

**RONALD HYAM and PETER HENSHAW: THE LION AND THE
SPRINGBOK. BRITAIN AND SOUTH AFRICA SINCE THE BOER WAR**
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In the build-up to South Africa's encounter with England in Perth, Australia, on Saturday 18 October 2003 during the Rugby World Cup Tournament, the relationship (and sometimes struggle) between these two countries was sometimes referred to. (For those not interested in rugby, or who prefer to forget what happened on that day Down Under: South Africa lost 24-6, and England went on to win the coveted trophy in the final on 22 November.)

From mid-1998 until 1 June 2002, the centenary of the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) was commemorated in several countries - for obvious reasons, particularly in South Africa. In the course of the commemoration the relationship between Britain and South Africa was also re-evaluated, although most of the hundreds of publications arising from the centennial concentrated on the military events and the direct consequences of the war and its effect on civilians and matters such as race relations.

It is therefore fitting that two prominent historians decided that, while many academics and others interested in the history of the Anglo-Boer War and its direct results were revisiting the war's battlefields and its consequences, they would complete their research, re-evaluate the period and write a new history of the uneasy, special relationship between Britain and South Africa in the century that followed the bloodiest conflict ever between these two countries, or rather between the Great Britain of the late nineteenth century and two small Boer republics.

The result is **The Lion and the Springbok**, a unique account of the dynamics and divergences of the relationship between Britain and South Africa. The book contains a series of studies, rather than a single, interconnected narrative. The chapters reflect some of the main issues that have aroused the most interest over the years. After discussing the uneasy relationship between the two countries (chapter 1), the authors briefly trace the road to war, 1895 to 1899 (chapter 2). They then chart the continuing relationship between the Lion and the Springbok from the bruising experience of the Anglo-Boer War in all its political, economic, cultural and geostrategic aspects. They unmask the post-war myth of magnanimity (chapter 3); they discuss African interests and the South Africa Act (chapter 4), and review the struggle for the High Commission Territories, i.e. Bechuanaland, Basutoland and Swaziland, which continued all the way from 1910 to 1961 (chapter 5).

In line with their thematic-chronological approach, the authors then tackle the economic dimension of the relationship between Britain and South Africa, up to 1961 (chapter 6); Britain, the United Nations and the 'South African disputes' are discussed in chapter 7, and the political consequences of Bechuanaland's Seretse Khama's marriage to Ruth Williams in chapter 8. Strategic matters are analysed in chapters 9 and 10: firstly, the efforts to contain Afrikanerdom, which can be regarded as the geopolitical origins of the Central African Federation (which brought together the then Nyasaland and Northern and Southern Rhodesia), and secondly, the transfer of the Royal Navy's strategically situated Simon's Town Naval Base to South Africa in April 1957.

In chapter 11 the gradual parting of the ways between South Africa and Britain is traced through the 1950s until South Africa left the Commonwealth in March 1961, shortly before becoming a republic. The next chapter deals with the way in which South Africans viewed Britain during the period 1945 to 1961; and in the final chapter, some British reactions to apartheid (1948 to 1994) are discussed. As the Afrikaner nationalist identity hardened and South African politics slid into the extremes of apartheid, relations between South Africa and Britain deteriorated. In the epilogue, the return of the 'new' South Africa to the Commonwealth in 1994 is briefly discussed.

The book's value is enhanced by the inclusion of three maps, six figures, three photographs, five cartoons, five tables, and an index. There is a select (albeit very comprehensive) list of sources, which, together with no fewer than 969 footnotes, attests to the thorough research that was done – a process that began in the mid-1980s.

AJP Taylor once said that a historian has failed with regard to the writing of a particular book if his or her reader does not feel compelled to turn the page. Ronald Hyam and Peter Henshaw have definitely succeeded in this regard. Those interested in the history of the relationship between Britain and South Africa, particularly regarding intergovernmental relations, will do themselves a disservice if they do not read this fascinating and thought-provoking book.

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