controversial internationally.

Evatt said in 1948 that Australia 'regarded the maintenance of ... friendly relations with South Africa ... as a matter of the greatest importance. The presence of an Australian High Commissioner in the Union ... had been of considerable value'.⁴ He also expressed to Malan his 'firm belief that our two Governments [would] co-operate to the maximum'.⁵ In 1951, the Liberal Party government considered that since the establishment of diplomatic relations 'the friendly relationship and mutual understanding between our two countries have grown tremendously ... We have also long recognised the importance of South Africa to Australia as constituting the main link in one of our life-lines to the United Kingdom'.⁶

¹ AA, A1066/1, M45/21/6, Agendum No. 979, 29 October 1945, 'Australian Representation in South Africa'. See Chapter Three, p. 126.

² Hall calls him 'the political architect of the name'. H. Duncan Hall, *Commonwealth: A History of the British Commonwealth of Nations* (London, 1971), p. 192.

³ Mulrooney, *Australia's relations with South Africa*, p. 26. See Chapter One, pp. 40-41 above.

⁴ AA, 1838/1, 201/10/6/1, Pt. 1, 'For the Press' (Draft), n.d.

⁵ BTS, 130/10, Vol. 1, Evatt/Malan, No. 13, 6 June 1948. The next sentence set the parameters: 'Few things are more important in the interests, not only of our two countries but of the Commonwealth of Nations, than of international peace and justice, and I look forward to co-operation with these ends in view'.

⁶ AA, A1838, 201/10/7, Pt. 1. Undated notes, presumably for a speech on the occasion of Viljoen's departure.

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Such views of the relationship gave way to a more pragmatic attitude as its lack of substance became apparent. For several periods during the 1950s the post was left vacant as perceptions of its value diminished. Even so, periodic departmental assessments concluded that the post had value *inter alia* because it was 'our only African post'.⁷ That surrendered in turn to the more negative stance represented by the view articulated in the late 1950s that South Africa's 'policies and attitudes are a source of embarrassment to the West, and particularly to the United Kingdom, the United States and ourselves in our policies with respect to South and South East Asia and Africa'.⁸

By 1960 the Australian High Commissioner in South Africa was seen as 'hampered by the physical and political isolation of the Government to which he [was] accredited'.⁹ And by 1963 Australian officials contemplated having to choose between South Africa and black Africa, to the former's disadvantage: 'In view of the voting power of the African states in New York and because of Australia's sensitivity on such matters as New Guinea and aborigines, any such choice could hardly favour the Republic'.¹⁰ For that reason Australia had already changed its votes at the UN General Assembly on the Apartheid and South West Africa items.¹¹

However, at the time Australian officials were beginning to see South Africa as a burden the latter's government, initially an unenthusiastic if not actually reluctant partner to the diplomatic connection, came more and more to appreciate its value. The highly regarded J.P. Quinn, who had on-the-spot experience, told his superiors in 1952 that 'Australia has adopted a more consistently sympathetic approach than any other Commonwealth country and South African Ministers, particularly Dr. Malan and Dr. Dönges, have expressed warm appreciation of our support'.¹² By 1954 Jooste, Ambassador to the United States and Permanent Representative to the United Nations, was calling Australia 'our best friend'.¹³

⁷ AA, 1838/1, 201/10/6/1, Pt. 1, Desmond/Lee, 'The political importance of our South African post', 30/1/1952.

⁸ AA, A1838/2, 201/11/1 Pt. 2, Memo. 668, Nicholson/DEA, 14 November 1958.

⁹ That was in the context of a lobbying effort in Africa to win support for Australian policies 'on Trusteeship and related matters'. AA, A1838/1, 201/10/6/1, Pt. 1, O. 8367, 22 May 1960, para. 4.

¹⁰ AA, A9421/1, 201/1, Pt. 1, Departmental general paper 'Prospects for South Africa', p. 12. Attached to Memo. 213, Lee/Australian Embassy, Pretoria, 2 September 1963.

¹¹ AA, A1838/T54, 201/2/6/1, Pt. 5, 'South West Africa', n.d., p. 3, para. 10 and A5819/2, Vol. 22, ag. 883, Attachment, 'History of United Nations consideration of apartheid and the Australian attitude', para. 2.

¹² A1838/T184, 201/7/1, Pt. 1, J.P. Quinn, 'For Mr McIntyre: Notes on South Africa', p. 2, para. 7.

¹³ BTS, 4/2/32, Vol. 2, Uys/Secretary for External Affairs, 7 July 1954. (Translation).

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In 1956 B.J. Schoeman, the Minister of Transport, told Hodgson in connection with the air link that because of the friendship he would do nothing to harm Australia's commercial interests.¹⁴ A year later, referring specifically to the United Nations, he informed a visiting Qantas delegation that it was 'important for the Union to have closer relations with Australia, as a friendly country'.¹⁵ Gilchrist reported in 1958 that

Louw, when proposing the toast of Australia at Australia Day reception this year, made the main theme of his remarks Australia's support of South Africa's resistance to interference by the United Nations in her domestic affairs. Both Louw and Schoeman ... have gratuitously expressed appreciation of this support to me on several occasions.¹⁶

Louw conveyed his thanks in writing to his Australian counterpart, R.G. Casey, almost annually from the time he became Minister of External Affairs. And as mentioned in Chapter Six, in 1956 and for some years Louw and his officials behaved dismissively towards a Pretoria landlord who seemed to have a case for breach of contract against Woolcott of the Australian High Commission. In a way, the landlord was a victim of South African perceptions of the friendship.

Events at the United Nations were central to both governments' attitudes. Those were influenced in turn (in no particular order) by the organisation's composition; by the nature of its constitution or Charter; and by such intangibles as the anti-colonialism and the new international morality engendered by the Second World War. Sara Pienaar wrote in 1987 that the 'tale of South Africa's relationship with the United Nations hardly bears repetition but for its contrast with the much less familiar story ... of South Africa's earlier experiences in the League of Nations'.¹⁷ In fact, the tale of South Africa's relationship with the United Nations has not been told yet, at least not by historians and not on the basis of archival documents. It is not proposed to tell it here but to focus on such of its aspects as will lend perspective to the Australian/South African connection.

In the context of references such as Jooste's above to Australia as our 'best friend' - Louw was also fond of such terminology - it is useful to remind oneself of

¹⁴ AA, A1838/1, 716/50/6/1, Pt. 2, Memo. 83, Hodgson/DEA, 1 March 1956.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Record of conversation, 16 August 1957 - attached to Memo. 425, Gilchrist/DEA, 22 August 1957.

¹⁶ AA, A1838/2, 916/1/2, Memo. 118, Gilchrist/DEA, 19 February 1958, p. 4, para. 10.

¹⁷ S. Pienaar, *South Africa and International Relations between the Two World Wars: The League of Nations Dimension* (Johannesburg, 1987), p. 183.

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Lord Palmerston's dictum that the nature of a state's relationship with others is impermanent, only its 'interests are eternal and perpetual'.¹⁸ As for its interests, there is Hedley Bull's view that these 'are simply what they are perceived to be by the ruling groups at any one time'.¹⁹ Likewise, though common practice, it is misleading to apply concepts descriptive of human relationships - friendship, enmity etc. - to those between states.

There is a further caveat. In April 1994 national elections ushered in a five-year South African government of national unity which effectively replaced the former white oligarchy by a non-racial disposition. The once banned African National Congress (ANC) became the dominant partner in government. The story of South Africa's march to majority rule is complex and it is too soon for historians to treat definitively of the process. While even at the present juncture it is clear that the United Nations made a contribution, its role was most likely peripheral, one of sound and fury rather than of substance. Its most visible aspect was serving as a forum for white South Africa's opponents to ventilate the issues.

That, of course, was not unimportant. Hugh Gilchrist observed at a relatively early stage (1958): 'Rightly or wrongly the United Nations debates have given far more publicity throughout the world to South African racial questions than would ever have been given if the General Assembly had not occupied itself with these matters.'²⁰ And let it be said that if that did not unleash decisive action by the UN, the ventilation of the issues at least had the effect of preventing a deal between South Africa and its western interlocutors. Less visible but quite likely more significant was the coordinating role played by the organisation's secretariat from around 1962 onwards. (See the Conclusion below.)

The United Nations developed along lines quite unforeseen when the representatives of fifty states met in San Francisco between 25 April and 26 June 1945 to draft the Charter. Idealism abounded. Interestingly, this was epitomised for at least one participant, Australia's Paul Hasluck, by the person of South Africa's elderly Prime Minister:

¹⁸ *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, Third Series, Vol. XCVII, House of Commons, 1 March 1848, Col. 122.

¹⁹ H. Bull, 'International Relations as an Academic Pursuit', *Australian Outlook*, Vol. 26, No. 3, December 1972, p. 260. See the Introduction, p. 16 above.

²⁰ AA, A1838/2, 201/9/1, Memo. 118, Gilchrist/DEA, 19 February 1958, p. 3, para. 7(c).

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The Americans made much play of the hopes of mankind and did it sincerely but the one delegate who made a clearer and stronger impression as a visionary was Smuts of South Africa. He appeared usually in military uniform and his keen bony face, like an eagle on a peak of rock, and the knowledge that he had fought the British in the Boer War as well as fighting the common enemy in two Great Wars made him a romantic figure. He had an air of apostleship about him and a loftiness and, whatever the truth may be, he looked and sounded more like a prophet and less like a politician than the Vandenberg, Stassen and Connally of the conference.²¹

That was an irony of the San Francisco Conference.²² One may compare this view of Smuts with his complaint to J.H. Hofmeyr from the conference about 'a strong humanitarian tendency, finding expression in provisions for equal rights all round and other somewhat embarrassing proposals so far as we are concerned'. 'The conference', he said, 'has to be carefully and even anxiously watched'.²³ The situation seems to have deteriorated and he was gloomily telling Hofmeyr a month later: 'Owing to the vague humanitarianism running very strong in the Conference and in Congress and public opinion generally, we have had much trouble over the subject of trusteeships which involves the colonies and mandates'.²⁴

In view of the support Australia was perceived to give South Africa at the United Nations in the 1940s and 1950s, another irony was that it should have been Evatt's work to enlarge the scope and powers of the General Assembly which set the scene for the South African government's embattled position in the organisation for most of its existence. If the final version of the Charter had reflected the original formulation of the General Assembly chapter in the Dumbarton Oaks proposals on which the Charter was based,²⁵ one wonders whether India would have been able to bring the matter of the treatment of South African Indians to the General Assembly in the last quarter of 1946. For the Assembly was not initially empowered make recommenda-

²¹ Hashluck, *Diplomatic Witness*, p. 200.

²² Known officially as the United Nations Conference on International Organisation (UNCIO).

²³ Van der Poel, ed., *Selections from the Smuts Papers*, Vol. VI, Smuts/Hofmeyr, 6 May 1945, p. 534.

²⁴ BTS, 136/1, Vol. 3, Cypher telegram, Smuts/Hofmeyr, 2 June 1945.

²⁵ Cmd. 6560, *Dumbarton Oaks Conversations on World Organisation, 21st August - 7th October, 1944, Statement of Tentative Proposals*, Chapter V, B, I. The proposals were named after the estate outside Washington, DC, where they were drafted by officials from the United States, United Kingdom and the Soviet Union between 21 August and 28 September 1944. The subsequent meetings between United States, United Kingdom and Chinese officials from 29 September to 7 October also formed part of the Dumbarton Oaks conversations. See also *Postwar Foreign Policy Preparation 1939-1945*, Washington, 1949, (Department of State Publication 3580), Appendix 43, 7 October 1944, pp. 611-19.

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tions about specific cases. If only for that reason and even if Australia does not feature in it as such, Evatt is a key figure in any study of South Africa's early post-war foreign relations.

The treatment of Indians question was a Trojan horse for a full-scale and decades-long examination of the South African government's racial policies at consecutive sessions of the General Assembly up to the 1990s. It and the annual item on South West Africa which South Africa itself had initially placed on the agenda fed off each other and together both compounded the government's difficulties. Relevant aspects of the San Francisco Conference will therefore be canvassed in the course of the chapter. In that connection it is important to bear in mind that the Charter has so far been amended substantively only twice - to increase the sizes of the Security Council (in 1965) and of the Economic and Social Council (in 1965 and 1971). Otherwise it is the document drafted at San Francisco though the interpretations placed on some of its provisions are quite different to what was intended at the outset.

Established as a 'centre for harmonizing the actions of nations' in the attainment of certain common ends (Charter Article 1(4)), particularly the maintenance of international peace and security, its principal *raison d'être*, the United Nations turned out in practice to be a vehicle for discord and disharmony. Eric Louw supplied a reason in a 1959 radio broadcast:

The real trouble is that the founders of these organisations, animated by great hopes and high ideals, do not take sufficient account of human nature. Nations are composed of groups of human beings. Most human beings in the final resort, look to their own interests, and to the interests of their families. Nations, through their representatives, act and react in the same way.²⁶

(He seemed by then to have overcome the element of surprise present in his complaint a few years earlier that, driven by self-interest, UN members engaged in 'horse-trading'! He confessed to having done that once himself!)²⁷

The United Nations differed from its predecessor in politics if not law, the League of Nations, in several respects. In taking its decisions, the League had required unanimity between those of its members present and voting. The only unanimity the

²⁶ AA, A1838/2, 201/9/1, Pt. 2, Memo. 7, Phillips/DEA, 11 January 1960, transcript of Louw's broadcast on 'Top Level', 20 December 1959.

²⁷ *HA Deb.*, Vol. 95, 10 June 1957, Col. 7606.

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Charter presupposed was that of the great powers. Without it, the UN had 'no foundation upon which to rest'.²⁸ Allowance was made for the great powers to disagree, but the serious political differences between the Soviet Union and the United States which soon manifested themselves, paralysed the new organisation in the area of its primary responsibility. That was not anticipated.

Also not anticipated was the wave of anti-colonialism set off by developments during the war. The direct result was that for most of its existence the United Nations 'has been a "decolonisation machine" grindingly absorbed in the dismantlement of western empires'.²⁹ The early Japanese victories over the Americans, the British and the French in the Far East, commencing with the surprise attack on Pearl Harbour on 7 December 1941, had shown the colonial powers to be vulnerable. The dawning of Asian self-confidence had already been marked by the Japanese victory over the Russians in 1905, or so India's Defence Minister, V.K. Krishna Menon, said in 1960.³⁰ The wartime severance of the connections between the metropolitan powers and their colonial possessions compounded the formers' postwar problems.

Absence did not make the heart grow fonder and by the war's end 'nascent revolutionary movements were struggling to prevent the reimposition of the prewar colonial order' in most territories that had been under Japanese occupation.³¹ The Atlantic Charter of 11 August 1941, four months before the United States entered the war was a stimulus for the anti-colonialist cause.³² Even black nationalists in faraway

²⁸ H.J. Morgenthau, 'Political Limitations of the United Nations', G.A. Lipsky, ed., *Law and Politics in the World Community* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1953), p. 148.

²⁹ *The Economist*, Vol. 334, No. 7904, p. 103. Review of Sir Anthony Parsons's *From the Cold War to Hot Peace* (London, 1995). The Australian diplomat, W.D. Forsyth, used similar words in 1963. Hudson, 'Australia's Trusteeship Policy', *Australian Outlook*, Vol. 21, No. 1, April 1967, p. 12 and fn. 16.

³⁰ GAOR, Fifteenth Sess., 944th plenary meeting, 13 December 1960, p. 1240, para. 96. The 'whole of Asia', Menon said, 'saw this as the defeat of a European empire by a small, short-statured Asiatic people'. D. Warner confirms Menon's view. He puts it more strongly than I have above: 'Nationalists in the Philippines, Indochina, the Dutch East Indies and even in Turkey and Egypt were strongly influenced by the war and the Japanese victory. Nehru and Sukarno were just two of the future leaders swept up in the movement.' 'Dress Rehearsal for Pearl Harbor', *International Herald Tribune*, 19 April 1995.

³¹ D.A. Kay, *The New Nations in the United Nations, 1960-1967* (New York and London, 1970), p. 147.

³² Churchill denied that this document, essentially a press release drafted by Sir Alexander Cadogan, PUS at the Foreign Office, was intended to refer to British or other colonial possessions. But its wording was sufficient guarantee that the world's anti-colonialists, foremost among whom were the Americans, would sit up and take notice. Whatever Churchill had in mind, presumably to prepare the way for the United States' entry into the war, the document had universal application. For particulars of the Atlantic Charter see Churchill's account in *The Second World War*, Vol. III, *The Grand*

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South Africa regarded it as 'a symbol of the freedom for which they had been striving since before Union'.³³

As evident from Smuts's cable to Hofmeyr, anti-colonialism featured strongly in San Francisco. A member of the delegation, H.T. Andrews, observed later that the 'wave against "Imperial-colonialism" was intense'.³⁴ Two-thirds of the participating states were hostile to the colonial system, the Latin Americans alone making up forty per cent.³⁵ Though impressed by latter's solidarity in San Francisco, Smuts's son and biographer, Jannie, felt that 'their voting power was out of all proportion to their intrinsic worth'.³⁶ South African delegations to the General Assembly up to 1960, the victims of overwhelming majorities of which the Latin Americans constituted a prominent component, would not have disagreed with him. Anti-colonialism was part of what Geldenhuys calls 'the new international morality'.³⁷ The easy racism with which the white world contemplated people of other cultures and colours gave way to a guilt-ridden anti-racism which, as Hudson says, became 'almost universal orthodoxy' in the western world.³⁸ The composition of the United Nations where other cultures and colours were in the majority facilitated the process.

Fixed in its own morality which saw nothing strange about the social and political inferiority of the country's non-white majority, white South Africa was the principal target and victim of the new morality from the time of the General Assembly's first session. It was left behind as the rest of the world changed. In Pienaar's words,

Alliance (London, 1950), Chapter XXIV, pp. 385-400; D. Dilks, ed., *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan O.M. 1938-1945* (New York, 1972), pp. 399-402 - Diary entry for 12 August 1941; and W.R. Louis, *Imperialism at Bay: The United States and the decolonization of the British Empire* (Oxford, 1977), pp. 121-28. Huntington Gilchrist, a former League of Nations official, called the Atlantic Charter a self-denying ordinance. 'Colonial questions at the San Francisco Conference', *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 5, October 1945, p. 982.

³³ *Reader's Digest Illustrated History of South Africa - The Real Story*, New York, 1988, p.361. South Africa subscribed to the Atlantic Charter as a signatory to the Declaration by United Nations of 1 January 1942. See also USNA, 843A.00/588, MacVeagh/Secretary of State, No. 116, 23 February 1943, Enclosure, Report by the OSS representative, Goodhue Livingston, 'Unrest among natives in the Union', p. 4

³⁴ BTS, 136/2/1, Vol. 1, Andrews/SEA, 21 March 1946, p. 2.

³⁵ Kay, *The New Nations in the United Nations*, p. 147. See Hasluck, *Diplomatic Witness*, p. 186 on the Latin Americans.

³⁶ J.C. Smuts; *Jan Christian Smuts* (London, 1952), p. 483.

³⁷ D.J. Geldenhuys, *The Effects of South Africa's Racial Policy on Anglo-South African Relations* (Unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1977), p. 36 *et seq.* See also G. Mills & S. Baynham, 'South African Foreign Policy, 1945-1960', G. Mills, ed., *From Pariah to Participant: South Africa's evolving foreign relations, 1990-1994* (Johannesburg, 1994), p. 12

³⁸ W.J. Hudson, *Billy Hughes in Paris: The Birth of Australian Diplomacy* (Melbourne, 1978), p. 54.

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'South Africa's domestic dilemmas landed it in a kind of time-warp which made it increasingly out of step, and sympathy, with the rest of the world'.³⁹ Henry Cabot Lodge, the United States Permanent Representative, put it succinctly in 1959: the 'majority of mankind was not white and [the] majority of [the] General Assembly was not white and had no sympathy for South African racialist policy'.⁴⁰ Smuts said in Pretoria in December 1946:

According to our time-scale, equality is a new word. There is no equality in this country - or on this earth. In fact, here in South Africa the coloured man does not look on the native as his equal. The Indian does not look on the native as his equal.

It is the traditional attitude of man, and you will not change it. ...

People at Lake Success⁴¹ were drunk with slogans - equality, non-discrimination. If there were no leaders in the world, where would we be? One man is better tha[n] another - that is the lesson of history, the lesson we have learned in South Africa. There must be discrimination.

I think we are on safe ground in essentials. We want to keep the peace in South Africa. We can only keep it among our heterogeneous elements by sorting them out fairly and decently, and so keep the show going and the army marching - the one a general, the other a corporal, another a private, and another a camp-follower. But we all take part in the march. That is South Africa and that is the history of the world.⁴²

Perhaps so, but a view out of tune with the times. The Indian delegation was to quote it against him at the General Assembly's second session.⁴³

The United Nations was from the beginning a political organisation and its General Assembly a pseudo-parliament where the mustering of majorities determined which causes succeeded and which did not. In the General Assembly each member has

³⁹ Pienaar, *South Africa and International Relations*, p. 182.

⁴⁰ Quoted by J. Plimsoll, A1838/2, 201/9/1, Pt. 2, I. 14535/6, 19 August 1959.

⁴¹ In the Borough of Queens, City of New York, where the second part of the UN General Assembly's first session was held.

⁴² *Rand Daily Mail* (Johannesburg), 21 December 1946. One is reminded of the third stanza of Cecil Francis Alexander's early Victorian children's hymn *All Things Bright and Beautiful* (1848). This particular stanza gave rise to some controversy in the last quarter of 1995. See *The Pretoria News*, 6 September 1995. ('Bishop brands hymn as wicked'.) See also AA, A4231/2, Pretoria 1-91 1947, Knowles/Minister of State for External Affairs, Despatch 3/47, 14 January 1947. For such reasons H. Seedat calls Smuts 'a tragic figure'. *The Star* (Johannesburg), 26 May 1995. ('History will show Jan Smuts as a tragic, not heroic, figure').

⁴³ See UN doc. A/373, 2 September 1947, para. 4, in *GAOR*, Second Sess., First Com., Summary Records 16 September - 19 November 1947, p. 533.

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one vote and what Inis Claude calls 'majoritarianism'⁴⁴ prevails, *ie.* decisions are carried either by simple majorities or a two-thirds majority in respect of 'important questions'. Kay rightly says that success or failure in United Nations diplomacy is 'judged by the criteria of parliamentary diplomacy - votes won or lost, amendments adopted or defeated, and successful or unsuccessful parliamentary stratagems - rather than by any contribution made to the control or resolution of the problems at hand'.⁴⁵ In addition to its formal rules there are, as Peterson says, 'a whole series of informal practices that help the formal rules operate more smoothly and permit adjustments to the needs of a particular issue or moment'.⁴⁶ As in a national parliament, intimate knowledge of both the formal rules and the informal practices is of cardinal importance.

Though not mentioned in the Charter,⁴⁷ the geographic and political groupings have occupied a central position for most of the organisation's existence. Bailey likens them to an 'embryonic party system', seeing in it a reason why the Assembly 'bears some resemblances to a parliamentary body'.⁴⁸ Especially in the pre-African period, there was also a Commonwealth Group which met regularly in New York during General Assembly sessions besides coming together periodically in London. South Africa's candidature in the late 1950s for the so-called Commonwealth seat in the Security Council was rejected by the other members of the group. In 1957 Eric Louw, who would by then have been aware of United Nations realities, commented on the absence of a Western group as such, saying that where the others stood together and voted together 'it happens again and again that the western nations are split, because there is not a Western group'. He likened the group caucus to a parliamentary caucus:

The group caucus meets, and decides how it will vote on a certain issue. Whatever the individual nation's view may be on the particular issue the member states of the group caucus vote as a group. The groups stand together, act together, and vote as a group.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ See I.L. Claude, *Swords into Plowshares: The Problems and Progress of International Organization* (New York, 1959 (1956)), pp. 128-40.

⁴⁵ D.A. Kay, 'The Impact of African States on the United Nations', *International Organization*, Vol. XXIII, No.1, Winter 1969, p. 46.

⁴⁶ M.J. Peterson, *The General Assembly in World Politics* (Boston, 1986), p. 10.

⁴⁷ Neither are Permanent Missions at UN headquarters in New York and at other centres where the UN maintains offices, *eg.* Geneva and Vienna. Permanent Missions are as much part of the UN as the group system.

⁴⁸ S.D. Bailey, *The General Assembly of the United Nations: A Study of Procedure and Practice* (London, 1960), p. 26.

⁴⁹ *HA Deb.*, Vol. 95, 10 June 1957, Col. 7607.

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He also implied that if delegations acted contrary to the wishes of their groups, they could be expelled. In his radio broadcast two years later he said that in 'the voting on the three perennial South African items on the agenda, the Afro-Asian and Communist states, and certain states with large mixed populations, always constitute a solid bloc, which commands a clear majority in the Assembly'.⁵⁰

At least in respect of the South African items - Treatment of Indians, South West Africa and, from 1952, Apartheid - voting patterns show that this is misleading. During the period covered here, there was only one truly monolithic group, the Soviet Union and its satellites whose votes were indistinguishable one from the other. Of the other groups the Arabs and Asians displayed a high degree of cohesion; the Latin Americans, numerically the largest group for much of the 1950s, less so. Indeed, from South Africa's point of view, the votes of a country like Argentina were consistently more favourable than those of the United States or Israel.⁵¹ The same went for Turkey whatever that country's group affiliations - Asian or European - at the time.

The numerical strength of the groups in relation to each other changed with time. Of the fifty-one founder members, there were twenty Latin American States (39.22%), by far the largest grouping;⁵² ten Asian and Middle Eastern States (19.61%);⁵³ three African States (5.88%);⁵⁴ thirteen Western European and other States (including Australia, Canada and New Zealand) (25.49%);⁵⁵ and five consisted of the Soviet Union and its Satellites (9.8%).⁵⁶ Between 1946 and 1948: the ranks of the Asians increased by five⁵⁷ and the Western Europeans by two.⁵⁸ The great com-

⁵⁰ AA, A1838/2, 201/9/1, Pt. 2, Memo. 7, Phillips/DEA, 11 January 1960, transcript of Louw's broadcast on 'Top Level', 20 December 1959.

⁵¹ In 1954 Jooste explained Israel's position as follows: 'Their attitude, we now know, is dictated by fear of opposing India, whose friendship, I believe, is of importance to them in their difficulties with the Arabs.' BTS, 136/2/21, Vol. 3, Jooste/SEA, 14 January 1954, p. 4.

⁵² Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela.

⁵³ China, Egypt, India, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Yugoslavia. India was not yet formally independent. Yugoslavia's position was anomalous. Although part of Eastern Europe, its votes on various UN issues including the South African items were to put it among the Asians.

⁵⁴ Ethiopia, Liberia, South Africa. Ethiopia and Liberia fell within the African-Arab-Asian grouping, while South Africa was grouped with the Commonwealth.

⁵⁵ Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Greece, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States. As with Yugoslavia, Turkey's position was also anomalous. Although falling geographically mainly in Asia, its delegations voted like Western Europeans.

⁵⁶ Byelorussian SSR, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Ukrainian SSR, USSR.

⁵⁷ Afghanistan, Burma, Pakistan, Thailand and Yemen.

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promise of 1955 brought about the admission of sixteen States: six Asian and Middle Eastern States,⁵⁹ six Western Europeans,⁶⁰ and four Communist States.⁶¹ They were followed by Japan, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia in 1956; Ghana and Malaya in 1957 and Guinea in 1958. Israel had joined in 1949 and Indonesia in 1950.

Sole, then South Africa's Permanent Representative in New York, reported on the implications of the 1955 compromise. He said it marked the abandonment in favour of one of universality, of the original concept of the UN as an organisation of like-minded states joined together for the maintenance of peace and security. He forecast the decline of western influence and a more than proportionate increase in the strength of the 'Bandoeng group'⁶² and the Soviet bloc. The 'anti-colonial line-up would be considerably strengthened and would occupy almost a commanding position'. The 'recognition of Communist China in 1957 ... was more probable'⁶³ and the 'Latin American voting machine would play a crucial role if it could be aligned firmly on the side of the west'.⁶⁴

By the end of 1958 the percentage of Latin Americans had declined to 24.1, while that of the Asians had increased to 31.32. The percentage of the Western Europeans had risen slightly to 24.1, that of the Africans (excluding South Africa) to 6.02, that of the Communists to 12.05 while two States, Israel and South Africa, belonging to no group comprised 2.41 per cent.⁶⁵ European and non-European States⁶⁶ had been more evenly balanced in the League of Nations.⁶⁷ In any case its reliance on the una-

⁵⁸ Iceland and Sweden.

⁵⁹ Cambodia, Ceylon, Jordan, Laos, Libya and Nepal.

⁶⁰ Austria, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Portugal and Spain.

⁶¹ Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania.

⁶² So named after the 18-24 April 1955 Conference in Bandung, Indonesia, which saw the creation of the Non-aligned Movement. Under the title 'Asian-African Conference', *Current Notes*, Vol. 26, No. 5, May 1955, pp. 310-16, gives an account of the conference. The conference pressed for the application of the principle of universality to UN membership (p. 314). The previous month's edition of *Current Notes* (No. 4, April 1955, pp. 293-97) contained the text of the conference's communique.

⁶³ The People's Republic of China replaced the Republic of China in the Chinese seat only in 1971.

⁶⁴ BTS, 136/2/24, Vol. 1, Sole/SEA, 23 October 1956.

⁶⁵ Except in South Africa's case, the Commonwealth which, even in its original form of the white Commonwealth, was scarcely monolithic.

⁶⁶ In the sense of geographic location.

⁶⁷ The League's original forty-two members were: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, India, Italy, Japan, Liberia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Persia, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Salvador, Siam, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia. F.P. Walters, *A History of the League of Nations*, London, 1965 (1952), pp. 64-65.

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nimity rule, the prevailing international morality, and the climate of its times made the League very different proposition. Eric Louw thought so. (See the transcript of the above mentioned radio broadcast.)

The UN's original composition favoured the United States in its battle for supremacy with the Soviet Union and for much of the 1950s the organisation was an instrument of American foreign policy.⁶⁸ But, as *The New York Times* commented in 1958, American influence declined with the expanding the membership:

our grip on the General Assembly is slipping. It has progressively slipped with the admission of four new members in 1946, two new members in 1947, one new member in each of the years 1948, 1949 and 1950, sixteen new members in 1955, four new members in 1956 and two new members in 1957.⁶⁹

If by the end of the 1950s the organisation's changing composition was giving rise to Western misgivings,⁷⁰ the mass admission of African States in the 1960s not only put an end to United States domination but changed the nature of the organisation's political process.⁷¹ Thirty-seven (sub-Saharan) African states became members between 1957 and 1968, sixteen in 1960 alone, the year of African independence, when the percentage of African members grew from 5.88 in 1945 (Ethiopia, Liberia and South Africa) to 21.21 in 1960. These states made their presence felt immediately. A measure of their impact is that they were responsible for the amendments to the Charter enlarging the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. That in the face of opposition by all five permanent members of the Security Council. This demonstrated their 'political savvy, strength and will' and not unnaturally 'resulted in a tremendous surge of self-confidence and a heightened feeling of group solidarity'.⁷²

By the time (the late 1970s) a former United States Permanent Representative was calling a book about his experiences at the United Nations *A Dangerous Place*⁷³ and heading one of its chapters 'Theatre of the Absurd', meaning the General

⁶⁸ The General Assembly's adoption in February 1957 of resolutions 1017 A and B (XI) concerning Soviet opposition in the Security Council to UN membership for South Korea and South Vietnam, by votes of 40-8-16 and 40-8-18, shows the extent of US influence at the time.

⁶⁹ *The New York Times*, 12 October 1958. (Editorial, 'The U.N. and the U.S.')

⁷⁰ Claude, *Swords into Plowshares*, pp. 458-59.

⁷¹ Kay, 'The Impact of African States on the United Nations', *International Organization*, Vol. XXIII, No. 1, Winter 1969, p. 21.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁷³ D.P. Moynihan, *A Dangerous Place* (London, 1979). His attitude towards the UN would not have harmed his campaign for the US Senate. First elected in 1976, he is still New York's senior senator.

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Assembly, the latter was 'controlled by Third World countries who ... want action they cannot perform themselves and see the General Assembly as an instrument'.⁷⁴ In South Africa's case, the new African members transformed a situation of annual discomfort for the government in respect of at most three interrelated agenda items into a virtual United Nations campaign in which South Africa and its principal international interlocutors were the focus of relentless attack.⁷⁵ That merely put the seal on a situation which had been unfavourable to South Africa from the beginning.

Barratt claims that until the African entry 'South African representatives were still playing a relatively normal role in the UN ... participating fully in the meetings of the General Assembly and its committees'.⁷⁶ 'Relatively' is the key word for South Africa was even then too controversial to consider putting up candidates for most of the elective positions on the main committees during sessions of the General Assembly⁷⁷ let alone for the presidency of that body. By 1958 South Africa was, with the exception of the United Kingdom which was barred by the convention that the great powers did not nominate candidates, the only member of the old (white) Commonwealth not to have held that office. An Australian (H.V. Evatt) was elected to it at the third session in 1948; a Canadian (L.B. Pearson) at the seventh session in 1952; and a New Zealander (L.K. Munro) at the twelfth session in 1957.⁷⁸

By 1960 South Africa was also the only member of the Commonwealth not to have been a member of the Security Council⁷⁹ or of the Economic and Social Council. It had, however, been elected to the Social Commission in 1946 as was the Chairman of the South African delegation (Heaton Nicholls for the first part of the first session;

⁷⁴ M. Keens-Soper, 'The General Assembly Reconsidered: the Attack on Secret Diplomacy', G.R. Berridge & A. Jennings, eds., *Diplomacy at the UN*, London & Basingstoke, 1985, p. 83.

⁷⁵ The notion of a United Nations 'campaign' is misleading for, as Morgenthau says, there is 'no such thing as the policy of an organization, international or domestic, apart from the policy of its most influential member or members', in this case the Africans. H. Morgenthau, 'Political Limitations of the United Nations', G.A. Lipsky, ed., *Law and Politics in the World Community* (Berkeley & Los Angeles), 1953, p. 150.

⁷⁶ C.J.A. Barratt, 'South African Diplomacy at the UN', G.R. Berridge and A. Jennings, eds., *Diplomacy at the UN* (London & Basingstoke, 1985), p. 194.

⁷⁷ Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur. M.I. Botha served as Vice-Chairman of the Fifth (Administrative and Budgetary) Committee at the ninth session in 1954. B.G. Fourie had been Rapporteur of the same committee at the fifth session in 1950.

⁷⁸ Of other members of the Commonwealth, Mrs V.L. Pandit (India) presided over the eighth Assembly in 1953, Sir Mohammed Zafrulla Khan (Pakistan) over the seventeenth in 1962, and Alex Quaison-Sackey (Ghana) over the nineteenth in 1964.

