

# PROFESSOR LEO FOUCHÉ, THE HISTORY DEPARTMENT AND THE AFRIKANERIZATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA<sup>1</sup>

F.A. Mouton

*Department of History, University of South Africa,  
P.O. Box 392, Pretoria, 0001*

Professor Leo Fouché, die Departement Geskiedenis en die Afrikaanswording van die Universiteit van Pretoria

Leo Fouché was een van die vroegste Afrikanerhistorici en die eerste geskiedenisprofessor verbonde aan die Transvaalse Universiteitskollege (TUK), later die Universiteit van Pretoria. Sy Blouboek oor die rebellie van 1914 het hom van die meerderheid Afrikaners vervreem aangesien dit 'n apologie vir die regering was. Fouché se posisie as 'n uitgeworpene onder die Afrikanernasionaliste is vererger deur sy weiering om hom by die Afrikaanse beweging te skaar tydens die stryd om die TUK in 'n Afrikanerinrigting te omskep. Na die Afrikaanswording van die Universiteit van Pretoria in 1932 is dit van die Departement Geskiedenis verwag om volksgeskiedenis te doseer om Afrikanernasionalisme aan te moedig. Fouché het dit geopponeer, met die gevolg dat sy posisie by die universiteit so onaangenaam gemaak is dat hy in 1934 bedank het om die departementshoofskap van die Departement Geskiedenis aan die Universiteit van die Witwatersrand te aanvaar.

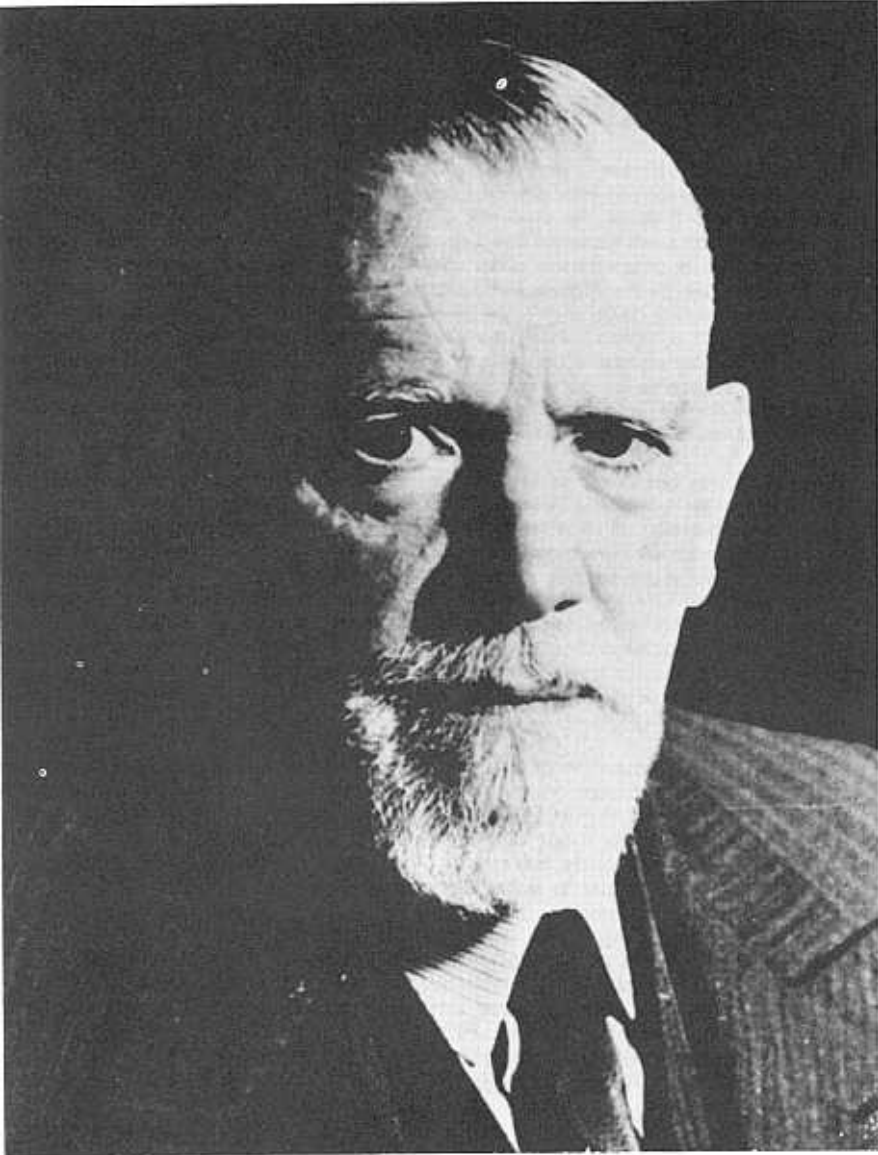
Leo Fouché was one of the earliest Afrikaner historians and the first history professor at the Transvaal University College (TUC), later the University of Pretoria. His Blue Book on the rebellion of 1914 led to his estrangement from Afrikaners as it tended to be an apologia for the Government. Fouché's position as an outcast amongst Afrikaner nationalists was aggravated by the struggle to make the TUC an Afrikaner institution as he refused to side with the Afrikaans movement. When the University of Pretoria became an Afrikaner institution in 1932 it was expected from the history department to teach "volksgeskiedenis" to encourage Afrikaner nationalism. Fouché opposed this and as a result he was totally ostracised. His position became so untenable that he resigned his post in 1934 to accept the history Chair at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Professor Leo Fouché was one of the earliest Afrikaner historians and a firm believer in the philosophy that history has to be seen as a neutral and objective science rising above politics. He firmly rejected the idea that historical events have to be continually reinterpreted to meet current political demands. This historical approach was inimical to the demands of rising Afrikaner nationalism. Together with his loyalty towards, and friendship with General J.C. Smuts and his opposition to the Afrikanerization of the University of Pretoria, it made him *persona non grata* with the Afrikaner establishment. Afrikaner nationalists found it unacceptable that he and not a true "Afrikaner" was in charge of the history department and waged a campaign to gain control of the department in order to use it in the service of the Afrikaner folk. As a result Fouché was hounded until, finding his position at the university too humiliating, he resigned his Chair in 1934. I.D. Bosman, with impeccable Afrikaner credentials, was appointed his successor. Under his guidance the history department became dedicated to "volksgeskiedenis".

