

**BROAD SOUTH AFRICANISM AND HIGHER EDUCATION: THE TRANSVAAL  
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE (1908-1919)**

by

**BRONWYN LOUISE STRYDOM**

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Supervisor: Prof K.L. Harris

For my mom, Norma.

“So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.”  
Romans 9:16.

## CONTENTS

PREFACE . . . . .	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS . . . . .	ii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS . . . . .	iii
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS . . . . .	iv
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION AND UNIVERSITY HISTORIES AS A GENRE . . . . .	1
The university and university histories – defining the field. . . . .	6
Trends and approaches . . . . .	11
South African university histories . . . . .	18
University of Pretoria histories . . . . .	25
Conclusion . . . . .	29
CHAPTER II. EXPORTING MODELS: EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES IN THE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURIES . . . . .	30
The university in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century . . . . .	30
British models . . . . .	37
Spread to the colonial world . . . . .	48
Conclusion . . . . .	53
CHAPTER III. THE TRANSVAAL HIGHER EDUCATION LANDSCAPE . . . . .	54
Higher education in South Africa . . . . .	54
Higher education in the Transvaal . . . . .	61
The Transvaal Technical Institute . . . . .	66
Het Volk, Smuts and Pretoria . . . . .	75
Conclusion . . . . .	84
CHAPTER IV. THE DEVELOPMENT OF BROAD SOUTH AFRICANISM AND CONCILIATION . . . . .	86
The South African War and white unity . . . . .	86
Milner, the Kindergarten and English-speaking South Africanism . . . . .	88
Botha, Smuts and Afrikaner conciliation . . . . .	93
The Union of South Africa and white identity . . . . .	101
Conclusion . . . . .	105
CHAPTER V. BROAD SOUTH AFRICANISM AND CONCILIATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION . . . . .	107
Higher education and white unity at the end of the nineteenth century. . . . .	107

Education in the Crown Colony period . . . . .	109
Conciliation in education in the responsible government period . . . . .	111
Union and the search for a national teaching university . . . . .	115
The 1916 University Acts and beyond . . . . .	119
Nation building and higher education . . . . .	123
Conclusion . . . . .	127
CHAPTER VI. INTENDED BROAD SOUTH AFRICANISM AT THE TUC . . . . .	128
The TUC: a broad South Africanist endeavour . . . . .	129
“To sink or swim” (1908-1913) . . . . .	136
Conclusion. . . . .	144
CHAPTER VII. DISCORD IN BROAD SOUTH AFRICANISM AT THE TUC. . . . .	146
“We have already been bribed into schism” (1914-1918) . . . . .	146
The flag incident revisited . . . . .	175
Conclusion. . . . .	179
CHAPTER VIII. EPILOGUE . . . . .	181
IX. BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	197

## **PREFACE**

The establishment of the Transvaal University College (TUC) in Pretoria took place at a very significant historical time in the wake of the South African War and its first decade coincided with the formation of the Union of South Africa and the outbreak of World War I. Furthermore, in this period successive administrations of the Transvaal and of South Africa pursued an ideal of forming a new unified white South African identity known as broad South Africanism. This project was strongly associated with education and found expression in much of the discourse regarding emerging higher education in the country. This study will approach the early history of the TUC from the perspective of broad South Africanism, attempting to shed light on white identity politics and their relationship to higher education in these early decades of the twentieth century.

The thesis will begin by examining university history as a genre of historical writing, highlighting various approaches to the writing of university histories. It will then investigate the development of universities in Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in order to point out influential trends and models which can be traced in the establishment of South African universities. This is followed by a brief account of the growth of higher education in South Africa, paying particular attention to its development in the Transvaal which gave rise to the establishment of the TUC, first in Johannesburg and then in Pretoria. The development of the notions of broad South Africanism and conciliation will then be considered followed by an examination of how these notions were related to higher education in this period. The study will then focus specifically on the way in which broad South Africanism was manifested at the TUC. It will highlight official intentions regarding broad South Africanism at the College and the initial responses of the student body to this policy. A second section will discuss the development of broad South Africanism at the TUC after the outbreak of World War I and the ensuing 1914 rebellion. This will also include an investigation of sentiments which opposed broad South Africanism, favouring a more exclusive white identity. Thus, this study will endeavour to demonstrate how an understanding of university history can shed further light on a complex period in South African history and highlight the significant relationship between higher education institutions and the wider historical context.

## **KEYWORDS**

University history, South African history, broad South Africanism, conciliation, white identity, Transvaal University College, University of Pretoria, higher education, students

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Afrikaanse Studentebond (ASB)  
Bachelor of Arts (BA)  
Christian National Education (CNO)  
National Union of South African Students (NUSAS)  
Orange Free State (OFS)  
South African College (SAC)  
Students Representative Council (SRC)  
Transvaal University College (TUC)  
University of Cape Town (UCT)  
University of Johannesburg (UJ)  
University of Pretoria (UP)  
University of South Africa (Unisa)  
University of Stellenbosch (US)  
University of the Cape of Good Hope (UCGH)  
University of the Free State (UOFS)  
University of the Witwatersrand (Wits)  
Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR)

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. “A scattered scheme” . . . . .	80
2. “Under way—crushing begins” . . . . .	82
3. Opening page of the September 1914 issue of <i>The T.U.C. Students’ Magazine</i> . . . . .	140



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION AND UNIVERSITY HISTORIES AS A GENRE

University histories offer the historian another angle with which to investigate the past. In South Africa the growth of universities and higher education took place at a very significant historical moment. In the first place, its establishment followed a century and a half of dramatic change and growth in European universities. Secondly, its significant expansion occurred during a pivotal period in South African history after the discovery of minerals with its accompanying rapid industrialisation and the South African War (1899-1902) which brought the whole of South Africa under the control of Great Britain. Thus, the story of universities and their early history can add to an understanding of this complex period. One of the significant facets of this era is related to the dramatically changing nature of white identities in South Africa. After the events of the War, white South Africans were left to redefine themselves in a changing and changed setting. A new unified white identity known as broad South Africanism was promoted in a number of quarters by the successive administrations of the Transvaal and South African Union. For the purposes of this project, institutions for higher learning were viewed by both the public and the country's authorities as critical places where the country's youth could be welded together into a new broad South African nation, learning tolerance and broad-mindedness. The Transvaal University College (TUC) was one such institution which in its early years was committed to furthering this ideal.

Unlike a general trend in universities histories, this thesis will not be a comprehensive history of the TUC in its early years. As will be discussed later in the chapter, a wealth of details of the institution's early history have already been compiled into a lengthy volume. Instead, this thesis will examine the TUC specifically through the lens of white identity, in particular according to the concept of broad South Africanism. It will thus endeavour to shed light on the relationship between the College and its wider social and political context, in line with more recent trends in the writing of university histories. This study made use of all the relevant available primary documentation for the period under review. This included official documentation of the TUC mainly in the form of Council and Senate minutes, correspondence, student reminiscences, TUC publications, yearbooks, collections of various student societies and ephemera. Every attempt was made to consult all the relevant material available in particularly the University of Pretoria Archives for the period in question.

Newspapers, government publications and relevant collections in other archives and repositories have also been consulted.

The thesis comprises of eight chapters. The first is an introduction and besides presenting an overview of the topic, outlining the contents of the thesis and clarifying some terminology, it also considers the nature of university histories as a genre of historical writing. It will begin by briefly defining the university and the field of university histories. In this regard it will investigate the multi-faceted nature of studies of university history and their place within a number of academic disciplines. It will then give a brief overview of some of the more significant trends in the writing of university histories, from the writing of more traditional commemorative histories to studies which use the university in order to shed light on wider social, political and economic questions. It will also review a number of South African university histories in order to highlight the ways in which this field of study has been approached in this country. Finally, there is a review of the histories of the TUC and later University of Pretoria (UP), pointing out the scope, merits and weaknesses of historical publications regarding the institution in light of the chapter's foregoing discussion of this genre of historical writing.

University development in South Africa, and in particular the establishment of a number of university colleges of which the TUC was one, took place at a time when the university in Europe had undergone almost a century of growth and reform. In order to understand adequately the context in which South African universities and university colleges developed, chapter two will investigate European university developments in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Following a general discussion of aspects of the university's evolution in Europe at this time, this chapter will also highlight more particularly specific features of university growth in Great Britain as British models had a strong influence on South African university development. This chapter will also briefly consider the spread of universities to the colonial world.

Continuing the theme of university growth and evolution, chapter three will give an overview of university development in South Africa in order to provide the context in which the TUC was established. After outlining university growth until the 1916 University Acts, this chapter will then consider the development of higher education in the Transvaal more specifically. This will cover the period from before the South African War until the start of university

classes in Pretoria in 1908, including the establishment of the TUC and the history of its predecessors. It will examine the influence of different university models on the university debate of the time, paying particular attention to aspirations in the Transvaal to establish a teaching university and the division of higher education between the region's two primary cities, Johannesburg and Pretoria.

Chapter four will introduce the second major focus of the thesis, that is, broad South Africanism. In this regard the notions of broad South Africanism and conciliation are examined more carefully in the context of national events in the first few decades of the twentieth century in order to give a broader understanding of these concepts. This chapter will begin by providing a brief overview of significant developments during this time and by discussing the merits of highlighting identity politics as a means to understand this period. It will then discuss briefly how broad South Africanism and conciliation were promoted in the successive administrations of the Transvaal and Union of South Africa, at each time pointing out features of the discourse which encouraged a unified white identity.

As a continuation of the more general discussion of broad South Africanism in the previous chapter, chapter five will look more closely at the way in which administrators and the public viewed its relationship with higher education. This chapter will combine the two key thrusts of the thesis. It will begin by briefly highlighting how broad South Africanism and conciliation related to notions regarding higher education in South Africa in the period before and during the South African War. The emphasis of the chapter will, however, be on the period following the South African War as the period most relevant to the history of the TUC. In order to highlight the significance of broad South Africanism in the context of higher education it will bring together much of the background sketched in chapters three and four.

Based on the foundation laid in the preceding chapters, chapters six and seven will consider the first decade of the TUC's history specifically through the perspective of broad South Africanism. Chapter six will first consider how the TUC appeared to be the ideal environment for promoting broad South Africanism and how this ideal was furthered by its staff and the College authorities in this period. It will then consider initial responses at the College to the broad South Africanist ideal, particularly from the perspective of the student body. Developments in the organised student life of the College will be examined as well as

student writing in *The T.U.C. Students' Magazine*. Chapter seven will continue this investigation and consider early signs of discord at the TUC. The impact of national and international events on the cultivation of broad South Africanism and conciliation at the TUC will also be highlighted. Students' requests regarding language will be considered as well as the response of both the College authorities and the government to these questions. Finally, the so-called flag incident of 1919 in which a Union Jack was burned on the College campus will be revisited. In this way, these two chapters will attempt to shed light on the success and failure of broad South Africanism at the TUC as well as the complexities surrounding white identity during this period of the South African past. This will be done not with respect to policy and regulations from the top down, but also in terms of how it was realised among the staff and students from the bottom up.

The epilogue will encompass a brief synthesis of the themes discussed in the preceding chapters. It will thus endeavour to highlight the nature of higher education in South Africa and its perceived function of nation building through the use of broad South Africanism. Thus the significant features of the discourse of broad South Africanism and the response it engendered in students at the TUC will be emphasized. An attempt will also be made to shed light on the nature of white identity politics in higher education during the period under review. Finally, a brief mention will be made of later developments at the College, as well as more current considerations of integration and reconciliation at the University of Pretoria in the twenty-first century.

The period under review (1908 – 1919) was one in which white South African identity was in flux after the turmoil of the South African War and the change of the political dispensation. As such a number of words were used to describe various types of white South Africans, some interchangeably. Several terms have been used historically to describe the forefathers of those who are today usually referred to as Afrikaans-speaking South Africans. These were originally known as the “Dutch”, although their heritage was from a wider range of European countries than merely the Netherlands.<sup>1</sup> The Dutch were among the first white settlers in South Africa and this term distinguished them mainly based on language from later English settlers. In the late nineteenth century the term “Afrikaner” came into use. At this stage it referred more broadly to include white South Africans (and even on occasion black South

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<sup>1</sup> H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners. Biography of a people*, (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2009), p. 11.

Africans) who had accepted South Africa as their country. In the early twentieth century, this term began to be used by nationalists to more narrowly describe only Dutch Afrikaans-speaking whites. In this thesis, except where indicated, this is the understanding of this term. Furthermore, the designation “Boer” was also used to refer to South Africans mainly of Dutch descent who had trekked north from the Cape Colony and formed the independent Boer Republics (the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR) and the Orange Free State (OFS)). This term gradually waned in use after the South African War. During the era of the ZAR, Boers were sometimes distinguished from another category of people also referred to as “Dutch”, in this case Dutch nationals who immigrated to South Africa mainly under the administration of ZAR President Paul Kruger.<sup>2</sup> The latter two terms, however, were sometimes used interchangeably to refer mainly to inhabitants of the two Boer Republics and those white South Africans who used the Dutch language.