⁷⁹ Australia (1946-47; 1956-57) and Canada (1948-49; 1958-59) had been members twice and New Zealand (1954-55); India (1950-51); and Pakistan (1952-53) once. Ceylon and Ghana served two-year terms in 1960-61 and 1962-63, respectively.

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Smuts for the second part) to be a Vice-President of the General Assembly. Also in 1946 Seymour Jacklin, formerly Chairman of the South African Public Service Commission and Treasurer of the League of Nations,⁸⁰ was elected to a three-year term on the Committee on Contributions.⁸¹ He was then sixty-four years of age and South Africa's Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

Barratt's other example of normality, South Africa's election to a vice-presidency as the agreed Commonwealth candidate at the fourteenth session in 1959, is not a good one. (Sole misses the point too. *Reminiscences*, p. 176.) The vice-presidency was a *quid pro quo*, a 'consolation prize',⁸² for South Africa not pressing its candidacy at that session for the so-called Commonwealth seat on the Security Council.⁸³ Louw had sold the idea of returning to the United Nations after the two-year period of 'token representation' (1956-58) to the cabinet *inter alia* on the basis of membership of the Security Council.⁸⁴

It had not been an easy decision. Davis, the Australian High Commissioner in Pretoria, cabled Canberra later that he and his British and Canadian colleagues agreed that the evidence showed it 'had been reached after much difficulty'. It was therefore 'important that the supporters in Cabinet of a more moderate approach should, if possible, not be let down'.⁸⁵ Louw announced South Africa's candidature in the House of Assembly on 18 August 1958.⁸⁶ By November the Commonwealth Relations Office

⁸⁰ AA, A4231/2, Pretoria 1-91 1947, No. 61/47, 22 July 1947.

⁸¹ Not, as Sole says (*Reminiscences*, p. 101), to 'the standing subcommittee which serves as the U.N.'s financial "watchdog"'. That is the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

⁸² AA, A1838/2, 201/9/1, Pt. 2, I. 7211, 24 April 1959 para 2.

⁸³ Judging by the amount of telegraphic 'to-ing' and 'fro-ing' on this issue, it was a quite a major one. By then South Africa was odd man out even in the context of the old Commonwealth. The Australian Archives has much material on the issue. See, eg., A1838/2, items (*ie.* file nos.) 201/9/1; 201/9/1, Pt. 2; 201/10/1 Pt. 2; 201/11/1, Pts. 2 and 3; 201/1/51, Pt. 1; 916/1/2; A1838/T55, 201/11/37, Pt. 1. See also BTS, 136/3/10, Vol. 2, 'Die Unie se kandidatuur vir die Veiligheidsraad 1959 en 1961' (The Union's candidature for the Security Council 1959 and 1961). Note apparently prepared by J.S.F. Botha.

⁸⁴ AA, A1838/2, 201/9/1, Pt. 2, Memo. 1219, Rowland/DEA, 18 November 1958, para. 2; 201/11/1, Pt. 2, I. 20176, 18 November 1958, para. 3. The work of the Good Offices Committee on South West Africa (see UN doc. A/3900, 27 August 1958 and AA, A1838/2, 916/1/2, Woodberry/Secretary, n.d.) and the allegedly more favourable attitude at the General Assembly towards the other South African items were additional factors.

⁸⁵ AA, A1838/2, 201/9/1, Pt. 2, I. 10257, 11 June 1959.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 916/1/2, I. 14225, 18 August 1958.

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was talking of a vice-presidency as an alternative.⁸⁷ South Africa ostensibly deferred its bid for the Security Council until 1961 but it never formally materialised.

The vice-presidency was also not a sure thing. The Latin Americans were divided on the issue and Argentina's Permanent Representative, Mario Amadeo, told Australia's Plimsoll that South Africa would not receive a majority of the votes. In selecting a nominee, he said, the Commonwealth should consider the views of other countries. The Latin Americans, for example, would never think of nominating the Dominican Republic for any office at that time.⁸⁸ Even if Argentina did not vote for another candidate, 'they might very well put in a blank paper for this post'. Plimsoll countered that if South Africa were defeated 'it would increase pressures inside that country to leave the United Nations'. Amadeo accepted that, but expressed the hope that

Commonwealth countries might make representations to South Africa to present their case in such a way as to make it easier for other countries to go as far as possible towards seeing their position. Argentina was a white country and did not want to see European civilisation go under, but often South Africa did not state its position in a way that helped the Argentine Government domestically in supporting it.⁸⁹

As it happened, South Africa drew the fewest number of votes, sixty out of a possible eighty-two, of any candidate nominated by the five groups (A to E).⁹⁰ Indicative of *its* controversial status was that only sixty-one votes were cast in favour of the Republic of China in group E.⁹¹ What probably tipped the balance in South Africa's favour was that India lent its support to and lobbied for the former's candidature.⁹² While adamantly opposed to South African membership of the Security Council, India was apparently 'willing to see South Africa working in more junior Committees to rehabilitate herself in the United Nations'.⁹³

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 201/11/1, Pt. 2, Memo. 1266/58, Davis/DEA, 28 November 1958, para. 7. See also 201/1/51, Pt. 1, I. 1734, 21 January 1959.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 201/9/1, Pt. 2, I. 14529/30, 19 August 1959.

⁸⁹ AA, A9421, 223/1/1, Serial No. UN 595, 19 August 1959.

⁹⁰ A = Africans-Arabs-Asians; B = Communists; C = Latin Americans; D = Western Europeans and Others; E = Permanent members of the Security Council.

⁹¹ GAOR, Fourteenth Sess., 796th plenary meeting, 15 September 1959, pp. 5-6, para. 6. The question of the Chinese seat still had twelve years to run.

⁹² AA, A9421, 223/1/1, Australian High Commission, Pretoria, Savingram, 13 August 1959, para. (d); and High Commission, London, Cablegram 3371, 4 September 1959.

⁹³ AA, A1838/2, 201/11/1, Pt. 2, I. 4479, 12 March 1959. See also 201/9/1, Pt. 2, Memo. 124, Phillips/Department of External Affairs, 12 March 1959, para. 4.

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If things at the United Nations were bad from the South African government's point of view before 1960, they became immeasurably worse thereafter. But that falls outside the scope of this study. Ironically, especially during Eric Louw's tenure at the foreign ministry, and before the African admission to membership, the government was at its most active in combating perceived UN intervention in the country's domestic affairs. After vainly seeking to prevent the inscription of the apartheid and Treatment of Indians items, it put its case against General Assembly consideration of them at length in plenary and in the committees at session after session. From time to time it withdrew its delegation from the Assembly to reinforce its attitude. The longest of these withdrawals was for two years between 1956 and 1958. The delegation had been withdrawn from the sixth Assembly in 1951 because of the decision to grant Michael Scott a hearing on South West Africa and from the tenth Assembly in 1955 after 29 November.

South Africa's standing in the pre-1960 UN can be measured statistically. The 1955 compromise produced a twenty-seven per cent increase in the membership.⁹⁴ Before then, between the first and the ninth sessions of the General Assembly (1945-54), when the organisation's composition was not far from its most favourable to South Africa, roll-call votes were held in plenary on the twenty-one resolutions adopted in respect of the Treatment of Indians (6),⁹⁵ South West Africa (11)⁹⁶ and Apartheid (4).⁹⁷ 1243 individual votes were cast covering the categories 'Yes' (796), 'No' (103), and 'Abstention' (293) in addition to which there were fifty-one individual absences,⁹⁸ not a large number, showing that delegations' discipline was good. (A collective approach is permissible because, as Sole pointed out in 1955, their attitude to apar-

⁹⁴ See *The Economist*, 1 December 1956, pp. 759-60 ('What the Assembly Is') for a useful analysis of the significance of the enlarged membership.

⁹⁵ 44 (I), 8 December 1946; 265 (III), 14 May 1949; 395 (V), 2 December 1950; 511 (VI), 12 January 1952; 615 (VII), 5 December 1952; 719 (VIII), 11 November 1953.

⁹⁶ 65 (I), 14 December 1946; 141 (II), 1 November 1947; 337 (IV), 6 December 6 December 1949; 449A (V), 13 December 1950; 449B (V), 13 December 1950; 570A (VI), 19 January 1952; 570B (VI), 19 January 1952; 749A (VIII), 28 November 1953; 749B (VIII), 28 November 1953; 844 (IX), 11 October 1954; 904 (IX), 23 November 1954.

⁹⁷ 616A (VII), 5 December 1952; 616B (VII), 5 December 1952; 721 (VIII), 8 December 1953; 820 (IX), 14 December 1954.

⁹⁸ Revealed by checking the other categories against the list of UN members. Delegations absent themselves from votes for various reasons, including the desire not to be seen taking a position, a phenomenon known in UN parlance as voting with one's feet. Laziness or incompetence on the part of individual representatives is uncommon.

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their conditioned delegations' approach to the other South African items.⁹⁹ Even so, the voting patterns reveal minor differences in attitude towards the three.)

Table 1 summarises the outcome:

Table 1¹⁰⁰

Group attitudes revealed by roll-call votes on South African items 1946-1954

Sixty countries; twenty-one resolutions:

		%Y	%N	%A	%Abs
AFRICANS	2	80.95	2.38	9.52	7.14
ARABS	6	90.32	0	5.65	4.03
ASIANS	10	89.39	0.51	9.6	0.51
COMMUNISTS	5	61.9	14.29	23.81	0
LATINS	20	70.24	3.57	19.52	6.67
WEO	17	32.26	19.93	43.88	3.92
TOTAL	60	64.04	8.29	23.57	4.1

The immediate conclusion is that, taken together, the twenty-one resolutions were adopted convincingly, indeed by well over two-thirds of the delegations present and voting, if not of the total membership. Conversely, the South African position on the three items was rejected equally convincingly.¹⁰¹ The six Arab states voted affirmatively 90.32 per cent of the time, the two Africans (Ethiopia and Liberia) 80.95 per cent of the time, the third highest percentage after the Arabs and the Asians. The Western Europeans and Others¹⁰² trailed with only 32.26 per cent affirmative votes. The WEOs abstained 43.88 per cent of the time, also casting the highest percentage of negative votes. That was where South Africa's support lay. This was, however, mainly of a token nature for there was no way South Africa and its 'friends' could have secured the deletion of any of the three items from the General Assembly's agenda.

⁹⁹ BCB Vol. 7, 8/4, Du Plessis/SEA, 18 January 1955, Attachment, p. 3. Only the roll-call votes on the resolutions themselves are taken into account. There were also roll-call votes on the inscription of the items on the agenda and in the committees including on individual paragraphs of resolutions.

¹⁰⁰ The percentages in this and subsequent tables were obtained by feeding the relevant voting statistics into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The calculation and sorting facilities of the Word for Windows 2 program with which this thesis was written were also helpful.

¹⁰¹ The best results South Africa achieved were in connection with the Treatment of Indians item at the first session when, in committee nineteen states and in plenary twenty-one, supported its position.

¹⁰² The 'Others' were Australia, Canada, New Zealand and United States. For the sake of convenience I also include Israel, Turkey and South Africa.

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This confirms Sole's impression that 'after the advent of the Nationalist Government in 1948 the anti-South African momentum in the U.N. became virtually unstoppable'.¹⁰³ In fact, given the nature of the country at the time and the refusal of its rulers to contemplate a serious amelioration of the situation of its non-whites, the momentum was unstoppable from the beginning. After all, the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act, No. 28 of 1946, which opened the door to international examination of South Africa's discriminatory domestic legislation was the product of Smuts's, not Malan's, South Africa. (As was Alan Paton's *Cry, The Beloved Country* which dramatically revealed to a world audience the predicament of South Africa's black people.)

And it was Smuts who complained of the 'solid wall of prejudice against the colour policies in South Africa which not even the most efficient publicity could have broken down in the time at our disposal'.¹⁰⁴ Events were to show that the wall would grow higher and ever more solid until the installation of a non-racial disposition in the country five decades later. Sole is hard on Smuts for not being alert to the procedural pitfalls into which he fell in respect of the Treatment of Indians item.¹⁰⁵ But even assuming he had won the day then, the respite would have been only temporary. The Pakistani view relayed to Canberra in 1952 does not negate that conclusion.

Pakistan ... appreciated South Africa's difficulties and realised ... it would be difficult for South Africa to make substantial or rapid concessions. So long as South Africa adopted a reasonable approach, as it showed signs of doing in 1947 when General Smuts succeeded in having the original resolution upset and the item deleted from the Agenda,¹⁰⁶ Pakistan was prepared to be conciliatory and reasonable in its approach. Even during the last Session, Pakistan had refused India's request to co-sponsor the Indian Resolution. The present South African Government, however, had shown itself so scornful of the United Nations, so insulting to Asiatic peoples and so completely intolerant that Pakistan had no alternative but to support the Indian Resolution. Pakistan felt that there had been no improvement in the policy of Dr. Malan's Government since then. It was considered that South Africa had added to the certainty of a two-third majority vote being registered against it at the last General Assembly by Dr. Malan's

¹⁰³ Sole, *Reminiscences*, p. 103.

¹⁰⁴ *Rand Daily Mail*, 19 December 1946.

¹⁰⁵ *Reminiscences*, p. 102. See below.

¹⁰⁶ The resolution failed to achieve a two-thirds majority. The item was back on the agenda at the General Assembly's next session.

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comment that the Latin American countries were opposed to South Africa because they were countries of half-caste populations.¹⁰⁷

In addition to the roll-call votes, five resolutions in respect of two of the three South African items, were adopted between 1946 and 1954 by show-of-hands votes, four on South West Africa and one on the Treatment of Indians.¹⁰⁸ Show-of-hands votes are held when a record of who voted how is not considered important. They lack the drama of roll-call votes. Where roll-call votes permit an analysis of voting patterns; show-of-hands votes do not. Collectively the five resolutions were adopted by 76.12 per cent in favour, 7.84 per cent against, with 16.04 per cent abstentions, again a convincing collective repudiation of South Africa's position. Table 2 illustrates the non-monolithic nature of the various groups, suggesting that an analogy between them and the parliamentary caucuses of political parties should not be taken too far. The Latin Americans were, in fact, less of a 'voting machine' than Sole believed.¹⁰⁹ As mentioned, the only truly monolithic group was the USSR and its satellites. Pakistan and South Africa were at the two extremes of the spectrum: every vote the former cast was affirmative, while the latter, except on one occasion when it abstained,¹¹⁰ invariably voted negatively or absented itself. The other fifty-eight members fell between the two.

Table 2

Affirmative votes in descending order

Twenty-one resolutions

100% (1)
1 Asian [Pakistan]
90-99% (12)
5 Arabs [Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria]
4 Asians [Afghanistan, India, Iran, Philippines]
3 Latins [Cuba, Guatemala, Mexico]
80-89% (11)
1 African [Liberia]

¹⁰⁷ AA, A1832/2, 201/2/5/2, Pt. 2, Ministerial Despatch 16/52, Beavis/Casey, 25 July 1952, p. 2, para. 5, reporting on a conversation with Messrs Akhtar Husain and Itaat Husain, respectively Joint Secretaries in charge of the UK & Commonwealth Division and of United Nations Affairs in Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Commonwealth Relations.

¹⁰⁸ Indians: 816 (IX), 14 November 1954; SWA: 338 (IV), 6 December 1949; 651 (VII), 20 December 1952; 851 (IX), 23 November 1954; 852 (IX), 23 November 1954. The number of show-of-hands votes especially in respect of South West Africa mushroomed over the next few years. There were a total of forty-eight between 1955 and 1961: Indians 4; SWA 42; and Apartheid 2.

¹⁰⁹ As *The Round Table* (No. 146, March 1947, p. 136) pointed out in respect of the General Assembly's first resolution on the Treatment of Indians, 44 (I), the votes of the Latin Americans were split between affirmative, negative and abstention.

¹¹⁰ On the General Assembly's first resolution on South West Africa, 65 (I).

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4 Asians [Burma, Indonesia, Thailand, Yugoslavia]
6 Latins [Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Haiti, Honduras, Uruguay]
70-79% (8)
1 African [Ethiopia]
1 Arab [Yemen]
1 Asian [China]
3 Latins [Bolivia, Costa Rica, El Salvador]
2 WEOs [Israel, United States]
60-69% (7)
5 Communists [Byelorussian SSR, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Ukrainian
SSR, USSR]
1 Latin [Panama]
1 WEO [Iceland]
50-59% (5)
3 Latins [Colombia, Paraguay, Venezuela]
2 WEOs [Denmark, Norway]
40-49% (4)
3 Latins [Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Peru]
1 WEO [Sweden]
30-39% (2)
1 Latin [Argentina]
1 WEO [Canada]
20-30% (3)
3 WEOs [France, Greece, Netherlands]
10-19% (2)
2 WEOs [Luxembourg, , Turkey]
1-9% (4)
4 WEOs [Australia, Belgium, New Zealand, United Kingdom]
0% (1)
South Africa

As a corollary to the few occasions they voted affirmatively, those responsible for the highest percentage of negative votes were (in descending order) South Africa (80.95), Belgium (33.33), United Kingdom (28.57), Luxembourg (23.81), Australia (23.81), New Zealand (14.29) and Turkey (4.76). It fell to New Zealand (76.19), Australia (71.43), United Kingdom (66.67), Turkey (61.9), Belgium and France (57.14), Greece, Argentina and Denmark (47.62), Netherlands, Luxembourg, Sweden, Dominican Republic and Venezuela (42.86), Canada and Peru (38.1), and Colombia (33.33) to record the highest percentage of abstentions. The performance of the Old (white) Commonwealth and, for comparative purposes, select countries such as Argentina, Belgium, Israel, Turkey, the United States and the Soviet Union, is reflected in Table 3.

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Table 3

The old Commonwealth and select other countries

Twenty-one resolutions

	%Y	%N	%A	%Abs.
Argentina	38.1	14.29	47.62	0
Australia	4.76	23.81	71.43	0
Belgium	9.52	33.33	57.14	0
Canada	38.1	23.81	38.1	0
Israel	72.22	5.56	22.22	0
New Zealand	9.52	14.29	76.19	0
South Africa	0	80.95	4.762	14.29
Turkey	14.29	4.76	61.9	19.05
United Kingdom	4.76	28.57	66.67	0
United States	71.43	9.52	19.05	0
USSR	61.9	14.29	23.81	0

From the South African government's point of view, therefore, the voting records of Argentina and Turkey were hardly worse than Canada's, a fellow (white) member of the Commonwealth. And Canada was out of step with Australia, the United Kingdom and New Zealand. Israel cast more affirmative votes than the United States and the Soviet Union while, curiously, the Soviet Union's record was better than that of the United States in each of the categories of affirmative, negative and abstention. No wonder Eric Louw decided there was nothing to be lost by embarking 'on a policy of confrontation with the United Nations'.

Sole gives that as a reason why his own eighteen month term as Permanent Representative in New York (1955-57) was the least enjoyable of his entire career.¹¹¹ Louw's reason was probably to strengthen his position in domestic politics. At any rate, developments at the United Nations up to the time he became Minister of External Affairs in January 1955, and confirmed by the analysis of voting patterns above, showed clearly that South Africa stood no chance at all of achieving favourable settlements in respect of the three South African items (meaning in effect their deletion from the General Assembly's agenda).

Hudson poses the question about Evatt in San Francisco whether 'behaviour which jangled on the sensitivities of officials and diplomats carried a price'. He concluded in effect that it did not. Evatt had a reputation for 'unpolished assertiveness ... and in some quarters he was personally disliked'. But it was to be doubted 'whether this

¹¹¹ Sole, *Reminiscences*, p. 171.

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had much effect on British and American attitudes towards Australia or policies with respect to Australia'.¹¹² The same can be said of Louw at the United Nations. In the long run Louw's abrasiveness was probably not a factor. Even if his manner had been as suave as that of his successor, Hilgard Muller, as in the latter's case, suavity unaccompanied by material concessions in respect of its domestic policies would not have saved South Africa at the United Nations during Louw's time as foreign minister.

Cadogan, the British Permanent Under-Secretary of State considered Evatt to be 'the most frightful man in the world'.¹¹³ If for different reasons, Louw could well have been viewed in similar terms. But that has never been a disadvantage at the United Nations. The situation at the General Assembly was, in fact, tailor-made for people like Evatt, Louw and Andrei Vyshinsky of the Soviet Union, not to mention India's V.K. Krishna Menon. It suited their personalities.

Between 1946 and 1974 when South Africa was denied the right of participation in the General Assembly, all South African delegations based their case in respect of the Treatment of Indians and Apartheid items (merged in 1962) on the provisions of the Charter's domestic jurisdiction clause, Article 2 (7). This reads:

Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state or shall require the Members to submit such matters to settlement under the present Charter; but this principle shall not prejudice the application of enforcement measures under Chapter VII.

Central to the South African thesis, which was first put by Smuts at the second part of the first session of the General Assembly when India secured the inscription on the agenda of 'the question of treatment of Indians in the Union of South Africa',¹¹⁴ was that the party invoking the protection of Article 2 (7) itself had the right to decide which matters lay 'essentially' within its domestic jurisdiction. Smuts had in fact told his parliamentary critics in February 1946 that Article 2 (7) secured the position.¹¹⁵ That was how it may have seemed to participants in the San Francisco Conference. As Sole

¹¹² W.J. Hudson, *Australia and the New World Order: Evatt at San Francisco, 1945* (Canberra, 1993), p. 158.

¹¹³ Dilks, ed., *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan O.M. 1938-1945*, p. 745 - Diary entry for 23 May 1945.

¹¹⁴ *GAOR*, First Sess., Second Part, Joint Committee of the First and Sixth Committee, Summary Records 21-30 November 1946, Annex 1, p. 52.

¹¹⁵ *HA Deb.*, Vol. 55, 7 February 1946, Col. 1274.

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says, '2 (7) was always viewed as the safeguard offered to the smaller powers in exchange for their acquiescence in the right of veto accorded to the five Great Powers'.¹¹⁶

Kelsen holds that such an interpretation is 'compatible with the wording of the Charter'.¹¹⁷ Naturally, anyone advancing it would have little difficulty in demonstrating at least to his own satisfaction that on such issues as the treatment of Indians and apartheid, the General Assembly engaged in the annual commission of gross violations of the Charter.¹¹⁸ But the matter was never as simple as that. The zeal and conviction which South African delegations brought to bear on the issue drew from one observer the not imperceptive comment: 'I've often wondered if the Dutch Roman Law [sic] tradition affected South African behaviour. Australia often used legalistic tactics, but transparently as tactics. One always suspected the South Africans really believed what they said - very unusual in national and international politics - and virtually unknown in diplomacy'.¹¹⁹

That was where Charles Fincham, the junior South African Foreign Service Officer, contradicted the official line,¹²⁰ He argued in 1948:

it appears that there is no warrant for the view that a member State can make a decision legally binding on other members or on the Organization as a whole, to the effect that a particular matter is one which is essentially within domestic jurisdiction. Such a decision must be taken by the Organ to which the dispute has been submitted, on the general principle that it is the sole judge of its own competence under the relevant provisions of the Charter.¹²¹

That has in fact been United Nations practice over the years. Fincham also argued that from the way in which it was applied in 1946 and 1947, 'Article 2,

¹¹⁶ Letter, 7 June 1993.

¹¹⁷ H. Kelsen, *The Law of the United Nations: A Critical Analysis of Its Fundamental Problems* (London, 1951), p. 783.

¹¹⁸ In the early 1980s with departmental financial support, a one-time law adviser in the South African Department of Foreign Affairs devoted an LLD thesis to this proposition. The thesis was published (J.C. Heunis, *United Nations versus South Africa: A Legal Assessment of United Nations and United Nations related Activities in respect of South Africa* (Johannesburg/Cape Town, 1986) and State President P.W. Botha, in whose office the author was then chief law adviser, was instrumental in having it distributed to those governments with which his own maintained diplomatic relations.

¹¹⁹ Communicated to the writer on an unattributable basis.

¹²⁰ See the Introduction, pp. 26-27 and Chapter Two, pp. 118-19.

¹²¹ Fincham, *Domestic Jurisdiction*, p. 95.

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paragraph 7 is either a dead letter, or else has a meaning which is very different from that which emerges from a casual perusal of the text'.¹²² The key to the situation is that, as Rajan says, the 'Charter is essentially a political document in legal garb and the Organization which is established was meant *primarily* to achieve certain broad political ends - not embody certain legal rights and obligations of the signatories'.¹²³ Fincham, who was one of Rajan's principal sources, held that 'the purpose of an instrument like the Charter is in the first place political'.¹²⁴ Writing as 'Pollux' in *The British Yearbook of International Law*, Fincham's friend, Edvard Hambro, the first Registrar of the International Court of Justice, called the Charter 'a highly political treaty'.¹²⁵ Morgenthau identifies a tendency to consider the Charter's 'legal provisions' and the 'institutions derived from them' as if

they were self-sufficient entities which receive their political meaning and their ability to perform political functions from their own literal content without reference to the political environment within and with regard to which they are supposed to operate.¹²⁶

If during the 1940s and 1950s the argument about domestic jurisdiction proved unconvincing, the South African approach made even less of an impression on the new African members. Nigerian Foreign Minister Jaja Wachuku said in 1960:

There is no use in telling Nigeria that this is an internal affair. We will never accept that as an internal affair of the Union of South Africa. As long as we live on a continent where there is racial discrimination against people of African descent - or as long as there is discrimination against people of African descent anywhere in the world - it can never be considered by Nigeria as an internal affair of any country. The sooner it is understood the better.¹²⁷

Hudson would have had that sort of criticism in mind when he referred to South African attempts to 'fight emotion with peculiarly formal logic', as 'bone-headedness'. On the other hand, he conceded that South Africa was in 'an almost impossible posi-

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 143.

¹²³ M.S. Rajan, *United Nations and Domestic Jurisdiction*, 2nd ed. (London, 1961 (1958)), p. 382. Emphasis in original.

¹²⁴ Fincham., *Domestic Jurisdiction*, p. 174.

¹²⁵ 'The interpretation of the Charter', *The British Yearbook of International Law*, Vol. 23, 1946, p. 55 and fn. 3. Rajan identifies Hambro as 'Pollux'. Rajan, *United Nations and Domestic Jurisdiction*, p. 404, fn. 2.

¹²⁶ Morgenthau. 'Political Limitations of the United Nations', G.A. Lipsky, ed., *Law and Politics in the World Community* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1953), p. 143.

¹²⁷ GAOR, Fifteenth Sess., 944th plenary meeting, 13 December 1960, p. 1240, para. 62.

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tion' and if South African whites are racists ('and racists they are'), 'history has not left them much option'.¹²⁸

In view of South African reliance on Article 2 (7), it might be thought that in anticipation of future difficulties the South African delegation would have played a leading role at San Francisco to bar United Nations intervention in a country's domestic affairs. A National Party government would have done so. Fifteen years earlier Hertzog resisted pressure to sign the General Act for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes on grounds that South Africa might then be obliged to defend aspects of its 'Asiatic policy before an international tribunal'.¹²⁹ (In the event of the League Council being unable to reach unanimity over a dispute, the Act provided for compulsory arbitration). Bodenstein explained to the Secretary of the Cape League of Nations Union in 1931 that the Act contained 'provisions which are dangerous to the Union, because of its peculiar geographical position and of the precarious foothold of the white man in Southern Africa'.¹³⁰

That was an approach to which Smuts appeared oblivious. During the 1946 parliamentary debate on the ratification of the UN Charter, his parliamentary opponents as well as some of his allies, particularly Col Stallard, drew the obvious conclusion from the wording of Charter articles that the colour question and the treatment of Indians were going to give South Africa trouble.¹³¹ But Smuts waved them aside.¹³²

The record shows that at San Francisco it was the Americans and the Australians, not the South Africans who took active steps to minimise the possibility of United Nations interference in their domestic affairs. The Australians had the White Australia Policy in mind. In the case of the Americans, that had been very much the position at Versailles in 1919 concerning the equivalent provision in the League of Nations Covenant, article 15(8).¹³³ For the same reason the then Australian Prime Minister, W.M.

¹²⁸ W.J. Hudson, 'Australia and United Nations Sanctions', *World Review* (Australia), Vol. 8, No. 2, July 1969, p. 23.

¹²⁹ Pienaar, *South Africa and International Relations*, p. 99.

¹³⁰ S. 1-32, The Parliament of the Union of South Africa, The Senate (Fourth Session - Sixth Parliament), *Correspondence between the Department of External Affairs and the Cape League of Nations Union regarding the question of the accession of the Union of South Africa to the General Act for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes*, p. 4.

¹³¹ *HA Deb.*, Vol. 55, 6 February 1946, Cols. 1188-89, 1205-06.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 7 February 1946, Col. 1274.

¹³³ See Fincham, *Domestic jurisdiction*, p. 15.

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Hughes, circumvented a Japanese move at Versailles to have a racial equality clause included in the Covenant.¹³⁴ Ironically, an added factor for the Americans at San Francisco was Evatt's demand for the Charter to contain a full employment clause:

Mr Pasvolsky explained that it was Dr. Evatt's intention to inject the World Organization into the internal affairs of the member states. This, he declared, was not conjecture, but had been told to him face to face by representatives of Australia and New Zealand on several occasions. The full employment argument, he said, was based on the theory that if a nation did not maintain full employment it would upset world peace. Mr. Pasvolsky indicated that he thought this was the most dangerous theory with which the United States had ever been diplomatically confronted.¹³⁵

Citing an anonymous member of the South African delegation, Duncan Hall claimed in 1971 that Smuts 'took a strong stand' at San Francisco 'against any weakening of the barrier erected by the [League of Nations] Covenant' against intervention in matters of domestic jurisdiction. He gave, Hall said, 'a stern warning against any tampering with this provision'. Otherwise, 'South Africa would not join the United Nations, nor probably would other countries'. The occasion was a meeting of British Commonwealth delegations and Smuts was supposedly reacting to a suggestion by Evatt that the United Nations be given a basis for intervening in Indonesia and Indo-China.¹³⁶ B.G. Fourie may have been Hall's informant. He was a last-minute addition to the South African staff in San Francisco as Smuts's assistant private secretary. He was at that time a clerical assistant at the High Commission in London. In words suggestive of Hall he claimed in his recent memoirs that Smuts worked hard for the inclusion in the Charter of Article 2 (7).¹³⁷ He had said in a draft of the book that he doubted whether South Africa would have signed the Charter if it had not contained the article.¹³⁸

¹³⁴ See Hudson, *Billy Hughes in Paris*, pp. 54-59; L.F. Fitzhardinge, 'Australia, Japan and Great Britain, 1914-18: A Study in Triangular Diplomacy', *Historical Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 54, April 1970, pp. 250-59; L.F. Fitzhardinge, 'W.M. Hughes and the Treaty of Versailles', *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, Vol. V, No. 2, July 1967, pp. 138-41; and Harper, *A great and powerful friend*, pp. 33-35. The Japanese argument was subsequently said to have 'combined disconcertingly ... the qualities of being unanswerable and unacceptable'. Walters, *A History of the League of Nations*, p. 64.

¹³⁵ *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers 1945, Vol. 1, General: The United Nations* (Washington, 1967), p. 924.

¹³⁶ Hall, *Commonwealth*, pp. 774 and 956, fn. 8. Eric Louw also cited Smuts to that effect at the General Assembly's 577th plenary meeting on 15 November 1956 (p. 33, para. 111 of the plenary records of the eleventh session).

¹³⁷ B.G. Fourie, *Brandpunte: Agter die skerms met Suid-Afrika se bekendste diplomaat* (Cape Town, 1991), p. 35.

¹³⁸ B.G. Fourie, *Buitelandse woelinge om Suid-Afrika 1939-1985* (1991), p. 34.

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One is obliged to give these claims due weight. However, neither the records of the San Francisco Conference nor the reports of the South African delegation are supportive of them. The South African delegation submitted but three amendments to the Dumbarton Oaks proposals and strengthening the domestic jurisdiction clause was not among them. Two related to the preamble and one to the inclusion of a paragraph for the apportionment of costs in respect of the enforcement of Security Council decisions.¹³⁹ H.T. Andrews's report on the work of Committee I/1 concerning the preamble and the purposes and principles of the Charter supports the impression that the South African delegation played a passive role in respect of Article 2 (7).¹⁴⁰ It may be significant in this connection that in the early years of the controversy, when setting out their interpretation of Article 2 (7) at length, South African spokesmen, would refer to the article's drafting history, citing *inter alia* Evatt and John Foster Dulles of the United States delegation, but never their own representatives.¹⁴¹ As for Smuts not signing if the Charter had omitted Article 2 (7), he would not have signed if the major powers had withheld their own signatures. But if they were satisfied, then so was he. (See below.)

The domestic jurisdiction principle was accorded a relatively unimportant place in the Dumbarton Oaks proposals. But at San Francisco, as Article 2 (7), it became one of the basic principles of the United Nations.¹⁴² The effect was supposedly 'to make it a limitation upon all the activities of the Organization rather than merely a limitation upon the action of the Organization under Chapter VI' concerning the pacific settlement of disputes.¹⁴³ With an eye to how the Charter would play in the Senate, recalling that the latter had rejected the Covenant and therefore kept the United States out of the League of Nations, the United States delegation was largely responsible for that.¹⁴⁴ Evatt came late to the issue at San Francisco and was obliged to put up 'a

¹³⁹ United Nations Information Organizations, *Documents of the United Nations Conference on International Organization San Francisco, 1945*, Volume III, *Dumbarton Oaks Proposals, Comments and Proposed Amendments*, English Text (London/New York, 1945), pp. 474-79.

¹⁴⁰ See first attachment to BTS 136/1, Vol. 4, Andrews/SEA, 20 July 1945, pp. 5-6, paras. 16-18.

¹⁴¹ See, *eg.*, G.P. Jooste's statement on the occasion of the inscription of the apartheid item on the General Assembly's agenda for the first time. *GAOR*, 381st plenary meeting on 17 October 1952, pp. 53-59.

¹⁴² N. Harper, N. & D. Sissons, *Australia and the United Nations* (New York, 1959), pp. 144-45.

¹⁴³ L.M. Goodrich & E. Hambro, *Charter of the United Nations: Commentary and Documents* (Boston, 1946), p. 72.

¹⁴⁴ See L.M. Goodrich, *The United Nations* (New York, 1959), pp. 74-79; R.B. Russell, *A History of The United Nations Charter: The Role of the United States 1940-45* (Washington, D.C., 1958), pp. 900-910; Rajan, *United Nations and Domestic Jurisdiction*, pp. 32-47; and *The New York Times*, 16 June 1945 ('Dulles Wins Plea to Bar League [sic] From Meddling in Domestic Issues').

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scrambling fight' to retrieve the situation which his work to enlarge the powers of the General Assembly and extend the organisation's authority in the economic and social field had served to undermine.¹⁴⁵ In fact, it was only when members of his staff pointed to the direct threat to White Australia that he sprang into action. His contribution was to close the door on the possibility of a Security Council recommendation for the settlement of a dispute providing an opportunity for an aggressor state to gain leverage over the victim of its aggression.