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Leo Fouché  
*Photograph: University of the Witwatersrand Archives*

Fouché was born on 24 September 1880 in Villiersdorp, the son of W.C.P. Fouché, a well-known educator. In 1889, his father became the principal of the Riebeeck West school where one of his pupils was D.F. Malan, the future Prime Minister of South Africa. J.C. Smuts was also a native of the district and became friendly with the Fouché family. A serious hip problem at the age of 12 caused Fouché to be bed-ridden with leg irons for six years as it was feared that he had a tubercular hip. Although this was not the case, he was left with a permanently stiff hip and one leg that was shorter than the other.<sup>2</sup> In this period Smuts was a frequent visitor to his bedside and it was the start of Fouché's lifelong love and admiration for him.<sup>3</sup> Whilst bed-ridden his father educated him at home and he went straight from bed to the Victoria College, the forerunner of the University of Stellenbosch. He was a brilliant student after obtaining a B.A. degree in 1903 he went to the University of Ghent in Belgium, where he was awarded a doctorate for his thesis, *'Tien jaren uit de wordingsgeschiedenis der Boeren (1652-1662)'*.<sup>4</sup>

On completion of his doctorate Fouché applied for the history Chair at the newly founded Transvaal University College (TUC) in Pretoria. The selection of a candidate was controversial with one group at the college favouring an English-speaking historian while others preferred an Afrikaner who they felt would be able to lecture more authoritatively on national history. His candidature was successful after some manoeuvring as the English-speaking majority on the TUC Council and Senate opposed him. His appointment was a *guid pro quo* for the nomination of Dr P.G. Gundry as professor in Physics.<sup>5</sup> (One of the unsuccessful applicants for the history chair was W.M. Macmillan who later became South Africa's leading liberal historian).<sup>6</sup>

At this stage, before the rise of an exclusive Afrikaner nationalism, Fouché's Afrikaner credentials were impeccable. His father in 1905 had been one of four teachers who had broken away from the English-orientated South African Teachers Association to start an Afrikaans equivalent. He also financed its official magazine out of his own pocket.<sup>7</sup> One of Fouché's uncles was T.C. Stoffberg, a respected educationist, a hero of the South African War and later an influential National Party (NP) politician.<sup>8</sup> Afrikaners thus expected much from Fouché.

Fouché began his duties at the TUC in February 1909, becoming in the process one of the founders of the college. In 1915 he was chairman of the Senate and between 1924 and 1929 chairman of the library committee. Apart from history he also lectured ethics, logics, psychology and political science.<sup>9</sup> In 1911 he complained to the Senate that he was overworked as he had to lecture 31 hours a week.<sup>10</sup> Although he was eventually relieved of the other subjects he still had to carry a heavy burden as the only history lecturer. In 1922, he complained that it was impossible to give all his classes singlehanded, claiming that "It has injured my health and gives me serious throat trouble."<sup>11</sup> His complaints did not fall on deaf ears and in 1923 J.A.I. Agar-Hamilton was appointed as a lecturer in the department.<sup>12</sup> Despite this appointment Fouché's workload was of such a nature that du-

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2. Interview with Dr M. Snow and P. Fouché, Fouché's children, 13-11-1991.
  3. Central Archives, Pretoria: Smuts Papers, Box 280: Mrs E Fouché - General J.C. Smuts, 25-3-1949.
  4. *Dictionary of South African biography (hereafter DSAB) V* (Pretoria, 1987), pp. 274-275.
  5. *Ad Destinatum. Gedenkboek van die Universiteit van Pretoria* (Johannesburg, 1960), p. 16.
  6. C. Saunders, *The making of the South African past. Major historians on race and class* (Cape Town, 1988), p. 49.
  7. *DSAB III*, (Cape Town, 1977), p. 304; P.H. Zietsman, *Die taal is gans die volk* (Pretoria, 1992), p. 57.
  8. *DSAB III*, p. 762.
  9. *Ad Destinatum*, pp. 102, 112, 313.
  10. University of Pretoria (hereafter UP): Personnel file of L. Fouché (hereafter personnel file), L. Fouché - The Secretary of the Senate, 15-3-1911.
  11. *Ibid.*, L. Fouché - The Registrar, 17-5-1922.
  12. *Ibid.*, The Registrar - L. Fouché, 19-8-1922.

ring his 25 years in Pretoria he was only once able to take leave. Even during the First World War when Smuts personally requested his services as his private secretary<sup>13</sup> the TUC Council requested his return to the campus after a few months.<sup>14</sup>

Fouché was a popular yet strict lecturer who maintained high standards.<sup>15</sup> In all of his lectures his emphasis was on history as a true and neutral science and on its objectivity.<sup>16</sup> In keeping with his conviction, he used original source material to train his students in the techniques of finding and verifying historical documents.<sup>17</sup> He also emphasized the need for objectivity in writing and teaching history. He drilled it into his students that history was not a means to praise heroes, or to besmirch opponents, but to place the past in the right perspective.<sup>18</sup> One of his former students, C.J. Uys, would later claim that he was the father of the scientific school of historiography in South Africa.<sup>19</sup>

Ironically, in practice Fouché failed to live up to the demands of objectivity he expected from his students. During his short stint as Smuts's secretary during 1914 he was requested to investigate the causes of the rebellion of 1914. He would later claim that he was foolish to have done so, but that he had no choice as it was an order and part of his military service.<sup>20</sup> Although Fouché claimed that his report was objective as he used official documents to bring undisputed evidence together and avoided personal commentary,<sup>21</sup> his conclusions, *Report on the outbreak of the rebellion and the policy of the government with regard to its suppression* (UG 10/1915), led to his estrangement from the majority of Afrikaners. The Blue Book condemned the actions of the rebels and tended to be an apologia for the government, without attempting to explain the rationale behind the uprising.<sup>22</sup> It is obvious that Fouché's political affiliations influenced his report, yet he would never recognize or admit it, and would continue to teach that history was a neutral and objective science.