During the period in question, the blurring of definitions for white South Africans also included a somewhat fluid definition of language. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the Dutch language had developed into a local variation known as Afrikaans. Dutch, however, was used mainly as a written language and in formal settings, such as religious services, while Afrikaans was largely only a spoken language.<sup>3</sup> At this time Afrikaners sought to protect their language rights in the face of the British anglicising project, yet which form of the language should be fought for was still a question of debate. Initially Dutch was favoured and as such became an official language of the Union of South Africa in 1910. The reality of the situation, however, was that most Afrikaners spoke Afrikaans and not Dutch. In these first few decades of the twentieth century, Afrikaans began gradually to take the place of Dutch. From 1905 a number of newspapers began to carry articles written in Afrikaans. Around this time various Afrikaans language societies came into being in some of the South African colonies. In 1914 Afrikaans began to be taught in primary schools and in 1918 it was recognised legally as a type of third language, for use in some instances in the place of Dutch. In 1925 Afrikaans replaced Dutch as the second official language in the country’s constitution alongside English.<sup>4</sup> In this period while the Afrikaans language was being

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<sup>2</sup> See Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, pp. 358-359; S. Marks and S. Trapido, “The politics of race, class and nationalism”, in S. Marks and S. Trapido (eds.), *The politics of race, class and nationalism in twentieth-century South Africa*, (New York: Longman, 1987), p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, pp. 364-365 & 369.

<sup>4</sup> I. Hofmeyr, “Building a nation from words: Afrikaans language, literature and ethnic identity, 1902-1924”, in Marks and Trapido (eds.), *The politics of race, class and nationalism in twentieth-century South Africa*, pp. 103-108; Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, pp. 364-369.

adapted to become not only a spoken language, but also a formal written one which would take the place of Dutch, many times the designations Dutch and Afrikaans are used interchangeably. For example, in the context of the TUC, Afrikaans-speaking students are often still referred to as Dutch and their requests to have lectures presented in Dutch resulted in fact in lectures being given in Afrikaans. Likewise in the College's student magazine, the contributions by Afrikaans-speaking students are selected by a "Dutch editor" while in fact the essays and poems are clearly no longer written in Dutch but in a language which resembles more closely modern Afrikaans.

### **The university and university histories – defining the field**

In the introduction to his 1968 landmark study of Cambridge University, *The revolution of the dons. Cambridge and society in Victorian England*, university historian Sheldon Rothblatt comments on the "relative paucity of systematic inquiries into the history of the university".<sup>5</sup> After briefly highlighting the importance and functions of universities in contemporary industrial society, he states,

In view of these multiple functions, it is not surprising that the university has attracted so much attention from scholars, critics and administrators. But it is surprising that so little writing of an historical nature has appeared. The immense volume of university literature is mainly fugitive, descriptive, sociological, programmatic, polemical and educationalist; it is only infrequently historical.<sup>6</sup>

He continues by adding that "[v]irtually all the topics of current discussion have yet to be given an historical context."<sup>7</sup> He contends that this lack of historical study is strange, not only in light of the important role of the university today, but also because of the antiquity of the institution and the abundance of source material available.<sup>8</sup>

Almost three decades later, Rothblatt again considers the genre of university history. At this time he describes the writings in the field as "voluminous and manifold"<sup>9</sup> with "plentiful scholarly activity".<sup>10</sup> From the above opposing assessment, the field of university history either experienced a major period of growth towards the end of the twentieth century, or the

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<sup>5</sup> S. Rothblatt, *The revolution of the dons. Cambridge and society in Victorian England*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 17. This book was first published in 1968.

<sup>6</sup> Rothblatt, *The revolution of the dons*, p. 16.

<sup>7</sup> Rothblatt, *The revolution of the dons*, p. 16.

<sup>8</sup> Rothblatt, *The revolution of the dons*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>9</sup> S. Rothblatt, "The writing of university history at the end of another century", *Oxford Review of Education* 23(2), 1997, p. 151.

<sup>10</sup> Rothblatt, "The writing of university history at the end of another century", p. 153.

understanding of what was being referred to as university history in each case had altered. However he still describes the genre as being “no well-demarcated field”,<sup>11</sup> emphasizing the fact that, “[t]he history of universities has always been a restless genre, a subfield whose focus is mercurial and whose loyalty to a single discipline is suspect.”<sup>12</sup>

In defining university history it is useful to consider the significance of the university as an institution. Higher learning can be traced back to the times of ancient Egypt and Babylon and the Greeks too had established a tradition of higher education. However, this did not have the features of organised education as we know it today, such as faculties, degrees, examinations and graduations.<sup>13</sup> It is generally agreed that the university itself is a purely twelfth century creation.<sup>14</sup> In this regard, well-known university historian Hastings Rashdall states that “the university is distinctly a medieval institution”.<sup>15</sup> Medieval European society had three acknowledged powers – *sacerdotium*, *imperium* and *studium* – represented by the Roman Catholic Church, the politics of the Holy Roman Empire and the European university.<sup>16</sup> According to Rashdall, “universities ... may be said to constitute the great achievement of the Middle Ages in the intellectual sphere.”<sup>17</sup>

The university has indeed progressed and changed in many respects from the institutions of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and yet, as C.H. Haskins states,

They are the rock whence we were hewn; the hole of the pit whence we were digged [sic]. The fundamental organization is the same, the historic continuity is unbroken. They created the university tradition of the modern world, that common tradition which belongs to all our institutions of higher learning, the newest as well as the oldest, and which all college and university men should know and cherish.<sup>18</sup>

Haskins looks into elements of continuity in the university, attempting to ascertain which common elements of the medieval university are still present today. He concludes that it is

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<sup>11</sup> Rothblatt, “The writing of university history at the end of another century”, p. 153.

<sup>12</sup> Rothblatt, “The writing of university history at the end of another century”, p. 151.

<sup>13</sup> C.H. Haskins, *The rise of universities*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1957), pp. 1-2; W. Rudy, *The universities of Europe, 1100 – 1914. A history*, (London & Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1984), p. 13.

<sup>14</sup> J.R. Pauw, *Die westerse universiteit (sy aard, ontstaan en toekoms)*, (Johannesburg: Boekhandel De Jong, 1975), p. 14.

<sup>15</sup> H. Rashdall, *The universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936), p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> Rashdall, *The universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, p. 2; W. Rüegg, “Foreword”, in H. de Ridder Symoens (ed.), *A history of the university in Europe. Universities in the Middle Ages I*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. xix.

<sup>17</sup> Rashdall, *The universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, p. 3.

<sup>18</sup> Haskins, *The rise of universities*, p. 3.

neither the physical buildings, nor the academic ceremony and tradition, but it is in the institutions of the university that continuity exists.<sup>19</sup> Firstly, the notion of the university as “an association of masters and scholars leading the common life of learning”<sup>20</sup> is still largely characteristic of the current university. Secondly, the existence of curriculums of study, examinations and degrees continue from the original universities. In addition, the faculties, deans and offices of chancellors and rectors also continue to refer back to the medieval origins of the university. Rashdall also concludes that “the universities of all countries and all ages are in reality adaptations under various conditions of one and the same institution.”<sup>21</sup> Thus, as Haskins states, “[t]he essentials of university organization are clear and unmistakable, and they have been handed down in unbroken continuity.”<sup>22</sup> He continues,

Universities are at times criticized for their aloofness or their devotion to vocationalism, for being too easy or too severe, and drastic efforts have been made to reform them by abolishing entrance requirements or eliminating all that does not lead directly to bread and butter; but no substitute has been found for the university in its main business, the training of scholars and the maintenance of the tradition of learning and investigation.<sup>23</sup>

In addition Haskins points out that the experience of students has a universal aspect, whether they are medieval students or modern students. In many respects not much has changed in the concerns and life of the student:

The Latin dialogue and disputation, the mud of Bologna, and the money-changers of the Grand-Pont, belong plainly in the Middle Ages and not in our time; but money and clothing, rooms, teachers, and books, good cheer and good fellowship, have been subjects of interest at all times and all places. ... In his relations to life and learning the mediaeval student resembled his modern successor far more than is often supposed. If his environment was different, his problems were much the same; if his morals were perhaps worse, his ambition was as active, his rivalries as intense, his desire for learning quite as keen. And for him as for us, intellectual achievement meant membership in that city of letters not made with hands, ‘the ancient and universal company of scholars.’<sup>24</sup>

Yet, in spite of the many apparently immutable and enduring qualities of this institution, on closer examination, it has no simple universal definition. The word ‘university’ is derived from the Latin *universitas*, used to refer to a group or corporation of people. It was at first not

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<sup>19</sup> Haskins, *The rise of universities*, pp. 22-24.

<sup>20</sup> Haskins, *The rise of universities*, p. 24.

<sup>21</sup> Rashdall, *The universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, p. 4.

<sup>22</sup> Haskins, *The rise of universities*, p. 24.

<sup>23</sup> Haskins, *The rise of universities*, p. 25.

<sup>24</sup> Haskins, *The rise of universities*, pp. 92-93.



limited to groups of masters and students but also referred to guilds of various types and municipalities. In time this word began to apply specifically to corporations of masters and students and today refers broadly to institutions offering higher education, awarding degrees and conducting research.<sup>25</sup> The difficulty with finding a clear definition of the university is made apparent in a discussion of a respected work on the history of the American university, where it was claimed that “[t]he most serious conceptual problem is that the meaning of the university is taken for granted.”<sup>26</sup> Simply put, the university is not the same thing in all places at all times.

Combining these views, university historian Björn Wittrock points out that “universities exist with layer upon layer of quite divergent legacies” while also possessing “a strong element of continuity”.<sup>27</sup> Since this is the case, he concludes that it is not surprising that the study of universities is also characterized by a “divergence of analytical traditions”.<sup>28</sup> According to Wittrock, “[r]esearch on universities is but a name for a cross-current of different intellectual traditions. ... [A]lmost none of these traditions has the study of universities as the primary focus.”<sup>29</sup> It is an “institutional orphan”<sup>30</sup> drawing practitioners from a wide range of disciplines, including schools of education, intellectual history, sociology and political science.

University histories also fall into the field of history of education and thus share many of the pitfalls and characteristics of this discipline which is in itself a complex and multi-faceted field. Harold Silver explains that,

The history of education is in fact multiple histories, because education itself is no simple and homogenous concept or category, and because its history can be explored in relation to almost endless variables. Whether education is conceived as itself an indefinite cluster of experiences or as a more narrowly definable

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<sup>25</sup> Haskins, *The rise of universities*, pp. 8-9; Rashdall, *The universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, pp. 4-5; Rüegg, “Foreword”, in De Ridder Symoens (ed.), *A history of the university in Europe I*, p. xx; C. Soanes & A. Stevenson (eds.), *Oxford dictionary of English*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 1928.

<sup>26</sup> P.H. Mattingly, “Structures over time: institutional history”, in J.H. Best (ed.), *Historical inquiry in education. A research agenda*, (Washington: American Educational Research Association, 1983), pp. 43-44.

<sup>27</sup> B. Wittrock, “The modern university: three transformations”, in S. Rothblatt and B. Wittrock (eds.), *The European and American university since 1800*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 305.

<sup>28</sup> Wittrock, “The modern university”, p. 305.

<sup>29</sup> Wittrock, “The modern university”, pp. 305-306.

<sup>30</sup> Rothblatt, “The writing of university history at the end of another century”, p. 152

process related to a variety of other processes, it has no meaning when presented in isolated and discretely institutional terms.<sup>31</sup>

University histories appear, however, to occupy a minor role within the scope of history of education. As Rothblatt points out, the history of education is usually concerned with lower forms of education due to the discipline often being housed within teacher training colleges and schools of education. This is also reflected in journals dedicated to the history of education, where the history of higher education does not feature as strongly as articles related to the history of schooling.<sup>32</sup>

Higher education research also forms a field on its own where the focus is not primarily historical. Furthermore, it is clear that higher education refers to a broader range of institutions which cannot all be classified as universities. Historian F.J. du Toit Spies has commented on the difficulty of comparing higher education institutions and of applying a strict definition of what a university is to such institutions.<sup>33</sup> Also related to higher education is institutional research, a field which is usually grounded in contemporary concerns regarding university reform and expansion.<sup>34</sup> The following is a rather scathing account of the state of university history and its relationship with educational research:

The history of universities was *terra incognita* until the early 1950s, inhabited only by pious hagiographers, myopic chroniclers and that most dangerous of pre-historic animals, the historians of education. This latter creature ... only seems to be concerned with gathering historical justifications for contemporary educational nostrums, or identifying the earliest instance of a pedagogic practice that meets with modern approbation.<sup>35</sup>

In his review of higher education historiography, Silver briefly demonstrates the wide range of approaches which historians have taken in writing the history of higher education in England.<sup>36</sup> He points out the difficulties of easily defining what is meant by 'higher education' as opposed to 'universities' and 'colleges'. In addition, he indicates how meanings

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<sup>31</sup> H. Silver, *Education as history: interpreting nineteenth- and twentieth-century education*, (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1983), p. 4.