Evatt's role was, in the words of the Australian delegation's report on the San Francisco Conference, to have it recognised that

the decision of any nation as to such *internal* matters as migration cannot become the subject of any action by the United Nations. The only possible ground for intervention by the Security Council will be to prevent a breach of the peace or to suppress aggression.¹⁴⁶

Watt explained what he had in mind:

suppose Japan or China demanded that Australia should accept one million migrants within a year, and threaten Australia if she refused. On appeal to the Security Council, the Council might agree to deal with the threat, *provided* Australia accepted 500,000, or 200,000 or less. The Australian amendment was designed to limit the powers of the Security Council, in such a case, to preventing aggression or defending the victim of aggression.¹⁴⁷

Perhaps because he was primarily interested in safeguarding Australia's domestic jurisdiction not that of other countries, Evatt himself subsequently tended to elasticity in his interpretation of Article 2 (7). Hudson calls his interpretation 'typically political'. When it suited him not to take 'a permissive view, he did not take it, as in the case of South Africa'.¹⁴⁸ Otherwise he did. It was only after the Liberal-Country Party Coalition took office in December 1949 that the Australian interpretation generally became as inflexible as the South African one.¹⁴⁹ 'Australian delegations' then, says

¹⁴⁵ Hasluck, 'Australia and the formation of the United Nations', *Royal Australian Historical Society, Journal and Proceedings*, Vol. XL, 1954, Part III, p. 178.

¹⁴⁶ *Report by the Australian Delegates*, No. 24 [Group E.]-F.4311, para. 153, pp. 29-30.

¹⁴⁷ Watt, *Australian Diplomat*, p. 65.

¹⁴⁸ W.J. Hudson, 'Australian diplomacy and South Africa', *Racism: The Australian Experience: A study of race prejudice in Australia*, Vol. 3 (Sydney, 1977), p. 170.

¹⁴⁹ See BTS, 136/1/1/2C (4/3/53-31/3/61), Sole/SEA, 27 January 1956.

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Hudson, 'in a sense swung closer to South Africa in that they sought to prevent even discussion of items which they believed were beyond United Nations competence'.¹⁵⁰

Australian support for the South African position got off to a rocky start. At the Second Part of the First Session in 1946 Australia switched votes on the Indian item, from negative in the Joint Committee of the First (political) and Sixth (legal) Committees¹⁵¹ to abstention in plenary.¹⁵² Sole writes of the 'audible gasp' with which this was received. It may have had the unintended effect of inspiring other countries to change their votes, contributing to the result that a relatively narrow majority in the joint committee became a two-thirds majority in plenary. Sole implies that Smuts's occupancy of the South African seat at the final meeting of the joint committee cost his delegation the day. The matter had to do with the order in which the joint committee voted on the proposals before it.

The delegation's position, its 'second line of defence' after Article 2 (7), was reflected in a United States/United Kingdom/Swedish amendment referring the question to the International Court of Justice for an Advisory Opinion.¹⁵³ The Ukrainian chairman (D.Z. Manuilsky) rejected a Belgian proposal that this should be put to the vote first. Instead, he ruled that the Franco-Mexican amendment¹⁵⁴ (to the Indian draft resolution) which favoured India's position, should receive priority. Smuts ignored Sole's attempts through Heaton Nicholls to have him request votes on the Belgian proposal and on Manuilsky's ruling.

According to Sole: 'A golden opportunity was thus lost, due to an inexcusable error of judgement on Smuts' part in insisting on occupying the South African seat where it should have been occupied by a member of the delegation familiar with rules of procedure and thus competent to counter the manipulation of the rules of procedure by a hostile and unscrupulous Chairman'.¹⁵⁵ His point is valid but probably only he himself could have given effect to it. (As a member of the relevant committee of the Preparatory Commission he had been involved in the drafting of the rules.)¹⁵⁶ How-

¹⁵⁰ Hudson, 'Australian diplomacy and South Africa', pp. 168-69.

¹⁵¹ GAOR, First Sess., Second Part, Joint Committee of the First and Sixth Committees, Summary Records 21-30 November 1946, 6th meeting, 20 November 1946, p. 51.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 52nd plenary meeting, 8 December 1946, p. 1061.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, Joint Committee of the First and Sixth Committees, 5th meeting, 28 November 1946, p. 43.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, Annex 1f, p. 133.

¹⁵⁵ *Reminiscences*, p. 102.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

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ever, where other representatives on the joint committee consisted of people of the seniority of Hartley Shawcross (United Kingdom) and Andrei Gromyko (USSR), he would probably have been thought too junior to occupy the South African seat. (Hasluck, who was older and whose relationship with authority was different, was the Australian representative.)

It is not clear whether Smuts's lapse affected the final outcome. For Sole omits to mention that South Africa was afforded a 'second bite at the cherry' in plenary. It is also a moot point whether, as he implies, a vote in the joint committee on the question of referral to the court would have produced the desired result. In plenary, under the benign presidency of Paul-Henri Spaak, Belgium's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Smuts's proposal at the first of the three lengthy meetings held on the item on Saturday 7 and Sunday 8 December 1946¹⁵⁷ to have the matter referred to the International Court, *was* put to the vote first. It was rejected in a roll-call vote by thirty-one to twenty-one, with two abstentions. Only then was the joint committee's draft resolution (*ie.* the Franco-Mexican draft) put to the vote and adopted by roll-call by thirty-two to fifteen, with seven abstentions.

Conditions were just about as favourable for the South Africans as they could have hoped. If Manuilsky had been a hostile chairman of the joint committee, Spaak was helpfulness itself in plenary. It was he who had earlier raised the question of the draft resolution requiring a two-thirds majority. After relatively protracted debate it was decided in a roll-call vote by twenty-nine to twenty-four with one abstention that the joint committee's draft resolution indeed required a two-thirds majority. At that stage it might have seemed that the draft would be defeated. The debate was protracted because delegations' positions on the procedural question tended to reflect their positions on the substance of the item. Forty of the fifty-four member states at the time voted the same way in the committee and plenary - twenty-four affirmatively,¹⁵⁸ thirteen negatively,¹⁵⁹ with three abstaining.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ GAOR, First Sess., Second Part, 50th plenary meeting, 7 December 1946, pp. 1009-10.

¹⁵⁸ Byelorussian SSR, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Iran, Iraq, Mexico, Philippines, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Ukrainian SSR, Uruguay, USSR, Venezuela, Yugoslavia.

¹⁵⁹ Belgium, Canada, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Greece, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, South Africa, United Kingdom, United States.

¹⁶⁰ Denmark, Ecuador, Turkey.

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With two exceptions¹⁶¹ there was among these states a correlation between their votes on the Franco-Mexican draft resolution in the joint committee and in plenary and those in plenary on the important question issue and the South African proposal to refer the matter to the court. That is, those who supported the Franco-Mexican draft voted against the important question issue and the South African proposal; those who supported the important question issue and the South African proposal voted against the Franco-Mexican draft. The delegations arguing against the important question issue obviously believed that the resolution would fail to achieve a two-thirds majority.

The transformation of the simple majority of twenty-four to nineteen with six abstentions in the joint committee into a two-thirds majority of thirty-two to fifteen with seven abstentions in plenary hinged on the votes of fourteen delegations: Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Iceland, Lebanon, Liberia, New Zealand, Norway, Panama and Sweden. Afghanistan, Argentina, Bolivia, Lebanon and Liberia had been absent when the vote was taken in the joint committee. In plenary Afghanistan, Lebanon and Liberia supported the Franco-Mexican resolution, Argentina voted against it, and Bolivia abstained. Of the remaining nine delegations, Dominican Republic, Iceland and Norway switched from negative votes in the joint committee to affirmative votes in plenary; Australia, Brazil and Sweden from negative to abstention; Honduras and Panama from abstention to affirmative; and New Zealand from abstention to negative.

Sole attributes the Australian abstention to Evatt personally: 'it was Evatt who inflicted on Smuts his biggest defeat on the Indian question at the 1946 General Assembly'.¹⁶² For it appeared that the delegation had switched its vote on Evatt's instructions.¹⁶³ There again, the briefing paper Sole prepared for Viljoen in 1949 held that the abstention was given 'without consultation with Dr. Evatt'.¹⁶⁴ However, while the matter *was* referred to Canberra for a decision, the course adopted appears to have been recommended by the delegation on the basis of a 'strong request from India'.¹⁶⁵ Sole, who was there, believes that the Australian switch was decisive. The Indians

¹⁶¹ France and Uruguay, the former abstaining and the latter voting affirmatively on the important question issue.

¹⁶² Letter, 30 June 1994.

¹⁶³ *Reminiscences*, p. 103.

¹⁶⁴ BTS, Vol. 229, 1/25/5, Vol. II, 'Australia's attitude towards the Indian question'.

¹⁶⁵ AA, A1067/1, M46/21/7, Pt. 2, O. 23411, 13 December 1946, para. 2.

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thought so too but the Australians denied it.¹⁶⁶ Heaton Nicholls claimed that Australia's action had influenced the voting of the South Americans.¹⁶⁷

At this remove, however, it is impossible to say exactly who was influenced by it. New Zealand, the country closest to Australia politically, did not follow suit. On the contrary, it went the other way. If others were influenced, that would perhaps have come from Australia's third position in the voting order after Afghanistan and Argentina, both of whom had been absent from the vote in the joint committee. What is certain is that Australia's abstention was not well-received in South Africa. Knowles cabled Canberra on 11 December 1946:

considerable resentment is felt in local official circles on Australia's abstention from voting on the critical division on the South Africa - India question, the question thus obtaining two thirds majority.¹⁶⁸

The reply was on the shrill side. Australia had gone 'to the limit in support of South Africa both within and without the conference'. Having supported South Africa up to the plenary, the delegation had then abstained because its vote would otherwise 'have been construed as a definite *censure* of India'. (Italics added.) In any case, Australia had not complained about the

continuous lack of support at international conferences from South Africa. They have always been opposed to every progressive move and at San Francisco they were the one nation which prevented the unanimous vote on the Australian proposal for full employment. At Paris, where we were fighting hard for democratic principles, we received no South African support.¹⁶⁹

The reply was leaked in Canberra, perhaps by Evatt himself, and part of it appeared verbatim in the *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg) on 26 January 1947. New at the diplomatic game, Knowles cabled Evatt that he was 'greatly disturbed at this serious leakage', following up with a detailed despatch.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁶ AA, A1068/1, M47/21/4/1, Box 1, Secretary/Official Secretary, New Delhi, 23 January 1947.

¹⁶⁷ *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg), 26 January 1947.

¹⁶⁸ AA, A1067/1, M46/21/7, Pt. 2, I. 29165, 11 December 1946.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, O. 23410, 13 December 1946. That is one way of looking at Evatt's performance at the Paris Peace Conference. Others, not only the Russians, saw it as an extreme manifestation of Evatt promoting himself.

¹⁷⁰ AA, A4231/2, Pretoria 1-91 1947, No. 14/47, 5 February 1947. There is little doubt that the reply was leaked in Canberra because the word 'censure' in Canberra's cable, which also appeared in the *Sunday Times* article, was wrongly deciphered by the High Commission as 'defiance'.

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The alleged lack of South African support for Australian concerns rankled. When reprimanding the Australian delegation for responding to press enquiries that 'any official explanation or comment' on the switch to abstention 'would have to come from Canberra', thereby 'unnecessarily' embarrassing the department and the government, Dunk claimed that South Africa had not

given us good support at international conferences and particularly at Paris they stood out as one of the most reactionary countries. They should not therefore complain if another delegation finds it unable to always support their own case.

Even so, while not believing 'that the treatment of Indians by South Africa was satisfactory, we stayed with them to the limit. We, in fact, voted for their amendment'.¹⁷¹ In any case, the 'impression that the Delegation was carrying out instructions not in accord with its own attitude' was incorrect.¹⁷² Smuts referred obliquely to the matter in a February 1947 letter thanking his old associate from the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, J.G. Latham, then Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia, for sending him a supportive press article: 'I had better not say anything about Australia's attitude at the U.N.O. meeting'.¹⁷³ By contrast with the language of later resolutions on the South African items, the language of this one (44(I)) was relatively innocuous.

At the 1947 session, however, Evatt delivered a lengthy and highly positive intervention in plenary over the South West Africa issue - what Hudson calls Evatt's 'fierce defence of South Africa'¹⁷⁴ - in which he praised Smuts extravagantly, saying that he was 'renowned throughout the world as a great leader of liberal thought'.¹⁷⁵ Jordaan, a member of the South African delegation, wrote:

If India again was the principal prosecutor of the Union on the South West Africa issue, it should also be stated that no individual in that debate did the Union a greater service than Dr. Evatt who forcibly drew attention to the Union's past record and the integrity of the Union's leaders like General Botha and Field Marshal Smuts.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷¹ AA, A1068/1, M47/21/4/1, Box 1, O. 23411, 13 December 1946, para. 3.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, para. 4.

¹⁷³ Van der Poel, ed., *Selections from the Smuts Papers*, Vol. VII, Smuts/Latham, 12 February 1947, p.124.

¹⁷⁴ Hudson, 'Australia's Trusteeship Policy', *Australian Outlook*, Vol. 21, No. 1, April 1967, p. 16.

¹⁷⁵ GAOR, Second Sess., 104th plenary meeting, 1 November 1947, p. 585.

¹⁷⁶ BTS, 136/2/8, Vol. 1, Jordaan/Secretary, 20 December 1947, p. 5.

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Perhaps because of the nature of his primary source (his letters home), Sole is not influenced by hindsight. Unlike Robert McNamara's,¹⁷⁷ his memoirs are refreshingly free both of *mea culpas* and of reinterpretations to take account of current political trends. Information he had prepared¹⁷⁸ additional to that contained in the 1946 report on South West Africa, which was considered by the Trusteeship Council instead of merely being on record at the United Nations as the South African government had intended, led the Council to draft what he calls 'a highly critical report' on South Africa's administration of the Territory. He says it was so hostile that even the Australian representative 'on the Trusteeship Council (no friend of South Africa's) regarded it as provocative'.¹⁷⁹

Sole does not name the representative but he would have been W.D. (Bill) Forsyth who was something of an expert on trusteeship.¹⁸⁰ The perception of others is that Forsyth was not ill-disposed towards South Africa. Thus Hudson writes of the same session of the Council that Forsyth 'sought constantly to shield South Africa' and he provides examples of this.¹⁸¹ Re-reading the material today and in the fullness of knowledge of the evolution and outcome of the South West Africa question at the United Nations, one is left with the impression that if the report was 'highly critical', this was not unjustified. On the basis of the information it was considering, what the Council in effect did was to point to the fact that the Territory was being administered for the benefit of its white rather than its non-white inhabitants.¹⁸² That was hardly surprising inasmuch as the former's self-governing status exerted a strong influence over the South African authorities. The non-whites did not enjoy similar leverage. More of this below.

In the 1950s the South African view of the United Nations was shared by the United Kingdom. Sir Roger Makins, British Ambassador to the United States, reported in 1953:

¹⁷⁷ R.S. McNamara (with B. VanDeMark), *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam* (New York, 1995). The book was timed to coincide with the twentieth anniversary of the fall of Saigon on 30 April 1975 and therefore of the effective end of the Vietnam War.

¹⁷⁸ See UN doc. T/175 in *TCOR*, Third Session, Supplement (doc. T/337, 28 December 1948), pp. 51-152. The replies were in response to a list of fifty questions annexed to Trusteeship Council resolution 28 (III), dated 12 December 1947.

¹⁷⁹ *Reminiscences*, p. 121.

¹⁸⁰ See the Introduction, p. 20 above.

¹⁸¹ W.J. Hudson, *Australia and the Colonial Question at the United Nations* (Sydney, 1970), p. 91.

¹⁸² See UN doc. T/209, para. 5 in *TCOR*, Third Session, Supplement (doc. T/337, 28 December 1948), p. 231.

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To the United States the United Nations is a conscious, necessary and major instrument of foreign policy, whereas to Her Majesty's Government it is perhaps at best an instrument through which policies already formed can occasionally be furthered, and at worst, a dangerous hazard in our course.¹⁸³

The same year Gladwyn Jebb, the British Permanent Representative in New York, complained that the UN had become part of the problem instead of representing the solution to such 'international, or allegedly international' disputes as apartheid. The very 'ventilation of such questions at the United Nations [was] an abuse of its machinery'.¹⁸⁴ Jebb's successor, Sir Pierson Dixon, observed in 1954 that 'the United Nations is not at all the institution which was planned in 1942 and launched in 1945'.¹⁸⁵ He warned that, as it was, the UN had 'great disadvantages both for Her Majesty's Government, the United States Government and the free world generally'. Among those he included its creation of 'problems which would not exist if it did not'. Particularly from the United Kingdom's point of view there was 'the continuing annoyance of having to defend our admirable colonial record against biased attack'.¹⁸⁶

Sole reported from New York in 1956 that his British counterpart had said that 'his Government was inclined to look more and more upon the U.N. with the doubts which South Africa has always expressed'.¹⁸⁷ At the time South Africa's reliance on Article 2 (7) was both supported and encouraged by its Western associates, particularly the United Kingdom and Australia. Not only South Africa invoked Article 2 (7). The USSR did so in respect of its invasion of Hungary in 1956 and earlier in respect of items relating to human rights under the peace treaties with Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania.¹⁸⁸ France did so in respect of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia and the United Kingdom in respect of Cyprus,¹⁸⁹ though more flexibly than South Africa. France also staged walk-outs from the General Assembly.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸³ Makins/Eden, 11 February 1953, para. 2. Copy on BTS, 136/2, Vol. 3.

¹⁸⁴ Jebb/Eden, 12 January 1953, p. 2, para. 7. Copy on BTS, 136/2, Vol. 3.

¹⁸⁵ Dixon/Eden, No. 14, 20 August 1954, p. 5, para. 15. Copy on BTS, 136/1, Vol. 6.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2, para. 5.

¹⁸⁷ BTS, 136/2/24, Vol. 1, Sole/SEA, 23 October 1956, p. 3.

¹⁸⁸ AA, A1838/2, 852/10/2/3, Pt. 6, Tange/Minister (Menzies), 31 March 1960.

¹⁸⁹ This may have detracted from South Africa's case. On the other hand, the South African argument had already been rejected at the General Assembly's first session.

¹⁹⁰ For example, France withdrew from part of the tenth session in 1955 when the General Committee's recommendation against inscription of the item on Algeria was overturned in plenary. BTS, 136/2/23, Vol. 3, 'Withdrawal of the French delegation from the Tenth session of the General Assembly', n.d.

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In 1952 the British presented an *aide memoire* to the South African government indicating that they 'were firmly convinced that the United Nations are debarred by Article 2 (7) of the Charter from considering questions such as Tunisia, Morocco and South African Racial Relations'.¹⁹¹ Anthony Eden said the next year that the United Kingdom should continue its battle in favour of its interpretation of Article 2 (7).¹⁹²

Thirty-four resolutions were adopted by roll-call votes on the three South African items between 1946 and 1961. Australia voted affirmatively four times, negatively seven times, abstained twenty-two times and was absent once.¹⁹³ Its support of South Africa was, therefore, mainly verbal and principally on the Article 2 (7) issue. When at India's instance in 1952 the General Assembly inscribed the apartheid item on its agenda for the first time, Jooste moved a motion to the effect that the Assembly would decide it was not competent to consider it. He gave a detailed exposition of South Africa's case on Article 2 (7).¹⁹⁴ R.G. Casey, the Australian Minister of External Affairs, aligned himself with Jooste and hoped 'very much for the future of the United Nations that his motion [would] prevail'.¹⁹⁵ On the Treatment of Indians item, Casey told the Ad hoc Political Committee at the same session that the General Assembly 'should have declared itself incompetent' to deal with it under Article 2 (7). The article's meaning 'was very clear and could be interpreted in only one way'.¹⁹⁶

Two years before, Casey's predecessor as External Affairs Minister, P.C. Spender,¹⁹⁷ had supported Jooste's arguments in the General Committee against

¹⁹¹ BTS, 136/1/1/2C, *Aide Memoire*, Domestic Jurisdiction, 22 October 1952. Also in 1952 a South Africa delegate, A.A. Roberts, commented that the 'rationalization that has been going on in an attempt to explain why native races are a domestic matter with France, but not with the Union, would be amusing if it were not so distressing in its implications. Certainly some of our big "friends" are extremely uncomfortable about it'. BTS, 136/2/3/7, Roberts/Forsyth, 30 December 1952.

¹⁹² Eden/Jebb, 23 March 1953, p.2, para. 6. Copy on BTS, 136/2, Vol. 3.

¹⁹³ **Indians** (9): Yes: 265(III), No: 395(V), Abstention: 44(I); 511(VI); 615(VII); 719(VIII); 1179(XII); 1302(XIII); 1460(XIV); **South West Africa** (16): Yes: 1143(XII), No: 141(II); 449B(V), Abstention: 65(I); 337(IV); 449A(V); 570A(VI); 570B(VI); 749A(VIII); 749B(VIII); 844(IX); 904(X); 1565(XV); 1568(XV); 1593(XV); 1596(XV); **Apartheid** (9): Yes: 1598(XV); 1663(XVI), No: 721(VIII); 820(IX); 1178(XII); 1248(XIII), Abstention: 616A(VII); 616B(VII), Absent: 1375(XIV).

¹⁹⁴ GAOR, 381st plenary meeting, 17 October 1952, pp. 53-59, paras. 8-67.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 65, para. 117.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, AHPC, 10th meeting, 5 November 1952, p. 46, para. 15.

¹⁹⁷ After holding the office for eighteen months, he resigned in 1951 to become Australian Ambassador to Washington. In 1957 he was elected a Judge on the International Court of Justice. In 1966 it was his casting vote as President which in a sense settled the South West Africa Case in South Africa's favour.

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inscription of the Treatment of Indians item. He 'deplored the tendency of United Nations organs to impinge upon the internal affairs of Member States'.¹⁹⁸ Bill Forsyth told the Ad Hoc Political Committee in 1954 that the '*apartheid* item was a clear case of intervention in the domestic affairs of a Member State'. United Nations 'intervention had succeeded in poisoning relations with South Africa, which was hardly consistent with the Charter objectives of tolerance and good neighbourliness'.¹⁹⁹ Appendix V below lists other South African and Australian statements on Article 2 (7). The list is not exhaustive.

Australia's reluctance in the 1950s to become involved in South Africa's domestic affairs extended also to replies to letters directed to the Prime Minister or the Minister of External Affairs by outraged clerics, students and others.²⁰⁰ Louw announced the beginning of token representation in the General Assembly at the end of 1956.²⁰¹ Casey was alone in taking to the rostrum to express his understanding and regret:

We in Australia would hope that all Members would give heed and reflection to the warning light that the Union of South Africa has shown. For myself, I can only hope that the action that South Africa has taken will turn out to be no more than a temporary one and that the circumstances that brought about its partial withdrawal will, be modified, as delegations reflect of the situation that brought it about.²⁰²

Louw thereupon cabled Uys in Canberra to convey the Union government's sincere appreciation to the Australian government: 'Casey's statement is greatly valued as testimony to the warmth, friendship and depth of understanding between our two countries'.²⁰³ Uys followed this wording which quite likely heightened the feeling of uneasiness among already edgy Australian officials.

¹⁹⁸ GAOR, Fifth Sess., General Com., 69th meeting, 21 September 1950, p. 3, para. 25. See the summary record of the First Committee's 545th meeting on 11 December 1952 (Seventh Sess.), pp. 257-59, paras. 28-35 for Spender's exposition on the applicability of Article 2(7) to the Tunisian question.

¹⁹⁹ GAOR, Ninth Sess., AHPC, 44th meeting, 6 December 1954, pp. 211-12, para. 4.

²⁰⁰ See, eg., correspondence on AA, A1838/1, 201/2/5, Pt. 6 and A1838/2, 201/10/1, Pt. 2, and 852/10/2/3, Pt. 3, replies to Rev. J. Garrett (5 March 1954); S. Abraham and J.P. Kennedy (28 June 1957); C.L. Pannam (17 October 1957) and P.J. Clarey, MP (24 December 1959).

²⁰¹ GAOR, Eleventh Sess., 597th plenary meeting, 27 November 1956, pp 357-58, paras. 152-56.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 598th plenary meeting, 27 November 1956, p. 361, paras. 35-37.

²⁰³ BTS, 136/2/24, Vol. 2, Immediate Code Telegram, Minister/Uys, 28 November 1956 and BCB, Vol. 6, 8/0, Vol. III, Uys/McBride, 29 November 1956.

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Whether there were doubts in cabinet circles about the efficacy of token representation, or for whatever reason, Louw cast about the next year for a face-saving device to enable South Africa to return to the General Assembly. Gilchrist reported that while he was 'under strong pressure ... to pull right out of the United Nations' he wanted, 'at some risk to his political position', South Africa to return to 'full participation' if that could be achieved 'without loss of face'.²⁰⁴ Louw turned to Casey, writing him what might be termed an importunate letter urging him to vote against instead of abstaining on the inscription of the Indian and apartheid items, to lobby other western delegations to do likewise and to speak up against inscription. He suggested points Casey should make.²⁰⁵ He also wrote to the New Zealand Foreign Minister who cabled his ministry that with regard to 'public attitude in New Zealand' it would be 'best to adhere to present brief'.²⁰⁶

Casey replied a month later assuring Louw that while Australia would vote against inscription of the apartheid item (perhaps because he was impressed by Louw's argument that South Africa's absence brought about voting parity between the Western and anti-Western factions in the Assembly at forty each), it could not do more than abstain on the other items. His delegation had been 'active in the lobbies ... in an attempt to swing some votes in your favour'. He himself had spoken to several heads of delegation and would speak against inscription 'along the lines suggested in the second last paragraph in page 2 of your letter'.²⁰⁷

In Casey's absence in New York, Australian officials had informed the Acting Minister of External Affairs (F.H. Osborne, otherwise Minister for Air) that the 'South Africans are asking us to go a good deal further than at previous sessions'. In fact, the request regarding the Treatment of Indians item 'would require a reversal of policy'. Since 1951 Australia had abstained on the item to 'avoid being isolated with South Africa'. The South African aim, the submission held, was 'to get an excuse to return to full participation in the United Nations'. In that regard, their representative at the UN, J.S.F. Botha, had let it be known that '20-30 votes against inscription of the items' would be regarded 'as a reasonable excuse'.²⁰⁸ The objective was to get most of those

²⁰⁴ AA, A1838/2, 852/10/2/3, Pt. 5, I. 12579, 5 September 1957.

²⁰⁵ BCB, Vol. 6, 8/0, Vol. III, Louw/Casey, 19 August 1957. A copy is on AA, A1838/2, 916/1/2.

²⁰⁶ Inward telegram, No. 246, Macdonald/Acting Minister, 13 September 1957. Copy on AA, A1838/2, 916/1/2.

²⁰⁷ AA, A1838/2, 852/10/2/3, Pt. 5, I. 13497, 20 September 1957.

²⁰⁸ AA, A/1838/2, 916/1/2, UN Branch/Acting Secretary, 13 September 1957 and Plimsoll's handwritten comment.

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who had abstained on inscription previously, to vote against on this occasion.²⁰⁹ The trouble was that 'South Africa [was] unlikely to get its 20-30 votes even if it [could] persuade more countries than Australia'.²¹⁰ The United Nations Branch, supported by Plimsoll, believed that Australia should 'decline to change [its] attitude'. Menzies disagreed.

Osborne cabled Casey saying that to accept Louw's proposition would probably entail a 'deterioration of [Australia's] position *vis-à-vis* the Afro-Asian group and particularly India'; that it could make the position more difficult in respect of the item on Dutch New Guinea; and especially increase the difficulty of making 'headway with the Latin Americans'. Australia could 'hardly accept the position that other countries should make the running on behalf of South Africa'. Though Australia gave 'a lot of support to South Africa' it 'would not want to be regarded as a spokesman for South Africa'. The same cable also expressed doubt whether 'legally the issues involved in the Indian question are essentially within South Africa's domestic jurisdiction'. Of course, 'we have never said in United Nations that we see any doubts about legal position because any such statement would be unhelpful to South Africans'.²¹¹ It all depended on what other countries were prepared to support South Africa.

In the event, Casey maintained Australia's abstention on the inscription of the Treatment item.²¹² Even so, India's Krishna Menon called his accompanying remarks 'a provocation' and used them, or so he said, as the excuse for a lengthy speech.²¹³ However, as he promised, Casey complied with Louw's request on the apartheid item.²¹⁴ In making Louw's points, he largely followed Louw's wording:

It should be remembered ... that South Africa, since the establishment of the United Nations, has played its part as a Member of the Organization and has fulfilled its obligations under the Charter. We should not forget ... that South Africa was one of sixteen countries that constituted the United Nations forces in Korea.²¹⁵

Louw's letter of thanks conveyed his 'sincere appreciation of the Australian voting on the inscription of the two South African items. I need hardly tell you that I

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 852/10/2/3, Pt. 5, I. 13097/13117, 13 September 1957.

²¹⁰ AA, A/1838/2, 916/1/2, Plimsoll/Acting Minister, 10 September 1957.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 852/10/2/3, Pt. 5, O. 11455, 12 September 1957.

²¹² GAOR, Twelfth Sess., 682nd plenary meeting, 20 September 1957, pp. 52, 55, paras. 85, 120.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 51, 55, paras. 80, 118.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 51, paras. 75-80.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, para. 76.

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am equally appreciative of the assistance in the lobbies by yourself and your Delegation, and above all, of your strong open intervention from the rostrum'.²¹⁶ Casey was alone in publicly welcoming Louw's announcement the following July that South Africa would return to the General Assembly at that year's session, the thirteenth. He or Tange, the Secretary, watered down a departmental draft *inter alia* by eliminating a sentence expressing the hope that the United Nations would 'refrain from intervention in matters within the domestic jurisdiction of its members, *even in cases such as that of South Africa*, when the majority of members is opposed in one degree or another to certain of the domestic policies of individual members'.²¹⁷ (Emphasis added.) Hamilton reported later from Canberra:

There is no doubt that the Union's decision has caused a good deal of satisfaction here, both in the Government itself and in the Department of External Affairs; and I am sure that it will fortify the Australian Government's desire to be of as much assistance as possible to us at the United Nations.²¹⁸

His remarks may seem to fall within the ambit of E.M. Rhoodie's claim on the basis of what he said Hamilton told him in Australia, that South African heads of mission reported only what they knew 'the government would like to hear'.²¹⁹ Yet the attitude of Australia's Permanent Representative in New York, E.R. Walker, suggests that Hamilton was not far off the mark: 'it is surely to our own and South Africa's advantage to draw them back into full participation in United Nations Affairs'. He assumed that 'keeping South Africa in the Commonwealth would be a further important consideration'.²²⁰

Presumably the Americans agreed. Two years before they had interpreted Louw's remarks on the inscription of the Treatment of Indians item on the agenda of the eleventh session as indicating that South Africa intended withdrawing from the United Nations altogether. Their view was not unjustified because Louw had said 'today a South African delegation is for the last time protesting against inscription of

²¹⁶ AA, A1838/2, 916/1/2, Louw/Casey, 26 September 1957, attached to Memo. 987/57, Hill/DEA, 11 October 1957.

²¹⁷ Compare draft attached to Woodberry/Secretary n.d. with Press Release 75, 17 July 1958, both on file AA, A1838/2, 916/1/2.

²¹⁸ BTS, 136/2/26, Vol. 2, Hamilton/SEA, 24 July 1958. A copy is on BCB, Vol. 6, 8/0, Vol. III. See also AA, A1838/2, 916/1/2, O. 8980, 17 July 1958.

²¹⁹ 'In Australia, our High Commissioner, Anthony Hamilton, used to chuckle when he told me this.' *The real information scandal*, p. 43. In any case, Jooste personally submitted Hamilton's report to Louw on 5 August 1958.

²²⁰ AA, A1838/2, 852/10/2/3, Pt. 5, I. 13097/13117, 13 September 1957, p. 2, para. 8.

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this item'.²²¹ Alarmed, the State Department requested Australia and others to make representations in Pretoria to urge South Africa not to withdraw because this 'would weaken the United Nations at a time when it was of crucial importance to world peace' besides adding 'to the problems of the Free World'.²²² Louw's claim that South Africa's vote in the General Assembly was important to the West did not therefore lack substance.²²³

No politician wants to stand perpetually in isolation, in a negative sense the cynosure of all eyes. It is the same with the representatives of states at the United Nations. What Hudson calls Australia's 'almost exclusively legal approach', for which he criticises the Menzies government of the 1950s,²²⁴ started slipping in 1959 when India angled for and obtained an Australian abstention instead of its customary negative vote on the substance of the apartheid item. The matter commenced when Australia's UN mission cabled Canberra in late October that India was 'particularly anxious to secure an Australian abstention in the voting on its draft resolution on Apartheid and is prepared to water down the present draft still further if it would make it easier for us to abstain'.²²⁵

There was at first resistance at desk level. B.G. Dexter of the Africa and Middle East Branch (P.R. Killen's brother-in-law), told his superior B.C. Hill that he was not 'at all happy about the proposal'. Australia should avoid doing 'anything that might help provoke South Africa into leaving the Commonwealth'. In any case, 'South Africa's apartheid policy is no more the business of the UN than is our treatment of the Aborigines, Indian treatment of the Nagas, or Soviet treatment of its Jews'. Hill agreed, minuting J.K. Allen of the UN branch who had requested his comments on a draft telegram:

If we are to change our position, I am against doing it during the Ass. We should explain ourselves full out to the S Africans & the UK between sessions - that's the time to review UN policies on big issues, not opportunistically on the basis of particular resolutions.²²⁶

²²¹ GAOR, Eleventh Sess., 577th plenary meeting, 15 November 1956, p. 30, para. 80. Louw announced token representation at the 597th plenary meeting on 27 November. (p. 357, para. 152).

²²² AA, A1838/2, 916/1/2, Record of Conversation Renouf/Hoey, First Secretary, American Embassy, 23 November 1956.

²²³ HA Deb., Vol. 95, 10 June 1957, Cols. 7600-01.

²²⁴ Hudson, 'Australian diplomacy and South Africa', *Racism: The Australian Experience*, p. 169.

²²⁵ AA, A1838/2, 852/10/2/3, Pt. 6, Allen & Munro/Secretary, 26 October 1959.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, Dexter/Hill, 22 October 1959.