With the growing nationalist spirit amongst Afrikaners since the formation of the NP in 1914 the report served to make Fouché an outcast amongst many Afrikaners on the campus.<sup>23</sup> The NP was founded to campaign for what they regarded as the rights of the Afrikaner and its culture. The party also rejected the conciliation policy of General L. Botha and Smuts's South African Party towards English-speakers. According to Fouché, friends refused to greet him and treated him as though he were a leper or criminal.<sup>24</sup> His outspoken admiration for Smuts which was expressed both in and outside the lecture room<sup>25</sup> further aggravated the situation. He would

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13. Interview with M. Snow and P. Fouché, 13-11-1991.

14. UP: Personnel file: L. Fouché - The Registrar, 12-7-1922; L. Fouché - The Rector, 25-2-1934.

15. Personal communication with Dr P.W. Venter, 8-10-1991; Ds G. Grobler, 18-10-1991; *Star*, 18-3-1949.

16. Interview with M. Snow and P. Fouché, 13-11-1991.

17. Central Archives, Pretoria: Harm Oost Collection, Box 25: Sworn statement of W.P. van R. van Oudsthoorn, former student of Fouché, 7-6-1952.

18. Letter of a student, R. Bosman, to *Die Transvaler*, 15-3-1934.

19. *Standard Encyclopædia of Southern Africa*, V (Cape Town, 1972), p. 22.

20. *Die Vaderland*, 27-7-1934.

21. *Die Vaderland*, 27-7-1934.

22. G.D. Scholtz, *Die Rebelle 1914-1915* (Johannesburg, 1942), p. 8; A.M. Grundlingh, 'Die rebellie van 1914: 'n historiografiese verkenning', *Kleio XI*, 1979; S.B. Spies, *The rebellion in South Africa 1914-1915* (unpublished MA thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1962), p. 236; F.J. du T. Spies, D.W. Krüger and J.J. Oberholster (eds.), *Die Hertzogtoesprake III* (Johannesburg, 1977), pp. 135, 239.

23. F.A. van Jaarsveld, *Afrikanergeskiedskrywing: Verlede, hede en toekoms* (Johannesburg, 1992), p. 47.

24. *Die Vaderland*, 27-7-1934.

25. C.P. Bresler, Q.C., *Lineage of conflict* (Johannesburg, 1952), p. 108.

never be forgiven for his report on the rebellion and it was constantly used to undermine his reputation as an objective historian. According to W.P. van R. van Oudtshoorn, a history student in the 1920s, Fouché eventually regretted his report. Van Oudtshoorn claimed that when Fouché was confronted by students on the report, he admitted that his version of the rebellion was a blot on his record as an historian as it did not reflect all the facts.<sup>26</sup> It is possible that Van Oudtshoorn may have misinterpreted Fouché's statement as he continued to defend the objectivity of his report.<sup>27</sup>

Fouché's position as an outcast amongst Afrikaner nationalists was aggravated by a language struggle which raged at the TUC in the early twenties. Despite including a large proportion of Afrikaans-speaking students the college was English orientated and until 1918 lectures were only given in English. With the growth of Afrikaner nationalism the demands for Afrikaans lectures became stronger. Although the initial aim of the nationalists was to place the two languages on an equal footing (50% Afrikaans and 50% English) their longterm goal was to make the TUC an Afrikaner institution to serve the Afrikaners in the Transvaal. Here the University of Stellenbosch served as an example of how the college could be used to serve and maintain Afrikaner ideals and to cultivate Afrikaner leaders.<sup>28</sup> The result was a long and bitter struggle primarily between the Afrikaans and English-speaking groups on the campus although some English-speaking lecturers supported the principle of making the college fully bilingual. The election of the Rector was critical in deciding the issue for he would control the college's policy. By the late twenties the English section began to lose ground. The nationalists had gained control of the Senate and with the NP in power since 1924 the number of nationalists appointed to the Council increased until they were in the majority.<sup>29</sup> In 1929 the Council confirmed the Senate's election of A.E. du Toit, a prominent nationalist and advocate of Afrikanerization, as Rector. In the same year the Afrikaner Broederbond (AB), the secret organization and self-appointed guardian of Afrikaner interests, intensified the campaign to capture the college for the Afrikaner.<sup>30</sup> The Afrikaner nationalists were responsible for the achievement of autonomy by the college in 1930 as the University of Pretoria. They believed that with the greater freedom the new status brought, it would be easier for the university to become an Afrikaner institution.<sup>31</sup>

Although Fouché was one of the first lecturers to make use of Dutch and Afrikaans in the classroom, he did not side with the Afrikaans movement. Various reasons can be forwarded for this. It was not that he was against the 50-50 approach, but rather that as a dedicated Smuts supporter it would have been difficult to align himself with the fiery NP supporters who dominated the Afrikaans group. His refusal to side with the movement resulted also from his antipathy towards the Afrikaner establishment after the treatment he received because of his rebellion report. For example, he allowed his membership of the Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Taal, Lettere en Kuns to lapse in 1923 after four years of non-payment.<sup>32</sup> The tactics of the Afrikaans group could also have contributed to his growing estrangement from them. When it became known that he would be on long leave in 1923 and that his replacement, Agar-Hamilton, could only speak English,

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26. Central Archives, Pretoria: Oost Collection, Box 25: Sworn statement by W.P. van R. van Oudtshoorn, 7-6-1952.

27. *Die Vaderland*, 27-7-1934.

28. F.A. van Jaarsveld, 'Gesiedenis van die Departement Geskiedenis, Universiteit van Stellenbosch, 1886-1979' in *Die Afrikaner se groot trek na die stede en ander opstelle* (Johannesburg, 1982), pp. 245-249.

29. Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk Archives, (hereafter NHKA) Pretoria: S.P. Engelbrecht Collection, File 3/4/12: J.E. Holloway, 'Die Afrikaanswording van die T.U.K en die Universiteit van Pretoria', p. 8.