<sup>32</sup> Rothblatt, "The writing of university history at the end of another century", p. 151.

<sup>33</sup> F.J. du Toit Spies, "Die skryf van 'n universiteitsgeskiedenis", *Historia* 3(2), September 1985, p. 65.

<sup>34</sup> T. Dyer, "Institutional research and institutional history", *Research in Higher Education* 8(3), September 1978, p. 283; Wittrock, "The modern university", p. 306.

<sup>35</sup> V. Morgan, quoted in H. de Ridder Symoens (ed.), *A history of the university in Europe. Universities in Early Modern Europe (1500-1800)* II, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. xix.

<sup>36</sup> H. Silver, "'Things change but names remain the same': Higher education historiography 1975-2000", *History of Education* 35(1), January 2006, pp. 121-122.

have changed over time, making definitions even more problematic. Furthermore, these concepts and institutions have different manifestations on different continents and in different countries.<sup>37</sup> He sums up this point well in the following way:

Questions of nomenclature and interpretation are associated with what changes and what persists in higher education. ... Butterfield in a 1961 lecture recognized that the university, ‘like the English Parliament ... keeps its identity in a formidable manner, but it keeps it through many mutations – astonishingly the same in some respects, yet meaning one thing in one age and another in another age’. Three years later in the US Clark Kerr described the universities as having ‘a unique capacity for riding off in all directions and still staying in the same place’ – not unlike what Perkin described as being, or needing to be, on the historian’s banner when going into ‘battle with the intractable past’: ‘things change but the names remain the same’.<sup>38</sup>

In short, in the relatively simple term ‘university histories’ a rather large group of possible role players and practitioners is implied. From its place within the greater scope of the history of education and current studies on higher education; to the distinction between universities and higher education; from practitioners in faculties of education and humanities to higher education policy makers; from one continent to another and one decade to another; it is a genre that will not submit to an easy definition and its scope may include multiple dimensions and approaches.

### **Trends and approaches**

Among the variety of approaches to university history, historically the most common type of university history is the ‘traditional’ chronicle or celebratory biography of a single institution often written by an alumnus or staff member.<sup>39</sup> It appears that until the second half of the twentieth century, “the celebratory institutional history occupied the field of higher education historiography almost unchallenged.”<sup>40</sup> Du Toit Spies outlines the basic characteristics of these ‘traditional’ university histories: they are usually commissioned commemorative volumes written to coincide with significant anniversaries, bearing an official character.<sup>41</sup>

Hugh Kearney also describes the situation as follows:

As a general rule, the history of a university has been written as a piece of ‘official’ history by specially appointed historians. In such circumstances, the

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<sup>37</sup> Silver, “‘Things change but names remain the same’”, p. 123.

<sup>38</sup> Silver, “‘Things change but names remain the same’”, p. 139.

<sup>39</sup> Rothblatt, “The writing of university history at the end of another century”, p. 154.

<sup>40</sup> Mattingly, “Structures over time: institutional history”, p. 284.

<sup>41</sup> Du Toit Spies, “Die skryf van ‘n universiteitsgeskiedenis’”, p. 63.

portrait normally appears without warts. Scholars who are a credit to the universities may be mentioned but not their indifferent colleagues who may have been more powerful in academic politics. Successes are highlighted but not failures. It would seem ‘bad form’ on the occasion of a university centenary to mention that certain classes of people are excluded, formally or informally, from the university because of religion, colour or income. In my experience, the history of particular universities often resembles ‘old style’ business history commissioned as subtle pieces of advertising.<sup>42</sup>

David Welsh reiterates this sentiment that “[o]fficial institutional histories are often tedious, uncritical efforts at public relations, rather than serious scholarly works.”<sup>43</sup> Rothblatt briefly describes this genre of history as being “relatively straightforward, impressively detailed and pioneering narrative studies or descriptions of university growth in terms of faculties, facilities, curricula and numbers of students, with additional miscellaneous information.”<sup>44</sup> The authors of these traditional histories, written mainly in the first part of the last century, “believed historical study produced results that issued from reason, rested on facts, stood objectively neutral before all differences, and warranted acceptance by all rational people as their common holding, no matter what their politics, religion, gender, race, or social class.”<sup>45</sup> In addition, this genre relied heavily on sources produced by the executive and administration of the institution in question. The result was a “facts-and-rulers-template”<sup>46</sup> which entrenched the hegemony of usually male administrators over the lower echelons of teaching staff and, even lower, of students. Early Oxbridge histories, of this genre, have been accused of suffering from “antiquarianism, parochialism, and chauvinism”.<sup>47</sup> Du Toit Spies also maintains that it is easy for an institutional history to be at most a work of local history unless the international university context in which the institution is situated is taken into account. In addition, the official nature of commemorative books also renders a critical approach more difficult, where the writing may be under the direct supervision of university authorities.<sup>48</sup>

In spite of their many shortcomings, Walter Rüegg maintains that many of these so-called traditional histories contributed “directly and indirectly ... to the illumination of the *terra*

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<sup>42</sup> H. Kearney, *Scholars and gentlemen. Universities and society in pre-industrial Britain, 1500-1700*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1970), pp. 11-12.

<sup>43</sup> D. Welsh, “Wits under the microscope”, *English Academy Review* 15, December 1998, p. 185.

<sup>44</sup> Rothblatt, *The revolution of the dons*, p. 17.

<sup>45</sup> C.T. McIntire, “Hegemony and the historiography of universities: the Toronto case”, *University of Toronto Quarterly* 72(3), 2003, p. 750.

<sup>46</sup> McIntire, “Hegemony and the historiography of universities”, p. 750.

<sup>47</sup> C. Brooke, quoted in Silver, “‘Things change but names remain the same’”, p. 126.

<sup>48</sup> Du Toit Spies, “Die skryf van ‘n universiteitsgeskiedenis’”, pp. 63-64.

*incognita* of university history”, although they left many “open questions and subjects ... untouched by research.”<sup>49</sup> McIntire lists some of these non-traditional themes as including, for example, women, student activism, scientific achievement and religion.<sup>50</sup>

The twentieth century was a period of growth and development in the field of university histories. By the start of the current century McIntire commented that “[t]he history of universities, formerly a casual occupation undertaken by dedicated souls, has become a well-developed field of historical study pursued by professional historians who devote themselves to the subject in a careful and systematic manner.”<sup>51</sup> The field boasts a dedicated research centre at the Università di Bologna, Europe’s oldest university, and an annual journal, *History of Universities*. Fritz Ringer has commented that “[o]nce dissatisfied with narrative accounts of individual institutions, the historian of education faces an extraordinary task. He must combine a variety of viewpoints and skills, for education is at once a complex and a central activity in any society.”<sup>52</sup>

Rothblatt’s 1997 assessment of the field of university histories noted “an ongoing eclecticism, understandably strongly skewed (as is historical writing overall) towards national history and national concerns.”<sup>53</sup> He enumerates various trends and approaches in the field and how the abundance of archival material and different experiences makes it difficult to draw any general conclusions regarding universities. Interestingly, he points out that the field of university histories has been largely dominated by medievalists and historians of the early modern period.<sup>54</sup> Other than that, Rothblatt maintains that “[i]f a trend has to be named, it would be the composite or collaborative model”<sup>55</sup> reflecting the wealth of available sources and the inability of a single individual to adequately master all the sources covering the various dimensions of an institution’s past. “For the most part, the actual content and choices of subject for the writing of university history ... follows from the themes already well established in the different historiographical genres.”<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> W. Rüegg, “Foreword”, in De Ridder Symoens (ed.), *A history of the university in Europe II*, p. xx.

<sup>50</sup> McIntire, “Hegemony and the historiography of universities”, p. 752.

<sup>51</sup> McIntire, “Hegemony and the historiography of universities”, p. 749.

<sup>52</sup> F.K. Ringer, “Problems in the history of higher education: a review article”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 19, 1977, p. 239.

<sup>53</sup> Rothblatt, “The writing of university history at the end of another century”, p. 152.

<sup>54</sup> Rothblatt, “The writing of university history at the end of another century”, p. 153; W. Rüegg, “Foreword”, in De Ridder Symoens (ed.), *A history of the university in Europe II*, p. xxi.

<sup>55</sup> Rothblatt, “The writing of university history at the end of another century”, p. 154.

<sup>56</sup> Rothblatt, “The writing of university history at the end of another century”, p. 154.

Among these approaches, the focus on individuals or successions of individuals and biographies of academics remains popular. Historians have also made studies of the history of various university disciplines and changes in university curriculums, while the university has also been the subject of histories of ideas tracing the development of social and philosophical thought and the meanings and purpose of university education. The university's space is also a topic for historical studies of campus planning, architecture and landscape. University historians have more recently considered the role of religion and the place of women in higher education, while these new approaches have also turned from the administrators, laws and organizational structure of the "facts-and-rulers" histories to consider the place of professors and students who, according to Haskins, are the basic components of the university.<sup>57</sup> Historians have also employed quantitative methods in some cases to shed further light on the growth and influence of institutions. In other cases the study of "the big picture over lengthy periods of time" has attempted to unlock "themes and competing concepts and explanations of tradition and change."<sup>58</sup> Furthermore Rothblatt notes "one relationship that is of perennial interest ... that is the university's ongoing relationship with the state"<sup>59</sup> as historians explore themes such as finance, the university's autonomy and state intrusion.<sup>60</sup>

Silver also points out that "historical writing has strong roots in the contemporary environment"<sup>61</sup> and demonstrates how this applies to new perspectives in the history of universities. In this regard Rothblatt also comments that in the field of university histories,

[h]igher education problems are among the breaking news today. It would be surprising if historians were totally oblivious to them ..., for no matter how guild-conscious or insulated from the larger world of public affairs, historians eventually gravitate towards issues thought to be of widespread current interest.<sup>62</sup>

He thus mentions work on the relationship of universities to cities, student games and sports, and the link between secondary and university education amongst other topics. In this regard

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<sup>57</sup> McIntire, "Hegemony and the historiography of universities", p. 751; Haskins, *The rise of universities*, p. 24.

<sup>58</sup> Silver, "Things change but names remain the same", p. 130.

<sup>59</sup> Rothblatt, "The writing of university history at the end of another century", p. 157.

<sup>60</sup> Silver, "Things change but names remain the same", pp. 122-135; Rothblatt, "The writing of university history at the end of another century", pp. 154-158.

<sup>61</sup> Silver, "Things change but names remain the same", p. 139.

<sup>62</sup> Rothblatt, "The writing of university history at the end of another century", p. 159.

it is interesting to note the growth of the literature on radical student politics in the 1960s and 1970s, a time of student unrest in Europe.<sup>63</sup>

One of the strongest reappraisals of the university is to reconsider it in its social context. In simple terms the task of the university historian is to determine the influence of the university on society and vice versa.<sup>64</sup> The university is undoubtedly “a social as much as an intellectual institution.”<sup>65</sup> As a component of society, involved in constant exchange with society, a university’s history can thus be seen as a constituent of the social history of a society within wider currents of history. It is therefore imperative that it should not be written in isolation.<sup>66</sup> As institutions which are “units of larger organizational and cultural networks”,<sup>67</sup> the university cannot be studied as an autonomous or independent entity as is often the case in commemorative histories.

In considering various historical theories applied to the history of Oxford and Cambridge, Rothblatt also confirms “how impossible it is to discuss educational change outside a larger historical context composed of social, political, intellectual, religious or economic ingredients.”<sup>68</sup> He does however warn that drawing links that are too strict between political and social change and educational reform can cause society to be portrayed “as distant and omnipresent, an abstraction whose will cannot be denied” and with whom disagreement cannot be tolerated.<sup>69</sup> Instead, in a plural society, it is likely that “the university and society will be in subtle and complex states of disagreement as well as agreement with one another”<sup>70</sup> and, according to him, this may be the outstanding feature of the modern university. It is the diverse and unexpected aspects of this relationship which merit attention by historians of universities.

Not only is an awareness of context vital for the study of universities, but the traffic between the university and its broader context gives the study of universities a broader significance.

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<sup>63</sup> Silver, ““Things change but names remain the same””, p. 124.

<sup>64</sup> Du Toit Spies, “Die skryf van ‘n universiteitsgeskiedenis”, p. 66.