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Nonetheless the decision to switch was taken after consultation with Menzies. Casey confirmed it in New York. Shann, the External Affairs Officer in London, cabled on 6 November: that it was a decision which 'disturbed' the Commonwealth Relations Office which intended taking it up with Casey. 'Apart from further isolation of their own position and Article 2 (7), they feel it is unfortunate that we have chosen this year, when South Africa has been more reasonable in the United Nations and appear to have made some adjustments in the substance of their apartheid policy'. Shann said he replied that 'we could not afford going on forever damaging our relations with a lot of other people who tended, because of our negative view, to identify us with policies of racial discrimination'.²²⁷

In effect, it took the Australians seven years to give effect to this point of view. Before the Sauer visit of 1952, anticipating that he would raise the matter, a departmental note prepared for Casey on the South African items at the UN held:

we - virtually alone - have helped South Africa a lot in the past. I believe you agree that we should be cautious before undertaking to do more. ... We have become conspicuous by being the only country other than South Africa to vote against the resolutions, and our arguments on domestic jurisdiction are listened to with irritation. The position cannot fail to have adverse effects on our efforts to get a better understanding with Asian countries in particular and attract the hostility of some members towards our own native policies in our Trust Territory ... South Africa's own tactics (e.g. walking out) are often embarrassing to us. They could help themselves by showing greater willingness to meet India and Pakistan outside the U.N.²²⁸

N. Pritchard, Acting United Kingdom High Commissioner pending the arrival of Lord Carrington's successor, General Sir William Oliver, used arguments similar to those made to Shann when he called on Tange in Canberra the same day. An Australian abstention would leave only Britain itself, France and Portugal in opposition. The UK was 'particularly anxious' to sustain the point that the resolution infringed Article 2 (7) because it had heard that 'United Kingdom policy in Nyasaland might be brought to the United Nations'. And, in a seemingly approving reference to 'grand apartheid', he said there were 'some signs of South African efforts to create some autonomy in the Bantu community and it would be unwise to respond to this gesture by turning away from South Africa'!

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, I. 20372, 6 November 1959.

²²⁸ AA, A1838/2, 201/10/1, Pt. 1, For the Minister. Visit of Hon. Paul Sauer - South African items in the U.N., 10 September 1952, unsigned.

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Tange dismissed his arguments:

Australia had to have regard to the disadvantages to us of misunderstanding of our motives (support for South Africa) in Asia and elsewhere. I thought that if the United Kingdom voted against such a resolution they would automatically be given credit for voting out of consideration for another member of the Commonwealth rather than out of sympathy for the policies of racial discrimination. Australia would not receive this tolerance.²²⁹

Casey subsequently fended off representations in New York by W.D. Ormsby Gore, the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Sir Pierson Dixon, the United Kingdom's Permanent Representative, who argued that if the 'position was abandoned on domestic jurisdiction it could open way to discussion by General Assembly on internal affairs of places like Central African Federation and Kenya. South Africa might also be pushed further in direction of leaving the United Nations'. Casey replied that Australia's negative votes of previous years 'had been widely interpreted throughout Asia as representing a vote on substance of South Africa policy and not on juridical basis of United Nations action'. Australia might have been prepared to continue on that basis if its vote would make any difference. But that was not the case.²³⁰

Jooste, Tange's South African counterpart, was disturbed by the news, perhaps especially because the delegation in New York, which was aware of it, had not reported it to Pretoria. When, on instructions,²³¹ O.L. Davis, the Australian High Commissioner, called on him on 9 November, the day before the vote was taken in the Special Political Committee, he said he 'received the information with the greatest regret and could not but regard it very seriously'. No country in the world 'was held in such high regard in South Africa as Australia'. He blamed Krishna Menon for the turn of events. Menon had 'for some years been working hard to get an apparently mild resolution in order to isolate South Africa' and 'appeared to be having some success'.²³² He had reproached Davis a few days earlier for Australia's abstention in the Fourth Committee on the South West Africa question.²³³

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, Record of conversation with Tange/Pritchard, 6 November 1959. Pritchard had served as Assistant Political Secretary in South Africa for part of the war.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, I. 20461, 8 November 1959.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, O. 14792, 7 November 1959.

²³² AA, A1838/2, 852/10/2/3, Pt. 6, Memo. 538, Davis/DEA, 11 November 1959, Attachment, p. 2, paras. 6, 11; and I. 29494, 9 November 1959.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 201/9/1, Pt. 2, I. 20225, 5 November 1959.

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Curiously, while Australia abstained on the resolution (1375 (XIV)) at the committee stage, it did not take part in the vote in plenary a week later.²³⁴ This was the only occasion during the period covered by this study when Australia missed a vote on one of the South African items. It was one of the few Western countries to do so.²³⁵ Millar says the reasons for the absence 'were stated to be "unavoidable".' Canberra may not initially have been aware of the position because a draft of Casey's letter to the ALP's Clarey (see footnote 200 above) at the end of December incorporated the words 'when the resolution was presented during the recent session of the United Nations General Assembly criticising South Africa's apartheid policy, we voted neither for it nor against it, but abstained'. That did not appear in the letter sent to Clarey.²³⁶

The Sharpeville shootings in March 1960 unleashed a firestorm of criticism, not least in Australia, marking a watershed in the South African government's relations with the international community. South Africa's departure from the Commonwealth a year later removed even the minor measure of protection membership had afforded it until then. Reassessing its position, Australia adjusted smoothly to United Nations realities. Hudson comments approvingly: in 'a changing situation, Australia changed her policies and, just as important, the terms in which she expressed them so that there tended to be a change of emphasis: legalism gave way to politics'.²³⁷ The switch to abstention on the apartheid item in the Special Political Committee in 1959 had paved the way.

In the early 1950s the British felt it would be a pity if the apartheid item were discussed 'since it could do a great deal of damage. Even discussion was tantamount to intervention in South Africa's domestic affairs'.²³⁸ A decade later they pragmatically changed their stance to bend with the wind. Their attitude towards apartheid in the UN context changed. From being a purely internal South African matter, it became a

²³⁴ GAOR, Fourteenth Sess., SPC, 148th meeting, 10 November 1959, p. 102, para. 10; 838th plenary meeting, 17 November 1959, pp. 559-60, para. 24.

²³⁵ T.B. Millar, 'Australian voting at the United Nations on issues concerning South Africa', *Australia's Neighbours*, 4th Series, Nos. 13-14, March-April 1964, p. 3. Between 1946 and 1961 South Africa absented itself fifteen times from plenary votes on these items, Spain four times, Iceland and Luxembourg three times, and Australia and Norway once.

²³⁶ The undated draft and the version as despatched dated 24 December 1959 are on AA, A1838/2, 201/10/1, Pt. 2.

²³⁷ Hudson, *Australia and the Colonial Question*, p.156. See also Albinski, *Australian Policy under Labor*, pp. 21-22.

²³⁸ BTS, 136/2/19, Vol. 1, Jordaan/SEA, 30 September 1952, p. 3.

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question that was *sui generis*,²³⁹ a rationalisation that ostensibly had as its *raison d'être* events such as Sharpeville which followed close on the heels of Macmillan's 'Winds of Change' visit to South Africa in January 1960, not to mention South Africa's recently announced withdrawal from the Commonwealth.

Along with the United Kingdom, Australia supported both the 1960 and 1961 resolutions on apartheid (1598 (XV) and 1663 (XVI)). Four years earlier Casey had told the Assembly that South Africa had 'fulfilled its obligations under the Charter'. Now Plimsoll told the Special Political Committee that South Africa should 'comply with its obligations under the Charter'.²⁴⁰ Millar suggests that the Australians were influenced by the British change of position two meetings before. Plimsoll's statement was not, however, as Millar says, 'an unusual second intervention in such a debate'.²⁴¹ It was an explanation of vote. What made it noteworthy was that it was delivered by the head of the delegation instead of by the representative in the committee, J.D. Hood, himself a senior official.

South Africa's departure from the Commonwealth ungagged the hitherto supportive or at least restrained British and Australians. Their delegates at the UN now gave vent to imaginative expressions of abhorrence. There was, for example, the British Conservative MP, Patrick Wall's famous (1962) description of apartheid as 'morally abominable, intellectually grotesque and spiritually indefensible',²⁴² sentiments which did not, however, prevent him in later years from accepting invitations to visit South Africa as a guest of the government. (He may not have been responsible for the wording.)²⁴³ Hood told the Special Political Committee in November 1961 that his government

²³⁹ An expression used by the British representative in the Special Political Committee, P. Smithers, who said that 'While the importance attached by the United Kingdom to Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter remained undiminished, it regarded *apartheid* as being now so exceptional as to be *sui generis*'. GAOR, Fifteenth Sess., SPC, 242nd meeting, 5 April 1961, p. 77, para. 12. The statement followed the announcement of South Africa's withdrawal from the Commonwealth.

²⁴⁰ GAOR, Fifteenth Sess., SPC, 244th meeting, 7 April 1961, p. 85, para. 5. He also said that Australia 'was strongly opposed to any sanctions against the Union; nor did it think that the situation in that country endangered international peace and security'.

²⁴¹ Millar, 'Australian voting at the United Nations on issues concerning South Africa', *Australia's Neighbours*, 4th Series, Nos. 13-14, March-April 1964, p. 3. Hood had spoken at the 241st meeting on 4 April. See p. 72, paras. 23-26 of the summary record.

²⁴² GAOR, Seventeenth Sess., Fourth Com., 1380th meeting, 12 November 1962, p. 332, para. 17. He was taking part in the committee's general debate on South West Africa.

²⁴³ Sir Brian Barder writes in that connection: 'The wording looks strongly London-drafted to me, and probably the outcome of a prolonged debate in which our UN Mission, Patrick Wall, various bits of the FCO almost certainly including ministers, and, certainly, the Embassy in Pretoria/Cape Town

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shared the virtually universal repugnance to the policy of 'apartheid' ... and that despite its adherence to the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States, it considered that the special nature of the question of 'apartheid' justified its examination by the United Nations.²⁴⁴

And in respect of South West Africa the Australian representative in the Fourth Committee, L.R. McIntyre, blandly repudiated a position held for sixteen years:

The Government and people of Australia ... considered that South Africa should have followed the example of other Mandatory Powers and have placed South West Africa under the Trusteeship System.²⁴⁵

As recently as 1960 Australia's position on the item had been that it would 'continue to recognise the legal right of South Africa, expressly affirmed by the International Court, not to place South West Africa under the International Trusteeship System'.²⁴⁶ (Emphasis in original.) It might be thought that the British and the Australians were influenced in their change of attitude by the human rights aspects of the apartheid issue. More likely, the organisation's changing membership profile coupled with South Africa's departure from the Commonwealth were the decisive factors.

The South African Indian elite²⁴⁷ enlisted the aid of the British government of India to inscribe the matter of their treatment on the agenda of the second, substantive part of the General Assembly's first session in 1946. Two prominent South African Indians, Sorabjee Rustomjee and H.A. Naidoo,²⁴⁸ and Hyman Basner, a natives' repre-

would have been involved. My guess is that what was wanted was a short, striking, key text - what we'd now call a sound-bite ... which could be quoted for years as defining our position on apartheid.' e-mail message 14 August 1995.

²⁴⁴ GAOR, Sixteenth Sess., SPC, 281st meeting, 7 November 1961, p. 108, para. 28.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Seventeenth Sess., Fourth Com., 1387th meeting, 16 November 1962, p. 388, para. 8.

²⁴⁶ O. 9497, 7 June 1960, p. 9. (Savingram to all posts setting out official thinking on the items of the agenda of the Fifteenth Session of the General Assembly.) Copy on BCB, Vol. 6, 8/0, Vol. III.

²⁴⁷ The legislation, Uma Shashikant Mesthrie points out, 'had serious implications for the Indian commercial and propertied class whose economic expansion would be seriously curtailed'. *From Sastri to Deshmukh: A Study of the Role of the Government of India's Representatives in South Africa, 1927 to 1946* (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Natal, Durban, 1987), p. 290

²⁴⁸ Respectively presidents of the South African and Transvaal Indian Congresses. In New York, operating out of Room 969 of the Hotel Commodore, they referred to themselves as 'Delegates of the South African Passive Resistance Council'. They put out a pamphlet under the title *5 months of Struggle: A Brief Account of the Passive Resistance Struggle From 13th of June - 13th of November, 1946*. A copy is on AA, A1067/1, M46/21/7.

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sentative in the Senate,²⁴⁹ went to New York to assist the Indian delegation with the preparation of the case. It was, however, South Africa itself which requested the inscription of the South West Africa item on the agenda of the same session.²⁵⁰ If only for that reason, the South African government never considered the item to fall within the scope of Article 2 (7).²⁵¹

It is important to know why Smuts took the South West Africa question to the United Nations. His political opponents criticised him for doing so, claiming that recognised the organisation's authority over the territory.²⁵² Sole and Friedmann, the South African Press Association correspondent in London during the war, contend that after the 1943 general election Churchill strongly advised Smuts to annex South West Africa.²⁵³ Hancock claimed later that 'Not a dog would have barked' if he had done so. After all, the 'Russians went unchallenged when they followed a different fashion in dealing with the Baltic States'. But he did not do so because of his 'old-fashioned respect for the legal fabric of the society of nations'.²⁵⁴

The Round Table called Smuts a 'constitutionalist'.²⁵⁵ Following Hancock, W.R. Louis argues that 'If South Africa had simply annexed South-West Africa during the war (in the manner that the Soviet Union appropriated the Baltic states) perhaps the vexed question of South-West Africa might not have arisen before the United Nations and the International Court of Justice'.²⁵⁶ Millar argued in similar terms in the 1960s.²⁵⁷ The British judge on the International Court, Sir Gerald Fitzmaurice, put it more strongly in 1971: 'Had this been done, there would have been no way in which it could have been prevented, or subsequently undone, short of war'.²⁵⁸

²⁴⁹ M. Basner, *The Political Memoirs of H.M. Basner* (Johannesburg, 1993), pp. 183-93.

²⁵⁰ BTS, 136/2/2, Vol. 1, SEA/SA Legation, Washington, No. 247, repeated London No. 1226, 9 August 1946.

²⁵¹ An official report on the General Assembly's Fourteenth Session in *Current Notes* (Vol. 31, No. 1, January 1960, p. 32) states wrongly that 'Australia's attitude on the question of South West Africa has always been that this was a domestic matter and, therefore, by the terms of Article 2(7) of the Charter, not within the competence of the United Nations'.

²⁵² See, eg., *HA Deb.*, Vol. 82, 11 August 1953, Col. 1322.

²⁵³ D. Friedmann, letter, 18 October 1988 and Sole, *Reminiscences*, pp. 84-85. Friedmann died in March 1995 at the age of eighty-seven. *The Citizen* (Johannesburg), 7 March 1995.

²⁵⁴ Hancock, *Smuts: The Fields of Force*, p. 467 and footnote.

²⁵⁵ 'South Africa and the United Nations', *The Round Table*, No. 146, March 1947, p.133.

²⁵⁶ Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, p. 563.

²⁵⁷ T.B. Millar, *The Commonwealth and the United Nations* (Sydney, 1967), p. 172, fn. 76.

²⁵⁸ *International Court of Justice, Reports of Judgments, Advisory Opinions and Orders, Legal Consequences for States of the continued presence of South Africa in Namibia (South West Africa) notwithstanding Security Council resolution 276 (1970)*, 'Dissenting Opinion of Judge Sir Gerald Fitzmaurice', p. 298 (286), para. 125. (Each page carries two numbers.)

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Needless to say, this writer does not agree with such views. The Soviet and South African situations were not analogous. The Soviet Union was a great power and the Baltic States lay outside the League of Nations mandates system. Assuming that Friedmann and Sole are correct, Churchill's advice could in some way have been connected with the British view, which the Colonial Secretary, Oliver Stanley, expounded to the Commonwealth Prime Ministers in May 1944 and later that year in the United States,²⁵⁹ that the mandates system had served its purpose.

Smuts himself said as much in the South African Parliament the same year.²⁶⁰ Australia's Curtin seemed to agree but not Fraser, the New Zealand Prime Minister whom, Louis says, evolved into the 'arch priest' of international supervision when he chaired Committee II/4 on trusteeship at the San Francisco Conference.²⁶¹ To the disagreement of Curtin and Stanley, Fraser told the Prime Ministers it was 'essential to make provision for reports on colonial administration to be submitted to and discussed by some central international body'.²⁶² Though Evatt's contribution to the trusteeship chapters of the United Nations Charter has received more attention, Fraser by no means just tagged along in his wake. As chairman of Committee II/4 at San Francisco, a post he occupied because the British did not want Evatt to have it,²⁶³ he prevented the South African reservation on South West Africa from being reflected accurately in the summary records of the conference.²⁶⁴

²⁵⁹ See PMM (44), 10th meeting, 9 May 1944, pp. 1-2; Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, pp. 441-42; and Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1942-1945*, pp. 488-89.

²⁶⁰ S. Slonim, *South West Africa and the United Nations: An International Mandate in Dispute*, (Baltimore & London, 1973), p. 75. In tying Smuts's remark exclusively to his concern about the future of South West Africa, Slonim is obviously unaware of the wider dimension.

²⁶¹ See also PMM (44), 10th meeting, 9 May 1944, pp. 1-3, 5; and Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, p. 343.

²⁶² PMM (44), 10th meeting, 9 May 1944, p. 5; Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1942-1945*, pp. 489-90.

²⁶³ Hudson, *Australia and the New World Order*, p. 63.

²⁶⁴ A statement by D.L. Smit is summarised in *UNCIO Docs.*, Vol. X, p. 434. (Doc. 260 (ENGLISH), II/4/8, 12 May 1945, p. 2). This bears no relation to the statement Smit claimed to have delivered. See *International Court of Justice, Pleadings, Oral Arguments, Documents, South West Africa Cases (Ethiopia v. South Africa; Liberia v. South Africa)*, Vol. II, 1966, pp. 33-34, para. 31. Adding to the confusion is that Smuts stated that he personally had reserved 'the question of the incorporation of South West Africa for the later Peace Conference'. BTS, 136/1, Vol. 3, Cypher telegram No. 35, 2 June 1945. Also *HA Deb.*, Vol. 55, 6 February 1946, Cols. 1169-70. At the Third Session of the General Assembly in 1948, Eric Louw attributed the reservation to Smuts personally. *GAOR*, Third Sess., Part I, 164th plenary meeting, 26 November 1948, p. 164. Finally, Sole (*Reminiscences*, p. 113), also attributing it to Smit, asserts that the statement was not delivered at all but merely handed in as a document!

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Smuts took the South West Africa question to the United Nations not because of his respect 'for the legal fabric of the society of nations' nor, as Barber and Barratt suggest, because he 'was confident of success',²⁶⁵ but because *politically* he thought he had no choice. In 1971 Sir Gerald Fitzmaurice revealed understanding of that motivation, saying that it would not be the 'first historical example of seeking a *political* recognition of incorporation of territory without there being any obligation to do so'.²⁶⁶ Having tested the atmosphere at the first part of the General Assembly's first session (held in London from 10 January to 15 February 1946) at which the New Zealander Fraser was South Africa's most vehement critic, Heaton Nicholls, who led the delegation, reported that

if the arrangements finally decided upon by the Union Government go beyond the terms of the present mandate, it will be necessary for these arrangements to be submitted for information and ratification by the General Assembly.

Even if it should prove

possible to obtain the tacit endorsement of the General Assembly for the Union's action [which, misguidedly, he thought might well be the case] without submission of a formal resolution for approval ... it would not be safe to proceed on the assumption that it will be possible to take action outside the terms of the mandate, without the General Assembly taking cognisance of such action.²⁶⁷

That was why Smuts went to the General Assembly. He had believed initially that the disposition of territories would be a matter for the peace conference. That had been the case at Versailles in 1919; but it was not in 1945 and he had no option but to follow Heaton Nicholls's advice.

From South Africa's point of view, the first part of the first session was difficult. One does not know whether Fraser's criticism was directly responsible for this²⁶⁸

²⁶⁵ J. Barber & J. Barratt, *South Africa's Foreign Policy: The search for status and security 1945-1988* (Johannesburg, 1990), p. 22.

²⁶⁶ *International Court of Justice, Reports of Judgments, Advisory Opinions and Orders, Legal Consequences for States of the continued presence of South Africa in Namibia (South West Africa) notwithstanding Security Council resolution 276 (1970)*, 'Dissenting Opinion of Judge Sir Gerald Fitzmaurice', p. 257 (245), para. 56, fn. 34. Emphasis in original. (Each page carries two numbers).

²⁶⁷ BTS, 136/2, Vol. 1, Annexures, 'Report of the First Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly held in London, January 1946', p. 12, para. 23. Sole presumably drafted this section of the report.

²⁶⁸ See, eg., *GAOR*, First Sess., First Part, Fourth Com., 2nd meeting, 21 January 1946, pp. 6-7 and BTS, 136/2, Vol. 1, Annexures, Heaton Nicholls/SEA, 7 March 1946, p. 8, para. 4.

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but the summary record of the Fourth Committee's third meeting on 22 January 1946 has Heaton Nicholls assuring the committee that the outcome of the announced process of consultation of the territory's 'European and native populations' would 'be submitted to the General Assembly for judgment'. Fraser pounced on that, calling it 'a considerable step forward'. Heaton Nicholls at least 'recognised the moral responsibility of informing the world through the General Assembly ... The Union of South Africa had now said that she would recognise the authority of the General Assembly'.²⁶⁹

The summary record does not reflect the air of gloom projected by the delegation's report nor its forecast that 'trusteeship in all its aspects [would] continue to provide major debating points in the next two or three sessions of the General Assembly'. There is a tendency to short-sightedness not to mention optimism in such forecasts. In respect of South West Africa, H.T. Andrews said of the same session that 'clearly a long road is ahead before the United Nations is likely to concur in our intended policy'.²⁷⁰ A few years later he was saying: 'if we exercise a little patience over the next year or two, the dispute as between ourselves and the United Nations must eventually peter out!'²⁷¹ Nor does the summary record convey the prevailing atmosphere of 'suspicion, prejudice and antipathy towards the mandatory and colonial powers' which saw 'South Africa in particular' bear 'the major brunt' of the criticism. Fraser's 'forthright attack on a fellow member of the Commonwealth induced other states of little political consequence ... to make entirely unwarranted charges against the good faith of the Union Government'.

South Africa was regarded 'even by our friends as endeavouring to evade, if not the letter, at least the spirit of our obligations under the Charter'. Pursuant thereto 'several delegations including notably New Zealand and India' contended that the Union was 'legally or morally obliged to place South West Africa under trusteeship'. What complicated matters was that Pretoria was unable to authorise the delegation 'to give an undertaking in regard to any form of consultation with the General Assembly'. The suspicion was therefore profound that South Africa 'meditated some form of unilateral action which was held to be contrary to the spirit both of the Charter and of the mandate'.²⁷²

²⁶⁹ GAOR, First Sess., First Part, Fourth Com., 3rd meeting, 22 January 1946, pp. 10-11.

²⁷⁰ BTS, 136/2/1, Vol. 1, Andrews/SEA, 21 March 1946, p. 2.

²⁷¹ BTS, 136/2/11, Vol. 3, Andrews/SEA, 4 January 1949, p. 4.

²⁷² BTS, 136/2, Vol. 1, Annexures, Heaton Nicholls/SEA, 7 March 1946, p. 8, paras. 4-6.

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If the countries Fraser and Evatt represented had once been ardent annexationists in respect of the territories they held under mandate - Western Samoa and New Guinea - at least in the persons of these two men they were strongly anti-annexationist in the 1940s as well as being enthusiastic about the idea of international supervision of mandated territories; indeed, to British horror, of all colonial territories.²⁷³ Fraser did not attend the May 1946 meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers, the first after the Attlee Labour government gained office in the United Kingdom. New Zealand was represented by the Deputy Prime Minister, Walter Nash. Smuts brought up the question of South West Africa, saying that he was going to raise the matter at the General Assembly in September. The non-European section of the population had been consulted and desired incorporation.

Evatt immediately advised him to 'tread very warily'. He 'felt certain that [the] proposal would meet with objection ... At San Francisco there had been very strong feeling against the annexation of Mandated Territories. He thought that that feeling would be found also in the Assembly'. He advocated presenting the Assembly with 'full factual information regarding the territory'. He suggested Smuts consider the idea of a trusteeship agreement with a clause that incorporation would take place if the territory's people made it clear in a vote or plebiscite that they wanted that. Hall, the new Colonial Secretary, foresaw 'many difficulties' in the event of 'a straight application for immediate incorporation'. Would it not be best to place South West Africa under trusteeship, including in the agreement 'a provision that after a period of, say, five years, the territory should be incorporated in the Union'.²⁷⁴ The sense of the meeting would not at all have been to Smuts's liking. He was obliged to go through the motions in New York but after the London meeting he would have been under no illusions about the possibility of success. He was not, as Millar says, gambling for United Nations approval.²⁷⁵ He would not have expected to receive it.

Slonim raises the question whether the South African government canvassed the views of other UN members before submitting the matter to the General Assembly.²⁷⁶ Under normal circumstances that would have been the commonsense approach. If, however, the government did not do so apart from airing the matter at

²⁷³ Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, p. 18. See also F. Eggleston, 'The United Nations Charter Critically Considered: The Trusteeship Provisions', *The Australian Outlook*, Vol. I, No. 1, March 1947, p. 44.

²⁷⁴ PMM (46), 17th meeting, 22 May 1946, pp. 3-6. The record of the meeting lists Sole as having been present.

²⁷⁵ Millar, *The Commonwealth and the United Nations*, p. 172.

²⁷⁶ Slonim, *South West Africa and the United Nations*, p.81, fn. 2.

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the Commonwealth meeting, it meant that it knew the answer. Later at the United Nations, even before the Fourth Committee considered the issue, Forsyth reported:

It is still too early to forecast developments, but it seems likely that, apart from British support, we shall stand virtually alone. The United States is not sympathetic and, according to press reports, the South American phalanx has decided to oppose us on the ground that we are seeking annexation in order to provide a native labour supply for the projected gold field development in the Free State.²⁷⁷

It may have seemed unfortunate from Smuts's point of view that the application for incorporation coincided with the Indian complaint about the treatment of South African Indians. But that was unlikely to have tilted the balance against him. Sentiment in the Assembly was in any case decidedly anti-colonial and in favour of all mandated territories being placed under trusteeship. India's complaint merely added a further dimension. Thus the British report on the proceedings of the second part of the first session held that the 'South African case suffered from the feeling aroused by the Indian complaint ... as well as the "anti-imperialist" sentiment of the Assembly, which was undoubtedly in favour of mandated territories being placed under trusteeship'.²⁷⁸ As *The Round Table* observed at the time, 'General Smuts's request [for incorporation] was rejected so decisively ... that rejection must have been inevitable'.²⁷⁹

Sole places much of the blame on Smuts personally, writing that his approach to the issue was 'doomed from the start'. That *inter alia* because he did not take the advice of 'so outstanding a statesman as Churchill', because 'he was so completely out of tune with the temper of the times', because 'he had little conception of the strength of anti-colonialist feeling', and because 'he persisted in thinking that the methods and procedures of the postwar settlement would be broadly similar to what he had personally experienced at the end of World War I'.²⁸⁰

Not all of this is true. Churchill may have been an outstanding statesman but not in the colonial field where he had the reputation of being a reactionary. Louis writes that his ideas 'often reflected the experience not only of the earlier period of the

²⁷⁷ BTS, 136/2/2, Vol. 1, Cypher OTP telegram, from Forsyth, 4 November 1946, p. 2, para. 5.

²⁷⁸ *United Nations. Proceedings of the General Assembly. Second Part of the First Sess. (with annexes)*, New York, 23rd October-16th December, 1946, London: HMSO 1947, p. 12, Annex G, para. 3.

²⁷⁹ *The Round Table*, No. 146, March 1947, p. 133.

²⁸⁰ Sole, *Reminiscences*, p. 119.

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First World War but also of the Victorian age, when he had spent his formative years in India, in the campaign in Africa against the Mahdi, and in the Boer War'.²⁸¹ There was also his famous remark that he had not 'become the King's First Minister in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire'.²⁸² Like Smuts, therefore, Churchill was a child of his times. He may have counselled annexation, but it is another matter how reflective such advice was of opinion in his own government let alone in the Dominions at large.

Smuts was not alone in thinking that the 'methods and procedures of the postwar settlement' would or could be similar to those at the end of the First World War. The Australians thought so too. Evatt's observations at the 1946 Commonwealth Prime Ministers' meeting on the disposal of the Italian colonies, in which Chifley concurred, contradict the common perception that they viewed all colonial matters through a UN prism. He said that if

the Council of Foreign Ministers²⁸³ did not reach a decision on the subject, the proper authority for doing so would not be the United Nations Organisation. It was unthinkable that a decision should be left to over 50 nations, the majority of whom had not been active belligerents. The twenty-one former belligerents who would be represented at the forthcoming Peace Conference should decide this matter.²⁸⁴

It was at the seventeenth meeting that Smuts raised the question of South West Africa. Where he differed from the Australians and the New Zealanders was that he saw all territorial problems falling within the purview of the Peace Conference, whereas for them mandates were a United Nations affair. In any event, so far as this writer is concerned, South Africa would have gained little more than a temporary respite if Smuts *had* annexed the territory during the war. The mass admission of African States to the United Nations in the 1960s would have seen to that. Even so, Fraser, Evatt and the Indians would probably have ensured that South Africa did not get away with it in the short term either.

²⁸¹ Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, p. 5.

²⁸² Speech at the Lord Mayor's Day Luncheon, London, 10 November 1942. *The Times* (London), 11 November 1942.

²⁸³ Comprising the UK, US, USSR, French and Chinese foreign ministers.

²⁸⁴ PMM (46), 6th meeting, 28 April 1946, p. 4. In any event, the question of the disposal of the Italian colonies found itself on the General Assembly's agenda.

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Why did Smuts not simply fall in with prevailing international opinion and conclude a trusteeship agreement? Much (South African) ink has been expended since 1945 on showing that the government was neither legally nor morally obliged to do so. Even in the 1990s Sole proceeds from the assumption that incorporation was the only acceptable solution. It is true that the trusteeship system was 'voluntary'. All that had happened was that machinery had been established at San Francisco which '*might* be used'.²⁸⁵ But the United Nations is a political organisation and in the context of trusteeship, the dictionary meaning of 'voluntary' was a dead letter practically from the start. In any case, Butterfield's view is not inapplicable: 'it is possible for us to have the law on our side while the ethics of the case are against us'.²⁸⁶

A South African domestic parallel is the supposedly voluntary nature of enlistment in the armed forces during the Second World War. The Smuts government did everything possible short of conscription to compel young white men to join the services, freezing recruitment for the Public Service and attempting to force all but select 'key men' already in employment to 'join up'. Reflecting the government line, the English-language churches applied great moral pressure to the young men of their congregations to do so.²⁸⁷

Was a trusteeship agreement ever a viable option? The key to the situation was the existence of a sizeable, vocal, not to mention self-governing *white* population in the Territory which markedly narrowed the South African government's options. Most commentators overlook the significance of this. Dale makes the point that South West Africa was the only (B or C) mandate which could be termed a 'white man's country' (in the sense that it was suitable for white settlement).²⁸⁸ Not only were many Germans allowed to remain after the war²⁸⁹ but settlement from South Africa was encouraged, probably in part to neutralise the German influence. At least during the first decade of

²⁸⁵ Gilchrist, 'Colonial questions at the San Francisco Conference', *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 5, October 1945, p. 988. Gilchrist had been Assistant Director of the Mandates Section in the League of Nations Secretariat. At the San Francisco Conference he was Executive Officer of Commission II.

²⁸⁶ H. Butterfield, *International Conflict in the Twentieth Century: A Christian View* (London, 1960), p. 31.

²⁸⁷ See Totiull, *The 1943 General Election*, pp. 294-95.

²⁸⁸ R. Dale, *The evolution of the South West African dispute before the United Nations, 1945-1950*, (Unpublished PhD thesis, Princeton University, 1962), p. 48. See fn. 3 for pre-war white population figures.

²⁸⁹ 7855 remained while 6374 or just under half were repatriated. G.-M. Cockram, *South West African Mandate* (Cape Town, 1976), p. 167.

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the mandate financial inducements were provided for the purpose.²⁹⁰ In 1924 most of the Germans in the territory were naturalised pursuant to the South West Africa Naturalisation of Aliens Act, No. 30 of 1924.²⁹¹ In 1928 over three-quarters of the so-called Angola Boers, some three hundred-and-fifty families or 1900 individuals were settled in the territory.²⁹²

By contrast, thereby fortuitously retaining its freedom of action when political circumstances and attitudes changed, Australia expropriated German properties in New Guinea in 1920, turning them over to Australian ex-servicemen (who mostly proved incapable of running them) and deported German nationals the following year.²⁹³

White settlement in South West Africa was permissible because Article 22(6) of the League of Nations Covenant as well as Article 2 of the mandate instrument authorised the administration of the territory as an integral portion of the territory of the mandatory state. Not only was it permissible but South Africa argued at the United Nations in 1946 and at the International Court of Justice in the 1960s, that it was necessary in order to develop the territory.²⁹⁴ That was also its response to charges that it administered the territory for the benefit of the whites.²⁹⁵ In 1921 the whites numbered 19 432, increasing to 30 677 in 1936. In 1940 the white population was estimated at 32 700. The non-white population was 208 307 in 1921 and estimated at 287 745 in 1936.²⁹⁶ Pursuant to the South West Africa Constitution Act, No. 42 of 1925,²⁹⁷ the white population was granted limited self-government similar to that enjoyed by a South African province.

²⁹⁰ *International Court of Justice, Pleadings, Oral Arguments, Documents, South West Africa Cases (Ethiopia v. South Africa; Liberia v. South Africa)*, Vol. II, 1966, pp 419-20, paras. 3-4. See also Cockram, *South West African Mandate*, pp. 92-94.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

²⁹² *Official Year Book of the Union of South Africa and of Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland*, No. 21-1940, p. 1094. Originally from the Transvaal, these farmers settled in Angola at various intervals commencing in 1974.

²⁹³ Cockram, *South West African Mandate*, p. 166; H. Duncan Hall, *Mandates, Dependencies and Trusteeship* (Washington, 1948), p. 145.

²⁹⁴ UN doc. A/123, 1946, para. 57 (*GAOR, Fourth Committee, Trusteeship, Part I, Summary Record of Meetings 1 November - 12 December 1946, Annex 13, pp. 199-235*); *South West Africa Cases*, Vol. II, 1966, pp 419-20, paras. 3-4; Slonim, *South West Africa and the United Nations*, p. 232.

²⁹⁵ Pienaar, *South Africa and International Relations*, p. 125.

²⁹⁶ *Official Year Book*, No. 21-1940, Tables (a) and (b), p. 1089.

²⁹⁷ *Statutes of the Union of South Africa 1925*, pp. 734-800. See also *Official Year Book*, No. 21-1940, pp. 1083-88.