30. A.N. Pelzer, *Die Afrikaner-Broederbond: Eerste 50 jaar* (Johannesburg, 1979), p. 141.

31. *Ad Destinatum*, pp. 48-58; NHKA: Engelbrecht Collection, File 3/4/12: J.E. Holloway, 'Die Afrikaanswording van die T.U.K. en die Universiteit van Pretoria', pp. 8-9.

32. Archives of the Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns, Correspondence 1923: Secretary of the Academy - L. Fouché, 15-2-1923.

there was an outcry from the Afrikaans-speaking students.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore as a result of Fouché's marriage in 1919 to an English-speaking woman, Ernestine van der Berg, his home language became English and his children were educated at English schools.<sup>34</sup> With this background it would have been very difficult for him to identify with the emotional and bitter struggle being waged by Afrikaners against the English speakers on the campus. Fouché's apathy towards the Afrikaans cause was the final straw for the nationalists. According to J.E. Holloway, a prominent activist for Afrikanerization, the nationalists had initially expected a lot from him and their anger was all the greater when they realised that he was inconsistent and unreliable towards the Afrikaners cause.<sup>35</sup>

Although the nationalists achieved their short term aim of a 50-50 policy in 1930, tension on the campus between the Afrikaans and English groups continued. The AB was disappointed that the university was not declared an Afrikaner institution when it achieved autonomy. They began a campaign to place pressure on the University Council to change the language policy.<sup>36</sup> It was the Lamont case of 1932 which finally led to the Afrikanerization of the university. H.P. Lamont was the head of the French department who under the pseudonym Wilfred Saint-Mandé, wrote the book *War, wine and women* in which he made a number of derogatory remarks about Afrikaners. This led to an outcry amongst Afrikaners and when it was rumoured that Mandé was a lecturer at the university, they angrily insisted that the author should be exposed and dismissed. The Rector actively participated in the campaign to expose Mandé, whilst the Senate of the university insisted that the government ban the book.<sup>37</sup>

The campaign to expose Mandé intensified the traumatic and bitter struggle between the two language groups on the campus, while at the same time it widened the rift between the nationalists, and Fouché and other Afrikaans staff who refused to associate themselves with the campaign. The Afrikaans group seized upon the book as an indication that the 50-50 policy could not work as the English neither could nor would respect Afrikaner values and culture.<sup>38</sup> The English group and the more moderate Afrikaners felt on the other hand that even though they might not necessarily approve of the sentiments expressed in *War, wine and women*, they were not prepared to acquiesce in the growing intolerance on the campus and were determined to defend the freedom of action and thought of staff members.<sup>39</sup> Fouché and 16 other professors signed a memorandum that was sent to the press in support of the principle of academic freedom and of the rights of any member of the university staff to speak and write freely in his personal capacity without prior censorship or subsequent penalty.<sup>40</sup> The Afrikaner nationalists were not impressed with this argument which they dismissed as a smokescreen to hide English contempt for the Afrikaner.<sup>41</sup> The Senate also passed a motion strongly disapproving of the memorandum.<sup>42</sup> Fouché also actively associated himself with those who felt that the Rector's treatment of the whole Mandé issue reflected adversely on the university. Together they requested that the Senate meet to put forward a motion demanding Du Toit's resignation. The motion was unsuccessful and was countered by a motion of confidence in Du Toit's prompt and decisive defence of the Afrikaner cause.<sup>43</sup> This victory revealed the strength of Afrikaner nationalism within the university.

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33. UP: Personnel file, L. Fouché - The Registrar, 1-11-1922.

34. Interview with M. Snow and P. Fouché, 13-11-1991.

35. NHKA: Engelbrecht Collection, File 3/4/12: J.E. Holloway, 'Die Afrikaanswording van die T.U.K. en die Universiteit van Pretoria', p. 5.

36. A.N. Pelzer, *Die Afrikaner-Broederbond*, p. 141.

37. *Ad Destinatum*, pp. 60-65.

38. *Trek* 28, Nov. 1932, pp. 7-8.

39. *Rand Daily Mail*, 14-4-1932.

40. *Rand Daily Mail*, 16-4-1932.

41. *Trek* 28, Nov. 1932, p. 8.

42. University of Pretoria: Senate minutes, 4-5-1932.

43. J.C. Steyn, *Trouwe Afrikaners. Aspekte van Afrikanernasionalisme en Suid-Afrikaanse taalpolitiek 1875-1938* (Cape Town, 1987), pp. 165-170; *Ad Destinatum*, pp. 63-64.

On 23 May 1932 four young Afrikaners decided to take matters into their own hands to defend the honour of the Afrikaner. Even though they lacked direct proof that he was Mandé, they abducted Lamont and tarred and feathered him. This assault increased the already high passions, prejudices and tensions between Afrikaans and English speakers. For many Lamont's attackers were heroes, whilst other regarded them as thugs.<sup>44</sup> During the assault trial of his assailants Lamont had to admit that he was Mandé. As a result the university could act against him and he was promptly dismissed.<sup>45</sup> To add salt to the wounds of those who were unhappy about Lamont's treatment, numerous lecturers contributed to the Pro Patria fund to cover the legal fees and fines of his assailants.<sup>46</sup>

At this stage the university was moving rapidly towards becoming an Afrikaner institution. Control of the Arts Faculty by the nationalists was crucial for the Afrikanerization of the university. Shortly after the unsuccessful attempt to remove the Rector, the nationalists successfully introduced a motion of no-confidence in Prof J.P.R. Wallis,<sup>47</sup> Dean of the Faculty of Arts and an outspoken defender of the 50-50 policy.<sup>48</sup> Wallis eventually resigned as Dean in August 1932 explaining that due to "... a succession of ill-conditioned harassments, it has become impossible for me to keep both the office and my selfrespect".<sup>49</sup> The new Dean was H.G. Viljoen, former editor of *Die Huisgenoot*, professor in Greek and a formidable and tough fighter for Afrikaans.<sup>50</sup> With Viljoen in charge Fouché became marginalized in the Faculty. In the meantime the Rector decided to revoke the 50-50 policy and on 13 September 1932 the Council decided in favour of the university becoming an Afrikaans institution.<sup>51</sup>