<sup>65</sup> Kearney, *Scholars and gentlemen*, p. 11.

<sup>66</sup> Du Toit Spies, “Die skryf van ‘n universiteitsgeskiedenis”, p. 67; A.L. Hayes, “The founding moment: Church, society and the construction of Trinity College”, *Anglican Theological Review*, 2004, Internet: [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa3818/is\\_200407/ai\\_n9459402](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3818/is_200407/ai_n9459402), access: 2007/10/22.

<sup>67</sup> Mattingly, “Structures over time: institutional history”, p. 49.

<sup>68</sup> Rothblatt, *The revolution of the dons*, p. 25.

<sup>69</sup> Rothblatt, *The revolution of the dons*, pp. 25-26.

<sup>70</sup> Rothblatt, *The revolution of the dons*, p. 26.

Universities viewed as elements of a certain social climate shed further light on that climate and their study therefore acquires some legitimacy. In an essay on institutional histories, Paul H. Mattingly has stated that “An institution becomes a system of collective behavior and thought with internal dynamics as well as external pressures. It is a device for illuminating broader and deeper issues of its own cultural context.”<sup>71</sup> An appeal has also been made that

[s]een in a broader context, the history of higher education is too important to be left to the vagaries of anniversary tributes to yet another illustrious alma mater. Instead it needs to be firmly integrated into the general discussion of social change in order to determine the university’s contribution to “modernization’ as well as to the perpetuation of traditional elites, values and styles.<sup>72</sup>

Among historians exploring the dimensions of the university’s relationship to society, Rothblatt has contributed some pioneering works, of which his already mentioned *The revolution of the dons* is probably the most renowned. In this study he looks at the changing role of the Oxford don by examining the intellectual and social influences of Victorian England in its transition from a clerical and aristocratic society to an industrial and professional society.<sup>73</sup>

In the attempt to better understand current challenges facing universities in Europe, the “Conference of European Rectors”, in 1982, decided to launch an investigation into “the social setting, the social demands, the structures and the major problems of European universities as they have developed and changed in the course of their history”<sup>74</sup> through a comprehensive study of the European university. The foreword of the first volume of the ambitious four volume project on the history of the university in Europe also places high priority on examining the social context and role of the university as one of the main aims of the study. In this foreword Rüegg also discusses notions regarding the social role of the European university. He proposes a definition of the social role or function as “the totality of the actions performed in response to the expectations of conduct which others direct toward

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<sup>71</sup> Mattingly, “Structures over time: institutional history”, p. 42.

<sup>72</sup> K.H. Jarausch, “Higher education and social change: some comparative perspectives”, in K.H. Jarausch (ed.), *The transformation of higher learning, 1860-1930. Expansion, diversification, social opening and professionalization in England, Germany, Russia and the United States*, (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1983), 1982, p. 11.

<sup>73</sup> Rothblatt, *The revolution of the dons*; McIntire, “Hegemony and the historiography of universities”, p. 751; Haskins, *The rise of universities*, p. 751; R.N. Soffer, *Discipline and power. The university, history and the making of an English elite, 1870-1930*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), p. 2.

<sup>74</sup> Rüegg, “Foreword”, in De Ridder Symoens (ed.), *A history of the university in Europe. Universities in the Middle Ages I*, p. xxii.



the incumbent of the particular role.”<sup>75</sup> These expectations are rooted in values which appear as norms, all of which stem from the explicit and implicit interests of the various social actors. According to Rüegg, conflicts are inherent in social roles and thus also in the social history of the university. He delineates some of these inherent conflicts including, for example, the tensions between research as an end in itself and utilitarian and economic approaches to research, and the fundamental ideals of academic freedom and the internal and external influences of collegial solidarity and necessary funding.<sup>76</sup> While it is perhaps too simplistic to consider conflict as the only gauge of social exchange, examining tensions between the university and its social environment is certainly a means to freeing the university from its isolated place in historical studies.

Regarding social history as an approach within the field, Rothblatt notes “a discernible shift away from social class explanations of change ... towards ... the ‘forgotten middle class’, that is to say, the professions” adding that this is understandable “both in terms of the origins of universities and their original purposes, ... and because universities have been one of the primary forces in shaping professionalism”.<sup>77</sup> The notion of professional education is a recurring theme in higher education literature, as historians have considered its relationship to liberal education and changing concepts and attitudes towards these differing understandings of university education. In Great Britain, these tensions have been explored in the relationship between the English civic and Scottish universities of the nineteenth century and the Oxbridge tradition and ideal.<sup>78</sup>

In a study of higher education and social change, Konrad Jarausch begins by observing that “[s]eemingly self-evident, the relationship between higher education and social change has proven elusive.”<sup>79</sup> He continues that

[p]art of this confusion results from an excessively narrow view of social change, limited by and large to industrialization. From a broader Weberian perspective, which includes rationalization, bureaucratization and professionalization as key processes, the role of education in the transformation of traditional society looms much larger. Instead of a simplistic alternative which defines schooling as either

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<sup>75</sup> Rüegg, “Foreword”, in De Ridder Symoens (ed.), *A history of the university in Europe. Universities in the Middle Ages I*, p. xxvi.

<sup>76</sup> Rüegg, “Foreword”, in De Ridder Symoens (ed.), *A history of the university in Europe. Universities in the Middle Ages I*, pp. xxvi-xxvii.

<sup>77</sup> Rothblatt, “The writing of university history at the end of another century”, p. 155.

<sup>78</sup> Silver, “‘Things change but names remain the same’”, pp. 123-126 & 131.

<sup>79</sup> Jarausch, “Higher education and social change: some comparative perspectives”, p. 9.

the passive product of society or the active motor of progress, the relationship between higher education and social change is circular and interdependent with both transforming each other.<sup>80</sup>

Attempting a social history of a university is however not without its pitfalls and difficulties and as one scholar has commented, “too often the university is used as a mere make-weight in an historical or sociological argument or considered as an adjunct of class, industry or government.”<sup>81</sup> Ringer, in turn, also recommends “that the history of scholarship should be related but not reduced to social and political history.”<sup>82</sup>

Among subjects in the field that still require more attention, are studies of the varieties and evolution of academic and student cultures, histories of faculties and departments, systematic investigations into admissions and student recruitment, and explorations of student subcultures and student experience.<sup>83</sup> Rothblatt concludes that although “the field contains fine work, there is no lack of subjects, methods and periods to challenge newer generations of university historians, who will find, as has an older generation, many political scientists, economists, sociologists and public policy analysts nearby...”<sup>84</sup>

### **South African university histories**

In South Africa university history is not a well-developed field. Although almost every university has some form of published ‘history’, most of these fall into the ‘traditional’ commemorative genre with only a few notable exceptions. A number of scholarly articles have appeared regarding a variety of questions related to South African universities. Among some of these, which on the surface could be classed with ‘traditional’ university histories, are a handful written by professional historians which exemplify a more contextualized and critical approach to their subjects. Concerning South African university education in general, Maurice Boucher’s doctoral thesis, “The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa, 1873-1946”<sup>85</sup>, published in the *Archives yearbook for South African history*, is a detailed study of the origins of the South African

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<sup>80</sup> Jarausch, “Higher education and social change: some comparative perspectives”, p. 9.

<sup>81</sup> D. Jones quoted in Silver, “‘Things change but names remain the same’”, p. 140.

<sup>82</sup> Ringer, “Problems in the history of higher education: a review article”, p. 255.

<sup>83</sup> Rothblatt, “The writing of university history at the end of another century”, pp. 160-161.

<sup>84</sup> Rothblatt, “The writing of university history at the end of another century”, p. 160.

<sup>85</sup> M. Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa, 1873-1946. A study in national and imperial perspective*, Archives yearbook, 35<sup>th</sup> year, 1972, I, (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1974).

university system. This study not only examines the establishment of the University of the Cape of Good Hope (UCGH) and its predecessors, but also takes into account the imperial context of higher education. Boucher examines the development of the UCGH into the federal University of South Africa (Unisa) ending at the time Unisa became a teaching institution in 1946. In a review of this study, it was said that “[t]here can be little doubt that this work is, and is likely to remain for some time, the standard history of the birth and growth of university education in South Africa.”<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, the impeccable referencing through the use of footnotes and an extensive source list make this an invaluable reference work for any scholar of South African higher education. A year prior to the publication of his thesis, Boucher produced *Spes in ardius: a history of the University of South Africa*<sup>87</sup> to coincide with the centenary celebration of the Unisa. This volume was drawn largely from his thesis, with additional chapters covering the period up until 1973. It focuses on questions relating to Unisa’s structure and functions and due to its nature as a commemorative piece, there are unfortunately no footnotes.

Among South African university histories, Bruce Murray’s histories of the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) are examples of more scholarly approaches to the field. *Wits, the early years*<sup>88</sup> was published on the occasion of the university’s diamond jubilee. This study focuses on the personalities and events involved in the early development of Wits. In the initial chapters the details surrounding the movement to establish a university on the Witwatersrand are covered. This includes the establishment of the Transvaal University College in Johannesburg and Smuts’s involvement in moving the institution’s arts and science classes to Pretoria. This event is presented from the perspective of the Johannesburg institution and the further development of the Pretoria college falls outside the scope of his study. Otherwise, it is a chronicle of vice-chancellors and a range of controversies. Separate chapters focus on academic development where the work of the foremost researchers is highlighted. There are also sections covering the topics of discrimination and student life, where an attempt is made to tell the story ‘warts and all’. Probably also in order to limit its length, references are only given for direct quotations,

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<sup>86</sup> S.B. Spies, Book review: M. Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa, 1873-1946. A study in national and imperial perspective*. Archives Yearbook, 35<sup>th</sup> year, 1972, I, Pretoria, 1974, *Kleio* 10, September 1978, p. 78.

<sup>87</sup> M. Boucher, *Spes in ardius: a history of the University of South Africa*, (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1973).

<sup>88</sup> B.K. Murray, *Wits, the early years. A history of the University of the Witwatersrand Johannesburg and its precursors, 1896-1939*, (Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand Press, 1982).

although there is a note on sources at the end of the text which highlights useful archival collections. *Wits, the 'open' years*,<sup>89</sup> the second university study by Murray, was published to coincide with the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the University. This volume covers the following twenty years of Wits's history. Due to the nature of the era, the University's response to government policies is a main theme in this publication. Wits is presented in open and often confrontational exchange with the government and society. This is illustrated by the inclusion of newspaper sources and cartoons in the text. Due to its commemorative nature, reference information has again been confined to limited endnotes. Both of Murray's volumes are benchmark examples of South African university history.

Mervyn Shear also produced a volume on the history of that institution entitled *WITS, a university in the Apartheid era*.<sup>90</sup> This history was written at the request of a Wits vice-chancellor and principal and examines the University's anti-Apartheid activities during the period of government policy under the National Party. Published in 1996, shortly after the collapse of the Apartheid government, the book attempts to take a critical look at Wits's resistance to Apartheid and its position on racial discrimination. Shear, a dental student at Wits in the 1950s, was part of the Wits staff from 1955 and served as deputy vice-chancellor in charge of student affairs from 1982 until his retirement in 1990. His account describes the University's racial policy from the 1920s, focusing on the period after the introduction of the "Separate University Education Bill" in 1957. The bulk of the book covers the dramatic events of the 1980s. Shear uses documents and photographs to construct his account. These are referred to in limited endnotes which unfortunately do not always have very complete reference information. However, a lengthy collection of appendices provides important documentary evidence. Shear also calls on his personal experience to explain and illustrate the events in question. In this way it is a valuable source, although at times the tone is fairly subjective and often rather apologetic.

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<sup>89</sup> B.K. Murray, *Wits, the 'open' years. A history of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1939-1959*, (Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand Press, 1997).

<sup>90</sup> M. Shear, *Wits, a university in the Apartheid era*, (Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand Press, 1996).

Another pioneering South African university history is *Stellenbosch 1866 – 1966. Honderd jaar hoër onderwys*.<sup>91</sup> Compiled under the editorship of the then rector, H.B. Thom, it was published in 1966, marking one hundred years since the first institution of higher education, the Gimnasium, opened in Stellenbosch. Out of the Gimnasium grew the Stellenbosch College, later renamed Victoria College, forerunner of the University of Stellenbosch (US). A variety of staff members wrote contributions for the volume covering various aspects of the university's past, although the bulk was written by P.S. du Toit. Probably to limit the length of the publication, almost no footnotes have been included and there is no list of references. Regardless of this it remains a groundbreaking history which deals in a very detailed and methodical way with the wide scope of the university's past, from important historical events to staff, student life, sport and administration. Furthermore, there is a lengthy addendum including lists of sport and academic achievers and university office bearers. It is a benchmark publication and reference book on the University of Stellenbosch's history, although discussion of the historical context in which the university grew is somewhat limited.