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German voters at first outnumbered the others and German candidates were returned in seven of the twelve seats at the first elections to the Assembly in May 1926.²⁹⁸ Their advantage was only temporary and at the outbreak of the Second World War the Union element outnumbered the Germans by two to one.²⁹⁹ Within the Union element, Afrikaners outnumbered English-speakers by five to one.³⁰⁰ As a counter to pro-Nazi activity on the part of the Germans who were agitating for the territory's return to Germany, non-Germans in the white population pressed for incorporation at an early stage. The South West Africa Commission of 1935 (the Van Zyl Commission) concurred.³⁰¹ In May 1943 and May 1946 the Legislative Assembly passed resolutions requesting incorporation.³⁰²

In this way the hands of successive South African governments were tied. Even though the government could, as Australia did, dictate the terms,³⁰³ a trusteeship agreement was not considered a practical proposition. Carrying with it implications of a sell-out, an agreement would have meant domestic political disaster. Dale puts it mildly when he says 'South African policy towards South West Africa, if it were not to be repudiated by the white electorate, had to take into account the necessity for the maintenance of white supremacy in all areas under the jurisdiction of the South African Government'.³⁰⁴ Louis misses the point altogether: 'At any cost, Smuts wanted to avoid international measures that might interfere with the race laws of South Africa'.³⁰⁵ The point was that a perception whites in South West Africa, most of them Afrikaners, were to be handed over to the tender mercies of the United Nations would at that time have had most adverse consequences for the perpetrator in the context of South Africa's *domestic politics*.

By way of a contingency plan D.D. Forsyth circulated a draft trusteeship agreement prepared in his department to other departments and the South West Africa Administration early in 1946.³⁰⁶ Smuts could not afford to follow through on it. He

²⁹⁸ Cockram, *South West African Mandate*, p. 171.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 191.

³⁰⁰ Dale, *The evolution of the South West African dispute*, p. 173.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 221. See also 'The South-West Africa Commission', *The Round Table*, No. 104, September 1936, pp. 772-83.

³⁰³ Hudson, *Australia and the Colonial Question*, pp. 83-85 and 'Australia's Trusteeship Policy', *Australian Outlook*, Vol. 21, No. 1, April 1967, p. 14.

³⁰⁴ Dale, *The evolution of the South West African dispute*, pp. vi, vii.

³⁰⁵ Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, p. 518.

³⁰⁶ BTS, 91/8/1, Vol. 2, Forsyth/All Heads of Departments of State, 28 January 1946.

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was not expected to lose the 1948 general election, but negotiations with the UN over a trusteeship agreement would practically have guaranteed that. To that extent he can be awarded points for political nous. And even if an agreement had been negotiated it would not have been assured of an easy passage. That was Australia's experience.³⁰⁷

The Dumbarton Oaks proposals which in effect constituted a draft United Nations Charter were silent on two issues: voting in the Security Council (*ie.* the great power veto insisted upon by the Russians) and trusteeship. The question of Security Council voting was settled at the Yalta Conference later in 1944 on the basis of an American proposal while the trusteeship question was sorted out in San Francisco *inter alia* also on the basis of American proposals. The American contribution to the Dumbarton Oaks proposals and therefore to the charter was more comprehensive than that of the other participants because the Americans had researched the question of postwar organisation more thoroughly than the others. The proposals also lacked a preamble but that was of lesser significance.

As mentioned, Evatt can be held indirectly and unwittingly responsible for South Africa's difficulties at the United Nations because of his work at San Francisco to enlarge the scope and powers of the General Assembly. He described the effect of his intervention in San Francisco:

The original Dumbarton Oaks draft ... limited discussion by the Assembly to matters relating to the maintenance of peace and security. Largely as the result of Australian initiative at San Francisco, that draft was amended so that the powers of the Assembly now extend to all matters comprehended by the Charter itself, covering all its principles, all its initiatives, and all its organizations.³⁰⁸

Hudson believes that Evatt's achievement was twofold. In the first place he forced the great powers who had envisaged a General Assembly with 'carefully limited powers' to accept one with 'almost unlimited scope'. Then, on this issue, he 'emerged as the key player outside the great powers and finally as a winner against the great pow-

³⁰⁷ See Hudson, *Australia and the Colonial Question*, pp. 83-86; T.A Pyman, 'The Australian Role in the United Nations as a Trustee State for Papua New Guinea', *Australian Outlook*, Vol. 34, No. 3, December 1980, pp. 254-56.

³⁰⁸ CPD, 26 February 1947, p. 160. See also the delegation's report on the San Francisco Conference, *ie.*, *The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, United Nations Conference on International Organization, Report by the Australian Delegates*, No. 24 [Group E.]-F. 4311, pp. 19-21, paras. 80-90.

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ers'.³⁰⁹ This was no doubt one of the reasons why, at the end of the San Francisco Conference, the small powers expressed their gratitude to Evatt by a vote of thanks which the steering committee carried by acclamation.³¹⁰ Another reason was his (fruitless) efforts to water down the great power veto in the Security Council, which extended the conference's life by several weeks.

Smuts was dismissive of the small powers, telling the Senate before he left for London and San Francisco that the 'small countries may be troublesome. Small dogs often bark the loudest, but they cannot do much harm'.³¹¹ He was wrong there because it was precisely the small powers *en masse* who turned out to be the South African government's most determined and successful opponents at the United Nations.³¹² Where Evatt worked actively to expand the General Assembly's powers, the South Africans were more interested in the powers of the Security Council. It followed, Sole reported on the 1945 Commonwealth meeting, that 'we should not spend too much time endeavouring to define closely the powers and functions of the various other constituent bodies of the organisation'.³¹³

Nonetheless, the South African delegation supported the move to give 'the Assembly an extended and more worth while role in certain important respects than was envisaged in the Dumbarton Oaks proposals'. Leif Egeland reported after the conference:

The attitude of the Union Delegation throughout was to support extensions of the powers and scope of the Assembly as the 'Town Meeting' or forum of the world, the acceptance of which did not run counter to any provision of the Dumbarton Oaks proposals, which one or more of the sponsoring Great Powers might regard as fundamental.³¹⁴

³⁰⁹ Hudson, *Australia and the New World Order*, pp. 107-08. Chapter eight of the book (pp. 92-11) is devoted to this issue.

³¹⁰ *Report by the Australian Delegates*, No. 24 [Group E.]-F.4311, para. 53, p. 15.

³¹¹ *Sen Deb.*, 23 March 1945, Col. 554.

³¹² Watt holds that Evatt was guilty of a similar lack of foresight: 'in pressing for an increase in the powers of the General Assembly beyond those contained in the Dumbarton Oaks draft, his imagination did not lead him to foresee that the votes of Small Power *blocs* in the General Assembly might in due course be directed, not merely against Great Power policies, but also against the policies of smaller Powers like Australia - for instance, in regard to trust and non-self-governing territories.' *The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy*, p.105.

³¹³ BTS, 136/1, Vol. 3, Heaton Nicholls/Acting Prime Minister, 17 April 1945, Attachment, p. 3.

³¹⁴ BTS, 136/1, Vol. 14, Egeland/SEA, 24 September 1945.

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The way Australia and South Africa viewed the San Francisco Conference was conditioned by the personalities and experience of the leaders of their delegations. Natal Senator G.R. Richards argued in February 1946 that Smuts had been 'accompanied only by two civil servants of no responsibility and without any previous experience'.³¹⁵ Albeit exaggerated, his complaint was not unfounded. The three delegates consisted of Smuts himself; D.D. Forsyth, the politically inexperienced Secretary for External Affairs; and Leif Egeland, Minister in Stockholm, who replaced Dr S.F.N. Gie, Minister in Washington on the latter's untimely death days before the conference opened. Of the three, only Smuts signed the Charter.³¹⁶ Egeland wrote thirty years later:

In a way we were essentially a delegation of one, Forsyth having had difficulty in persuading Smuts to have any advisers or assistants at all. For Smuts was concerned less with the details of the proposed Charter and more with the overriding need to keep the Big Three sufficiently in agreement to ensure that some sort of charter could operate during the transitional and critical years ahead.³¹⁷

Then there were D.L. Smit, Member of the Native Affairs Commission and former Secretary for Native Affairs; L.E. Orkin, Industrial Registrar, Department of Labour; H.T. Andrews, Head of the South African Supply Mission, Washington, DC., J.R. Jordaan, Legation Secretary, South African Legation, Washington, DC., and R. Jones, Acting Accredited Representative, Ottawa. Somewhat Freudianly, Smuts referred to the 'staff', *ie.* those other than himself and Gie, as 'not very large but fairly efficient'.³¹⁸ Egeland in effect substituted for Sole because Heaton Nicholls, on whose staff Sole was in London, insisted that he could not do without his services.³¹⁹ The numbers if not the names had been the product of discussions in mid-March 1945 between the High Commissioner's office and Gladwyn Jebb of the Foreign Office.³²⁰

Apart from Smuts himself and perhaps Andrews, the South African delegation was hardly of the calibre of the Evatt side of the Australian delegation. (See below). In part that had to do with Smuts's conception of its role. Viewing the Dumbarton Oaks

³¹⁵ *Sen Deb.*, 20 March 1946, Col. 441.

³¹⁶ *UNCIO Docs.*, Vol. 15, p. 507.

³¹⁷ Egeland, *Bridges of Understanding*, pp. 168-69.

³¹⁸ *Sen Deb.*, 23 March 1945, Col. 556.

³¹⁹ Sole, *Reminiscences*, p. 87.

³²⁰ BTS, 136/1/3, Vol. 1, High Commissioner, London/SEA, No. 339, 13 March 1945. Handwritten comments by Forsyth and Smuts on the file copy of this cable refer to the positions of Sole and Fourie.

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proposals as it were through British eyes, he saw his own role and that of his delegation basically as extensions of the British delegation. As far as he was concerned, the proposals were 'a careful draft prepared by experienced officials', the 'work of a commission of skilled experts who had sat for a long time and had conducted searching discussions' and amendments should be confined 'to essentials or the process of discussion would be endless'.³²¹ If Evatt had believed that, the course of United Nations history would have been different.

It is not unreasonable to ask why Smuts went to San Francisco. His government was a 'one man show', the cabinet weak and running to him 'for their decisions'.³²² He could hardly absent himself at all, let alone for an extended period, without an adverse effect on the formulation and implementation of policy. He told his friend Margaret Gillett that 'only a sense of duty' took him away from South Africa at a time when he was 'badly wanted'. 'But I feel I should be there [in San Francisco], in case I could be needed as one of those who remember 1919. Issues may be raised where I could speak with some effect because of my past experience'.³²³ That was his rationalisation. But he contributed nothing to the furtherance of purely South African interests or, in fact, to the work of the conference as such. Besides, he was not needed. Against the background of the perceived failure of the League of Nations ('the League reeked with the odour of failure'),³²⁴ the presence of someone so closely associated with its birth was hardly a guarantee that his advice would be welcome. At least not to the Americans who were the prime movers behind both the Dumbarton Oaks proposals and the San Francisco Conference.

The situation was such that even a Smuts at the height of his powers would not have shown up to best advantage. Most of the preparatory work had already been done by others over a period of years. The British and American delegations teemed with experts in various aspects of international organisation and trusteeship.³²⁵ And the

³²¹ BCM (45), 5th meeting, 6 April 1945, p. 11. Ms Moira Smythe of the Australian Archives kindly supplied me with a photocopy of Evatt's copy of the 1945 minutes.

³²² Louis Esselen's complaint to the American Minister, Lincoln MacVeagh. USNA, RG 59, DS 848A.00/594, MacVeagh/Secretary of State, No. 137, 17 March 1943, p. 2 and No. 370, 9 November 1943, p. 2.

³²³ Van der Poel, ed., *Selections from the Smuts Papers*, Vol. VI, Smuts/M.C. Gillett, 4 March 1945, pp. 526-27.

³²⁴ H.G. Nicholas, *The United Nations as a Political Institution*, Fifth Ed. (Oxford, 1975), p. 2.

³²⁵ Not only that but it was disclosed recently that by intercepting diplomatic cable traffic, the Americans 'knew in advance the negotiating positions' of almost all the participants in the San Francisco Conference. That 'played a major role in enabling America to fashion the United Nations into the organization it wished'. S. Schlesinger, 'Cryptanalysis for Peacetime: Codebreaking and the

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honour bestowed on him of the Chairmanship of Commission II on the General Assembly was hollow because it was largely a ceremonial job. The action lay elsewhere in the committees and sub-committees.³²⁶

The Australian delegation was an odd one. There were in effect two delegations, each occupying a different floor of the Sir Francis Drake hotel, what Hasluck called 'a calf with two heads'.³²⁷ The calf's other head, in fact nominally the brain of the whole animal, having been designated so by Prime Minister John Curtin, was F.M. Forde, the Deputy Prime Minister who, for eight days after Curtin's death in early July 1945, was *de jure* Prime Minister of Australia.³²⁸ He later spent six years as Australia's High Commissioner to Canada, overlapping, as mentioned in Chapter Four, with the first South African High Commissioner there, Dr P.R. Viljoen, who became the first South African High Commissioner to Australia.

The nucleus of the Evatt team consisted of brilliant young officials who later made names for themselves in politics, diplomacy and academia. Paul Hasluck, entered federal politics in 1949, serving before the end of his public career twenty-five years later as Minister for Territories, Minister of Defence, Minister for External Affairs and Governor-General of Australia. J.W. Burton, Alan Watt and Keith Waller became permanent heads of the Department of External Affairs, Burton in 1947 at the age of thirty-two. Burton later sought to enter electoral politics before commencing in the 1960s a distinguished academic career in the United Kingdom and the United States. In retirement Watt wrote a pioneering study of Australia's foreign relations.³²⁹ Kenneth Bailey, a Professor of Law at Melbourne University, succeeded Sir George Knowles as Solicitor-General and Head of the Attorney-General's Department. Keith Waller was Secretary to the Delegation (in this case the whole delegation) in San Francisco. In the 1960s he served as Ambassador to the Soviet Union and to the United States and from 1970 to 1974 as head of the department.

Birth and Structure of the United Nations', *Cryptologia*, Vol. XIX, No. 3, July 1995, pp. 217, 219. See also W.H. Honan, 'War Decoding Helped U.S. To Shape U.N.', *The New York Times*, 23 April 1995.

³²⁶ See C. Eagleton, 'The Charter adopted at San Francisco', *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. XXXIX, 1945, p. 936.

³²⁷ Hasluck, *Diplomatic Witness*, title of chapter 19, pp. 188-206. Forde and Evatt, in that order, eventually signed both the Charter and the report on the San Francisco Conference, the latter as 'delegates'. *UNCIO Docs.*, Vol. 15, p. 490 and *Report by the Australian Delegates*, No. 24 [Group E.]-F.4311.

³²⁸ Hughes, *Australian Prime Ministers*, pp. 133-35.

³²⁹ *The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy 1938-1965*. Cambridge, 1968. See the Introduction above.

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The Australians were well-prepared, arriving in San Francisco with many amendments to the Dumbarton Oaks proposals which they and their New Zealand colleagues had previously thought out.³³⁰ Evatt proceeded to put his stamp on the conference immediately by successfully lobbying for Australia to be a member of the Executive Committee. According to Hasluck, 'this single act gave to us many opportunities, both at the conference and after to become one of the dozen or so nations that had a significant part in forming and shaping the United Nations'.³³¹ Even then somewhat unstable, a relative newcomer on the national political stage, in effect only the co-leader of the Australian delegation, the brilliant and thrusting Evatt viewed the proceedings from a perspective quite different to Smuts's, that of a politician on the make. As it happened, that was better suited to the occasion and to later events.

The contrast between the Australian and South African performances provides another example of the impact of personalities on international relations. Hasluck called Evatt a political opportunist who turned to foreign affairs to advance his career³³². He was, Hasluck said, 'first and last a successful politician'.³³³ If as a politician Evatt beheld a picture bigger than his own country's immediate interests, at San Francisco he was guided less by that than by what he thought it would take to make Australia and himself come out on top. In that way his driving ambition brought about an expansion of Australia's interests. Despite his decade on the High Court bench, he was a man for the times, adept at the political in-fighting and horse trading which has always characterised the United Nations as a political institution. Australia's election to the Executive Committees of the San Francisco Conference and the later Preparatory Commission, to the Security Council for 1946-47, not to mention his own election as President of the General Assembly for 1948, owed much to his 'pushiness'.

He may, as claimed recently, have been a 'miserably failed Labor leader'³³⁴ but that was as Leader of the Labor Party and of the Opposition in succession to Curtin and Chifley. As Minister of External Affairs he was what the situation called for in

³³⁰ For the New Zealand amendments see Department of External Affairs, Publication No. 10. *New Zealand and the San Francisco Conference: Amendments to the Dumbarton Oaks Proposals for the establishment of a General International Organisation advanced by the Prime Minister of New Zealand*. Wellington, 1945.

³³¹ P.M.C. Hasluck, 'Australia and the formation of the United Nations', *Royal Australian Historical Society, Journal and Proceedings*, Vol. XL, 1954, Part III, p. 167.

³³² Hasluck, *Diplomatic Witness*, p. 27.

³³³ See P.M.C. Hasluck, 'Australia and the formation of the United Nations', *Royal Australian Historical Society, Journal and Proceedings*, Vol. XL, 1954, Part III, p. 176.

³³⁴ Peter Ryan in *The Weekend Australian*, August 28-29 1993.

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1945. He 'achieved', as Alexander says, 'results which were at times spectacular'.³³⁵ Watt is not alone in his assessment that Evatt 'reached the peak of his international influence during the San Francisco Conference'.³³⁶ Like Hughes at Versailles twenty-five years previously, Evatt took active steps to ensure (or so he thought) that the world outside would not encroach on vital Australian interests and, again like Hughes, could not care whom he offended in the process. Accustomed to basking in the approbation of the British establishment, Smuts would not have dreamed of behaving like Evatt or Hughes.

Apart from the difference in personalities, it was perhaps a generational thing. Born in 1870, Smuts was ill-equipped him to deal with the world after 1945. In any case, most men of seventy-five are already ten to fifteen years into retirement.³³⁷ Born in 1894, Evatt was in 1945 only slightly older than Smuts had been at the time of the 1919 Paris Peace Conference. By 1945 Smuts was an anachronism whereas Evatt was well suited to the new UN environment.

A comparison of Evatt and Smuts as foreign ministers points to a further irony. Evatt, the High Court judge with limited political experience (after a decade on the bench he returned to politics only in 1940) turned out to be a master politician in San Francisco and later in New York. Smuts, with four decades experience of domestic and, intermittently, international politics behind him, behaved like a High Court judge. Even so Hasluck, that acute observer, probably would have been kinder to Smuts than he was to Evatt. He saw, as did Smuts, that 'the Dumbarton Oaks draft recognized the existence of power', basing 'its proposals for security on the unanimity of the possessors of power'.³³⁸ But the San Francisco Conference whittled away at that foundation, Australia being one of the principal whittlers. Evatt wanted a success for himself and Australia; Smuts wanted the United Nations to succeed.

³³⁵ F. Alexander, *Australia since Federation: A Narrative and Critical Analysis* (Melbourne, 1967), p. 280.

³³⁶ Watt, *Australian Diplomat*, p. 64.

³³⁷ E.G. Malherbe's words of consolation to Smuts after his 1948 electoral defeat at Standerton are apposite. Smuts bemoaned what he thought was the fact that his old comrades from the Boer War who were living in the area had turned against him. Malherbe replied that they could not have done so because, being much older than Smuts, most of them were already dead! *Never a Dull Moment*, pp. 281-82.

³³⁸ Hasluck, 'Australia and the formation of the United Nations', *Royal Australian Historical Society, Journal and Proceedings*, Vol. XL, 1954, Part III, p.178.

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Along with Cadogan, Smuts quite likely thought Evatt 'a frightful man', but his South Africa could have benefited more, at least in the short term, if he himself had been as successful as Evatt at the game of international politics UN-style. If South Africa had not been a target at the 1946 and 1947 UN General Assemblies, perhaps the United Party could even have won the 1948 general election with all that such a victory would have implied domestically and internationally.³³⁹

Not surprisingly in view of its scratch nature and its leader's conception of its role, the South African delegation maintained a relatively low profile in San Francisco. That is apparent from its proposed *modus operandi* cabled to Cape Town and Washington during the preliminary British Commonwealth meetings:

In our participation in the actual work of the Conference, in view of the limited number of our delegates and advisers, we must concentrate on those matters - (a) in which the Prime Minister is personally interested, (b) which intimately affect the policies of the Union.³⁴⁰

In her 1954 memoirs Virginia Gildersleeve, the Dean of Barnard College, New York, and one of eight US delegates to the San Francisco Conference, recalled her South African colleague on Committee II/3 (L.E. Orkin or D.L. Smit) dealing with international economic and social co-operation, saying that 'his instructions were never to speak and always to vote with the great powers'.³⁴¹ Smit's reservation in Committee II/4 on 11 May 1945 in respect of South West Africa³⁴² may, therefore, have been one of the few occasions when South African silence was broken except in a few committees, apart from Smuts's chairmanship of Commission II. Andrews also seems to have been active in Committee I/1, if mainly in respect of Smuts's preamble.

³³⁹ Under the headline 'South Africa's Colour Problem Is Acute', a 'Special Correspondent' in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 4 December 1946, obviously not a practical politician, completely misread the situation by predicting that the setback in New York would neither weaken Smuts's 'position as the leader of the United Party or that of the party itself in the eyes of the nation'. On the contrary, if they campaigned on a new deal for non-whites and told the people they were 'going to remove from them the stigma' of "'the most backward white nation in the world", the mass of the population would support them! In any case, the support of world opinion would be a 'powerful and persuasive cry'.

³⁴⁰ BTS 136/1, Vol. 3, Addressed Washington No. 37, repeated Cape Town No. 486, 9 April 1945. See also Heaton Nicholls/Acting Prime Minister, 17 April 1945, Attachment, pp. 2-3.

³⁴¹ V.C. Gildersleeve, *Many a good crusade* (New York, 1954), p. 340.

³⁴² See UNCIO Docs, Vol. X, p. 434. (Doc. 260 (ENGLISH), II/4/8, 12 May 1945, p. 2) and *International Court of Justice, Pleadings, Oral Arguments, Documents, South West Africa Cases (Ethiopia v. South Africa; Liberia v. South Africa)*, Vol. II, 1966, para. 31, pp. 33-35.

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Dumbarton Oaks and the Yalta voting formula represented for Smuts the maximum that could be achieved and he would defend the settlement they represented against all comers including his parliamentary opposition. That meant, however, that there was little of substance he could turn his hand to in San Francisco. He knew that before he left Cape Town and he accordingly cast about for an issue that would keep his name to the fore. He found it in the preamble which the Dumbarton Oaks proposals had lacked. It is not clear how long this had been engaging his attention. Egeland says he went to London with a draft preamble.³⁴³ In the debate on his vote at the 1945 parliamentary session he had referred to the need for the Charter to reflect the question of 'fundamental human rights'.³⁴⁴ Appendix III hereunder contains an account of the preamble's drafting history, the texts of the various drafts and, for comparative purposes, the preambles to the League of Nations Covenant and the United States Constitution which inspired aspects of the UN preamble.

Coming from the leader of the South African delegation, the idea of a declaration on human rights was a trifle far-fetched. *The Chicago Tribune* thought so, calling Smuts 'a curious figure'. Yet it agreed with him. The Charter should incorporate a declaration of human rights, 'even if to do so embarrasses the Russian dictatorship, not to mention the South Africans whose laws directed against the Negro offend every principle of right and morality'.³⁴⁵ Gladwyn Jebb, then a member of the British delegation in San Francisco, was amused that Smuts should be 'particularly concerned' with the preambular 'passage about promoting social progress and better standards of life "in larger freedom"',³⁴⁶ wording which appears only in the preamble as adopted and for which he was not directly responsible. Even more telling, though, is the wording for which he *was* responsible. He wanted the UN to declare its 'faith in basic human rights, in the sacredness, essential worth and integrity of the human personality', and express belief 'in the equal rights of individuals' and in the 'enlargement of freedom and the promotion of social progress and in raising the standards of life'.

³⁴³ Egeland, *Bridges of Understanding*, p. 167.

³⁴⁴ *HA Deb.*, Vol. 52, 22 March 1945, Cols. 3983-84.

³⁴⁵ *The Chicago Tribune*, 5 May 1945. Half a generation previously the American press had idolised Smuts. See Spooner, *United States policy toward South Africa*, pp. 98-99. On the occasion of his 1929 visit to the US one commentator wrote that from the 'remote and uncertain base of influence' represented by his membership of a nation numbering 'fewer white citizens than one-seventh of New York State', Smuts had 'stepped onto the stage of world events at their climax and influenced profoundly the destinies of mankind'. P.W. Wilson, 'Smuts, Son of Veldt, visits US', *The New York Times*, 29 December 1929, Section 9, p. 1.

³⁴⁶ *The Memoirs of Lord Gladwyn* (London, 1972), p. 163. Also, BCM (45), 5th meeting, 6 April 1945, pp. 11-12.

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Strange sentiments for a white South African segregationist³⁴⁷ whose entire career suggested a sublime disbelief in the proposition that all men were created equal. (See page 383 above.) As he revealed in New York in 1946, the rights Smuts contemplated were rudimentary - 'the right to exist, the right to freedom of conscience, and freedom of speech, and the right of free access to the courts'.³⁴⁸ Such as they were, they were overshadowed within two years by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 'the most widely recognized statement of the rights to which every person on our planet is entitled'.³⁴⁹ In retrospect one suspects that his motives had less to do with human rights than a desire to bask in the limelight. Observers saw him as 'a glamorous figure', an image he cultivated. (Why else did he wear uniform?) Virginia Gildersleeve remembered him 'still slender and straight in spite of his age, in his marshal's [sic] uniform with his decorations', urging the adoption of his preamble. With typical hyperbole he apparently described the occasion as 'the fulfilment of his dream and crowning achievement of his life'.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁷ See, for example, *HA Deb.*, Vol. 52, 22 March 1945, Col. 3985.

³⁴⁸ *GAOR*, First Sess., Second Part, Joint Committee of the First and Sixth Committee, 1st meeting, 21 November 1946, pp. 3-4.

³⁴⁹ R.N. Gardner, 'Eleanor Roosevelt's Legacy: Human Rights', *The New York Times*, 10 December 1988, the fortieth anniversary of the declaration's adoption. Gardner was Professor of International Law at Columbia University, New York.

³⁵⁰ Gildersleeve, *Many a good crusade*, p. 344.

CONCLUSION

Here ends this examination of Australian South African and Australian diplomatic relations between the mid-1940s and the early 1960s. In initiating the relationship the Australian government saw South Africa under Smuts as a normal Commonwealth country with which the establishment of diplomatic relations was natural and desirable at a time when Australia was rapidly expanding the number of its overseas missions. The tendency then and for some years was to regard South Africa as a vital link in Australia's communications with the United Kingdom. The Australians were accordingly also responsible for the airlink which first connected the two countries in 1952. Then flown by propeller-driven aircraft, the air route led to the expansion of Australian territory when the United Kingdom transferred to Australia sovereignty over the Cocos (Keeling) Islands in the Indian Ocean, eight hours flying time from Perth and an essential refuelling stop en route to Southern Africa.

The wider context of the Australian initiative was the sense of isolation which has always characterised that country's perception of its place in the world. As Miller puts it, 'distance has played a large part in determining Australia's attitudes to external relations'.¹ Andrew Fisher's view in 1910 that, thanks to its geographic position, South Africa held for Australians the keys of East and West, remained valid until the 1960s. South Africa lies beside the Cape Route, one of Australia's two sea routes to the United Kingdom. (The Suez Canal is the other). Brief stopovers at Durban or Cape Town brought many influential Australians on their way to and from the United Kingdom into contact with South Africa.

More than sixteen thousand Australians joined the British Forces in South Africa at the turn of the century, many settling there after the Anglo-Boer War. Blainey gives as 'a forgotten reason' for their enlistment the 'large colony of Australians' then living in the Transvaal who were 'deprived of the franchise and civic rights'.² By 1904 more than five thousand Australians were living on the Witwatersrand,³ several occupying leadership positions in the trade unions, later in the newly-established South

¹ J.D.B. Miller, 'Australia in the Commonwealth: a troubled adjustment to a changing Commonwealth', *The Round Table*, No. 240, November 1970, p.579.

² G. Blainey, 'The men before Anzac', *The Herald* (Melbourne), 25 April 1986.

³ B. Kennedy, *A Tale of Two Mining Cities: Johannesburg and Broken Hill 1885-1925* (Melbourne, 1984), p. 2.

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African Labour Party.⁴ Even before the war, by May 1896, around five thousand Australians were thought to be living on the Rand, attracted on the one hand by the lure of gold which had been discovered by the Australian George Harrison ten years before⁵ and propelled on the other by the prevailing recession in Australia. There were so many Australians on the Rand that 'all Australia was thrown into a state of anxiety' for their safety as a result of the 'appalling dynamite disaster in Johannesburg' on 19 February of that year.⁶

By contrast, Australia was not on the road to anywhere for South Africans and few ever visited it except for a specific purpose. There were but a handful of South African ministerial visits from the time of Union up to the 1960s, indeed up to the early 1990s. F.H.P. Creswell stood in for Hertzog at Canberra's inauguration as Australian federal capital on 9 May 1927 and at the opening of the Parliament Building. Creswell had Australian connections: his elder brother William was the founder of the Australian Navy.⁷ H.G. Lawrence attended the Commonwealth Conference on the Japanese Peace Settlement in Canberra in August 1947.⁸ S.P. le Roux represented the government at the Jubilee Celebrations in Canberra in 1951 later touring part of Australia by car. And P. Sauer and B.J. Schoeman went to Australia on inaugural flights in 1952 and 1957 respectively.

The Australian feeling of isolation quite likely also contributes to the greater interest in foreign policy questions evident among Australian scholars than among their South African counterparts. Likewise, if Australia is largely a closed book to South Africans, some Australians have written significant works on South African themes. Probably the best-known example is W.K. Hancock's two-volume biography of Smuts and the four volumes of Smuts's papers he edited with Dr Jean van der Poel besides the article and lecture spin-offs from his research. In 1965 Geoffrey Blainey published (or

⁴ See Kennedy, *op. cit.*, p. 22 and D. Tickin, *The Origins of the South African Labour Party 1888-1910* (Unpublished PhD. Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1973), pp. 15-21, 73-76 for information about Australians, or men with Australian backgrounds, active in South African labour politics.

⁵ E.L. & J. Gray, *A History of the Discovery of the Witwatersrand Goldfields* (Johannesburg, 1940), Preface.

⁶ *The Star* (Johannesburg), 6 May 1896, Australian Notes. The fact that *The Star* ran a regular series of Australian Notes, covering all the states and New Zealand, is suggestive of numbers. See *The Star* of 13 January, 4 February and 4 April 1896.

⁷ See their respective entries in *ADB*, Vol. 8, pp. 145-47 and *DSAB*, Vol. I pp. 187-89.

⁸ An account of the conference including the opening and closing addresses is given in *Current Notes*, Vol. 18, No. 7, August 1947, pp. 433-52.

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as Denoon puts it, 'intervened dramatically in South African historiography')⁹ the seminal article 'Lost Causes of the Jameson Raid' which argued that the Raid was mounted for economic and financial rather than political reasons.¹⁰

Ignorance of Australia among South African academics is surpassed only by public ignorance. A newspaper columnist wrote of a visit by an Australian trade delegation at the end of 1993: 'They went home at the tour's end amazed by our hostility and lack of knowledge about Australia. South Africans, they said, gave the impression that they blamed Australia single-handedly for sanctions. Nor could they believe how little South Africans knew about Australia.'¹¹

Perceptions of Australia's communications needs as well as sentiment therefore superseded John Curtin's commonsense view in 1941 that 'the expense involved' in establishing diplomatic relations with South Africa on a residential basis 'would not be justified by the work involved'. If that test were applied to diplomatic relations in general, there would be fewer world-wide and those that remained would be more cost effective. For nothing has happened to contradict Smuts's 1930 view of South African diplomatic representation that it was 'going to be a very expensive thing'. It was then and is now.

It is sobering to contemplate the small sizes of the British Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service on the eve of the First World War, a time when the United Kingdom was a Great Power. The diplomatic services maintained by the other Great Powers of the day were similarly sized. Steiner's view that changing international circumstances were responsible for the relatively gargantuan diplomatic establishments maintained today even by powers far from Great, is superficial and requires elaboration.

At least in developed countries the matter of their diplomatic representation is often drawn into the domestic political debate as are the standards diplomats are required to maintain while performing their duties abroad. These tend to be tied up with perceptions of the national prestige. Even so, while governments do not generally allow money to stand in the way of that, few can afford (or desire) to maintain their

⁹ Denoon, 'The isolation of Australian history', *Historical Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 87, October 1986, p. 266.

¹⁰ *Economic History Review*, second series, Vol. XVIII, 1965, pp. 350-66.

¹¹ Chris Gibbons in *The Star* (Johannesburg), 5 February 1994.

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diplomats in the baronial splendour of the past. Developing countries are especially less fortunately situated.

Those representing the newer and poorer ones may find themselves in the position of the Eritrean Chargé d'Affaires at the United Nations whose government contributes \$US 800 monthly towards his subsistence and who is 'diplomat, administrator, and secretary' to himself. A typical day sees him boarding 'the G [subway] train to his modest midtown [Manhattan] office, where his duties are multiple: debating disarmament or human rights as one of his country's representatives at the United Nations; or typing, filing and answering the phone'.¹² Some governments cannot afford even that.

Inheritors of the British civil service tradition, the Australian and South African Departments of External Affairs kept their diplomats on a relatively tight rein financially during the period under consideration. Viljoen probably suffered the most in that regard and Hamilton the least. The Australians would have been surprised to learn that meeting the 1956 South African rugby team on arrival in Sydney was not considered a worthy objective of official expenditure. Perhaps that was because the South African department was less conscious than the Australian one of the value of sport as an arm of diplomacy.

The composition of a country's foreign service is also affected by domestic political considerations. That applies as much to the ostensible democratisation of the British foreign service in the course of the present century as it does to the various mergers and fusions which produced the South African and Australian foreign services as they are today. The following recent broadside suggests that the British service may not have been sufficiently democratised:

An elite corps should not have been left to perpetuate itself, untouched and unchallenged by the anti-establishment social revolution of the Thatcher years. Above all, the Foreign Office's privileged position matters because it fosters illusion. Grand people who live in grand places at the grand expense of others will inevitably spend time thinking grand thoughts. Any coincidence between these and Britain's real interests will be largely accidental.¹³

¹² J. Sexton, 'For Many Who Serve, No Room for Pomp', *The New York Times*, 22 October 1995, p. 1.

¹³ 'Punched out', *The Economist*, Vol. 334, No. 7907, 25 March 1995, p. 48. (Bagehot). Refer also to Bruce Lockhart's view of the Foreign Office. Chapter One above, p. 51.

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Down the years the Australian and South African services, particularly the former, have been at pains to deny charges of elitism. They were more susceptible to charges of anti-feminism and, of course, racism, particularly in the case of South Africa from whose service non-whites were excluded altogether. Before, during and after the period 1945-61, the South African Public Service Commission and Department of External Affairs prohibited the appointment of female foreign service officers. Though their gender did not automatically disqualify Australian women from serving as diplomats, they were in practice recruited only during the term of the Labor government (1941-49). The Liberal Party-Country Party coalition discontinued the practice during its lengthy period of office (1949-72).