Apart from crossing swords with the Rector over the Lamont case Fouché also had personal differences with him. In 1932 due to financial difficulties, the university had to cut staff salaries.<sup>52</sup> The Rector was instructed by the finance committee of the Council to discuss the matter with members who were reluctant to agree to the cut. Fouché was unhappy about the cut, yet Du Toit gave him no opportunity to present his objections and insisted that he return his form giving authorization for the cut. Fouché refused to do so, but stated on the form his desire to explain that he thought the reduction in salaries unnecessary. Du Toit who was known for his inflexibility, and a man who could be short-tempered and tactless<sup>53</sup>, ignored Fouché's request and informed the Council of his refusal.<sup>54</sup> As result the Council decided to dismiss him.<sup>55</sup> As this happened shortly after the failed motion of no-confidence in the Rector, it is possible that Du Toit's actions were politically motivated. On hearing that he would be dismissed and realizing that there was not alternative to the reduction in salaries, Fouché was obliged to back down.<sup>56</sup> It took a special meeting of the Council to rescind the decision to dismiss him.<sup>57</sup> For Fouché this must have been a humiliating experience, but his difficulties at the university were only beginning.

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44. J.C. Steyn, *Trouwe Afrikaners*, pp. 166-167; D. Joubert, *Teer-en-veer in 1932. Rondom die Lamont-saak* (Cape Town, 1972), pp. 27-29.

45. UP: Senate minutes, 3-8-1932.

46. J.C. Steyn, *Trouwe Afrikaners*, p. 173.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 168.

48. *Ad Destinatum*, p. 110.

49. UP: Arts Faculty minutes, Letter to the Rector, 23-8-1932.

50. *DSAB V*, pp. 844-845; *Ad Destinatum*, p. 109.

51. *Ad Destinatum*, pp. 60-68.

52. UP: Personnel file, Rector - Staff, 20-4-1932.

53. NHKA: Engelbrecht Collection, File 3/4/12: J.E. Holloway, 'Die Afrikaanswording van die T.U.K. en die Universiteit van Pretoria', p. 6; *Ad Destinatum*, p. 82.

54. UP: Personnel file, L. Fouché - the Acting Chairman of the Council, 23-5-1932.

55. UP: University of Pretoria, Council minutes, 20-5-1932.

56. UP: Personnel file, L. Fouché - The Acting Chairman of the Council, 23-5-1932.

57. UP: Council Minutes, 26-5-1932.

The Afrikanerization of the University of Pretoria meant more than a change in the language policy, it became a "volksuniversiteit". According to *Trek*, a student magazine, the university was now to be regarded as in the service of the volk and its mission was to promote the ideals of the Voortrekkers.<sup>58</sup> This meant that the university was to be imbedded in the life of the volk with the basic task of serving and protecting its identity and unique character.<sup>59</sup> For staff and students, thus entailed trust in the perspectives of the volk and an acceptance at university level of these perspectives.<sup>60</sup> Academic freedom was only permissible within the context of a university bound to the volk.<sup>61</sup> This view was based on the premise that the volk was more important than the individual and that the latter had to be prepared to accept restrictions on his personal freedom for the good of the Afrikaner.<sup>62</sup> History was regarded as an important agent in turning students into fullblooded Afrikaners. Only "volksgeskiedenis", or blood and tears history of the thirties and forties as Prof F.A. van Jaarsveld refers to it,<sup>63</sup> was acceptable, for the Afrikaner and his heroes had to receive their rightful place and had to be legitimized and mobilized.<sup>64</sup> It was thus expected from Afrikaner historians to serve the cause of the volk.

As a "volksuniversiteit" or Voortrekker university as it was popularly known by students and staff members, a culture of intolerance was encouraged against those who were not politically correct. These included English-speaking staff members and especially Afrikaners who were regarded as disloyal. The latter were singled out for special attention for they were to be rejected and never forgiven as they were regarded as traitors and bigger enemies than the enemy itself.<sup>65</sup> The new attitude on the campus was expressed by A. Brandt, chairman of the Students Representative Council, who asserted in 1934 that when it came to the ideals and policy of the university nobody could be impartial.<sup>66</sup> As a result the position of politically unacceptable lecturers was made as difficult as possible. One of the earliest victims of this policy was Edgar Brookes, professor in public administration and political science. In the twenties Brookes had been a firm supporter of the Afrikaner cause,<sup>67</sup> but he left let down by the decision to turn the university into an Afrikaner institution. Furthermore, his growing liberal outlook on racial affairs led to conflict with the Rector and eventually his resignation became inevitable.<sup>68</sup>

Despite accepting the requirement that history had to be used in the service of the Afrikaner, nationalist historians regarded themselves as objective and scientific,<sup>69</sup> but they also believed that the teaching of history was too important to be left in the hands of a person incapable of sharing their perspective. Fouché with his political background and his philosophy that history was a neutral science which should not be manipulated for political purposes, obviously did not fit into the mould

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58. *Trek* 28, Nov. 1932, p. 7.

59. J. Degenaar, 'The concept of a volksuniversiteit', in H.W. van der Merwe and D. Welsh (eds.), *The future of the University in southern Africa* (Cape Town, 1977), p. 157; T.J. Hugo, *Die Afrikaanse universiteit en sy taak in die volkslewe* (Cape Town, 1941), pp. 113-116.

60. J. Degenaar, 'The concept of a Volksuniversiteit', p. 157.

61. *Ibid.*, p. 156.

62. P.S. Dreyer, 'Die liberalisme', in P.S. Dreyer (ed.), *Afrikaner-liberalisme* (Pretoria, 1977), p. 18.

63. F.A. van Jaarsveld, 'Gesiedenis van die Departement Geskiedenis, Universiteit van Stellenbosch', pp. 260-261.

64. A. Grundlingh, 'Politics, principles and problems of a profession: Afrikaner historians and their discipline, c.1920 - c.1965', pp. 1-2, 10. Paper delivered at the University of the Witwatersrand History Workshop, 6-10 Feb. 1990; F.A. van Jaarsveld, *Afrikanergeskiedskrywing*, p. 49.