Another noteworthy scholarly South African university history by a historian is Howard Phillips's *The University of Cape Town, 1918-1948. The formative years*. It was published at the time of the University of Cape Town's (UCT) 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It covers the period from 1918, when UCT acquired university status, until 1948 – a period which Phillips considered UCT's formative years – also ending at a time when a change in South Africa's government occurred which meant significant changes for universities. The volume was commissioned by the University Council and the brief specified that as it was aimed at a “non-specialist audience”, it should avoid being “dull” and should contain “some anecdotal matter”.<sup>92</sup> Bearing these considerations in mind, Phillips still however produced a scholarly volume complete with reference information contained in endnotes. In addition, Phillips viewed his study as “an opportunity for us to share the triumphs of the past and to identify where the University has failed”, hoping that it would “inform the institution as it attempts to adapt sensibly to the changing times”.<sup>93</sup> Written at the close of the Apartheid era, Phillips presents a sensitive “warts and all” view of a period of UCT's history, with a strong sense of the

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<sup>91</sup> H.B. Thom (ed.), *Stellenbosch, 1866 – 1966. Honderd jaar hoër onderwys*, (Cape Town: Nasionale Boekhandel Bepers, 1966).

<sup>92</sup> H. Phillips, *The University of Cape Town, 1918-1948. The formative years*, (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 1993), p. viii.

<sup>93</sup> S.J. Saunders, “Foreword”, in Phillips, *The University of Cape Town*, p. vii.

historical context in which it played out. Much like Murray's histories of Wits, the limited scope in terms of time period which Phillips covers, allows him to produce a more thorough, thoughtful and contextualised volume than those which are written to showcase a century of an institution's history. In this regard it is a very fine example of South African university history which also has a place among the benchmark texts on university history.

Former University of Pretoria academic and later professor at the University of Natal, Edgar H. Brookes authored *A history of the University of Natal* in 1966, covering the development of higher education in Natal and the University of Natal until 1965. It was not written for any specific anniversary, although the costs of printing the book were paid for by the University's convocation. Brookes does not give any insight into his approach in writing this volume. The foreword, by then Principal and Vice-Chancellor O.P.F. Horwood, terms the study an "authoritative History" but also offers much personal criticism for aspects which Horwood felt were lacking or not adequately represented in Brookes' work.<sup>94</sup> Brookes' personal strengths and persuasions inform his study. He is labelled "a sturdy champion of academic freedom" and his interest in university finance, also influenced his study, as he includes a whole chapter on the subject.<sup>95</sup> His volume is also critical in its approach, but unfortunately, except for a brief note on sources, it includes no references. It is a thorough though, in many respects, rather sober presentation of the University's history, with not much anecdotal information, along the lines of the "facts and rulers template", with its emphasis on influential administrators and university policy.

A pioneering history of the University of the Free State (UOFS), *From grey to gold*, was published in 2006 as part of the university's 2004 centenary celebrations.<sup>96</sup> It is an impressive volume in its length and scope, attempting to cover all the multiple dimensions of the university over a one hundred year period, including subjects such as the university's administration, executive, physical growth, academic and sport achievements and student life. The commission to compile the university's history was given to the Department of History in 1998. Under the leadership of Prof Leo Barnard of that department, a committee carried out the research and writing which led to the production

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<sup>94</sup> O.P.F. Horwood, "Foreword", in E.H. Brookes, *A history of the University of Natal*, (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1966), p. vi.

<sup>95</sup> O.P.F. Horwood, "Foreword", p. vi.

<sup>96</sup> This volume also appeared in Afrikaans. Universiteit van die Vrystaat, *Van sink tot sandsteen tot graniet. Die eerste 100 jaar van die Universiteit van die Vrystaat*, (Bloemfontein: Universiteit van die Vrystaat, 2006).

of a first draft of the history. A second committee under the leadership of Rector Prof Frederick Fourie then took over the editorial work and produced the final version of the volume.<sup>97</sup> It is not certain how much Fourie had his hand in the writing, but his influence is discernible in the remarkable number of photographs in which he appears throughout the book. As with other commemorative publications, the only references are a brief list of sources used. It is an impressively detailed volume covering a wide variety of information, which probably will be considered the key reference source for facts regarding the university. There is a definite attempt to contextualise the university's history in wider events, both in the text and in a very detailed timeline in the paste-down of the book's cover, which gives national and international events on one side and university events on the other.

A more recent addition to South African university histories is Elsabé Brink's history of the University of Johannesburg (UJ), *The University of Johannesburg. The university for a new generation*.<sup>98</sup> This volume was published by the university and written to coincide with UJ's fifth anniversary in 2010. As an institution which was formed by the merger of the Rand Afrikaanse Universiteit, the Technikon Witwatersrand and the Soweto Campus of Vista University, the history looks at its progress during its first five years. It also digs deeper into the context of the institution by examining themes in the history of UJ from a historical perspective through the investigation of their development at UJ's predecessors. It is a dense publication, covering a wide range of topics and strongly locates the institution in an interesting way within the history of the city of Johannesburg. In keeping with its commemorative nature, it is a richly illustrated volume, including not only pictures of UJ and its predecessors, but also illustrations which touch the wider local and national context. There is a useful bibliography and references are given to direct quotations.

A few general remarks can be made regarding South African university histories. Almost all were written to coincide with a landmark in the institution's history with the sanction of, or under the commission of, the institution in question. Many were written by members of the particular institution's staff. Most are not exhaustive of the period which they cover,

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<sup>97</sup> Universiteit van die Vrystaat, *Van sink tot sandsteen tot graniet*, pp. xiv-xvii.

<sup>98</sup> E. Brink, *The University of Johannesburg. The university for a new generation*, (Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg, 2010).

but select an era on which to focus in more detail. Bearing the intended audience in mind, the appeal of these volumes is usually broader than merely a scholarly academic community. For this reason, anecdotal information is often included and in some cases the trappings of historical writing are dispensed with. Among later histories, one could remark that some have been written by ‘liberals’ in so-called ‘open’ universities and, in some cases, their aims appear to be to position the respective university favourably in a radically changed and changing political climate.

This latter approach is also apparent in a good number of the scholarly articles which have been written regarding South African universities. Phillips gives the title “What did your university do during Apartheid?” to a review article published in 2000 looking at three publications of Wits’s history.<sup>99</sup> This title could also aptly be applied to the majority of recent scholarly articles written about South African universities, as many examine different universities’ positions during the Apartheid era. These include an issue of the *African Sociological Review* dedicated to articles on Rhodes University. The articles come from a “Critical Tradition Colloquium” held at Rhodes in 2004 to celebrate its centenary, in which various dimensions of the university’s history were critically examined, particularly as they related to Apartheid and the university’s post-Apartheid transformation.<sup>100</sup> One predominant dimension which is investigated in scholarly articles is the question of student participation or protest.<sup>101</sup> Other articles have looked more specifically at the question of language medium at particularly former Afrikaans-medium universities.<sup>102</sup> The growth of disciplines at South African universities has also been investigated, with history understandably attracting the most attention.<sup>103</sup> A perhaps

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<sup>99</sup> H. Phillips, “What did your university do during Apartheid?”, *Journal of Southern African studies* 26(1), March 2000, pp. 173-177.

<sup>100</sup> *African Sociological Review* 9(1), 2005.

<sup>101</sup> B.K. Murray, “Defending the ‘open university’: Wits University, student politics and university Apartheid 1955-1959”, *Perspectives in Education* 17(1), 1996, pp. 27-50; B.K. Murray, “Wits University, student politics, and the coming of Apartheid”, *Perspectives in Education* 12(1), 1990, pp. 55-68; H. Giliomee and G. Hendrich, “Die slag van Andringastraat: student-onluste op Stellenbosch: 1940”, *Historia* 50(2), November 2005, pp. 179-209.

<sup>102</sup> J.C. Steyn, “’n Rektor skors sy voorganger oor ‘n onstuimige hoofstuk uit die taalstrydaan die UKOVS”, *Joernaal vir Eietydse Geskiedenis*, 20(1), Junie 1995, pp. 87-112; J.C. Steyn, “Die taalstryd aan die Grey Universiteitskollege ten tyde van die rektorat van D.F. Malherbe”, *Acta Academica*, 25(4), Desember 1993, pp. 87-117; D.A. van der Bank, “Die Grey Universiteitskollege, 1904-1935: stryd om indentiteit en voortbestaan”, *Navorsing van die Nasionale Museum Bloemfontein* 11(11), Desember 1995, pp. 302-376; D.M. van der Merwe, “‘Taal op Tuks’ A reappraisal of the change in language policy at the university of Pretoria, 1932”, *Historia* 53(2), November 2008, pp. 151-181.

<sup>103</sup> H. Phillips, “First lessons in South African history: University teaching and the writing of South African history, 1903-c.1930”, *South African Historical Journal* 34, May 1996, pp. 160-174; B. Nasson, “HISTORY AT



somewhat older tradition in the articles regarding South African universities is the investigation of the origins and growth of universities in the country. The latter includes studies by Boucher, Phillips and Spies, and presents useful insights into the foundational years.<sup>104</sup>

### University of Pretoria histories

Concerning the early history of the University of Pretoria and the Transvaal University College, the most comprehensive source is *Ad Destinatum. Gedenkboek van die Universiteit van Pretoria* published in 1960 by Voortrekkerpers, which covers the history of UP from the first thoughts of higher education in the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek up to 1960. At first glance *Ad Destinatum* fits the description of a traditional university history as outlined above. It is an “impressively detailed and pioneering narrative” commissioned by the University Council to coincide with the jubilee of the institution’s independence from the Johannesburg branch of the Transvaal University College. The publication was carried out under the auspices of a committee of whom the chairperson was the Rector. There is no author mentioned on the cover or title page, but an editorial note opposite the foreword attributes the writing of the volume to three members of the University’s Department of History. The person given the chief credit for the writing of *Ad Destinatum* is A.N. Pelzer, then professor and head of that department. The final editor of the publication was the rector of UP, Prof C.H. Rautenbach, which in itself indicates, like the UOFS and Stellenbosch histories, that it was a managed publication.

The political and cultural orientation of both Rautenbach and Pelzer immediately call into question the interpretation of events presented in *Ad Destinatum*, as both represented the nationalist persuasion of their period.<sup>105</sup> Pelzer was a prominent member of the Afrikaner Broederbond who “felt strongly about the Afrikaner cause”.<sup>106</sup> In a study of Pelzer, F.A.

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LARGE. Cape or Cairo? University history on the African continent”, *History Workshop Journal* 55, 2003, pp. 192-196.

<sup>104</sup> M. Boucher, “A brief history of the South African university system”, *Historia* 18(1), March 1973, pp. 59-66; M. Boucher, “Some observations upon the influence of Scotland in South African university education”, *Historia* 14(2), June 1969, pp. 98-106; H. Phillips, “A Caledonian college in Cape Town and beyond: an investigation into the foundation(s) of the South African university system”, *South African Journal of Higher Education* 17(3), 2003, pp. 122-128; S.B. Spies, “1946 and all that: the emergence of the University of South Africa as a teaching university”, *Kleio* 29, 1997, pp. 5-18.

<sup>105</sup> Van der Merwe, “Taal op Tuks”, pp. 152-153.

<sup>106</sup> F.A. Mouton, “A.N. Pelzer: A custodian of Afrikanerdom”, in F.A. Mouton (ed.), *History, historians and Afrikaner Nationalism. Essays on the history department of the University of Pretoria, 1909 – 1985*, (Vanderbijlpark: Kleio, 2007), p. 101.

Mouton includes *Ad Destinatum* in a list of his publications “commissioned in the service of the *volk*”<sup>107</sup> and demonstrates how Pelzer felt it was his duty to “defend and preserve orthodox Afrikaner historiography”.<sup>108</sup> According to Mouton, “[t]he closest Pelzer came to a philosophy on history was his view that the Afrikaner historian had a special calling to stimulate pride in and patriotism towards the *volk*, and love for the fatherland, in other words to ensure Afrikaner ethnic mobilization.”<sup>109</sup>

In addition, Pelzer was a student at the University in the 1930s, a period which was characterized by growing Afrikaner nationalism, especially in the wake of the “Afrikaanswording” (literally “becoming Afrikaans”) when the University adopted the policy of Afrikaans as the single medium of instruction. Furthermore, Pelzer was a member of the residence Sonop, a breeding ground of nationalist and republican sentiment where, according to Mouton, there was little tolerance for non-conformity and individuality.<sup>110</sup> It is then quite reasonable to expect that Pelzer’s history of the University embodies the atmosphere of his student days which was characterized by an endeavour to strengthen and protect the place of the Afrikaner student. Mouton also points out that Pelzer’s “academic career started when the Afrikaner was competing with the dominant culture of Britain and dealing with economic insecurity.”<sup>111</sup> In *Ad Destinatum* there are distinct undertones of Pelzer’s nationalist sentiments. These are particularly evident in his interpretation of the events surrounding the highly charged debate around language policy at the University.<sup>112</sup>

Apart from its nationalist flavour, *Ad Destinatum* is a remarkable source due to the wide scope of subjects it covers and its impressive use of particularly primary sources. Pelzer was a firm believer in the Von Rankian ‘scientific and primary research’. For him, the historian should attempt a ‘definitive’ study of a subject based on thorough research so that no further study would be necessary.<sup>113</sup> The major shortcoming of this volume is that, while an extremely wide range of sources were consulted and even quoted in the text, due to the

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<sup>107</sup> Mouton, “A.N. Pelzer: A custodian of Afrikanerdom”, p. 98.