The current reconstruction of the South African Department of Foreign Affairs is designed to have it better reflect the composition of the country's population. Reconstructions or rationalisations of that nature are driven by the exigencies of domestic politics rather than by the needs of efficiency or of the international situation. That was the case with the department's absorption of the Department of Information in the late 1970s. In that sense the South African foreign service mirrors the country's domestic politics not to mention its social mores. The concern of the 1950s with 'mixed' dancing at diplomatic receptions and the suspicion with which the ideals of the Moral Re-Armament Movement were beheld have given way to other preoccupations. Similar changes of attitude no doubt occur in all foreign services which also reflect their societies at large.

Diplomats are required to deal with the political, economic and social elites in the countries where they are stationed and have to be acceptable to them. A candidate's acceptability has always featured prominently among the selection criteria applied by the Australian and South African departments. In nineteenth century European diplomatic services it was a *sine qua non* that a country's representatives should be drawn from the same social strata as the power-wielders with whom they were dealing. The German Kaiser would drop in on the British Ambassador in the course of his morning rides; Robert Menzies would call unannounced on Anthony Hamilton. To this writer's knowledge, no other South African representative has ever found himself in so felicitous a position professionally. If not responsible for it, the Hamilton/Menzies friendship quite likely confirmed Menzies in his liking for white South Africans.

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Unlike his predecessors, Hamilton enjoyed the advantage of living in a residence situated between the Prime Minister's Lodge and the Parliament building, within walking distance of both and probably not more than five minutes from the first-mentioned. The absence of a defined Embassy Row in South Africa as well as the larger size of Pretoria and Cape Town, made such 'cosiness' unknown to diplomats in South Africa. If not working against them, the nature of Pretoria and Cape Town was not especially advantageous to foreign diplomats.

Menzies unquestionably facilitated the work of South African High Commissioners in Canberra, an advantage not necessarily understood by the South African authorities. While the last word has yet to be pronounced on this - one awaits Volume Two of the Menzies biography - from the early days of his second Prime Ministership his actions showed Menzies to be sympathetic towards white South Africa. The particular context was keeping South Africa in the Commonwealth. His hand is evident in the arrangements for Boydell's controversial talks to Australian schools in 1959. Even during the furore generated in Australia by the Sharpeville shootings, Menzies held that the matter was a domestic one for South Africa. He was assailed for that domestically and internationally. Some of his Cabinet colleagues and especially some of his diplomats, were harder headed and more realistic. Menzies conceivably held the Australian government back from adopting a less pro-South African posture after South Africa left the Commonwealth than was actually the case.

That was to occur when the Whitlam Labor government (1972-75) took office. From that day until recently Australian/South African bilateral relations were in a state of decline. On the other hand, even the frosty political relationship from the mid-1970s to the mid-1990s which was conducted at the highest diplomatic level, that of Ambassador, was preferable from the South African government's point of view to no relationship at all.

Researchers into diplomatic activity in early postwar Canberra are helped by the 'one-horse', 'company town' nature of the city in those days. With truth did the first home-based woman clerk attached to the South African High Commission, Miss J.M. Richards, observe of 1951 Canberra:

[It] is ... very little more than a village, and if one has to stay here without a break for any length of time life becomes tedious. If one can afford to spend an occasional weekend in Sydney or Melbourne one's attitude towards life in Canberra is certainly a hap-

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pier one. The shops here are quite inadequate, and for this reason as well it is necessary to visit the cities once or twice a year.¹⁴

Canberra's sole newspaper, *The Canberra Times*, then owned and edited by the Shakespeare family,¹⁵ took an interest in diplomats and its 'Canberra Diary' column is an excellent guide to what they were doing. From it we learn, for example, that Gert Nel made his residence available to the Australian Institute of International Affairs for a reception it gave Julian Huxley in 1953.¹⁶ The following year the diary reported that Heather Menzies, the Prime Minister's daughter, gave a farewell party at The Lodge for Rae Killen and his wife and one or two others on the occasion of their departure from Canberra.¹⁷

The newspaper's sports columns tell us that Killen turned out regularly for the University 'B' Hockey team; that Nel and Killen were members of the Wanderers Cricket team, which was composed of diplomats; that Nel improved his standing as a golfer at the Royal Canberra Golf Club from B grade to A grade; and that Colin Roberts was a high-scoring shot at the Canberra Rifle Club besides being on its committee and chairing its social club.¹⁸ Olivier was once accorded the headline 'Olivier To Lead A.C.T. In Country Week'¹⁹ and in April 1958 Rhodie was a 'danger man' to the cadets of the Royal Military College: 'Last week he cut the Forestry School defence to pieces and made repeated openings for the rest of the backs'.²⁰

Pretoria and Cape Town were not 'one horse towns' with a single newspaper dependent on the activities of diplomats to fill its social columns. It is therefore impossible to build a profile of Australian diplomats in South Africa equivalent to that of the South Africans in Canberra. Indicating the nature of the city, most Canberra housing including diplomatic housing was in the gift of the federal government. Even heads of missions were housed by the Department of the Interior unless and until their own governments built them residences. That was not the case in Cape Town or Pretoria and diplomats were not thrown into each other's company there to the same degree as in Canberra. By 1960, however, Canberra's sense of diplomatic intimacy was receding.

¹⁴ BTS, S4/5/45, Vol. 2, Miss Richards/Viljoen, 15 May 1951.

¹⁵ *The Canberra Times*, 12 March 1963. ('City Foundation Was The Times' Genesis').

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 18 November 1953.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 24 February 1954.

¹⁸ He seems to have given his dislike of the social side of the job as a reason for his decision to resign from the South African Department of External Affairs.

¹⁹ 15 April 1957.

²⁰ 24 April 1958.

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In October of that year *The Canberra Times* estimated that the city had 'a diplomatic population of between 800 and 1,000, representing 27 countries'.²¹

The period covered by this thesis was in some ways rather more innocent and unsophisticated than the present one. Even at the height of the furore in Australia over the Sharpeville shootings, individual diplomats were not the targets they became later. Their names, addresses and telephone numbers appeared in the diplomatic list. (That was not South African practice.) Not only that, but when Colin Roberts arrived in 1954 *The Canberra Times* reported his future home address - 21 Favenc Circle, Griffith.²² It had been Killen's before him as well as Nel's until he moved into the official residence.

P.R. Viljoen, Eschel Rhoodie and Anthony Hamilton were alone among South Africans in Canberra to make their mark outside the narrow confines of the South African Department of External Affairs.²³ However, the ranks of the Australian diplomats in South Africa during the period contained names who were, or were to become, famous in Australian administrative, diplomatic and even political history. The first High Commissioner, Sir George Knowles, was a longtime Solicitor-General and head of the Attorney-General's department. The second, Alfred Stirling, was at the time of his appointment one of the most senior External Affairs officials. And the third, Lt Col W.R. Hodgson, officially headed the Australian department for ten years, effectively serving in that capacity for nine.

Apart from them, J.P. Quinn was at the time considered a most promising young officer. K.T. Kelly had interesting extra-departmental connections and departed this life accompanied as it were by a blaze of glory. J.C.G. Kevin was the first Australian diplomatic officer to head the department's administrative branch. Had it not been for his death at the early age of fifty-eight in 1968 he could conceivably have progressed higher in the department. One Australia's few women diplomats of the day, Elizabeth Ann Warren, commenced her brief overseas career in South Africa, being

²¹ 4 October 1960.

²² *The Canberra Times*, 28 July 1954. Commonwealth of Australia. Department of External Affairs. *Diplomatic Representatives in Australia*, June 1951, p. 15; September 1953, p. 22; and January, 1955, p. 21. The Russian defector Petrov lived at 7 Lockyer Street, Griffith. *Ibid.*, September, 1953, p. 23.

²³ Although he rose to head it, Rae Killen was hardly known outside it. On one occasion during his term even a government-supporting newspaper misspelled both his Christian name and surname, calling him Ray Kilian!

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replaced by R.A. Woolcott. He in turn ended a distinguished foreign service career in 1992 with three-and-a-half years as permanent head of the department.

The Australian government initially overestimated the importance of its relations with South Africa. From their side the South Africans were insufficiently interested to engage immediately in an exchange of High Commissioners, to Australia's embarrassment. By the time the South African government came to appreciate the connection's value, South Africa had become controversial internationally and an embarrassment to its Western interlocutors. At the United Nations the latter found themselves having to balance the voting support they rendered South Africa and the criticism this drew from Afro-Asian countries with the need for South Africa's vote in Cold War confrontations.

That was a time when the United States and its Western and Latin American supporters enjoyed a numerical majority over the Communist bloc and its Afro-Asian supporters. The UN was then an instrument of United States foreign policy. It had ceased to be so by the early 1960s with the large influx of African members. The writing was, however, on the wall after the so-called 1955 compromise which changed the organisation's character from one of like-minded states to one exemplifying the principle of universality. The 1955 Bandung Conference of Non-aligned States had pressed for United Nations universality and may therefore have played a part in bringing about the change of attitude.

The South African government's basic problem at the United Nations was that it was out of step from the beginning, with the numbers against it in an organisation whose proceedings are characterised by their pseudo-parliamentary nature. (In the General Assembly majority votes determine which issues succeed and which do not.) The British and the Australians were the most supportive of the South African position among the old (white) Commonwealth. However, after a decade and a half they concluded that they should save their own positions whereupon they distanced themselves from South Africa. What led to their change of policy was the UN's changing composition and their own potential marginalisation rather than the human rights aspects highlighted by Sharpeville.

Whether or not the South African delegation played a role in securing the inclusion in the UN Charter of Article 2(7) which ostensibly prohibited the organisa-

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tion from intervening matters within a member state's domestic jurisdiction - and it was argued that its role was minimal - South Africa claimed the protection of the article more than any other country in United Nations history. The Australian delegation's contribution to the wording of the article was made necessary by its work to broaden the scope and powers of the General Assembly. The South African case on the domestic jurisdiction principle, which was initially supported and encouraged by its Western interlocutors, was that the state invoking it had the exclusive right to decide what matters fell within its domestic jurisdiction. UN practice contradicted that assumption from the beginning. For most of the 1950s the Australian position on Article 2(7) coincided with the South African one.

Their contemporary reporting from the United Nations shows that while the Australians considered themselves obliged to surrender to the pressure of numbers, they remained sceptical about the pretensions of South Africa's opponents. Plimsoll's report on the debate in the General Assembly leading to the adoption of resolution 1514(XV) on the 'Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples' is an example. He dismissed Ghanaian assertions of having brought 'the ancient wisdom of Africa' to UN counsels: 'the truth is of course that the ancient wisdom of Africa consists of cannibalism and witchcraft'. However, it was not

politic for representatives of the colonial powers to prick these balloons ... and the myths are being allowed to develop. Indeed the flattery being accorded to African delegations on all sides may be giving them a wrong impression of their importance and an unjustified complacency about their own standards.²⁴

At the commencement of the diplomatic relationship and for some years, Australian representatives in South Africa conceived of it as their job to develop favourable white South African perceptions of Australia. In 1952 J.P Quinn commented with satisfaction that South African Cabinet interest in Australia had been 'quickened' as a result of S.P. le Roux's attendance of the Jubilee celebrations the previous year.²⁵ Paul Sauer's visit as Qantas's guest in September 1952, especially his perception that here was another bastion of white civilisation, would have quickened it further. There followed Menzies's six day visit to South Africa in July 1953. Apart from only two

²⁴ AA, A4231/2, UN, New York, 1961, Despatch 1/61, Plimsoll/Menzies, 24 February 1961, paras. 2-3.

²⁵ AA, A1838/2, 716/50/1/7, Pt. 2, No. 5/52, Quinn/Casey, 25 April 1952. The original is on A4231/2, South Africa 1952.

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'discordant notes'²⁶ Hodgson called the visit 'an outstanding success' in 'every possible way'. It was 'a very good thing for the morale and spirit of South Africa that Mr. Menzies was able to make even such a flying trip'. Menzies's speeches were much admired, attracting the 'most glowing testimonials from all shades of political opinion'.²⁷

The objective of stimulating South African government interest in Australia diminished in importance as South Africa became more controversial internationally. Four years after Menzies's visit the prospect of B.J. Schoeman visiting Australia on the occasion of an inaugural flight was a matter of concern to Gilchrist, the Acting High Commissioner. He was also disturbed by Hodgson's proposal at the time of his retirement that Prime Minister Strijdom should visit Australia. For Gilchrist both proposals were unacceptable in the context of the coming 1958 South African general election because he thought they could influence voter opinion in favour of the government. Apart from his own inclinations, he was not unlikely reinforced in his attitudes by the views of his contacts in opposition circles.

A later parallel was the instruction the British High Commissioner, Sir John Maud, issued to his officials early in his term. He told them to desist from letting it be known that whether or not South Africa became a republic was a matter of purely South African concern. That horrified the opposition and was seen as sabotage of their efforts to keep South Africa a monarchy.

One of the objects of this study was to give South Africans an historian's perspective on what real foreign service officers or diplomats did in a given historical context and thereby, by analogy, what diplomats do in general. The object was to dispel the impression fostered by political scientists, perhaps because of the nature of their discipline and of their sources, of the diplomat as a cog in a well-oiled machine turning out considered and well-rounded policies in pursuit of a defined national interest. The study may have succeeded in that. Where it may not have succeeded, though, is in dispelling notions of diplomacy as a glamorous profession whose members engage in 'social pursuits of doubtful value'. Even so, the aforementioned Eritrean

²⁶ Malan's reference to India and Havenga's reference to the United States and the gold price when he proposed a toast at a dinner Hodgson hosted for Menzies. Hodgson seemed to regard the second incident as more important than the first.

²⁷ AA, A1838/2, 201/10/11/1, Hodgson/Minister for External Affairs, 4 August 1953, paras. 6, 8.

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in New York with his multiple duties and low income may be more representative of the average modern diplomat than is generally thought.

If for Western diplomats the rationale of the diplomatic cocktail party or reception is to serve as a clearing house for information, many of the invited (and uninvited) guests are probably unaware of that. They would see their presence, and probably rightly, as testimony to their standing in the community. For diplomatic parties are not confined to diplomats. Outside of parties given by delegations at the United Nations, most of the guests will probably be non-diplomats, particularly nationals of the host country. What should not be discounted is the 'expectation factor' - diplomats entertain because it is expected of them. Walter Crocker abolished National Day receptions. His successors restored them quite likely because they lacked the strength of will to resist local expectations. On the other hand, at least some developing country diplomats lead lives of 'unpretentious ordinariness', not giving parties at all.²⁸

The cocktail party or reception provides Western critics of the diplomatic lifestyle with a symbol too convenient to discard. The debate in the United Kingdom in 1995 about containing Foreign and Commonwealth Office expenditure attracted headlines such as 'Diplomats on last round of cocktails?',²⁹ 'Embassies to lose luxurious lifestyle'³⁰ and 'Pass along the lemonade, Jeeves'.³¹ Even *The Pretoria News* gleefully announced the speedy end of the 'caviar-and-champagne lifestyle of British diplomats abroad', what it also called 'high living at the taxpayers' expense'.³² South African diplomacy has drawn such recent headlines as 'SA party animals flourish in Paris embassy'³³ and 'Let's have no more lizards lounging on cocktail circuit'.³⁴ Similar headlines are likely to catch the eye in developed countries for as long as diplomacy lasts. Richard Casey tried unsuccessfully to dispose of the cocktail party forty years ago; Richard Woolcott attempted the same in 1988 at his first press conference as Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Trade,³⁵ to similar lack of effect.

²⁸ Sexton, 'For Many Who Serve, No Room for Pomp', *The New York Times*, 22 October 1995, p. 12.

²⁹ *The Herald* (Glasgow), 3 July 1995.

³⁰ *The Sunday Times* (London), 26 March 1995.

³¹ *The Star* (Johannesburg), 27 March 1995.

³² *The Pretoria News*, 27 March 1995.

³³ *Business Day* (Johannesburg), 14 March 1995.

³⁴ 'Business Report', *The Star/Pretoria News*, 23 May 1995.

³⁵ R.A. Woolcott, 'Press Conference by the New Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Mr Richard Woolcott, Canberra, 6 September 1988', *World Review* (Australia), Vol. 27, No. 4, December 1988, p. 37.

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Political developments open up career opportunities for officials. The impact on the careers of individual Information Officers of the merger between the Departments of Information and Foreign Affairs in the late 1970s was touched on in Chapter Five. United Nations consideration of the South African issue provided upwardly mobile South African officials such as G.P. Jooste, D.B. Sole B.G. Fourie, J.S.F. Botha and R.F. Botha with excellent career opportunities. All five made their names at General Assembly sessions or, if not there, in Pretoria as in R.F. Botha's case; or both in New York and Pretoria in connection with UN work. The South West Africa question was central to the rise of Jooste, Sole, Fourie and R.F. Botha. J.S.F. Botha took charge of the Permanent Mission during the two year period of token representation between 1956 and 1958. The careers of these officials also testify to the relevance to diplomacy of A.J.P. Taylor's 'dictum' about patrons, not so much in the sense that 'when you lose your patron you are done for',³⁶ but that patrons are indispensable for advancement in the first place.

On the Australian side, J. Plimsoll would have consolidated the reputation he had already made for himself in Canberra, during his term as Permanent Representative to the United Nations. Menzies commended his handling of the 1961 proposal to strike Eric Louw's general debate statement from the record followed by the motion of censure: 'Mr Plimsoll, greatly to his credit, went to the rostrum and spoke against this proposal. ... I was proud of him. I thought it was an admirable attitude and an admirable speech on his part, particularly as he had had no opportunity to consult with us at all. ... I want to say deliberately that in both of those matters Mr Plimsoll represented this country with great dignity and immense common sense'.³⁷ Four years later Plimsoll was Secretary for External Affairs, a post he held for five years before resuming his Ambassadorial career abroad. He became Governor of Tasmania after his retirement as an official.

The South African issue also boosted careers in the UN Secretariat. One who benefited was an Indian national, Enuga Sreenivasulu Reddy. A graduate in mathematics from the University of Madras in 1943, Reddy joined the Secretariat in May 1949 after graduating from New York University the previous year with an MA in international relations. Twenty-two of his thirty-six years as a Secretariat official were spent servicing the South African liberation struggle.³⁸ In 1963 he entered on the

³⁶ See Chapter One above, p. 78.

³⁷ BTS, 136/2/29, Vol. 3, Woodward/Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 19 October 1961.

³⁸ Reddy CV.

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ground floor of what came to be known to the target government's officials as the anti-apartheid industry when the General Assembly set up a 'Special committee on the policies of *apartheid* of the Government of the Republic of South Africa'.³⁹

Reddy hints of the extent of his role in his Introduction to *Anti-Apartheid Movement and the United Nations*.⁴⁰ If it is accepted that the United Nations as an organisation made a contribution to the demise of apartheid, then Reddy was quite likely *the* Secretariat official whose personal contribution was of more than passing significance. Future historians would do well to examine it. He once told this writer that he had a hand in drafting most resolutions adopted at international gatherings on the subject of apartheid. Not only meetings of United Nations bodies but also of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).⁴¹

This scrutiny of a handful of South African and Australian diplomats within a given historical context has not contradicted the writer's impression that a top British Ambassador at the height of his powers outclasses most others.⁴² Certainly he has seen nothing among the archival records of the Australian and South African Departments of External Affairs to rival the quality of Sir Nicholas Henderson's 'valedictory despatch' from Paris on the occasion of his retirement from the British foreign service in March 1979.⁴³ This addressed the theme of Britain's decline in the world. Among its virtues is that it is relatively easily accessible. Sent to the then Secretary of State, the Labour Party's David Owen, it was published a month later by *The Economist*⁴⁴ where, it has been said, Mrs Thatcher read it.

³⁹ Resolution 1761 (XVII), 6 November 1962, operative paragraph 5. Resolution 3324 D (XXIX), 16 December 1974, operative paragraph 11, renamed it the Special Committee *against* Apartheid.

⁴⁰ E.S. Reddy, ed., *Anti-Apartheid Movement and the United Nations: Statements, papers and letters of Abdul S. Minty, honorary secretary of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement and director of the World Campaign against Military and Nuclear Collaboration with South Africa*, New Delhi, 1994, pp. vii-xviii. In 1995 Minty was appointed Deputy Director-General (Multilateral) in the South African Department of Foreign Affairs.

⁴¹ In May 1995 the University of Durban-Westville awarded Reddy an honorary doctorate. See the *Sunday Tribune* (Durban), 28 May 1995. (E. Naidu, 'Still fighting on'.)

⁴² Perhaps by virtue of the calibre of the people selected.

⁴³ I am indebted to Sir Brian Barber, formerly United Kingdom High Commissioner to Australia, for drawing my attention to this despatch and for sending me a copy. According to Sir Brian (e-mail message, 22 September 1995) valedictory despatches are usually 'a retrospective look at the country which the author is just about to leave, and its relations with Britain, how British interests have fared under his or her stewardship, and so on. It's comparatively rare to write in the sort of terms that Nicko Henderson did about "Britain's place in the sun".'

⁴⁴ 'Sir Nicholas Henderson's valedictory despatch', *The Economist*, 2 June 1979, pp. 29-30, 33-34, 38-40.

Conclusion

She is said to have been impressed and, on the strength of it, recalled Henderson from retirement after her victory in the 1979 British general election, appointing him Ambassador to the United States. Whether or not this is a true account of the circumstances of his appointment, there is no denying that from the United Kingdom's point of view Henderson was the right man in the right place when Argentina invaded the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) less than two years later. His recently published diaries⁴⁵ should be recommended reading for all new Ambassadors irrespective of country. No matter if he was atypical of British diplomats as a whole. The standards he set are worthy of emulation by all. Of particular relevance in the present context was his use of the media as an arm of his diplomacy.

The present comparison between the Australian and South African Departments of External Affairs within the same time-frame has given perspective to both. There were similarities as well as differences, not least in respect of the two countries' approach to diplomatic service. These reflected attitudes in their wider societies. The South African department was established in 1927; the Australian department to all intents and purposes in 1935. Australia opened its first overseas missions in 1940, eleven years after the first South African missions. Paradoxically, however, the development of the South African department lagged behind that of the Australian department.

The Prime Minister's dual position between June 1927 and January 1955 as Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs was responsible for that. The Australian department operated independently of the Prime Minister under its own minister from 1935. To all intents and purposes the early postwar period marked the real beginnings of Australian diplomacy as well as a bend in the road for South African diplomacy as South African diplomats found themselves in the unexpected position of encountering the wind from the front. While Australian diplomacy went from strength to strength, South African diplomacy declined.

Smuts, the international visionary, had a braking effect both on the development of the South African department and on the conduct of the Union's foreign relations in the critical early post-war period which saw the creation of the United Nations. The department came more into its own under Malan before achieving a measure of fulfilment under Eric Louw (in the sense of living a less hand-to-mouth existence). The

⁴⁵ N. Henderson, *Mandarin: The Diaries of an Ambassador, 1969-1982*. London, 1994.

Conclusion

Smuts government's relations with the United Nations set the pattern for those of its successor: by the time the National Party took office in 1948 relations were set in concrete and nothing short of a radical reversal of domestic policy would have enabled South Africa to harmonise its relations with the organisation.

However irascible and abrasive in his dealings with foreigners, Louw was a good departmental minister, a fighter for his department in cabinet and loyal to its personnel.⁴⁶ Having been the country's first head of mission abroad in the 1920s, he was a founder of the South African foreign service and he always took an interest in its development. As shown by his instructions to the 1956 inspection mission,⁴⁷ he was knowledgeable in administrative matters. For the Australian department, however, Evatt, who was Minister of External Affairs from 1941 to 1949, was not an unmixed blessing. For one thing he was also Attorney-General (Minister of Justice), a portfolio to which some people felt he accorded priority even while he was serving as President of the United Nations General Assembly.⁴⁸ Then, his personality, working methods and style caused unhappiness to most External Affairs officers who came into contact with him.

The *modus operandi* of the Australian department as well as the practical effects of its personnel policy were to some extent superior to those of the South African department. Even if it were not a conscious policy at the time, the number and variety of postings most of its officials enjoyed pointed to a measure of career planning. The South Africans operated on a more *ad hoc* basis. South African officials of the day could well have been glad to have the opportunities open to, say, O.L. Davis and R.A. Woolcott who served in many more posts (of shorter duration) than they did. By the time Nel left Australia he had been in Canberra longer than any other diplomat except the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps⁴⁹ (a position which almost automatically accrues to the longest serving head of mission). Perhaps because of the Labor tradition, the Australians took a greater interest in their junior personnel. In any case, they

⁴⁶ The *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg) headline (3 June 1973) 'Louw did not flinch, even from Verwoerd', was well-chosen.

⁴⁷ BTS, S4/5/2, Vol. 18, 'Proposed inspection of the Union's foreign missions by the Chief Public Service Inspector, Mr J.P.B. van Veen and Mr W.G.W. Parminter, formerly Minister for the Union in Paris'.

⁴⁸ See, for example, Edwards, *Australia through American eyes*, p. 95.

⁴⁹ *The Canberra Times*, 15 December 1954. ('Canberra Diary').

Conclusion

displayed some humanity in dealing with them. The practice of notifying the next of kin of officials and wives of their safe arrival at a post was a nice touch.⁵⁰

In at least two respects the new South African department could usefully emulate the Australian one. Firstly, it could establish its own regular publication or journal akin to *Current Notes on International Affairs* or the *Australian Foreign Affairs Record* in which authoritative articles by members of the department and outside experts could be published as well as the texts of ministerial statements, reports on conferences etc. Down the years the above journals, especially the first-mentioned, which was of high quality, have enhanced the Australian department's status in the eyes of its interlocutors including Members of the Commonwealth Parliament for whom it was originally intended to provide a service.⁵¹ In its early years *Current Notes* provided the department with a sense of coherence and helped it prove its worth. In fact, it proved of inestimable value to the department in its formative years. It has been claimed that *Current Notes* 'did much to establish an informed public opinion'⁵² in respect of Australia's foreign relations. The new South African department needs a vehicle similarly to imprint itself positively upon the consciousness of a critical media, parliament and public.

Secondly, the department could create an historical documents unit. This could also consist of two wings: a Documents Section and an Information Section. The first would prepare selections of documents relating to South Africa's foreign relations for publication. The second section could play the role of Millar's 'proper research organisation to provide regular, up-to-the-minute as well as background analyses',⁵³ thereby addressing the traditional problem of a lack of continuity. The recent establishment of such an organisation within the Australian Historical Documents Branch presumably satisfies the need Millar identified in respect of the Australian department as far back as 1968.

Some may argue that the new South Africa has no need of information about the foreign relations of the old. After all, that was 'bad' history. The writer believes, however, that there is no such thing as 'good' history or 'bad' history; only history that

⁵⁰ See the examples relating to Nicholson and Wallis on AA, A1838/T171, 1252/4/53 and 1252/16/11.

⁵¹ Heydon, *Quiet Decision*, p. 126.

⁵² Edwards, *Prime Ministers and Diplomats*, p. 105.

⁵³ Millar, *Australia's Foreign Policy*, pp. 16-17.

Conclusion

is well-written or badly-written. There are lessons to be learned from the *ancien régime's* foreign relations if only in the sense, in some respects, of how not to go about things. The new department should help lift the veil on the country's foreign relations from their beginnings. That would be in keeping with the government's announced policy of openness and transparency. In any case, as Pienaar observed of the research for her study of South Africa and the League of Nations,⁵⁴ and whether a matter of rejoicing or regret, the records are unlikely to contain any 'smoking guns'. The present writer found none during the course of his archival work on both sides of the Indian Ocean.

⁵⁴ Pienaar, *South Africa and International Relations*, Preface.

APPENDIX I

THE STAFF OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONS

AUSTRALIANS (1946-1962)

Heads of Mission

Sir George Shaw Knowles 2/9/1946¹ - 23/11/1947 (Deceased) High Commissioner
A.T. Stirling 7/8/1948 - 15/5/1950 High Commissioner
Lt Col W.R. Hodgson 23/7/1952 - 3/7/1957 High Commissioner
O.L. Davis 30/4/1959 - 15/6/1962 High Commissioner/Ambassador
J.C.G. Kevin 21/9/1962 - 13/2/1968 Ambassador (Deceased)

Acting Heads of Mission

M.H. Marshall 23/11/1947 - 7/8/1948; 17/5/1950 - 23/4/1951 Acting High Commissioner
J.P. Quinn 23/4/1951 - 13/5/1952 Acting High Commissioner
K.T. Kelly 2/4/1952 - 5/8/1952 Acting High Commissioner
H. Gilchrist 4/7/1957 - 12/1/1959 Acting High Commissioner
L.E. Phillips 21/1/1959-29/4/1959 Acting High Commissioner
N. St. C. Deschamps 1/11/1960 - 22/12/1960 Acting High Commissioner²
J.H. Brook 16/6/1962 - 20/9/1962 Chargé d'Affaires

No. 2s

O.C.W. Fuhrman 15/8/1946 - 1/11/1946 Official Secretary
M.H. Marshall 1/11/1946 - 23/4/1951 Official Secretary
K.T. Kelly 2/4/1952 - 26/5/1955 First Secretary
H. Gilchrist 22/5/1955 - 3/7/1957 First Secretary
L.E. Phillips First Secretary 12/1/1959 - 9/9/1960
J.H. Brook 9/9/1960 - 14/2/1964 Third Secretary/Second Secretary/Acting First Secretary

Third Secretaries/Second Secretaries

M.J.S. Knowles 15/8/1946 - 11/2/1948 Third Secretary

¹ The date of his meeting with the Acting Prime Minister, J.H. Hofmeyr. He had an audience with the Governor-General, G. Brand van Zyl, the next day to whom he expected to hand over his 'credentials'. AA, A4231/2, South Africa 1946, Despatch No. 1, 13 September 1946. Knowles and his party first touched South African soil when their ship, the s.s. *Nestor* arrived at Durban on 15 August.

² This was during Davis's leave and consultation visit to Australia. Deschamps was then Chargé d'Affaires in Dublin. *The International Year Book and Statesmen's Who's Who 1994/95*, p. 167.

Appendix I: The staff of the High Commissions

K. Desmond 10/9/1948 - 19/10/1951 Third Secretary/Second Secretary
Miss E.A. Warren 23/11/1951 - 11/6/1954 Third Secretary
R.A. Woolcott 3/6/1954 - 20/1/1957 Third Secretary/Second Secretary
I.E. Nicholson 15/1/1957 - 23/9/1959 Third Secretary
J.H. Brook 11/7/1960 - 9/9/1960 Third Secretary

*Trade*³

G.R.B. Patterson 28/5/1947 - 25/4/1953
A.B. Millard 28/5/1947 - *
A.G. Hard */1949 - 10 May 1950 (Deceased)
E.E. Jarvis */1951 - *
A.J. S. Day 6/1/1954 - */1956
G.P.H. Knight * - */1955
S.D. Shubart */1956 - */1960
D.R. Cristofani */1955 - */12/1959
J.L. Chapman */1960 - */1966

Attaches

Cape Town

E.H. Hanfield 26/8/1953-15/3/1957
S.A. Wallis 4/3/1957 - */1959
N.M. Hocking 29/7/1959 - 22/10/1962 [The Cape Town Office was named a Consulate and Hocking designated Vice-Consul when South Africa became a Republic in 1961]

Pretoria

W.J. Symington */1961 - *

Secretary-Typists

Miss D.M.M. Bartlett 15/8/1946 - April 1948
Miss S.A. Richardson 4/9/1948-18/11/1950
Miss B.S. Tyler 2/10/1952 - 7/5/1957
Miss E.M. Thompson 30/4/1957 - */1959
Miss M. Fay 21/9/1959 - */1962

³ It was not possible to be more precise about dates. The gaps could no doubt have been filled if Mr Mervyn Knowles's detailed listing of all trade officers between 1933 and the early 1970s had not gone astray. M.J.S. Knowles, letter, 4 April 1995.

Appendix I: The staff of the High Commissions

*Locally-engaged Staff (50)*⁴

Miss C.M.G. Allan */1952 - *
Miss Barlow */1952 - *
Miss C. Barnes *
Mrs S. Baron Aug/Sept 1959 - * Clerk-Archivist
Mrs J. Barsdorf 1/12/1959 - 31/12/1959 Stenographer-typist (Cape Town) (Part-time)
Miss J. Bernhardt 1/6/1960 - * Typist (Cape Town)
Miss M. Botha */1961 - *
Miss C. Brenell */1961 - *
E.R. Bruce */ - 1948
Miss J.M. Chase 1/7/1953 - 31/3/1956
Miss A. Craven */1946 - *
A. Cupido 1/2/1960 - * Driver/Messenger
Miss B.P. Cutler 1/10/1959 - * Clerk-Archivist
G. de Lange */1946 - */1948 Chauffeur (Dismissed)
Miss L.S. du Toit */1952 - *
Miss E. Faller 22/7/1957 - * Clerical Assistant
Miss M.E.S. Gnodde 1952
Miss D.M. Hall 22/7/1957 - 17/8/1957 Clerk-Archivist
Miss J. MacG. Hall 1/7/1959 - * Typist 2
Miss G. Harris */1961 - *
E. Herman 1/12/1957 - * Chauffeur
Miss N.H. Hiemstra 1/10/1958 - 30/6/1959 Stenographer
Miss K.M. Kelly */1952 - *
Miss E. Kinder */1952 - *
D. Lehlohonolo */1952 - *
Miss M.J. McCraw 1/12/1952 - * Typist 1
Mrs B. McKay */1961 - /*
Miss C.M.L. Mellor 2/4/1956 - 30/6/1957 Stenographer [Resigned to marry R. Swart, MP]
Miss D. Mitchell */1952 - *
A. Mnquhevu */1961 - *
Miss Mounsey */1948 - *

⁴ Despite the best efforts of Mr Chris Taylor and Ms Moira Smythe of the Historical Documents Branch of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Canberra and of Mr John Pepper of the Australian Archives in the same city, it was not possible either to identify all the locally-engaged staff who worked in the Australian High Commission/Embassy over the period 1945-61 or to pin down the details of those whose names could be established; that is, apart from an outline of the duties of those listed on part B of the half yearly return required in terms of Circular C. 23 of 6 January 1947. It is, however, thanks to Messrs Taylor and Pepper and Ms Smythe, and also to Messrs H. Gilchrist and M.J.S. Knowles, that the names of so many could be given. Messrs Gilchrist and Knowles supplied information about people with whom they were acquainted. Theoretically information in respect of both the South African and the Australian locally-recruited or locally-engaged staff is available in the South African Archives but one would not know where to start looking for it. Given their importance to the work of the Australian and South African offices during the period in question, I regret that I cannot be more specific about the local staff. Even so, 'their glory shall not be blotted out'. (Ecclesiasticus xlv.)