65. P.S. Dreyer, 'Die liberalisme', p. 23.

66. *Trek* 30, July 1934, p. 7.

67. NHKA: Engelbrecht Collection, J.E. Holloway, 'Die Afrikaanswording van die T.U.K. en die Universiteit van Pretoria', p. 6; E. Brookes, *A South African pilgrimage* (Johannesburg, 1977), p. 19.

68. E. Brookes, *A South African pilgrimage*, p. 47.

69. A. Grundlingh, 'Politics, principles and problems of a profession', p. 13.



of a volks historian and was therefore unacceptable as a lecturer at a volks university. *Die Volksblad* claimed in 1934 that he had only contempt for Afrikaner and especially Voortrekker history.<sup>70</sup> According to Markus Viljoen, a former M.A. student of Fouché and the editor of *Die Huisgenoot*, his old professor was narrow-minded and un-Afrikaner if not anti-Afrikaner in his outlook.<sup>71</sup> Prof S.P. Engelbrecht, Dean of the Faculty of Theology, church historian, expert on Transvaal history and one of Fouché's main antagonists, also claimed that Fouché and his protégé C.J. Uys were not good Afrikaner historians. According to him they looked at history from an English viewpoint and they ignored Afrikaner history as they regarded it as inferior compared to the history of the British Empire.<sup>72</sup> The Rector was also upset that only two weeks in one of the courses was spent on Transvaal history.<sup>73</sup> Fouché was vulnerable to this type of criticism as European history dominated the department's curriculum.<sup>74</sup> But the crux of the matter was Fouché's antagonism towards Afrikaner nationalism. He regarded it as intolerant, too isolationist and as a case of mental rabies that had to be cured.<sup>75</sup> The growth of Afrikaner nationalism also changed his philosophy on history. By the thirties he claimed that it was the task of history teachers to detribalize the Afrikaner youth so as to save them from the dangers of Afrikaner nationalism, namely intolerance and isolation.<sup>76</sup> Feelings against Fouché were so strong that even his deceased father became a target of gossip. His old pupil D.F. Malan claimed that Fouché senior had been anti-Boer in his attitudes and that he had spied for British intelligence.<sup>77</sup>

Another point of criticism against the history department was the fact that Fouché's colleague, Agar-Hamilton, could not speak Afrikaans. Eventually the Senate decided to intervene and 'strengthen' the department, meaning to place Afrikaner nationalists in it. It also commissioned the Roos Commission which was investigating ways to make the university more effective, to study affairs in the department.<sup>78</sup> One of the charges the commission had to investigate was the accusation that the two lecturers did no research, an allegation that the commission rejected in its report.<sup>79</sup> Yet for Fouché who had played such an important role in the development of the university by carrying an abnormal workload for years, the ingratitude and vindictiveness of the Senate must have been painful. Ironically the accusation was made in a period when he was playing a leading role in the Mapungubwe excavations.

The Senate's decision also entailed the appointment of a committee to re-organize the history department with Fouché as the only non-nationalist member. The Rector played the leading role in the committee by deciding that Engelbrecht would teach South African history including a course on the Trekker states which would be compulsory for all history students.<sup>80</sup> Prof M. Bokhorst of the department Netherlands cultural history would teach European history with the emphasis on relations between South Africa and the Netherlands. Fouché would be left with British constitutional and colonial history. As Bokhorst and Engelbrecht would do the extra lectures without additional remuneration, the Rector reasoned that Agar-Hamil-

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70. *Die Volksblad*, 31-7-1934.

71. NHKA: Engelbrecht Collection, File P1 2/7 1924-1940: Markus Viljoen - S.P. Engelbrecht, 7-9-1934.

72. *Ibid.*, File 2/7 Uys: S.P. Engelbrecht - Markus Viljoen, 3-6-1934.

73. UP: Minutes of a special meeting of the Arts Faculty, 31-10-1933.

74. F.A. van Jaarsveld, *Afrikanergeskiedskrywing*, pp. 60, 65.

75. *Die Vaderland*, 27-7-1934; 31-7-1934.

76. *Die Vaderland*, 27-7-1934.

77. Central Archives, Pretoria: Oost Collection, Box 25: Oost's notes of a conversation with D.F. Malan, 12-6-1952.

78. *Ad Destinatum*, pp. 112-113.

79. NHKA: Engelbrecht Collection, File 3/4/7: Roos Commission report, p. 29.

80. UP: Senate minutes, 29-11-1933.

ton's services would no longer be required and he could be retrenched, whilst the money saved in the process could be used to appoint a lecturer in the theology department. Fouché vehemently opposed the decision, but was outnumbered.<sup>81</sup>

Economic reasons were thus used to cover the political motives of ridding the university of Agar-Hamilton. That he was an outstanding historian who specialized on the Voortrekkers, that his M.A. dealt with the constitutional history of the Trekker states and his B.Litt thesis on the native policy of the Voortrekkers,<sup>82</sup> was of no importance as he was not an Afrikaner. For the Afrikaner nationalists it was not possible for Agar-Hamilton to write proper Afrikaner history as he was not a member of the volk.<sup>83</sup> And obviously he also could not be trusted to teach young Afrikaners about their past. Fortunately for Agar-Hamilton the plan to dispose of him was leaked to the press.<sup>84</sup> This led to an outcry and the plan to retrench him was dropped. Even the Senate, to its credit, was outraged at the idea that a staff member could be dismissed to make another appointment possible. It also condemned the scheme as an outrageous and unheard of interference with the rights and privileges of a lecturer.<sup>85</sup> The Arts Faculty was most embarrassed by the reaction to the plan. Fouché was suspected of having leaked it to the press and a motion was accepted in faculty that he sign a statement that he had nothing to do with it.<sup>86</sup> Although the statement was required from all the committee members it was obviously aimed at him as the only one who had opposed the committee's decisions. An obviously upset Fouché denied he was responsible and pointed out that should he want to make a statement about the university he would do it under his own name, not anonymously.<sup>87</sup>

Fouché was not opposed to Engelbrecht and Bokhorst teaching a number of history courses as they had done so before. He was however opposed to the fact that they would be given set curriculums, yet would remain autonomous and unaccountable to the history department.<sup>88</sup> For Fouché as head of the department this was humiliating. Furthermore, he suspected that Engelbrecht was trying to take over his work to make him redundant.<sup>89</sup> What made this unrequested assistance even more difficult to accept was the personalities and politics of the two men. Bokhorst was a Netherlander who identified with Afrikaner nationalism and, with Engelbrecht, had been one of the lectures who had donated money to the Pro Patria fund which had assisted Lamont's assailants.<sup>90</sup> But of the two it was Engelbrecht who was the real thorn in Fouché's side.