<sup>108</sup> Mouton, “A.N. Pelzer: A custodian of Afrikanerdom”, p. 103.

<sup>109</sup> Mouton, “A.N. Pelzer: A custodian of Afrikanerdom”, pp. 100-101.

<sup>110</sup> Mouton, “A.N. Pelzer: A custodian of Afrikanerdom”, pp. 91-92.

<sup>111</sup> Mouton, “A.N. Pelzer: A custodian of Afrikanerdom”, p. 121.

<sup>112</sup> An example is Pelzer’s defensive tone regarding criticism of the single medium policy and the withdrawal of the city council’s financial support for the University. C.H. Rautenbach (ed.) et al, *Ad Destinatum. Gedenkboek van die Universiteit van Pretoria*, (Johannesburg: Voortrekkerpers Beperk, 1960), pp. 68-71; Van der Merwe, “‘Taal op Tuks’”, pp. 154-155.

<sup>113</sup> Mouton, “A.N. Pelzer: A custodian of Afrikanerdom”, pp. 99-100.

commemorative nature of the book, no footnotes were included and there is no bibliography. It thus lacks the weight of a well-substantiated and referenced piece of historical writing which detracts from its usefulness for future researchers.

Pelzer's account complies with the "facts-and-rulers" template which presents the university as a political institution operating according to the hierarchical structures of the administration and the requirements of legislation. *Ad Destinatum* is a story presented primarily from the top, in which the main role-players are the members of the University Senate and Council, complemented by government administrators. While there is a detailed section dedicated to student life, students do not feature heavily in the events of the University's development. For example, in the controversy surrounding the appointment of A.E. du Toit as rector in 1929, brief mention is made of a mass gathering of students to protest the new appointment. In comparison to the attention dedicated to the wranglings of Senate and Council, the response of the students is somewhat ignored and underplayed.<sup>114</sup> In addition, while the Senate and Council feature as the prime initiators of change, the changing composition of these two bodies and the sometimes stormy relationship that existed between them is also not accounted for. They appear as faceless bodies obscuring the role of the individuals of whom they were constituted.

The strongest criticism that can be leveled at *Ad Destinatum* is its failure to place university events within the context of a changing South African society. The fifty years covered by this volume were decisive years in the history of South Africa, characterized by the unsettled atmosphere in the wake of the South African War, the turbulence of the World War I, 1914 rebellion and 1922 strike, the political changes after Union and splintering of Afrikaner politics, not to mention the uneasiness over the future of the race question and the development of Afrikaner identity and nationalism. Some of these factors receive a passing mention in *Ad Destinatum*, but on the whole it is a story of the University that is rather insulated and parochial. National events are given as a backdrop, but the role-players within the University are never directly linked to the context of the day. Especially in relation to the students and teaching staff of the University, no real attempt is made to explore the development of these groups and their demographics in relation to wider events and circumstances.

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<sup>114</sup> Rautenbach (ed.) et al, *Ad Destinatum*, p. 34.

Furthermore, there is an overriding notion of progress and destiny in the sequence of events presented in the narrative. As regards the presentation of the language question in *Ad Destinatum*, Ria van der Merwe states that “the entire history of the University up to 1932 is portrayed as a struggle against and finally a victory for the Afrikaans-speaking community over the deliberate negation and suppression of the Afrikaners and their mother tongue by the British Imperialist authorities and the supporters of British imperialism.”<sup>115</sup> Given Pelzer’s nationalist sympathies, this is understandable and yet, the approach neglects the complexities and contradictions which existed in the post South African War and Union of South Africa period.

The publication of *Ad Destinatum* was followed in later decades by three successive volumes with the title *Ad Destinatum* covering the periods 1960-1982, 1983-1992 and 1993-2000 respectively. These later volumes give a more bland account of the facts and figures of university growth and developments. They follow a prescribed “recipe” in which the detail of executive, faculties and service departments are relayed. This does however provide a useful reference book on university developments and staff. The fifth volume, 2001-2009, is currently being compiled.

Church historian and former UP student dean, Flip van der Watt has contributed various publications regarding the history of the University, from a history of the Faculty of Theology to a history of Tuks rugby.<sup>116</sup> In *Rectores magnifici*<sup>117</sup> he examines each of the rectors of the University, giving biographical sketches and highlighting their respective achievements during their tenures. Anecdotes and popular impressions of each man are included, making this a useful and interesting source. While the more controversial aspects of their terms of office are mentioned, in general the descriptions are not very critical. Van der Watt’s latest contribution to UP history is a commemorative volume published to coincide with the centenary entitled *Tukkies oorskou sy eerste honderd jaar*.<sup>118</sup> This book uses thematic sketches and a wealth of photographs and images to illustrate the University’s first century. It is aimed at a popular Afrikaans audience and thus is deliberately not an in depth

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<sup>115</sup> Van der Merwe, “Taal op Tuks”, p. 155.

<sup>116</sup> P.B. van der Watt (ed.), *Deo Gloria! Teologiese Fakulteit, 1938-1988*, (Pretoria: NG Kerkboekhandel, 1989); F. van der Watt, *Tukkie-rugby by die millennium*, (Pretoria: Business Print Centre, 2000).

<sup>117</sup> F. van der Watt, *Rectores magnifici*, (Pretoria: Protea Boekhuis, 2003).

<sup>118</sup> F. van der Watt, *Tukkies oorskou sy eerste honderd jaar. 1908-2008*, (Pretoria: Universiteit van Pretoria, 2008).

study of the institution's history. There are plans to translate the book into English, thus making it accessible to a wider readership.

A noteworthy scholarly approach to one UP Department's past is the collection of essays compiled and mainly written by F.A. Mouton under the title *History, historians and Afrikaner nationalism. Essays on the history department of the University of Pretoria, 1909-1985*.<sup>119</sup> This collection of biographical articles examines a selection of staff members of the UP Department of History. As stated in a review of Mouton's work, "[i]t does not pretend to be a comprehensive account of the department over the 75 years that it covers, and its focus is not on the department as such but rather on the individuals and their lives."<sup>120</sup> It has however been welcomed as adding new light on the subject of Afrikaner historians and historiography.<sup>121</sup> Two of the essays fall into the period of the Transvaal University College, those covering Leo Fouché, founding UP historian, and J.A.I. Agar-Hamilton, his contemporary. The essay on Fouché, in particular, includes a lengthy analysis of the development of the language question at the TUC and useful references to relevant sources on that topic.

## Conclusion

As a genre which includes multiple possible dimensions, university history may add significantly to the understanding of a certain period by considering the university in its social context. This approach goes further than 'traditional' university histories by offering a critical look at the complexities existing in the relationship between the university and the society in which it operated. South African university histories may be seen as a combination of 'traditional' histories and ones which establish strong connections between the university's history and its historical context. The limited number of histories of the Transvaal University College and their shortcomings make this an area of study which merits further attention.

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<sup>119</sup> Mouton (ed.), *History, historians and Afrikaner Nationalism*.

<sup>120</sup> C. Saunders, Book review: F.A. Mouton (ed.), *History, historians and Afrikaner Nationalism. Essays on the history department of the University of Pretoria, 1909 – 1985*, *South African Historical Journal* 58, 2007, p. 314.

<sup>121</sup> J. Peires, Book review: F.A. Mouton (ed.), *History, historians and Afrikaner Nationalism. Essays on the history department of the University of Pretoria, 1909 – 1985*, *Historia* 52(2), November 2007, p. 307.

## CHAPTER II

### EXPORTING MODELS: EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES IN THE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURIES

The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were times of major expansion and development in universities in Europe. Far from being a uniform institution at this point, the university in Europe differed from country to country and even within countries. Moreover, key economic and social changes in Europe acted upon universities, leading to their transformation. Furthermore, in the early twentieth century the university was becoming an accepted part of society in many parts of the world and particularly in the British Empire. This chapter will examine the factors which influenced changes and reforms in universities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It will then explore some of the European models of universities, paying particular attention to the universities of Great Britain as they were most influential in the establishment of universities in South Africa. It will then briefly consider the spread of universities to the colonial world. As the university is a distinctly European institution, an understanding of this critical period in the history of European universities provides the essential background and context for the growth of higher education in South Africa.

#### **The university in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century**

During the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there was, what Jarausch has termed, a “seismic shift” in the educational realm with “the emergence of ‘modern’ higher education”.<sup>122</sup> He explains that “[d]uring the development of a mature industrial society, a small, homogenous, elite and pre-professional university turned into a large, diversified, middle-class and professional system of higher learning”.<sup>123</sup> Furthermore, this modernization of higher education has been ascribed during this period to all countries of the West. Without doubt this period can aptly be described as “an exciting and significant epoch in the history of the universities of Europe”.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Jarausch, “Higher education and social change: some comparative perspectives”, p. 10.

<sup>123</sup> Jarausch, “Higher education and social change: some comparative perspectives”, p. 10.

<sup>124</sup> Rudy, *The universities of Europe, 1100 - 1914*, p. 134.

The first half of the nineteenth century certainly was a period of major restructuring in the universities of Europe.<sup>125</sup> During this time both external and internal forces acted on European universities. Externally, “the ‘idea’ of a university was resurrected at the turn of the nineteenth century” which in many ways would become “the axial institution of the modern world”.<sup>126</sup> This was amid the demands of industrialization and modernization, joined with rising nation states in influencing the nature of universities in the West. “These institutions were caught up in the political turmoil and rapid socioeconomic evolution of the times” which “let loose powerful pressures to make higher education more responsive to the demands of society.”<sup>127</sup> Internally, universities also underwent changes related to the nature of university education and to the place of research and teaching, as “deep-seated tensions in the very conception and operation of the university also existed”.<sup>128</sup> Some attention needs to be given briefly to the effects of these factors on the university.

National aspirations and sentiments became increasingly prevalent in the wake of the French Revolution in early nineteenth century Europe. These relatively modern nationalistic concerns brought an expanding political element into universities in certain parts of Europe, which in some cases even became players in national liberation movements. This was particularly true of German, Austro-Hungarian and Russian universities, where radicalism was often coupled with nationalism.<sup>129</sup> Not only were universities affected by the development of national spirit, but also can be implicated in the spread of nationalism.<sup>130</sup> Furthermore, it has been put forward that institutional changes in this period can be “intimately linked to ... the rise of the modern nation-state” either as new political entities or through the reform of older state institutions in various countries.<sup>131</sup> Wittrock continues that,

far from being detached from the basic societal and political transformations of the modern era, universities form part and parcel of the very same process which manifests itself in the emergence of an industrial

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<sup>125</sup> Wittrock, “The modern university”, p. 312.

<sup>126</sup> Wittrock, “The modern university”, p. 331.

<sup>127</sup> Rudy, *The universities of Europe, 1100 - 1914*, p. 134.

<sup>128</sup> Wittrock, “The modern university”, p. 331.

<sup>129</sup> Rudy, *The universities of Europe, 1100 - 1914*, pp. 105-107.

<sup>130</sup> Jarausch, “Higher education and social change: some comparative perspectives”, p. 11.

<sup>131</sup> Wittrock, “The modern university”, p. 305.

economic order and the nation-state as the most typical and most important form of political organisation.<sup>132</sup>

The former development ushered in a period during the second half of the nineteenth century described as “the coming of age of modernity”<sup>133</sup> and characterised by intensified industrialization and urbanisation. Economic growth and modernization both preceded and followed developments in education. In Great Britain industrial development largely came before the modernization of higher education, while in Germany higher education was a factor in boosting economic growth.<sup>134</sup> Furthermore, with increasing economic prosperity and material growth, higher education also became another “consumption good, afforded by parents of modest means”.<sup>135</sup> In addition to industrial development, the late nineteenth century also saw the evolution of “the scientific spirit”.<sup>136</sup> Rapid progress in science and technology and the flowering of knowledge in the natural sciences forced universities into re-evaluating subjects of study and, to a greater and lesser degree, transformed them into modern research institutions.<sup>137</sup>

Related to the development of research at universities during this period, was the creation of disciplines. The organisation of bodies of knowledge as specialised study fields “within a closed society of shared wisdom” was a phenomenon which occurred at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>138</sup> This process was shaped by assumptions regarding the arrangement of specific disciplines, curriculum choices, the form of examinations, institutional structures and pressures from outside universities. In an introduction to a study of the history of the discipline history, Reba Soffer states that “[d]isciplines were shaped by external and internal criticism, conceptual challenge, economic pressures, political principles, institutional lethargy, personalities, tensions among conflicting interests, individual preferences, aesthetic inclinations and the

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<sup>132</sup> Wittrock, “The modern university”, p. 305.