Appendix I: The staff of the High Commissions

Mrs J. Murdock 1/7/1956 - 31/12/1956 Stenographer-typist (Cape Town) (Part-time)
Mrs M.C. Murray 1/3/1955 - * Archivist
J.A. Norris */1/1947 - */1948
W. Ntwana */1961 - *
Miss E.J. Oakes */1961 - *
Mrs J. Owendale */1947 - *
Mrs P.F. Sharp */1961 - *
S. Singh 1-30/11/1957 Chauffeur-Messenger
Mrs V.H. Skibbe (née Wagner, married 11/8/1956) 1/7/1954 - 29/5/1957 Clerical
Assistant (Accounts)
Mrs C.N.I. South */1954 - * Trade Commission, Johannesburg
Miss M.B. Stanley 29/7/1957 - 30/9/1958 Stenographer
Miss J. Steyn * - 30/4/1959 Clerk-Archivist
Miss S. Stuart */12/1946 - */1959
Mrs I.M. Tait * - 14/9/1953
Miss S.H.A. Thomson */1961 - *
Miss Y. Tilemann 1/5/1959 - 15/8/1959 Clerk-Archivist
H.E. van der Walt 1/10/1948 - 31/10/1957 Chauffeur
Mrs Wallace-Jones 1/1/1958 - 30/6/1958; 1/7/1959 - 30/11/1959 Stenographer-typist
(Cape Town) (Part-time)
Miss G.M. Wheaton (exact dates unknown)

SOUTH AFRICANS (1949-1962)

Heads of Mission

Dr P.R. Viljoen 10/6/1949 - 13/10/1951 High Commissioner
J.K. Uys 11/3/1954 - 10/6/1957 High Commissioner
A.A.M. Hamilton 10/9/1957 - 5/3/1961 High Commissioner
H.H. Woodward 20/4/1961 - 8/10/1964 High Commissioner/Ambassador

Acting Heads of Mission

G.C. Nel 13/10/1951 - 10/3/1954 Acting High Commissioner
D.P. Olivier 10/6/1957 - 10/9/1957 Acting High Commissioner
P.L.T. Snyman 5/3/1961 - 20/4/1961

No. 2s

G.C. Nel 7/6/1949 - 13/10/1951; 11/3/1954 - 23/12/1954 Second Secretary
D.P. Olivier 11/1/1955 - 25/10/1958 Third Secretary/Second Secretary
P.L.T. Snyman 10/1/1959 - 28/11/1962 Second Secretary

Appendix I: The staff of the High Commissions

Third Secretaries/Second Secretaries

P.R. Killen 7/6/1949 - 9/4/1954 Cadet/Third Secretary
C.R. Roberts Third Secretary 28/7/1954 - 30/6/1959 (Resigned)
J.C. Bosch Third Secretary 5/3/1960 - */1964

Information Officers⁵

C.A. Smith 31/12/1953-23/11/1956 (Deceased)
E.M. Rhodie 15/11/1957 - 6/6/1960
P.S. Joubert 4/7/1960 - */1964

Trade Commissioner

J.F. Brooks 30/6/1961 - */1971

Female Clerks, Grade I/Foreign Assistants

Miss J.M. Richards 7/6/1949 - */9/1951
Miss C.M. Honiball 1/9/1954 - */1959
Miss J.C. Joubert 9/1/1959 - */1962

Locally-recruited Staff (17)⁶

Miss G.J. Boyle Shorthand typist 27/8/1959 - *
Miss M. Callaghan Typist/Clerk Information 1955 - *
Mrs M.R. Duffus 1/9/1960 - at least until 30/9/1967
Mrs S.M. Foster 5/11/1956 - *
Mrs M.F. Forster Shorthand Typist/Clerk */1957 - *
Mrs J. Green Shorthand Typist/Clerk 5/2/1957 - *
Miss N. Helms Shorthand typist 15/1/1952 - 8/12/1956
A. Jansen Chauffeur 1/8/1958 - at least until October 1963
Miss S.E. Jeffreys 2/2/1956 - */12/1956
Miss B. Marshall Shorthand typist 2/7/1959 - at least until 15/8/1961
A. Morland Messenger 8/11/1954 - at least until 30/12/1964
Miss D.J. Read 9/7/1958 - *
Miss M. Roberts Shorthand typist 2/7/1959 - *
A.E.J. Taylor Chauffeur 1957-1958
Mrs J.E. Tompsett Shorthand Typist 9/2/1955 - *
Miss V.P. Townshend Shorthand Typist 7/8/1949 - 31/1/1955
Mrs B.J. Waters Assistant to the Information Officer 16/1/1958 - *

⁵ The post was renamed Information Attaché in 1961.

⁶ There were also staff employed by the High Commissioner in a domestic capacity.

APPENDIX II

DIPLOMATIC MEMOIRS ETC AND WORKS ON THE BRITISH FOREIGN OFFICE

Diplomatic Memoirs etc

C. Gladwyn, *The Paris Embassy*. London, 1986 (1976).

R.A. Cosgrove, *Sir Eyre Crowe and the English Foreign Office, 1905-1914*. Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of California, Riverside, 1967.

The Memoirs of Lord Gladwyn. London, 1972 (Gladwyn Jebb).

J.D. Gregory, *On the Edge of Diplomacy; Rambles and Reflections, 1902-1928*. London, 1928.

E. Hambloch, *British Consul: Memories of Thirty Years' Service in Europe and Brazil*. London, 1938.

Old Diplomacy: the Reminiscences of Lord Hardinge of Penshurst. London, 1947.

N. Henderson, *Water Under the Bridges*. London, 1943.

H. Knatchbull-Hugessen, *Diplomat in Peace and War*. London, 1949.¹

J. Lees-Milne, *Harold Nicolson: a biography*. 2 Vols., London, 1981.

R.H. Bruce Lockhart, *British Agent*. New York, 1933;² *Retreat from Glory*. New York, 1934.

F. McLynn, *Fitzroy Maclean*. London, 1992.

V. Massey, *What's Past is Prologue*. London, 1963.

H. Nicolson, *Sir Arthur Nicolson, Bart: First Lord Carnock: A Study in the old diplomacy*. London, 1930.

¹ Knatchbull-Hugessen was the victim of the 'Operation Cicero' scam in Istanbul during the Second World War.

² This had been published in England the previous year under the title *Memoirs of a British Agent*. A consular officer, not a diplomat, in Imperial Russia before and during the First World War, Lockhart returned to Russia after the outbreak of the 1917 revolution to establish unofficial relations with the Bolsheviks, thus the 'agent' of his book's title.

Appendix II: Diplomatic memoirs etc

M. Paleologue,³ *An Ambassador's Memoirs 1914-1917*, Trans by F.A. Holt. London, 1973.

W. Phillips, *Ventures in Diplomacy*. London, 1955.

N. Rose, *Vansittart: Study of a Diplomat*. London, 1978.

D. Scott, *Ambassador in Black and White: Thirty Years of Changing Africa*. London, 1981.

Lord Strang, *Home and Abroad*. London, 1956.

Mist Procession: The Autobiography of Lord Vansittart. London, 1958.

G. Waterfield, *Professional Diplomat: Sir Percy Loraine of Kikharle Bt., 1880-1961*. London, 1973.

Works on the Foreign Office

F.T Ashton-Gwatkin, 'Foreign Service Re-organization in the United Kingdom', *International Affairs*, Vol. XXII, No. 1, January 1946, pp. 57-74.

S.T. Bindoff, 'The Unreformed Diplomatic Service, 1812-60', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 4th series, Vol. XVIII, 1935, pp. 143-72.

R. Butler, 'Beside the Point: Sir Eyre Crowe', *World Review* (United Kingdom), New Series, No. 50, April-May 1953, pp 8-13.

E.T. Corp, 'Sir Eyre Crowe and the administration of the Foreign Office, 1906-1914', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. XXII, No. 2, 1979, pp. 443-54; 'Sir William Tyrrell: The Éminence Grise of the British Foreign Office, 1912-1915', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. XXV, No. 3, 1982, pp. 697-708; 'The Problem of Promotion in the Career of Sir Eyre Crowe 1905-1920', *The Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol. 28, No. 2, 1982, pp. 236-49.

V. Cromwell, 'The Foreign and Commonwealth Office', in Z.S. Steiner (ed.), *The Times Survey of Foreign Ministries of the World*, London, 1982, pp. 541-73.

V. Cromwell and Z.S. Steiner, 'The Foreign Office before 1914: a study in resistance' in G. Sutherland (ed.) *Studies in the growth of nineteenth-century government*, London, 1972, pp. 167-94.

F. Gosses, *The Management of British Foreign Policy before the First World War, especially during the period 1880-1914*, Trans. E.C. Van der Graaf, Leiden, 1948.

³ French Ambassador to Imperial Russia from January 1914 to June 1917.

Appendix II: Diplomatic memoirs etc

- E. Hertslet, *Recollections of the Old Foreign Office*, London, 1901.
- R.A. Jones, *The British Diplomatic Service 1815-1914*, Gerrards Cross, Bucks., 1983.
- R. Langhorne, 'The Foreign Office before 1914', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. XVI, No. 4, 1973, pp. 857-64.
- C. Larner, 'The Amalgamation of the Diplomatic Service with the Foreign Office', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 7, Nos. 1-2, January-April 1972, pp. 107-26.
- R.T. Nightingale, 'The Personnel of the British Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service, 1851-1929', *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. XXIV, 1930, pp. 310-31.
- H.K. Norton, 'Foreign Office Organization', Supplement to *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, Vol. CXLIII, 1929, pp. 1-81.
- W. Selby, 'The Foreign Office', *The Nineteenth Century and After*, Vol. CXXXVIII, July-December 1945, pp. 3-12.
- Z.S. Steiner, 'The Last Years of the old Foreign Office, 1898-1905', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. VI, No. 1, 1963, pp. 59-90; 'Grey, Hardinge and the Foreign Office, 1906-1910', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. X, No. 4, 1967, pp. 415-39; *The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy 1898-1914*. Cambridge 1969; with M.L. Dockrill 'The Foreign Office Reforms, 1919-21', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. XVII, No. 1, 1974, pp. 131-56; 'The Foreign Office under Sir Edward Grey, 1905-1914' in F.H. Hinsley (ed.) *British Foreign Policy under Sir Edward Grey*, Cambridge, 1977, pp. 22-70; Introduction to *The Times Survey of Foreign Ministries of the World*, London, 1982, pp. 9-32.
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- 'Changes in the organisation of the Foreign and Diplomatic Service', *The British Year Book of International Law 1920-21*, London, 1920, pp. 97-108.
- Cd. 7749, *Royal Commission on the Civil Service: Appendix to Fifth Report of the Commissioners: Minutes of Evidence, 29th April 1914-16th July 1914, Q.36,551-Q.43,890, with Appendices*. London, 1914.

APPENDIX III

SMUTS AND THE PREAMBLE

Contrary to popular belief, Smuts was not solely responsible for the Preamble to the United Nations Charter. Heaton Nicholls, who should have known better because he accompanied him to them, attributed to Smuts at the preliminary Commonwealth meetings the text as finally adopted in San Francisco.¹ Smuts's son and namesake was more accurate. He felt that a comparison between his father's original and the final version revealed 'how little his original draft [had] been modified'.² Fourie says that Smuts drafted the preamble though various other people 'naturally proposed amendments'.³ Not that Smuts did not subsequently imply he was the sole author.⁴ On the basis of the texts given below, readers can judge for themselves.

C.K. Webster of the United Kingdom delegation had a hand in the preamble at the stage of the British Commonwealth meetings⁵ as later at the San Francisco Conference did Virginia Gildersleeve, Dean and Professor of Literature at Barnard College, New York, and her assistant on the United States delegation, Elizabeth Reynard. Gildersleeve and Reynard, not Smuts or Webster, were the authors of the resounding opening 'We the Peoples of the United Nations, Determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war'.⁶ 'We the Peoples' was inspired by the opening of the United States Constitution.⁷ Following the League Covenant, the Webster/Smuts version had rendered this as 'The High Contracting Parties' who were 'Determined to prevent a recurrence of the fratricidal strife which has twice in our generation brought untold sorrows and losses on mankind'. Smuts's original opening was: 'We, the United Nations, assembled in Conference to seek a new way of life for the nations, and to prevent a recurrence of the fratricidal strife which has now twice in our generation brought untold sorrows and losses on mankind'.

¹ G.H. Nicholls, *South Africa in My Time* (London, 1961), pp. 394-95.

² Smuts, *Jan Christian Smuts*, p. 477.

³ Fourie, *Buitelandse Woelinge*, p. 32. (Original in Afrikaans.)

⁴ See J. van der Poel, ed., *Selections from the Smuts Papers*, Vol. VII, Smuts/M.C. Gillett, 14 January 1947, p. 117. 'Here is the author of the great preamble of the Charter ...'

⁵ See his *The Art and Practice of Diplomacy* (London, 1961), pp. 10-12 and Hancock, *The Fields of Force 1919-1950*, pp. 431-33.

⁶ Gildersleeve, *Many a good crusade*, p. 346.

⁷ 'We, the People of the United States'.

Appendix III: Smuts and the Preamble

Perhaps Smuts was entitled to claim credit for the preamble. The April 1945 British Commonwealth meeting in London had endorsed the Webster/Smuts version, attributing it to Smuts⁸ and he introduced it personally on 26 April in Committee I/1 of the San Francisco Conference. The committee, as R.B. Russell puts it, 'obviously moved by the moment, agreed by acclamation to adopt in principle what inevitably became known as the "Smuts preamble," as the basis of its work'. Gildersleeve speaks of a tacit understanding to credit Smuts with the preamble 'whatever form it finally took'.⁹ The most important aspect of the work of the South African delegate in Committee I/1, H.T. Andrews, was to prevent tinkering with Smuts's draft, particularly by Gildersleeve. Andrews reported later that his task was

frequently a delicate one, to 'neutralize' the 'cooperation' of a number of delegations, who having acclaimed the Field Marshal's text in principle, thereafter attempted to 'improve' upon its form and substance to the ultimate extent of submitting other drafts based on individual ideas of what constituted a preamble perfect as to 'architecture', 'soul', 'literary style', and 'content'.¹⁰ (Emphasis in original).

There were already those at the Commonwealth meeting, including Evatt and Fraser, who thought that the Webster/Smuts draft 'lacked a little of the spontaneity and warmth' of Smuts's original proposal and that whatever preamble was adopted, 'the warmth and idealism' of Smuts's earlier draft should be preserved.¹¹

In length Smuts (239 words), Webster/Smuts (234 words) and the final version (228 words) are much the same. Smuts's original had included a draft first chapter. Considerably shorter were Gildersleeve/Reynard (133 words), the preambles to the League Covenant (90 words) and to the Constitution of the United States (52 words). Thus Webster's recollection that the Smuts original was a long document which he had shortened and simplified with Smuts's consent, is faulty.¹² If, however, his account is otherwise to be accepted, it seems he contributed more to the combined version than Smuts. It will also be noted that if not altogether in wording then in ideas, there is a large measure of identity between Webster/Smuts and the final version.

⁸ BCM(45), 11th Meeting, 12 April 1945, p. 2.

⁹ Gildersleeve, *Many a good crusade*, p. 347.

¹⁰ 'United Nations Conference on International Organization, Commission I, Committee I, Preamble and Chapter I (Purposes and Principles of the Charter', para. 1. Attached to BTS, 136/1, Vol. 4, Andrews/Secretary for External Affairs, 20 July 1945.

¹¹ BCM (45), 11th meeting, 12 April 1945, p. 3. (Fraser and Evatt).

¹² Webster, *The Art and Practice of Diplomacy*, pp. 10-12

Appendix III: Smuts and the Preamble

Although she did not have access to the minutes of the British Commonwealth meetings in London in early April 1945, relying instead on a New Zealand report on the San Francisco Conference which referred to the Commonwealth meetings, Russell gives a creditable account of the preamble's drafting history.¹³ The Commonwealth minutes are, however, essential to an understanding of what actually happened.¹⁴ The minutes of the 11th meeting on 12 April 1945 show that Clement Attlee, then Lord President of the Council, was responsible for the expression 'and to promote social progress'¹⁵ which appears in the Charter as adopted.

Preamble to the United States Constitution (52 words)

We, the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessing of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Preamble to the League of Nations Covenant (90 words)

The High Contracting Parties, in order to promote international co-operation and to achieve international peace and security by the acceptance of obligations not to resort to war, by the prescription of open, just and honourable relations between nations, by the firm establishment of the understandings of international law as the actual rule of conduct among Governments, and by the maintenance of justice and a scrupulous respect for all treaty obligations in the dealings of organized peoples with one another, agree to this Covenant of the League of Nations.

Original Smuts Preamble¹⁶ (239 words)

We, the United Nations, assembled in Conference to seek a new way of life for the nations, and to prevent a recurrence of the fratricidal strife which has now twice in our generation brought untold sorrows and losses on mankind, and to establish an international organisation to that end:

¹³ R.B. Russell, *A History of The United Nations Charter: The Role of the United States 1940-45* (Washington, D.C., 1958), pp. 910-18.

¹⁴ The minutes in the writer's possession were photocopied by the Australian Archives from Dr Evatt's copy.

¹⁵ BCM(45), 11th Meeting, 12 April 1945, p. 4.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 5th Meeting, 6 April 1945, pp. 11-12.

Appendix III: Smuts and the Preamble

Do hereby declare, in this Charter of the United Nations, our common faith and objects, and the principles on which we seek to found an Organisation for the peace, progress and welfare of mankind.

Chapter I. - The Common Faith.

1. We declare our faith in basic human rights, in the sacredness, essential worth and integrity of the human personality, and affirm our resolve to establish and maintain social and legal sanctions for safeguarding the same.
2. We believe in the practice of tolerance, in the equal rights of individuals and of individual nations large and small, as well as in their inherent right to govern themselves without outside interference, in accordance with their own customs and way of life.
3. We believe in the enlargement of freedom and the promotion of social progress, and in raising the standards of life, so that there may be freedom of thought and expression and religion, as well as freedom from want and fear for all.
4. We believe in nations living in peace and peaceful intercourse with each other as good neighbours, and in renouncing war as an instrument of national policy.

Webster/Smuts Preamble¹⁷ (234 words)

The High Contracting Parties:

Determined to prevent a recurrence of the fratricidal strife which has twice in our generation brought untold sorrows and losses on mankind and to re-establish the faith of men and women in fundamental human rights, in the sacredness, essential worth and integrity of the human personality, in the equal rights of individuals and of individual nations large and small, in the enlargement of freedom and the promotion of social progress and the possibility of raising the standards of life everywhere in the world, and for these ends to practise tolerance and to live together in peace and peaceful intercourse with each other as good neighbours,

In order to make possible co-operation between nations for the maintenance of international peace and security necessary for these purposes,

By the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods to ensure that armed force is only used in the interests of the community of nations, and not for national ends,

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 11th Meeting, 12 April 1945, p. 2.

Appendix III: Smuts and the Preamble

By the provision of means by which all disputes that threaten the maintenance of international peace and security shall be settled,

By the establishment of conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations of international law and treaties, and fundamental human rights and freedoms, can be maintained,

By the employment of international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples,

Agree to this Charter of the United Nations.

Gildersleeve/Reynard Preamble¹⁸ (133 words)

We the Peoples of the United Nations

Determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which in our time has brought untold sorrow to mankind

Resolved to reaffirm faith in the dignity and value of every human being and to maintain his right to live and work in tranquillity and larger freedom

United in our common endeavour to promote social progress, to establish better standards of life, to secure the equal rights of men and of nations large and small

Dedicated to the rule of law, the reality of justice, the sanctity and obligation of treaties,

In the hope that we of all lands and creeds will practice tolerance towards one another and live together in peace as good neighbors,

Through our representatives assembled in San Francisco agree to this Charter.

Preamble as adopted at San Francisco (228 words)

WE THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS
DETERMINED

to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and

to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and

¹⁸ Gildersleeve, *Many a good crusade*, p. 346.

Appendix III: Smuts and the Preamble

to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and

to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

AND FOR THESE ENDS

to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and

to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and

to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and

to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples,

HAVE RESOLVED TO COMBINE OUR EFFORTS TO ACCOMPLISH THESE AIMS

Accordingly, our respective Governments, through representatives assembled in the city of San Francisco, who have exhibited their full powers found to be in good and due form, have agreed to the present Charter of the United Nations and do hereby establish an international organization to be known as the United Nations.

APPENDIX IV

SOUTH AFRICAN AND AUSTRALIAN INTERVENTIONS CONCERNING ARTICLE 2(7)

South Africa

T.E. Dönges, Fifth Session, Ad Hoc Political Committee, 41st meeting, 14 November 1950, p. 247, paras. 1-6, pp. 251-52, paras. 44-55; 42nd meeting, 14 November 1950, pp. 253-55, paras. 1-19 (Treatment of Indians); **W.C. du Plessis**, Ninth Session, Ad Hoc Political Committee, 10th meeting, 21 October 1954, pp. 29-30, paras. 1-11 (Treatment of Indians); 42nd meeting, 2 December 1954, pp. 201-04, paras. 13-36. (Apartheid); **G.P. Jooste**, Seventh Session, Ad Hoc Political Committee, 13th meeting, 12 November 1952, pp. 65-67, paras. 1-14 (Apartheid); 20th meeting, 19 November 1952, pp. 113-14, paras. 16-33; Eighth Session, General Committee, 87th meeting, 16 September 1953, p. 1, para. 7; 435th plenary meeting, 17 September 1953, pp. 24-27, paras. 19-48; 469th plenary meeting, 8 December 1953, pp. 432-34, paras. 12-37; Ad Hoc Political Committee, 32nd meeting, 23 November 1953, pp. 155-58, paras. 1-26 (Apartheid); Ninth Session, 476th plenary meeting, 24 September 1954, pp. 37-40 (Treatment of Indians and Apartheid); **E.H. Louw**, Third Session, Part I, 146th plenary meeting, 28 September 1948, pp. 221-26; Third Session, Part II, First Committee, 263rd meeting, 9 May 1949, pp. 246-47; 265th meeting, 10 May 1949, pp. 272-80; Third Session, Part II, 212th plenary meeting, 14 May 1949, pp. 439-49 (Treatment of Indians); Eleventh Session, 577th plenary meeting, 15 November 1956, pp. 29-34, paras. 72-126 (Treatment of Indians and Apartheid); **J.C. Smuts**, First Session, Second Part, General Committee, 19th meeting, 24 October 1946, pp. 69-70; Joint Committee of the First and Sixth Committees, 1st meeting, 21 November 1946, pp. 3-4 (Treatment of Indians).

Australia

C.T. Moodie, Fifth Session, Ad Hoc Political Committee, 42nd meeting, 14 November 1950, pp. 256-588, paras. 37-52. (Treatment of Indians); **A.H. Tange**, Fifth Session, 315th plenary meeting, 2 December 1950, p. 531, paras. 24-28. (Treatment of Indians); **K. Officer**, Sixth Session, 360th plenary meeting, 12 January 1952, p. 329, paras. 17-21. (Treatment of Indians); **P. Shaw**, Seventh Session, Ad Hoc Political Committee, 16th meeting, 14 November 1952, pp. 83-85 (Apartheid); **W.D. Forsyth**, Eighth Session, Ad Hoc Political Committee, 20th meeting, 27 October 1953, pp. 97-98, paras. 8-12 (Treatment of Indians), 36th meeting, 30 November 1953, pp. 182-83, paras. 10-24;(Apartheid); Tenth Session, Ad Hoc Political Committee, 11th meeting, 7 November 1955, pp. 38-39, paras. 46-3).

APPENDIX V

AUSTRALIAN DESPATCHES FROM SOUTH AFRICA 1946-64

1946

Ministerial Despatches

Sir George Knowles

1. Untitled (Report on Arrival), 13 September 1946, 10 pages
2. The Indian Problem in the Union of South Africa, 11 September 1946, 2 pages + Annexure 'The Indian in South Africa', 32 pages
3. The Future Status of South West Africa, 10 September 1946, 2 pages + Annexure, 66 pages
4. Untitled (Political Developments in South Africa etc), 26 September 1946, 13 pages
5. Untitled (Accommodation), 26 September 1946, 6 pages
6. Untitled (General Report), 2 October 1946, 11 pages
7. Sentences on Nazi Leaders - Nuremberg Trial, 9 October 1946, 5 pages
8. The Indian Question, 9 October 1946, 2 pages
9. USA stops Transfer of Indian Jute to South Africa, 9 October 1946, 1 page
10. The Non-European Labour Problem in South Africa, 9 October 1946, 4 pages
11. The Indian Question in South Africa, 9 October 1946, 1 page
12. Financial trend in South Africa, 9 October 1946, 3 pages
13. Migration of South African nationals to Rhodesia, 9 October 1946, 3 pages
14. Expansion in the Union of South Africa of United Kingdom Information Service, 17 October 1946, 1 page
15. The Nuremberg Trial and Sentences of ex-Nazi Leaders
16. A United Africa, 15 October 1946, 1 page + Annexures, 14 pages
17. The Economic future of South Africa - being an address by the Acting Prime Minister of the Union, 17 October 1946, 10 pages
18. The Union's Asiatic Policy, 15 October 1946, 2 pages
19. The Industrial outlook for South Africa; Union's drive for immigrants questioned, 15 October 1946, 4 pages
20. Resolutions adopted by the Transvaal Congress of the Nationalist Party, 22 October 1946, 2 pages
21. South Africa Trade Unionism, 22 October 1946, 4 pages
22. Plans to control Air Service in South Africa, 22 October 1946, 3 pages
23. Imperial Defence and the Union of South Africa, 22 October 1946, 2 pages
24. Delegation of Legislative Power, 22 October 1946, 1 page
25. South African Labour Attaché for London, 22 October 1946, 1 page
26. Reaction of the Pirow Party to the sentences carried out at Nuremberg, 22 October 1946, 2 pages

Appendix V: Australian despatches from South Africa 1946-64

27. South African Cost of Living Index, 22 October 1946, 2 pages + Annexure, 2 pages
28. A 'Buy South African First' publicity drive, 22 October 1946, 2 pages
29. Transport of Immigrants to South Africa, 22 October 1946, 2 pages
30. Survey of South African Political Situation, 23 October 1946, 1 page + Annexure, 1 page
31. Labour Party as a potential factor at next SA Election, 28 October 1946, 2 pages
32. Next general election - South Africa, 28 October 1946, 1 page
33. General Smuts in Eire, 28 October 1946, 1 page
34. Agreement on Double Taxation, 28 October 1946, 1 page + Annexure, 3 pages
35. Visit of British Industrial Mission to South Africa, 29 October 1946, 3 pages
36. International Trade Organisation, 6 November 1946, 1 page
37. Mining Unions' Demands, 6 November 1946, 2 pages
38. Remembrance Day in the Union of South Africa, 13 November 1946, 6 pages
39. Impending changes in the Diplomatic Corps in the Union of South Africa, 14 November 1946, 2 pages
40. A Nationalist Party 'Republican Fund', 14 November 1946, 4 pages
41. Italian Prisoners-of-War as settlers in the Union of South Africa, 13 November 1946, 2 pages
42. USSR Reception, 13 November 1946, 2 pages
43. Election of Mayor, Pretoria, 14 November 1946, 4 pages
44. Interview with Mr Waterson, 4 November 1946, 2 pages
45. Agreement on Double Taxation, 20 November 1946, 1 page
46. Diplomatic Appointment, 20 November 1946, 1 page
47. Cultural Relations with Italy, 20 November 1946, 1 page
48. The Afrikaans Press discusses UNO action regarding South West Africa, 21 November 1946, 2 pages
49. Comments of the Acting Prime Minister of South Africa on Proceedings before the United Nations Assembly, 20 November 1946, 3 pages
50. Air Treaty with the United States of America, 21 November 1946, 2 pages
51. African Traffic Conference. International Air Transport Association, 23 November 1946, 1 page + Annexure, 2 pages
52. Impending changes in the Diplomatic Corps in the Union of South Africa, 22 November 1946, 1 page
53. Expansion of trade between the Union of South Africa and Scandinavian countries, 22 November 1946, 2 pages
54. Native mine labourers and Trade Unionism, 4 December 1946, 4 pages
55. Diamond Prospecting in South Africa, 4 December 1946, 2 pages
56. Union Defence Force - Post-war training scheme for officers, 4 December 1946, 2 pages
57. Question of Devaluation of South African Currency, 4 December 1946, 5 pages
58. South-West Africa's Destiny Lies with Union of South Africa, 4 December 1946, 4 pages
59. New motor car plants for Union of South Africa, 10 December 1946, 2 pages
60. Immigration, 10 December 1946, 2 pages
61. Coming Session of South African Parliament, 10 December 1946, 2 pages

Appendix V: Australian despatches from South Africa 1946-64

62. Union Government's Native Policy, 18 December 1946, 5 pages
63. Compulsory Unemployment Insurance, 19 December 1946, 6 pages
64. Agreement on Double Taxation: United States of America, 21 December 1946, 2 pages
65. South African Air Force: Additional Fighter Aircraft, 27 December 1946, 2 pages
66. 'Colour Bar' in industry. Training of African Natives in the building trades, 30 December 1946, 6 pages

1947

1. Steel Production in South Africa, 6 January 1947, 5 pages
2. The problem of non-European labour in South Africa, 7 January 1947, 10 pages
3. The United Nations Assembly and the South African questions dealt with thereat, 14 January 1947, 12 pages
4. Compulsory Unemployment Insurance, 11 January 1947, 1 page
5. Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act - not to be repealed, 11 January 1947, 3 pages
6. Interview with Prime Minister, 15 January 1947, 5 pages
7. Outline of South African Labour Party's Policy, 17 January 1947, 4 pages
8. Agreement on Double Taxation: United States of America, 17 January 1947, 1 page + Annexure, 7 pages
9. South Africa Oversea Representation, 20 January 1947, 4 pages
10. New Industries for Union of South Africa, 24 January 1947, 3 pages
11. Union Defence Forces - Organisation, 28 January 1947, 2 pages
12. Results of Recent By-Elections, 29 January 1947, 6 pages
13. General Smuts' comments on Britain's Mission in Europe and South Africa's problems, 3 February 1947, 3 pages
14. Leakage of contents of cypher message No. 86 from Canberra to South Africa, 5 February 1947, 3 pages + Annexures, 3 pages
15. Immigration, 8 February 1947, 7 pages
16. Parliamentary debate on decisions of UNO on South West-Africa and the Indian question, 10 February 1947, 15 pages
17. Political future of the Rt. Hon. J.H. Hofmeyr, 11 February 1947, 5 pages
18. Invitation to Union of South Africa to exhibit at Sydney Easter Show, 12 February 1947, 4 pages
19. Political Situation as it affects the Coloured People in South Africa, 13 February 1947, 7 pages
20. Removal of controls on maize and tea, 19 February 1947, 4 pages
21. Establishment of Indian Advisory Board, 21 February 1947, 4 pages
22. General Smuts' comments on the significance of Commonwealth world leadership, 21 February 1947, 3 pages
23. The Royal Family's visit to South Africa, 26 February 1947, 10 pages
24. Refusal by Union Government to issue Passports to enable two South African Indians to attend All-Asia Conference in India, 1 March 1947, 5 pages
25. Budget Speech, 5 March 1947, 20 pages
26. Labour Party Dissension, 10 March 1947, 3 pages

Appendix V: Australian despatches from South Africa 1946-64

27. Immigration Policy, Parliamentary Debate on Government's Immigration Policy, 12 March 1947, 10 pages
28. South African Trade Figures, 12 March 1947, 4 pages
29. Draft Customs Agreement between the Union and Southern Rhodesia, 15 March 1947, 6 pages
30. Immigration, 18 March 1947, 7 pages
31. Budget Speech, 18 March 1947, 1 page + Annexure, 32 pages
32. Question of fees charged by Members of Parliament for services, 21 March 1947, 6 pages
33. Untitled (Indian Question), 25 March 1947, 7 pages
34. Future status of South-West Africa, 31 March 1947, 10 pages
35. Privy Council Appeals, 1 April 1947, 4 pages
36. Native's [sic] part in Union's economy and relations between English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking populations, 8 April 1947, 3 pages
37. Cotton textiles from Germany and Japan, 22 April 1947, 3 pages
38. Impending Changes in the Diplomatic Corps, 23 April 1947, 2 pages
39. Visit to Eastern Province, 23 April 1947, 3 pages
40. Future status of South-West Africa, 24 April 1947, 5 pages
41. Boycott of Indian Traders, 25 April 1947, 5 pages
42. Office accommodation in Pretoria, 28 April 1947, 3 pages + Annexures, 8 pages
43. Union's interest in International Trade Conference, 30 April 1947, 4 pages
44. South Africa's foreign affairs and attachments to UNO, 1 May 1947, 7 pages
45. The Royal Family's visit to Africa, 6 May 1947, 20 pages + Annexure, 6 pages
46. Review of agricultural position in the Union of South Africa, 13 May 1947, 7 pages
47. South-West Africa, 20 May 1947, 6 pages
48. Unemployment Insurance, 26 May 1947, 6 pages
49. Royal Family's Visit to South Africa - further details concerning 'the White Train', 3 June 1947, 2 pages
50. Development in Mining Industry in Union, 4 June 1947, 3 pages
51. Official residence or residences for High Commissioner in the Union of South Africa, 11 June 1947, 3 pages
52. Procedure of the Union Parliament - differences from procedure of Commonwealth Parliament, 11 June 1947, 9 pages
53. General Smuts on South Africa's policy, 14 June 1947, 10 pages + Annexures, 4 pages
54. Military Service by Women, 25 June 1947, 6 pages
55. Deportation of German ex-internees, 1 July 1947, 11 pages
56. Immigration, 3 July 1947, 3 pages
57. Biographical Notes: Field Marshal Jan Christiaan Smuts, and the Hon. Harry Gordon Lawrence, 9 July 1947, 8 pages
58. Gold Mining Industry - Housing of Native of Native Mine Labourers' families, 9 July 1947, 5 pages
59. Statement by General Smuts on Palestine Problem and Jews in South Africa, 16 July 1947, 4 pages
60. Labour Party Dissension, 17 July 1947, 6 pages