Engelbrecht was one of the leading forces behind the Afrikanerization of the university.<sup>91</sup> He was the descendant of Voortrekkers and his father had died in the South African War, a war that had financially ruined his family and led to him being committed to an orphanage.<sup>92</sup> He was a fiery nationalist and an opponent of anything

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81. UP: Arts Faculty minutes of the committee i/e the re-organization of the departments history, philosophy and religion, 27-10-1933.

82. UP: Personnel file: L. Fouché - The Registrar, 5-3-1926; F.A. van Jaarsveld, *Afrikanergeskiedskrywing*, p. 72.

83. J. du Bruyn, 'Swartes in die Afrikanergeskiedskrywing', p. 8. (Paper delivered at the Department of History, University of South Africa, 11-3-1992).

84. *Rand Daily Mail*, 31-10-1933.

85. UP: Senate minutes, 8-11-1933.

86. UP: Minutes of an extraordinary Arts Faculty meeting, 31-10-1933.

87. UP: Personnel file: L. Fouché - The Rector, 23-11-1933.

88. UP: Arts Faculty minutes, 24-11-1933.

89. UP: Senate minutes, Report back on the re-organization of the Department of History, 28-11-1933.

90. J.C. Steyn, *Trouwe Afrikaners*, p. 173.

91. Archives of the Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns: File 20/9/24: Homage by A.D. Pont to Prof S.P. Engelbrecht on receiving a medal of honour for his cultural achievements, 1-5-1967.

92. *DSAB V*, pp. 242-243.

English.<sup>93</sup> He saw the purpose of history to be the maintenance of the Afrikaners' unique identity and the development of their spiritual and cultural self-expression. It was impossible for him to be impartial in his historical writings as he was far too committed to the Afrikaner and the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk.<sup>94</sup> In his books on the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk and on President T.F. Burgers he portrayed those he agreed with as good, pure and truthful, whilst those he disagreed with were precisely the opposite.<sup>95</sup>

Apart from their different philosophies of history, Engelbrecht's personality aggravated the situation. Engelbrecht was a cantankerous person who was intolerant and unpleasant to those he disagreed with, whilst he also had a reputation as an intriguer.<sup>96</sup> Years later he would play an important role in the persecution of Prof A. Geyser after he had broken with the Afrikaner establishment and criticized apartheid.<sup>97</sup> Engelbrecht with his autonomous status in the department must have been a bitter pill for Fouché to swallow.

Fouché also had to endure other pruricks as a result of his treatment at the university. He complained about the university's postal system for example,<sup>98</sup> a complaint which the Rector saw as a questioning of his authority and as a threat of non-compliance with university regulations. As a result he brusquely dismissed Fouché's complaint.<sup>99</sup> These pruricks must have contributed to Fouché's already difficult position at the university.

His marginalization within the university would have been more painful if he had known that his protégé C.J. Uys had tried to ingratiate himself with Engelbrecht. In his correspondence with Engelbrecht, Uys insinuated that Fouché was unable to assist him as his promoter, and that they differed over his conclusions on Paul Kruger. After hearing about his mentor's problems with the Rector he asked Engelbrecht to assist him in obtaining a post at the university if Fouché had to leave.<sup>100</sup>

With Bokhorst and Engelbrecht enjoying an autonomous status in his department, Fouché felt by February 1934 that his position at the university had changed fundamentally and was no longer tenable. He considered that he had no option but to look for another job for it was impossible for anyone with a shred of self respect to continue under the new circumstances.<sup>101</sup> He explained his predicament to Margaret Hodgson, history lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits):

"I dont want to say too much, but two notorious firebrands have been pitchforked into my department 'to strengthen it', and to teach History according to a new principle laid down officially: **History is not a neutral science!**"<sup>102</sup>

Fortunately for Fouché W.M. Macmillan had resigned his Chair at Wits in September 1933. Fouché applied for it and it was rumoured that Smuts used his influence to ensure his appointment.<sup>103</sup>

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93. Personal communication with Prof P.S. Dreyer, 7-10-1991.

94. *DSAB V*, pp. 242-243.

95. F.A. van Jaarsveld, *Apologetiek en objektiwiteit in ons kerkgeskiedskrywing* (Elsiesrivier, 1953), pp. 37, 38, 42.

96. Personal communication with Dr P.W. Venter, 8-10-1991; Dr W.T.H. Beukes, 4-10-1991; Prof P.S. Dreyer, 7-10-1991.

97. I. Wilkins and H. Strydom, *The Super-Afrikaners. Inside the Afrikaner Broederbond* (Johannesburg, 1980), pp. 299, 303.

98. UP: Personnel file, L. Fouché - The Rector, 5-10-1933.

99. *Ibid.*, Rector - L. Fouché, 6 and 7-10-1933.

100. NHKA: Engelbrecht Collection, File 2/7 Uys: C.J. Uys - S.P. Engelbrecht, 2-4-1932 and 2-8-1932.

101. University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg: Ballinger Papers, B2.16.1 (file 1): L. Fouché - M. Hodgson, 19-2-1934.