<sup>133</sup> Wittrock, “The modern university”, p. 309.

<sup>134</sup> Jarausch, “Higher education and social change: some comparative perspectives”, pp. 10 & 32-33.

<sup>135</sup> Jarausch, “Higher education and social change: some comparative perspectives”, p. 35.

<sup>136</sup> W. Rüegg, “Themes”, in W. Rüegg (ed.), *A history of the university in Europe. Universities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (1800 – 1945)* III, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 13.

<sup>137</sup> Rudy, *The universities of Europe, 1100 - 1914*, pp. 125-126; Rüegg, “Themes”, p. 13; Wittrock, “The modern university”, p. 331.

<sup>138</sup> Soffer, *Discipline and power*, pp. 21 & 26.



actual content of each discipline.”<sup>139</sup> Certainly, the creation of disciplines was a vital influence in the transformation and growth of universities in this era.<sup>140</sup>

The scientific spirit in the nineteenth century best found expression in the German universities and particularly in Wilhelm von Humboldt’s University of Berlin. The modern scientific laboratory did not actually originate in Germany, having already been developed in both Britain and France in the early nineteenth century. Germany, however, was the first to combine laboratory research into the instructional programmes of its universities.<sup>141</sup> Many of the other above factors, including the development of nation states, came together in the notion of *Bildung* which was also embodied in the establishment of the University of Berlin in Germany and in the philosophy of its creator, Von Humboldt. After military defeat and political turmoil in nineteenth century Germany, *Bildung* was an attempt to “recreate and reinvigorate national culture”.<sup>142</sup> This concept reaches further than meaning merely ‘general education’; it may be understood more literally as ‘formation’. *Bildung* affected continental Europe as it interacted with “the ‘invention’ of the new cultural community of the nation as a partly real, partly imagined community of cultural-linguistic commonalities and legacies”.<sup>143</sup> This notion profoundly influenced the university in its period of rebirth in the early nineteenth century and continued to shape academic research, disciplines and ideology during the rest of the century.<sup>144</sup>

The German model based on Von Humboldt’s university in Berlin “with its heavy emphasis on research and research training ... came to serve as an exemplar for university reformers all over the world”.<sup>145</sup> In some respects this model was adopted more successfully outside of Germany. The best examples of such an adaptation are the Anglo-American research universities which most effectively combine general education and scientific teaching, and developed in their own right into an alternate

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<sup>139</sup> Soffer, *Discipline and power*, p. 21.

<sup>140</sup> Soffer, *Discipline and power*, p. 21.

<sup>141</sup> Rudy, *The universities of Europe, 1100 - 1914*, p. 129.

<sup>142</sup> Wittrock, “The modern university”, p. 317.

<sup>143</sup> Wittrock, “The modern university”, p. 318.

<sup>144</sup> Wittrock, “The modern university”, p. 319; S. Rothblatt, “The limbs of Osiris: liberal education in the English-speaking world”, in Rothblatt and Wittrock, *The European and American university since 1800*, pp. 41 & 59.

<sup>145</sup> Wittrock, “The modern university”, p. 328.

model.<sup>146</sup> Furthermore, the success of the scientific spirit can be found in institutions where the university's traditional corporate autonomy lent itself to freedom for its academic staff in terms of teaching, study and research, showing "the fundamental importance of academic freedom and corporate autonomy".<sup>147</sup> This also highlights important questions regarding the relationship between university autonomy and the state, upon which higher education in most countries came to depend in an increasing measure financially.<sup>148</sup>

By the end of the nineteenth century, Oxford and Cambridge had also conformed to the German model, accepting that research was an important aspect in the teaching mission of a modern university. In her examination of higher education questions in England, Sarah Barnes relates the growth of interest in scientific discovery to the professionalization of the academic career. She highlights how from the mid-1800s in Oxford and Cambridge "research began to emerge as an essential, often competing, function of the academic staff".<sup>149</sup> Scholarship became attached to the notion of being a good teacher and the Oxbridge dons were elevated to having professional status.<sup>150</sup>

The period between the mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth century was also characterised by the sheer quantitative expansion of universities. A brief survey shows double the number of universities in Europe on the eve of World War II compared to a hundred years before and a 500 and 700 percent increase in the number of professors and students respectively. Jarausch's systematic study of the transformation of higher education in England, Germany, Russia and the United States between 1860 and 1930 shows that higher learning over the period expanded in these four countries at an average of ten times.<sup>151</sup> While he points out the role that increased technical and teacher training played in influencing this growth, he remarks that "the expansion was still so substantial that one is tempted to call it an educational mobilization".<sup>152</sup> Further examination shows a wide range of factors which to a

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<sup>146</sup> Rüeegg, "Themes", p. 12; Wittrock, "The modern university", p. 328.

<sup>147</sup> Rüeegg, "Themes", p. 14.

<sup>148</sup> Rüeegg, "Themes", p. 14.

<sup>149</sup> S. Barnes, "England's civic universities and the triumph of the Oxbridge ideal", *History of Education Quarterly* 36(3), Autumn 1996, p. 290; Rüeegg, "Themes", p. 12.

<sup>150</sup> Barnes, "England's civic universities and the triumph of the Oxbridge ideal", pp. 290-291.

<sup>151</sup> Rüeegg, "Themes", p. 3; Jarausch, "Higher education and social change: some comparative perspectives", p. 13.

<sup>152</sup> Jarausch, "Higher education and social change: some comparative perspectives", p. 14.

greater or lesser degree affected student enrolments during the period, such as the establishment of new universities and colleges, the admission of women and the inclusion of more vocational courses of study. Other broader influences include aspects such as population growth, the demand for more skilled manpower and social mobility which became attached to higher education. This numeric expansion is the first of four trends identified by Jarausch in his study. The other three themes he identifies as diversification, social opening and professionalization.<sup>153</sup>

The second trend, namely diversification, points to the development of assorted forms of higher educational institutions. Higher learning became no longer synonymous with universities only and this period saw the emergence of technical and professional training institutions catering to the demand for more specialised professional and vocational skills.<sup>154</sup>

In his third identified trend, namely, the opening of recruitment, Jarausch attempts to examine quantitatively the broadening of access to higher education from different social classes. While admitting the difficulties of accurately studying the question, he argues that available evidence “suggests that the social recruitment of higher learning altered significantly”<sup>155</sup> in the period under review with lower middle class students accounting for an increasing proportion of the student population. Thus, “despite variations over time, nationality and institution, the basic thrust of expansion and differentiation [of institutions] led to the emergence of the middle class university”.<sup>156</sup>

The fourth trend of professionalization is one that occurs quite frequently in the literature on the nineteenth and early twentieth century university. Scholars agree that the rise of professions within societies had a profound influence on universities as “higher education [became orientated] towards practical knowledge and useful careers for the public good”.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Jarausch, “Higher education and social change: some comparative perspectives”, pp. 14-32.

<sup>154</sup> Jarausch, “Higher education and social change: some comparative perspectives”, p. 18; Rüegg, “Themes”, p. 3; Silver, *Education as history*, p. 177.

<sup>155</sup> Jarausch, “Higher education and social change: some comparative perspectives”, pp. 23 & 25.

<sup>156</sup> Jarausch, “Higher education and social change: some comparative perspectives”, p. 25.

<sup>157</sup> Rüegg, “Themes”, p. 3.

A profession may be defined as

a full time occupation in which a person earned the principal source of an income ... mastered an esoteric but useful body of systematic knowledge, completed theoretical training before entering a practice or apprenticeship, and received a degree or license from a recognised institution ... .<sup>158</sup>

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the standing of professions began to become more established in terms of authority and status. Professionals were more and more recognised in terms of their knowledge, practice and competence, and were able to lay down the terms upon which they would provide their services.<sup>159</sup> This specialised knowledge and skill lent authority to professionals and secured their position and status.<sup>160</sup>

The desire for professional status and the need for more trained professionals had a significant impact on higher education, which “emerged as the gatekeeper for entrance into an educated elite.”<sup>161</sup> The relationship between universities, who at their origin in the Middle Ages offered professional training and professions is, however, a complex one. Traditionally the medieval university had offered professional training, but this function had gradually been replaced by liberal education and pure research pursuits, particularly by the mid-nineteenth century. The twentieth century saw the gradual return to professional training in universities.<sup>162</sup> Furthermore, a number of new professions emerged such as teachers, chemists and engineers whose fields were added to university disciplines, in addition to the more traditional professions of the clergy, law and medicine.<sup>163</sup>

The relationship between the professions and higher education can be summed up in the following way:

The coincidence between the rise of the new professions and the transformation of higher learning is not entirely accidental. Universities ...

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<sup>158</sup> B.J. Bledstein quoted in Jarausch, “Higher education and social change: some comparative perspectives”, p. 29.

<sup>159</sup> Soffer, *Discipline and power*, pp. 25-26; Barnes, “England’s civic universities and the triumph of the Oxbridge ideal”, p. 288.

<sup>160</sup> Soffer, *Discipline and power*, p. 26.

<sup>161</sup> Barnes, “England’s civic universities and the triumph of the Oxbridge ideal”, p. 288.

<sup>162</sup> Jarausch, “Higher education and social change: some comparative perspectives”, p. 29; Barnes, “England’s civic universities and the triumph of the Oxbridge ideal”, pp. 287-288.

<sup>163</sup> Jarausch, “Higher education and social change: some comparative perspectives”, p. 29.

produced novel careers through scholarly specialization while aspiring practitioners time and again tried to legitimate their claim to professional status through higher learning. Ultimately professionalization and academization therefore fed on each other by continually upgrading the entrance requirements..., making the curriculum content and teaching style more scientific... and by increasing academic demands for various certifying examinations.<sup>164</sup>

### **British models**

The above trends in higher education in the nineteenth and twentieth century were manifested in varying degrees in the form which universities took in different parts of the Western world. These in turn became models of universities as higher education spread to other parts of the world particularly through colonial expansion. By the turn of the twentieth century, there was no standard model of a university and, as elements of each model had an impact on the understanding of what a university should be in the colonial world, it is useful to attempt to highlight some of the main features of each model.

With respect to the development of higher education in Great Britain in the nineteenth century, historian Christophe Charle maintains that “[n]owhere did people hold fast to traditions more determinedly”.<sup>165</sup> In 1800 there was one university in Ireland, four in Scotland, and Oxford and Cambridge (Oxbridge) in England. The University of London was established in 1828, followed by thirteen provincial universities between that time and 1902. Before the outbreak of World War I a more unified and homogeneous national university system was beginning to come into existence.<sup>166</sup>

The idea that a British model of university existed is spurious. The characteristics of British universities were not so much a result of government direction, but were a conglomerate of tradition and slowly adopted reforms. Furthermore, some of the newer institutions were purposeful attempts to remedy the shortcomings of the older universities. This meant that in practice a variety of higher educational institutions

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<sup>164</sup> Jarausch, “Higher education and social change: some comparative perspectives”, p. 31.

<sup>165</sup> C. Charle, “Patterns”, in Rüegg (ed.), *A history of the university in Europe. Universities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries*, p. 36.

<sup>166</sup> Charle, “Patterns”, pp. 36 & 53.

existed which “had few internal connections”.<sup>167</sup> Despite the absence of these “connections”, the history and development of these various types of British institutions is intimately intertwined. This is particularly true in the case of the Oxbridge institutions and the newer civic universities, as one grew out of reaction to apparent defects in the other and the other, while adopting reforms, continued to set the tone for university ideals.

One researcher has identified elements of hierarchy as a “paramount” influence in the form higher education expansion took in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Britain.<sup>168</sup> Such was the process that by 1930 “a definite hierarchy of educational institutions”<sup>169</sup> was apparent. However, until the end of the World War II, students and teachers at universities were still made up mainly of members of the upper classes and in an increasing way of those of the upwardly mobile middle classes.<sup>170</sup> Oxford and Cambridge, however, remained the preserve of the aristocracy, while new institutions provided for growing democratization of higher education.<sup>171</sup>

Oxford and Cambridge embodied the pursuit of a humanist education and the ideal of producing “the generally educated gentleman”.<sup>172</sup> Both were residential and clerical universities presenting a liberal education which was meant to form mind and character, where character represented “the successful assertion of rational will against every kind of vicissitude”.<sup>173</sup> This notion of character was intended to furnish coping mechanisms for anything life presented and its mettle was tested particularly in the field of public service. Thus, as Soffer points out, its acquisition was linked to ideas of “national interest”.<sup>174</sup>

Various factors, such as compulsory college residences, high costs and the restriction of being only open to Anglican students, caused these two ancient universities to

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<sup>167</sup> Charle, “Patterns”, p. 53.