Appendix V: Australian despatches from South Africa 1946-64

61. South African Oversea Representation, 22 July 1947, 3 pages
62. Biographical Notes: The Rt. Hon. Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr, 23 July 1947, 6 pages
63. Biographical Notes: The Rt. Hon. Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr, 29 July 1947, 2 pages
64. Biographical Notes: The Hon. Daniel Francois. Malan, MA, DD, 30 July 1947, 7 pages
65. Delville Day Commemoration Service, 30 July 1947, 3 pages
66. Canadian Trade Mission to South Africa, 5 August 1947, 2 pages
67. Future status of South West Africa, 5 August 1947, 8 pages
68. The United Nations Assembly and the South African questions dealt with thereat, 21 August 1947, 2 pages + Annexures, 13 pages
69. Kruger National Park, 21 August 1947, 3 pages
70. Portuguese East Africa, 21 August 1947, 3 pages
71. Untitled (Crocodile River Citrus Estates Pty. Ltd.), August 1947, 8 pages
72. Native farm labour - Bethal district, 21 August 1947, 5 pages
73. Visit to the Union by Mr A.G. Bottomley, British Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, 21 August 1947, 5 pages
74. South Africa's Policy on Aid to Britain, 28 August 1947, 7 pages
75. Belgian honour conferred on General Smuts, 3 September 1947, 4 pages + Annexure, 10 pages (H.L.T. Taswell, 'Short memorandum on the Belgian Congo', 23 July 1947)
76. General Smuts' statements on Union's industrial policy, 3 September 1947, 5 pages
77. Biographical Notes. The Hon. F.C. Sturrock, 9 September 1947, 4 pages
78. South Africa's problems of race relationship, 11 September 1947, 10 pages
79. Diplomatic representation of the Union of South Africa, 11 October 1947, 2 pages
80. Deportation of German Ex-Internees, 11 October 1947, 3 pages
81. Indian Trade sanctions against the Union of South Africa, 14 October 1947, 6 pages
82. Local Reaction to Opening Debates at UNO, 21 October 1947, 4 pages
83. South Africa's Policy on Aid to Britain, 21 October 1947, 6 pages + Annexure, 4 pages
84. Reference to Policy of Union Government in speech by General Smuts, 26 October 1947, 5 pages
85. Impending Changes in the Diplomatic Corps, 12 November 1947, 2 pages

M.H. Marshall

86. South Africa's problem of race relationship, 25 November 1947, 16 Pages + Annexure, 20 pages
87. Pretoria University Rectorship Issue, 27 November 1947, 4 pages
88. Diplomatic representation in the Union of South Africa, 1 December 1947, 2 pages
89. State Funeral of Sir George Knowles, 2 December 1947, 2 December 1947, 3 pages + Annexures, 9 pages
90. The Political Set-up in the Union of South Africa, 15 December 1947, 11 pages
91. Reference to International Situation in Speech by General Smuts, 18 December 1947, 5 pages

Appendix V: Australian despatches from South Africa 1946-64

1948

Ministerial Despatches

1. Untitled (Political), 21 January 1948, 6 pages + Annexure, 4 pages
2. Untitled (Native and Indian Representation), 3 February 1948, 7 pages
3. Untitled (Supreme Empire Council), 1 March 1948, 6 pages
4. Untitled (Czechoslovakia), 5 March 1948, 4 pages
5. Untitled (South African representation abroad), 10 March 1948, 3 pages
6. Untitled (Defence), 6 April 1948, 3 pages
7. Untitled (South African - Indian Relations), 6 April 1948, 5 pages
8. Untitled (Native Policy), 14 April 1948, 7 pages
9. Untitled (Dissolution of Parliament), 15 April 1948, 2 pages
10. Untitled (Communism), 21 April 1948, 2 pages
11. Untitled (Election propaganda), 21 April 1948, 4 pages
12. Untitled (Indian-South African Dispute), 12 May 1948, 5 pages
13. Untitled (Election campaign enters intensive phase), 18 May 1948, 6 pages
14. Untitled (Victory of the Nationalist Party), 2 June 1948, 8 pages
15. Untitled (New Cabinet), 5 June 1948, 4 pages + Annexures, 3 pages
16. Untitled (Biographies of Ministers), 5 June 1948, 11 pages
17. Untitled (Dr Malan's Speech), 9 June 1948, 1 page
18. Untitled (Release of Leibbrandt, Visser, Van Blerk, Strauss and Pienaar), 16 June 1948, 3 pages
19. Untitled (South African internal and oversea information services), 28 June 1948, 2 pages
20. Untitled (Repeal of sections of National Security Regulations, 1941), 29 June 1948, 2 pages + Annexure, 3 pages
21. Untitled (New government's immigration policy), 29 June 1948, 2 pages
22. Untitled (F.C. Erasmus's defence plans), 30 June 1948, 30 June 1948, 2 pages
23. Untitled (Smuts's campaign against the government), 2 July 1948, 3 pages
24. Untitled (United Party's native policy to be based on Fagan Commission Report), 5 July 1948, 3 pages
25. Untitled (Steps to implement government's racial policy), 8 July 1948, 3 pages
26. Untitled (Draft Republican Constitution), 31 July 1948, 2 pages + Annexure, 5 pages
27. Untitled (New government's immigration policy), 19 August 1948, 4 pages

A.T. Stirling

28. The Malan Government, 14 September 1948, 6 pages
29. First Session of the Tenth Parliament of the Union of South Africa, (6th August-2nd October 1948), 25 October 1948, 4 pages
30. van der Hum, 15 November 1948, 5 pages + Annexures, 2 pages
31. Australia-South African Survey Flight, 30 November 1948, 5 pages + Annexure, 1 page
32. Death of the Rt. Hon. J.H. Hofmeyr, 6 December 1948, 3 pages

Appendix V: Australian despatches from South Africa 1946-64

33. British Commonwealth High Commissioners in the Union, 20 December 1948, 1 page + Annexures, 3 pages

Departmental Despatches

M.H. Marshall

1. Changes in Diplomatic Corps, 19 January 1948, 1 page
2. Proposed Visit to Australia - South African Members of Parliament, 19 February 1948, 2 pages + Annexures, 3 pages
3. Price Controls in the Union of South Africa, 25 February 1948, 7 pages
4. South African gold loan to Britain, 3 March 1948, 2 pages
5. Occupation by the Government of South Africa of the Prince Edward and Marion Islands, 23 March 1948, 3 pages
6. Sixth report of Public Service Enquiry Commission, 5 April 1948, 3 pages
7. Report on Sir Earle Page's statement concerning trade potentialities with South Africa, 16 April 1948, 3 pages + Annexure, 2 pages
8. Empire Day broadcast by General Smuts and Union Government's recognition of new State of Israel, 26 May 1948, 1 page
9. Dissolution of Senate, 16 July 1948, 5 pages
10. Indian-South African Dispute, 17 July 1948, 5 pages
11. Appointment of Mr Charles te Water as Union Ambassador-Extraordinary-at-Large, 21 July 1948, 2 pages + Annexures, 6 pages
12. Opening of Union Parliament, and Budget Speech, 10 August 1948, 2 pages + Annexure, 3 pages

A.T. Stirling

13. Young South Africa League, 20 September 1948
14. Royal Society of South Africa Presentation to Field Marshal Smuts, 6 October 1948, 2 pages
15. Union Government's Attitude in the Event of War, 13 October 1948, 2 pages
16. University of the Witwatersrand: Visit of Students to Australia, 13 October 1948, 2 pages
17. University of Natal Opening Ceremonies, 22 October 1948, 2 pages
18. The Issue of the Republic and the Crown, 25 October 1948, 3 pages
19. Appointment of Administrator of the Transvaal, 25 October 1948, 3 pages
20. Imposition of Import Restrictions in South Africa, 2 November 1948, 5 pages (signed by K. Desmond on behalf of A. Stirling)
21. Mr Havenga's Position, 2 December 1948, 4 pages

1949

Ministerial Despatches

1. Dr Evatt's Visit, 4 January 1949, 4 pages

Appendix V: Australian despatches from South Africa 1946-64

2. The Forthcoming Session, 12 January 1949, 6 pages
3. Australia Day - 1949, 27 January 1949, 3 pages
4. The Session January-February, 1949, 25 February 1949, 9 pages
5. Anzac Day, 27 April 1949, 2 pages + Annexure, 1 page
6. Departure of South African High Commissioner in Canberra, 25 May 1949, 2 pages
7. Second Session of the Tenth Parliament 21st January - 30th June, 1 July 1949, 5 pages
8. Arrival of Australian Cricket Team, 18 October 1949, 2 pages
9. The Political Situation in South Africa, 21 December 1949, 4 pages

Departmental Despatches

1. House of Assembly: Additional Estimates, 3 February 1949, 2 pages
2. Untitled (Books requested for South African Library), 15 February 1949, 1 page + Annexure, 1 page
3. The Issue of the Republic, 25 February 1949, 3 pages
4. Credentials of High Commissioners, 3 March 1949, 2 pages + Annexure, 1 page
5. The Issue of the Republic, 19 April 1949, 3 pages
6. Mission Abroad of Mr Charles te Water, South African Ambassador-at-large, 2 pages
7. South African Branch, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, 28 April 1949, 1 page
8. The Issue of the Republic, 3 May 1949, 4 pages
9. The Issue of the Republic, 14 May 1949, 8 pages
10. Visit of Australian Tennis Team, 25 May 1949, 3 pages
11. The Political Situation - The Issue of the Republic, 27 May 1949, 5 pages
12. The Issue of the Republic, 8 June 1949, 4 pages
13. Union Day, 22 June 1949, 1 page
14. South African Diplomatic Service, 22 June 1949, 2 pages
15. Nationality Legislation - South Africa, 23 June 1949, 5 pages
16. Nationality and Citizenship Bill, 25 June 1949, 5 pages
17. Death of Deputy Leader of Labour Party: Dr T.W.B. Osborn, 27 June 1949, 2 pages
18. South African Embassy - Washington, 27 June 1949, 2 pages
19. South African High Commissioner to Canada, 28 June 1949, 2 pages
20. Seretse Khama, 8 July 1949, 5 pages + Annexure, 1 page

M.H. Marshall

21. South African Diplomatic Service, 26 July 1949, 1 page
22. Second Mission Abroad of Mr Charles te Water, South African Ambassador-at-Large, 26 July 1949, 2 pages
23. Possible Merger of Nationalist and Afrikaner Parties, 12 August 1949, 3 pages

Appendix V: Australian despatches from South Africa 1946-64

A.T. Stirling

24. The Issue of the Republic, 26 August 1949, 3 pages
25. The Victorian Railways Commission, 18 October 1949, 1 page
26. The Issue of the Republic, 22 October 1949, 3 pages
27. South West Africa and the Reverend Michael Scott, 14 November 1949, 1 page
28. The General Political Situation and the Issue of the Republic, 22 November 1949, 5 pages
29. Victorian Railways Mission, 28 November 1949, 1 page

Unnumbered. Official Residences in Cape Town and Pretoria, 15 November 1949, 5 pages

1950

Ministerial Despatches

1. Policy Speech, 11 January 1950, 2 pages
2. The forthcoming Session, 14 January 1950, 6 pages
3. Communism, 15 January 1950, 9 pages
4. Australia Day, South Africa, 1950, 27 January 1950, 2 pages + Annexure, 3 pages
5. Abolition of Appeal to Privy Council, 8 February 1950, 2 pages
6. The Issue of the Republic, 23 February 1950, 5 pages
7. Seretse Khama, 15 March 1950, 6 pages
8. Departure of Australia Cricket Team, 3 April 1950, 3 pages
9. ANZAC Day, 27 April 1950, 2 pages + Annexure, 2 pages
10. The Issue of the Republic, 24 April 1950, 5 pages

M.H. Marshall

11. Untitled (Retirement of General Smuts and succession of the J.G.N. Strauss as leader of the United Party), 15 June 1950, 3 pages
12. Afrikaner Party Congress, 3 August 1950, 4 pages
13. Death of Field-Marshal Smuts, 19 September 1950, 4 pages
14. Untitled (Appointment of Dr Jansen as Governor-General), 26 September 1950, 3 pages
15. Removal of Coloured Voters from Common Roll, 17 October 1950, 5 pages
16. The Republican Issue, 21 November 1950, 8 pages

Departmental Despatches

A.T. Stirling

1. Australian Books, 21 February 1950, 2 pages
2. Australian Books and South African Library, 27 February 1950, 1 pages + Annexure, 2 pages

Appendix V: Australian despatches from South Africa 1946-64

3. Appointment of Dr A.L. Geyer as Union High Commissioner in London, 27 February 1950, 4 pages
4. Untitled (Draft Bill on measures to combat Communism), 3 March 1950, 1 page + Annexure, 10 pages
5. South Africa - Southern Rhodesia, 17 March 1950, 5 pages
6. Visit of Professor F. Alexander, University of Western Australia, 5 April 1950, 1 page + Annexure, 4 pages
7. City of Durban - Protection of Bathers from Sharks, 11 April 1950, 2 pages
8. Visit of Professor F. Alexander, University of Western Australia, 18 April 1950, 2 pages + Annexure, 1 page
9. Peace-time Military training in South Africa, 18 April 1950, 1 page
10. Death of Mr A.G. Hard, 16 May 1950, 2 pages

M.H. Marshall

11. Third Session of the Tenth Union Parliament - 20th January - 24th June, 1950, 6 pages
12. Indian Question in South Africa, 18 July 1950, 3 pages
13. Visit of the Australian Soccer Team, 8 August 1950, 2 pages
14. South-West Africa Elections, 9 August 1950, 4 pages
15. South-West African Elections, 4 September 1950, 5 pages
16. Cabinet Changes, 6 September 1950, 2 pages
17. Address by Prime Minister, 12 September 1950, 4 pages
18. Three New Cabinet Ministers Appointed, 23 October 1950, 5 pages
19. Press Inquiry, 27 October 1950, 5 pages
20. Election of new Speaker, 11 November 1950, 3 pages
21. The Policy of 'Apartheid', 28 October 1950, 11 pages
22. Defence Organisation, 5 December 1950, 2 pages

1951¹

Ministerial Despatches

1. The Fourth Session of the Tenth Union Parliament, 4 January 1951, 7 pages
2. Australia Day and Jubilee Celebrations, 1951, 30 January 1951, 3 pages + Annexures, 16 pages
3. Matters Arising out of the Visit of the Right Honourable Mr Gordon Walker - Commonwealth Relations and the Position Regarding the Protectorate, 12 February 1951, 5 pages + Annexures, 12 pages
4. Untitled (Dr Malan on British Colonial Policy), 27 February 1951, 4 pages + Annexure, 5 pages

¹ The last year a distinction was officially drawn between ministerial and departmental despatches. Presumably unaware of this, the High Commission headed its first four despatches from South Africa in 1952 departmental despatches.

Appendix V: Australian despatches from South Africa 1946-64

Departmental Despatches

1. British Minister to Visit Union, 12 January 1951, 2 pages
2. South Africa's Participation in Korean War, 8 February 1951, 4 pages
3. Industry Prepares to Help Defence, 8 February 1951, 3 pages
4. New Minister of Health and Social Welfare, 12 February 1951, 2 pages
5. Coloured Franchise Issue, 21 February 1951, 4 pages + Annexure, 5 pages
6. South Africa and the United Nations, 16 March 1951, 4 pages
7. Coloured Franchise Bill Debate, 21 March 1951, 5 pages
8. Central Africa Talks, 3 April 1951, 3 pages

J.P. Quinn

9. Anzac Day Ceremony - 25 April 1951, 26 April 1951, 1 page
10. Coloured Franchise Bill Debate, 3 May 1951, 9 pages
11. Separate Representation of Voters Bill, 23 May 1951, 6 pages
12. Separate Representation of Voters Bill, 1 June 1951, 10 pages
13. Separate Representation of Voters Bill, 6 June 1951, 5 pages
14. Separate Representation of Voters Bill, 19 June 1951, 9 pages

1952

1. Separate Representation of Voters Act: The Appellate Court Judgment, 24 March 1952, 5 pages
2. Brigadier Durrant's Resignation from the Union Defence Force, 26 March 1952, 8 pages (signed E.A. Warren on behalf of J.P. Quinn)
3. The South African Budget, 1952-53, 7 April 1952, 7 pages (signed E.A. Warren on behalf of J.P. Quinn)
4. Separate Representation of Voters Act. Repercussions of the judgment of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, 15 April 1952, 10 pages
5. Possibility of Visit to Australia of Hon. Paul Sauer, 25 April 1952, 3 pages + Annexure, 1 page

W.R. Hodgson

6. The South African Apartheid Policy, 2 September 1952, 6 pages
7. South Africa: The Republican Question, 19 September 1952, 3 pages
8. South Africa: The Constitutional Crisis, 19 September 1952, 7 pages
9. The High Commission Territories, 16 October 1952, 4 pages
10. The Riots at New Brighton, 29 October 1952, 5 pages
11. Untitled (Relations between black and white in South Africa), 24 November 1952, 4 pages
12. Untitled (Lessening of tension throughout the Union), 10 December 1952, 3 pages + Annexure, 1 page
13. Untitled (Statement by the Minister of) Native Affairs, 23 December 1952, 1 page + Annexure, 2 pages

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14. United Kingdom and South African White Papers on Negotiations Between 1913 and 1939 on the Transfer to South Africa of the High Commission Territories, 23 December 1952, 4 pages

1953²

1. South African Labour Party, 3 February 1953, 4 pages + Annexure, 1 page
2. South Africa: The Government's Emergency Legislation, 17 February 1953, 4 pages
3. The Union Parliament 1948-1953, 1 April 1953, 8 pages
4. South Africa: The Passive Resistance Movement, 11 April 1953, 3 pages
5. South Africa: General Elections at 15th April, 1953, 27 April 1953, 6 pages
6. South Africa: Afrikaner Nationalism and the Nationalist Party, 8 October 1953, 2 pages
7. South Africa: The Constitutional Crisis, 12 October 1953, 7 pages
8. South Africa: Federalism in Natal, 13 October 1953, 6 pages
9. South Africa: The Republican Tradition, 20 October 1953, 5 pages
10. South Africa: The Liberal Party, 6 November 1953, 5 pages
11. Indians in South Africa: The Immigrants Regulation Amendment Act 1953, 23 November 1953, 6 pages
12. Untitled (Army dismissals), 22 December 1953, 5 pages

1954

1. South Africa: The Growth of the Afrikaans Press, 16 February 1954, 2 pages
2. South Africa: Integration and Apartheid, 15 March 1954, 4 pages, + Annexures, 13 pages
3. Untitled (The national flag), 15 March 1954, 4 pages
4. The Budget, 29 March 1954, 4 pages
5. South Africa: The rural native community in European South Africa, 30 March 1954, 5 pages
6. South Africa: The urban native, 14 April 1954, 6 pages + Annexure, 1 page
7. South Africa: Eclipse of the Union Federal Party at the Natal Provincial Elections, 1954, 5 pages
8. South Africa: The Coloured vote in the Cape Province, 23 June 1954, 5 pages

K.T. Kelly

9. South Africa: The provincial election campaign in the Cape Province, the Orange Free State and the Transvaal, 5 August 1954, 5 pages

W.R. Hodgson

10. Untitled (Celebration of the Kruger anniversary), undated, 5 pages

² Hodgson did not report on Menzies's 1953 visit to South Africa in this series. He did so in a letter addressed to the Minister. See AA, A1838/2, 201/10/11/1, 3/7/1/6020, 4 August 1953.

Appendix V: Australian despatches from South Africa 1946-64

11. Speculation on Dr Malan's Successor, 19 November 1954, 4 pages (drafter's initials RAW)
12. United Party Congress and Native Policy, 30 November 1954, 4 pages
13. South Africa's Fifth Prime Minister, 1 December 1954, 3 pages
14. Mr Strijdom's New Cabinet, 3 December 1954, 3 pages (drafter's initials WRH/RAW)
15. Important Developments in Native Education, 8 December 1954, 5 pages (drafter's initials RAW)
16. The British Protectorates, 15 December 1954, 2 pages

1955

1. The Foreign Service of the Union of South Africa, 28 January 1955, 3 pages + Annexure, 2 pages
2. Commencement of Western Areas Native Removal, 24 February 1955, 4 pages (drafter's initials RAW)
3. South Africa: Native representation in the Union Parliament, 1 March 1955, 6 pages (drafter's initials KTK)
4. South Africa: Appellate Division Quorum Bill, 5 April 1955, 5 pages (drafter's initials KTK)
5. South Africa, India and Unesco, 7 April 1955, 4 pages (drafter's initials KTK)
6. South Africa: The Senate Bill, 1955, 18 May 1955, 4 pages (drafter's initials KTK)
7. The Senate Act, 1955, 17 June 1955, 5 pages (drafter's initials HG)
8. Oil from South African Coal, 27 June 1955, 5 pages (drafter's initials HG)
9. South African Legislation: 1955, 29 June 1955, 4 pages (drafter's initials HG)
10. Recent Developments in Native Education, 9 August 1955, 4 pages (drafter's initials RAW)
11. Trade Unions in South Africa, 26 August 1955, 6 pages
12. The Economic Problems of South Africa's Apartheid Policy, 7 pages + Annexure, 3 pages
13. South African Attitude Towards African States, 19 October 1955, 8 pages (drafter's initials HG)

H. Gilchrist

14. The Uranium Industry and Nuclear Energy in South Africa, 29 November 1955, 8 pages, + Annexures, 3 pages (drafter's initials RW)

W.R. Hodgson

15. The New Senate, 15 December 1955, 5 pages (drafter's initials HG)

1956

1. Untitled (New parliamentary session), 27 January 1956, 3 pages + Annexure, 1 page

Appendix V: Australian despatches from South Africa 1946-64

2. Untitled (Closure of Soviet consular offices in South Africa), 10 February 1956, 7 pages + Annexure, 4 pages
3. The African National Congress and Native Political Activities, 23 February 1956, 9 pages + Annexure, 4 pages (drafter's initials RW)
4. Amendment of the South Africa Act, 10 March 1956, 4 pages (drafter's initials HG)
5. Political Movements of the Colored Population, 22 March 1956, 6 pages (drafter's initials WRH/RW)
6. The Tomlinson Report on Development of the Bantu Areas, 7 April 1956, 7 pages
7. Cape Court Hearing of the Senate Act Case, 5 May 1956, 6 pages (drafters' initials WRH/HG)
8. The Political Activities of South Africa's Indian Population, 17 May 1956, 7 pages (drafter's initials RW)
9. South African Approach to the Prime Ministers' London Conference, 19 May 1956, 4 pages (drafter's initials HG)
10. South Africa and the United States, 20 June 1956, 2 pages (drafter's initials HG)
11. South Africa and the Commonwealth of Nations, 20 June 1956, 7 pages (drafter's initials HG)
12. South African relations with African States, 20 June 1956, 5 pages (drafter's initials HG)
13. Prime Ministers' Conference 1956, 21 June 1956, 2 pages (drafter's initials HG)
14. Mr Strijdom's record and prospects, 21 June 1956, 3 pages (drafter's initials HG)
15. South African Policy for Africa, 21 June 1956, 7 pages (drafter's initials HG)
16. Parliamentary Session - 1956, 13 July 1956, 5 pages (drafter's initials HG)
17. The Volkskongres on the Future of the Bantu, 20 July 1956, 6 pages
18. South Africa and the Suez Canal Crisis, 10 August 1956, 4 pages + Annexures, 2 pages (drafter's initials HG)
19. South Africa - Changes in Defence Command, 21 September 1956, 3 pages
20. The Return of Seretse Khama, 6 October 1956, 4 pages (drafter's initials HG)
21. The End of the 'Constitutional Crisis', 16 November 1956, 5 pages (drafter's initials HG)
22. Leadership of the United Party, 30 November 1956, 6 pages + Annexures, 3 pages (drafter's initials HG)
23. Apartheid in Sport, 12 December 1956, 10 pages + Annexure, 2 pages (drafter's initials HG)
24. The Mass Arrest of Treason Suspects, 13 December 1956, 8 pages + Annexure, 3 pages (drafters' initials RW/HG)

1957

1. South Africa: The Road to Totalitarian Rule, 15 March 1957, 7 pages (drafter's initials HG)
2. South Africa: ILO Membership, 17 April 1957, 3 pages + Annexures, 11 pages (drafter's initials HG)
3. South Africa: Road to Totalitarian Rule, 30 May 1957, 7 pages (drafter's initials HG)
4. Untitled (Visit of Prime Minister), 14 June 1957, 4 pages (drafter's initials WRH)

Appendix V: Australian despatches from South Africa 1946-64

5. Parliamentary debate on Foreign Affairs, 22 June 1957, 7 pages (drafter's initials HG)

H. Gilchrist

6. The 'Oppenheimer proposals' for constitutional reform, 3 September 1957, 4 pages + Annexures, 18 pages (drafter's initials HG)
7. The United Party's Bloemfontein Congress, 3 September 1957, 5 pages + Annexure, 3 pages (drafter's initials HG)
8. Untitled (Impressions of the Rhodesias), 5 October 1957, 1 page + Annexure, 5 pages (drafter's initials HG)
9. South Africa: General election 1958, 14 November 1957, 3 pages (drafter's initials HG)
10. Oil from South African coal, 16 November 1957, 1 page + Annexure, 4 pages (report dated 15 November by Ian E. Nicholson on 'Oil from South African coal')

1958

1. The end of the eleventh parliament, 17 March 1958, 8 pages + Annexure, 29 pages (drafter's initials HG)
2. South African general elections: (2) factors and prospects, 3 April 1958, 6 pages (drafter's initials HG)
3. South Africa: general elections: (3) The Coloureds' representatives, 3 April 1958, 6 pages (drafter's initials HG)
4. South Africa: general election: (4) factors and prospects, 10 April 1958, 5 pages (drafter's initials HG)
5. South Africa: general election: (5) factors and prospects, 10 April 1958, 7 pages + Annexure, 2 pages (drafter's initials HG)
6. South Africa: general election: the political issues, 12 April 1958, 6 pages (drafter's initials HG)
7. South African general election: Nationalist victory, 19 April 1958, 5 pages
8. South Africa: visit of the UN Good Offices Committee on South West Africa, 26 June 1958, 4 pages + Annexures (records of conversations Gilchrist/Sir Charles Arden-Clarke; Gilchrist/Heinz Wieschoff), 7 pages (drafter's initials HG)
9. South Africa: The Prime Minister, 26 July 1958, 2 pages + Annexure, 1 page (drafter's initials HG)
10. South Africa: The Prime Minister, 8 August 1958, 3 pages + Annexure, 1 page (drafter's initials HG)
11. The immediate political situation in the Union, 12 September 1958, 2 pages + Annexure, 1 page (drafter's initials HG)
12. Problems of South Africa's National Propaganda, 16 September 1958, 8 pages (drafter's initials HG)
13. Division in the African National Congress, 3 October 1958, 4 pages + Annexure, 2 pages (drafter's initials HG)
14. Southern Rhodesia: Accommodating the Urban African, 21 September 1958, 7 pages + Annexure, 8 pages

Appendix V: Australian despatches from South Africa 1946-64

15. Parliamentary Discussion of External Affairs, 9 October 1958, 8 pages + Annexure, 4 pages (drafter's initials HG)
16. Thoughts on constitutional revision in South Africa, 22 December 1958, 6 pages (drafter's initials HG)
17. The significance of Dr Verwoerd (Part 1), 29 December 1958, 5 pages (drafter's initials HG)
18. South Africa: Significance of the Bantu languages, 30 December 1958, 7 pages (drafter's initials HG)

1959

O.L. Davis

1. Formal Calls on Cabinet Ministers, 16 May 1959, 3 pages
2. Cato Manor riots, 24 July 1959, 4 pages
3. The Union's Parliamentary Session - 1959, 8 August 1959, 5 pages
4. The split in the United Party, 21 September 1959, 4 pages
5. Bantustan, 5 October 1959, 5 pages
6. The Progressive Party, 30 November 1959, 3 pages

1960

1. Macmillan's address to the South African parliament, 6 February 1960, 4 pages + Annexures, 18 pages
2. South Africa: the republic and the Commonwealth, 8 February 1960, 3 pages
3. The short-term effects of Mr Macmillan's speech, 22 February 1960, 4 pages
4. Australia's concern with the future of South Africa, 21 April 1960, 6 pages
5. The rudderless ship, 24 May 1960, 4 pages
6. The referendum campaign, 25 August 1960, 5 pages
7. The referendum and after, 3 October 1960, 6 pages

1961

1. South Africa and the Prime Ministers' Conference, 9 February 1961, 4 pages
2. The prospects for South Africa's economy, 21 March 1961, 4 pages
3. South Africa isolated, 23 March 1961, 3 pages + Annexures, 4 pages
4. Parliamentary debate on Commonwealth issue, 27 March 1961, 5 pages
5. Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, 1 May 1961, 8 pages + summary 2 pages
6. Racial troubles in May, 15 May 1961, 3 pages
7. South Africa's economic problems, 16 May 1961, 3 pages
8. Post-mortem on the strike, 8 June 1961, 4 pages + summary, 1 page
9. The practical effects of apartheid in South Africa, 31 July 1961, 10 pages
10. South African general elections 1961, 16 August 1961, 5 pages + summary, 1 page
11. South West Africa (Part I), 4 October 1961, 6 pages + Annexure (South West Africa (Part II)), 9 October 1961, 8 pages
12. South Africa: 1961 General Election, 20 October 1961, 3 pages

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13. Swaziland, 24 October 1961, 6 pages + Annexure, 1 page
14. The next five years, 31 October 1961, 4 pages + summary, 1 page

1962

1. The Transkei (Part I), 8 February 1962, 7 pages
2. The Transkei (Part II), 9 February 1962, 4 pages
3. South Africa: A Review, 15 March 1962, 4 pages + summary, 1 page
4. South Africa: Defence, 29 March 1962, 6 pages + summary, 1 page + Annexures, 8 pages
5. Kenya 1962, 25 May 1962, 15 pages + summary, 1 page + Annexure, 1 page
6. The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, 1 June 1962, 8 pages, + summary, 1 page + Annexure, 1 page

J.C.G. Kevin

7. The race problem: some early impressions, 7 December 1962, 9 pages
8. The white groups: some early impressions, 14 December 1962, 4 pages
9. Developments in the Federation, 21 December 1962, 4 pages + summary, 9 lines
10. The South African image, 28 December 1962, 6 pages + summary, 6 lines + Annexure, 2 pages

1963

1. Economics of the Bantustans, 17 January 1963, 7 pages + summary, 16 lines
2. The Coloureds, 23 January 1963, 3 pages
3. Sport and the South African government, 7 February 1963, 5 pages + summary, 4 lines
4. South African defence, 14 February 1963, 6 pages
5. Southern African developments, 5 June 1963, 5 pages + summary, 17 lines
6. Changing trends in white opinion, 7 June 1963, 3 pages + summary, 9 lines
7. The South African stance, 5 July 1963; 5 pages + summary, 10 lines
8. Race federation: The United Party's policy, 16 July 1963, 5 pages + summary, 10 lines
9. Policy of the Progressive Party, 26 July 1963, 4 pages + summary, 10 lines
10. Partition of South Africa, 7 August 1963, 4 pages + summary, 3 paragraphs
11. The police power, 23 August 1963, 5 pages + summary, 3 paragraphs
12. Economic integration of the Bantu, 30 August 1963, 3 pages + summary, 12 lines
13. The white heartland: The Orange River scheme, 14 November 1963, 5 pages + summary, 10 lines
14. The Broederbond, 22 December 1963, 7 pages + summary, 3 paragraphs

1964

1. South Africa: The Year Ahead, 23 January 1964, 6 pages + summary, 16 lines

Appendix V: Australian despatches from South Africa 1946-64

2. South-West Africa: Papua and New Guinea, 13 February 1964, 4 pages + summary, 21 lines
3. Indians in South Africa, 13 March 1964, 7 pages + summary, 1 paragraph
4. Political future of the Coloureds, 2 April 1964, 6 pages + summary, 22 lines
5. The Opposition and South-West Africa: The Odendaal Proposals, 3 April 1964, 5 pages + summary, 3 paragraphs
6. The press and the South African image, 14 May 1964, 6 pages + summary, 2 paragraphs
7. The Myrdal report, 3 June 1964, 7 pages + summary, 3 paragraphs
8. The Bantu as a partner in government, 10 July 1964, 7 pages + summary, 1 paragraph
9. South Africa: The present mood, 4 August 1964, 5 pages + summary, 2 paragraphs
10. South Africa as a moral issue, 20 August 1964, 8 pages + summary, 8 lines
11. This week in Southern Rhodesia, 29 October 1964, 5 pages + summary, 14 lines
12. The Simonstown Agreement, 20 November 1964, 4 pages + summary, 9 lines
13. South Africa: economics and the race problem, 11 December 1964, 5 pages + summary, 15 lines

SOURCES

I. Unpublished Archival Sources and Historical Manuscripts

1. *Australian Archives, Canberra*

CA 3. Cabinet Secretariat I

CRS A4926, Sixth Menzies Ministry - folders of Cabinet submissions. 1956-1958

CA 11. Department of the Treasury

CRS A571, Correspondence files, annual single number series. 1901-1976

CA 18. Department of External Affairs II

CRS A981, Correspondence files, alphabetical series. 1927-42

CRS A989, Correspondence files, multiple number series with year prefix. 1943-1944

CRS A1066, Correspondence files, multiple number series with year and letter prefixes. 1945

CRS A1067, Correspondence files, multiple number series with year and letter prefixes. 1946

CRS A1068, Correspondence files, multiple number series with year and letter prefixes. 1947

CRS A1838, Correspondence files, multiple number series. 1948-1989

CRS A3299, Dr J S Cumpston's collection of material about the history of the Department of External Affairs and its antecedents. 1960-1962

CRS A4231, Bound volumes of despatches from overseas posts. 1940 +

CA 31. Department of the Interior

CRS A659, Correspondence files, Class 1 (general, passports), multiple number series. 1939-1950

Sources

CA 51. Department of Immigration

CRS A446, Correspondence files, annual single number series. 1953 +

CA 197. Office of the Public Service Board

CRS A447, Correspondence Files, 'A' Series. 1924-1950

CA 241. High Commissioner's Office, London

CRS A2910, Correspondence files, multiple number series (Class 400). 1918-1960

CA 250. Australian Aluminium Production Commission

CRS A1050, Estimate of AAPC 16000 ton expansion. 1959-1961

CA 264. Rationing Commission

CRS CP 54/1, Specimen Ration Documents. 1944

CA 273. Trade Commissioner Service Directorate, Department of Trade

CRS A3120, Correspondence files, multiple number series (Post and Policy files). 1963 +

CA 588. Prime Minister's Office, 1904-1911.

CRS A2 Correspondence files, annual single number series, 1904-1920.

CA 590. Commonwealth Office of Education

CRS A1361, Correspondence files, multiple number series. 1947-1960

CA 1472. Cabinet Secretariat II

CRS A5818, Seventh Menzies Ministry - folders of Cabinet submissions (first series). 1958-1961

CRS A5819, Seventh Menzies Ministry - folders of Cabinet submissions (second series). 1961-1963

CA 1882. Royal Commission on Espionage

CRS A6213, Correspondence files, alpha-numeric series with 'RCE' Royal Commission on Espionage prefix 1954-1956

Sources

CA 7010. Australian Embassy, South Africa

CRS A9421, Correspondence files, multiple number series (1st Uniform Post System) (Pretoria). 1946 +

2. *Australian War Memorial*

AWM 254 [1].

3. *Canadian Archives, Ottawa (CA)*

DEA Records, File 167(S).

4. *Central Archives, Pretoria*

A.1. Smuts Collection, 298.

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