102. *Ibid.*

103. B.K. Murray, *Wits: The early years* (Johannesburg, 1982), p. 269.

Even Fouché's departure from the University of Pretoria was marred by unpleasantness. His recommendation that Agar-Hamilton should take over his course for first year students was rejected by the Senate after some students complained that he would lecture in English.<sup>104</sup> (Agar-Hamilton to the frustration of the nationalists would continue to lecture in English till 1940 when he went on military leave, resigning his post in 1946 to become eventually an ordained Anglican priest).

Years after he left Pretoria, Fouché still caused waves at the university. When he retired from Wits in 1942 its Rector, H.R. Raikes, enquired whether Pretoria University would be prepared to contribute to Fouché's gratuity because of his long service at the university.<sup>105</sup> Although Pretoria University was legally correct in refusing any contribution as Fouché had resigned his post, Raikes was angered by the university's attitude and this led to an acrimonious correspondence between the two rectors.<sup>106</sup>

Fouché's successor at the University of Pretoria was I.D. Bosman who's impeccable Afrikaner nationalist credentials was a crucial factor in his appointment.<sup>107</sup> Bosman became a popular and influential figure on the campus and he was highly regarded as an academic due to his activities as a cultural leader.<sup>108</sup> His nationalist approach to history also made the subject more popular. Whilst Fouché's era delivered only a handful of M.A.'s and one D.Phil, the history department during Bosman's 13 years produced 33 M.A.'s and ten doctorates.<sup>109</sup>

Ironically Fouché was also unpopular with a group at Wits, this time with the liberals. After Macmillan they regarded him as a distinct let down and felt that the history department had lost its status as the forcing-house of liberal scholarship. It was claimed that he did not serve his department well and that he was an uninspiring lecturer and narrow in outlook.<sup>110</sup> According to Prof E. Axelson, a former colleague of Fouché, these accusations are not true and he claims that Prof B. Murray, who criticized Fouché in his official history of Wits, was unnecessary critical and prejudiced against him. According to him Fouché was a far more liberal and inspiring lecturer than given credit for.<sup>111</sup> Although not so productive and inspiring as Macmillan, it is possible that Fouché's negative image at Wits, which also influenced Prof Murray's book, was the result of disappointment that one of Macmillan's protégés like Margaret Hodgson or C.W. de Kiewiet did not succeed him. Margaret Hodgson and William Ballinger, her future husband, both of whom were upset that she did not get the post, contributed to the allegations that he was a political appointment thanks to the influence of Smuts. Furthermore they also claimed that Fouché was anti-black.<sup>112</sup> This was not justified as his historic interests were not just Eurocentric<sup>113</sup> and he was sympathetic to the position of blacks and contributed to improving their position at Wits.<sup>114</sup> It is interesting to note that Fouché's academic reputation at Wits and Pretoria University was undermined by groups that differed with him. The liberals at Wits and the nationalists at Pretoria University had the same complaint about Fouché. It was that he encouraged objectivity through the study of documents, but neglected the role of interpretation

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104. UP: Senate minutes, 28-2-1934; Personnel file, Dean of the Arts Faculty - L. Fouché, 2-3-1934.

105. UP: Personnel file, H.R. Raikes - M.C. Botha, 22-7-1942.

106. *Ibid.*, H.R. Raikes - M.C. Botha, 3-10-1942; M.C. Botha - H.R. Raikes, 7-10-1942; H.R. Raikes - M.C. Botha, 10-10-1942.

107. A.N. Pelzer, 'Izak Daniël Bosman \*1897 - †1947', *Historiese Studies* 8(1), p. 7.

108. *DSAB III*, pp. 86-87; F.A. van Jaarsveld, *Afrikanergeskiedskrywing*, pp. 52-54.

109. A.N. Pelzer, 'Izak Daniël Bosman', p. 7.

110. B.K. Murray, *Wits*, p. 270.

111. Personal communication with Prof E. Axelson, 19-10-1991; Draft of Prof Axelson's letter to the *Sunday Times*, in the possession of M. Fouché, protesting Murray's description of Fouché.

112. W.M. Macmillan, *My South African years*, (Cape Town, 1975), p. 246; Hull Central Library: Winifred Holtby Collection, file 10: W.G. Ballinger - W. Holtby, 14-2-1934.

113. C. Saunders, *The making of the South African past*, p. 124.

114. Personal communication between Prof E. Axelson and Prof C. Saunders, 15-10-1984. (Letter in the possession of Dr M. Snow.)

in writing history.<sup>115</sup> At Pretoria they wanted history to support Afrikaner nationalism, whilst at Wits many of his critics were used to Macmillan's liberal activism as an historian.

Towards the end of 1942 Fouché resigned his Chair at Wits to become the first full-time chairman of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). He held this post until the end of 1947 when to his delight he was appointed South Africa's envoy in the Netherlands and Belgium. At this stage Fouché was failing and aging rapidly due to bad health.<sup>116</sup> Although he was politically unacceptable to the NP he was recalled for health reasons in 1948. Fouché was despondent about the NP's parliamentary victory, but not unhappy at being recalled as his heart condition had made it difficult for him to fulfil his diplomatic functions.<sup>117</sup> Back in South-Africa his physician confirmed that there was no hope of recovery and he died on 18 March 1949.<sup>118</sup> At his funeral Smuts paid a glowing tribute to his friend and disciple.<sup>119</sup>

Fouché was the victim of Afrikaner nationalism at the University of Pretoria. The radicalization of Afrikaner politics spilled over into the academic world where political loyalty to Afrikaner nationalism became an important element in the principles of Afrikaner academics. Despite believing that they were 'objective-scientific' historians, they used history, sometimes unconsciously, to legitimize the current demands of Afrikaner nationalism through the use of the past. It led to conformity and consensus becoming the hallmark of Afrikaner historians which contributed to their isolation from historiographical developments.

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115. C. Murray, *Wits*, p. 270.

116. L. Egeland, *Bridges of understanding* (Cape Town, 1977), p. 204.

117. Interview with M. Snow and P. Fouché, 13-11-1991.

118. Central Archives, Pretoria: Smuts Collection, Box 275: E. Fouché - J.C. Smuts, 21-12-1948; *Star*, 18-3-1949.

119. *Rand Daily Mail*, 21-3-1949.