<sup>168</sup> R. Lowe, “The expansion of higher education in England”, in Jaraus (ed.), *The transformation of higher learning 1860-1930*, p. 52.

<sup>169</sup> Lowe, “The expansion of higher education in England”, p. 37.

<sup>170</sup> Soffer, *Discipline and power*, p. 12.

<sup>171</sup> Rudy, *The universities of Europe, 1100 - 1914*, p. 118; Silver, ““Things change but names remain the same””, p. 130.

<sup>172</sup> Charle, “Patterns”, p. 54; See also S. Rothblatt, “The limbs of Osiris: liberal education in the English-speaking world”, pp. 44-45.

<sup>173</sup> Soffer, *Discipline and power*, p. 14; Rüeegg, “Themes”, p. 11.

<sup>174</sup> Soffer, *Discipline and power*, p. 14.

stagnate.<sup>175</sup> Mid-nineteenth century attempts to reform them, however, met largely with resistance or nominal acquiescence. Various external methods were employed in an attempt to persuade these institutions to adopt more ‘modern’ curricula including subjects like history and physical science, but they doggedly held onto their traditions.<sup>176</sup> Furthermore, these traditions were linked to the belief that higher education should foster a national elite.

Soffer explains that in these institutions

[t]hroughout the century that began in the 1850s innovations in curriculum, finances, staff, and teaching were rarely the result of irresistible pressures from either parliament or the public. Only those changes were accepted which the university’s officers and teachers believed would protect and extend traditional educational aspirations.<sup>177</sup>

Wittrock points out “a complex threefold development” in the process of institutional transformation in nineteenth century Britain. The first two, apparently contradictory, trends directly affected the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. These were, namely, “a renewed emphasis on the importance of a liberal education free from narrow considerations of utility and vocational interests” and, as discussed earlier, “a renewed emphasis even in the old universities of Oxford and Cambridge on the role of universities in preparing students for a professional career”.<sup>178</sup> The first development, which lined up with the Oxbridge tradition, was articulated by Roman Catholic Cleric John Henry Newman and the philosopher John Stuart Mill.<sup>179</sup> Interestingly, while advocates of the first trend rejected the thought of professional training, those formed by a liberal education became the political and administrative elite of Britain and the British Empire. This highlighted the connection between the political and administrative demands of the British government and exclusive or hierarchical higher education.<sup>180</sup>

The second development, which occurred mainly in the second half of the nineteenth century, “entailed a deep-seated restructuring” of Oxford and Cambridge and

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<sup>175</sup> Charle, “Patterns”, p. 54.

<sup>176</sup> Soffer, *Discipline and power*, pp. 15-16; Silver, *Education as history*, p. 177.

<sup>177</sup> Soffer, *Discipline and power*, p. 17.

<sup>178</sup> Wittrock, “The modern university”, pp. 324-325.

<sup>179</sup> Wittrock, “The modern university”, p. 324; Soffer, *Discipline and power*, p. 18.

<sup>180</sup> Wittrock, “The modern university”, p. 325.

“involved the professionalization of science and scholarship”.<sup>181</sup> This was manifested in for example, the addition of medicine and engineering schools at Cambridge and, on the material side, by the introduction of museums, lecture halls and laboratories to the universities.<sup>182</sup>

The third development in this process of institutional change was the emergence of a new range of higher education institutions during the second part of the nineteenth century. These institutions, which were later called “civic universities”, have often been contrasted with the ancient Oxbridge universities as promoters of professional and even vocational education.<sup>183</sup>

An important step in the later establishment of the civic universities in provincial towns of England was the establishment of the first new English university after Oxford and Cambridge, the University of London. In 1828, University College in London was established as the first non-Anglican college in England. It was followed in 1831 by the establishment in London of a rival Anglican college, King’s College. In 1836, these two were joined together by the government’s establishment of the University of London, which had the right to award degrees to students of the London colleges. This new university was therefore a new model in British higher education, as it did not require students to be in residence, but also had no inner unity. Through awarding external degrees, it encouraged the establishment of university colleges. Most of the later civic universities began as colleges which prepared students for University of London degrees.<sup>184</sup> The University of London’s establishment showed a growing confidence in the written examination as an objective means of gauging intellectual capacity, something which would increasingly fall into disfavour at a later time.<sup>185</sup>

In examining the development of the university in Britain, Lord Annan comments that the University of London “drew their inspiration and established two traditions which

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<sup>181</sup> Wittrock, “The modern university”, p. 325.

<sup>182</sup> Wittrock, “The modern university”, pp. 325-326.

<sup>183</sup> Wittrock, “The modern university”, p. 326.

<sup>184</sup> Charle, “Patterns”, pp. 54-55; A. P. Newton, *The universities and educational systems of the British Empire*, (London: W. Collins Sons & Co. Ltd, 1924), p. 22.

<sup>185</sup> Boucher, “A brief history of the South African university system”, p. 59.



were to affect the development of the civic universities”.<sup>186</sup> These were, firstly, the incorporation of serious research as an essential element of the university, following the German model, and the belief in the freedom of researchers in their pursuits; and secondly, the absence of restrictions on students or staff based on race or religion.<sup>187</sup>

The University of London may be viewed as the first English liberal university, including modern subjects in its teaching such as modern languages, engineering and medicine. It became a model of lay government, later emulated by the civic universities. The founders of this university and the later civics did not want to leave particularly the financial control of these institutions in the hands of the academic staff, as income was derived mainly from fees and not endowments. This led to the two-tiered system of university government with a lay council keeping control mainly of finances and demonstrating the aspiration that the university should serve the needs of society, and a senate of academic members of the university, illustrating the university’s freedom in academic affairs from outside influence.<sup>188</sup> This is the system of university governance which would be followed later in South African universities.

The University of London’s strongest and most dubious influence on higher education in England and ultimately further afield, was its offering of external examinations to younger university colleges. The goal was to prevent any university college from acquiring university status too easily without attaining to proper standards. The dramatic result was, however, that academic growth and innovation was stifled in the university colleges.<sup>189</sup> By the mid-nineteenth century, the University of London “had shown that a predominantly non-sectarian university could survive and prosper in England.”<sup>190</sup> It became particularly influential in later years over the establishment of the civic, or “redbrick”, universities.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> L. Annan, “The university in Britain”, in M.D. Stephens and G.W. Roderick, *Universities for a changing world*, (Vancouver: Douglas David & Charles Ltd, 1975), p. 23.

<sup>187</sup> Annan, “The university in Britain”, p. 23.

<sup>188</sup> Annan, “The university in Britain”, pp. 23-24.

<sup>189</sup> Annan, “The university in Britain”, p. 24.

<sup>190</sup> Rudy, *The Universities of Europe*, p. 116.

<sup>191</sup> Rudy, *The Universities of Europe*, p. 116; M.D. Stephens and G.W. Roderick, “Introduction”, in Stephens and Roderick, *Universities for a changing world*, p. 9.

As already mentioned, between 1832 and 1905 thirteen local institutions of higher education were established across Britain.<sup>192</sup> These new institutions began as university colleges, preparing students to take University of London examinations, but during the first decades of the twentieth century, many of these colleges were granted university charters of their own.<sup>193</sup> The autonomy which the government afforded British universities “created an opening for initiative and flexibility that was unknown on the Continent” and as a result these new institutions emerged without an overarching plan, encompassing medical, polytechnic and commercial disciplines in their curricula.<sup>194</sup> These civic universities were generally supported by local industries and had a more practical focus in their teaching. In fact, the academic specialisation of each was directly related to local industries and endowments.<sup>195</sup>

The multiplication of these universities in some of the large provincial cities of England with the aim of educating a new industrial urban elite, has been described as “[t]he most important changes in the British university landscape”<sup>196</sup>; as “a breakthrough” as “[t]hey shattered the Oxford-Cambridge monopoly and brought higher learning to the mass of the British people.”<sup>197</sup> An example of the latter is the “Liberal, Nonconformist concern of the trustees [of Owens College in Manchester] that the common people be educated”.<sup>198</sup>

The emergence of these civic universities coincided with reforms at Oxford and Cambridge, resulting in the strengthening of a number of English university traditions, including its mission to provide a liberal education. However, this was viewed as merely part of the university’s function and alongside it, “[i]n all types of institutions, old and new, there was also a clear recognition that professional training and professional scientific activities in disciplined form were integral parts of a modern university.”<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> Soffer, *Discipline and power*, p. 14; Rüegg, “Themes”, p. 11.

<sup>193</sup> Rudy, *The universities of Europe*, p. 119.

<sup>194</sup> Soffer, *Discipline and power*, p. 14; Rüegg, “Themes”, p. 11.

<sup>195</sup> Charle, “Patterns”, p. 55; Rudy, *The universities of Europe*, p. 132.

<sup>196</sup> Charle, “Patterns”, p. 62.

<sup>197</sup> Rudy, *The universities of Europe*, p. 119.

<sup>198</sup> G.S. Messinger, *Manchester in the Victorian age. The half-known city*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), p. 141.

<sup>199</sup> Wittrock, “The modern university”, p. 327.

Civic universities were established in the Victorian and Edwardian eras by larger provincial towns in order to meet local needs for higher education. These universities “initially represented a distinct alternative to the ancient universities, not only in terms of their location and the socioeconomic composition of their student bodies but also in terms of mission.”<sup>200</sup> This new model stressed scientific research, practical professional training, regional service and more open access. A feature which initially distinguished the civic universities from Oxbridge was their recognition and inclusion of scholarship in every field of knowledge in their curriculum. As a result, it is possible to point out the “extraordinary institutional diversity”<sup>201</sup> which existed in higher education in England at the beginning of the twentieth century.

The rise of these new university colleges and polytechnics was also a reaction to international economic and industrial competition. These institutions were generally located in the rapidly expanding industrial cities which would have been most sensitive to this challenge. Conservatism at Oxford and Cambridge meant that “modern” curricula found more favourable homes in these newer institutions where there was more awareness of the country’s technological and scientific demands, as well as entrepreneurs with ready money who were motivated both by European competition and an appreciation of the achievements afforded to industry on the continent by their institutions of higher learning.<sup>202</sup>

According to Barnes’s study of the civic universities, their history began with the founding of Owens College – later the University of Manchester – in 1851. As such, aspects of Owens College’s early years highlight features of these new institutions in the English higher education landscape. Owens College was founded with traditional emphasis on Latin, Greek and mathematics, incorporating some newer subjects like natural science, English literature and modern languages. Instruction was aimed at the middle class local population. The college nearly failed in its first decade due to a lack of students. Middle class demand for higher education only came into existence in a strong way after 1860 when reasons for its growth included the following: the rise of professions which required the recruitment, training and certification of new

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<sup>200</sup> Barnes, “England’s civic universities and the triumph of the Oxbridge ideal”, p. 271.

<sup>201</sup> Soffer, *Discipline and power*, p. 29.

<sup>202</sup> Silver, *Education as history*, p. 178; Rudy, *The universities of Europe*, p. 131.

members; the development of a middle class who were eager to preserve or promote their status; and to a degree, the gradual recognition of the importance of scientific training and research by industry.<sup>203</sup>

Barnes points out the dual mission of Owens College: on the one hand, it sought to meet middle-class aspirations for a liberal education in line with ideas of a traditional university; on the other hand, especially in the era after 1860, it became more focused in offering training in the sciences and on scientific research, in order to meet local needs in Manchester.<sup>204</sup> Messinger also expands on the mission of Owens College and furthermore alludes to the relationship between the College and the city in which it was located by stating:

The College propagated and defended the view – accepted in the twentieth century but then still radical – that there was a great need in Britain for more institutions of higher learning which would give the sciences the same status as the liberal arts, use the city itself as a tool of education, and simultaneously give the city a broader view of life which only higher learning could bestow.<sup>205</sup>

Interestingly, “specifically urban universities are not a dominant feature of all modern industrial societies.”<sup>206</sup> For example, in the United States of America the location of many campuses was based on the rural secluded ideal of Oxbridge, while other campuses that today appear urban, were rural in origin. Messinger concludes that the “urban orientation of Britain’s university system, and the large role which Victorian Manchester played in bringing it about, is therefore of international historical significance”.<sup>207</sup> Due to England’s traditional emphasis on landed interests, it is noteworthy that the civic universities set a new urban pattern for higher education.

In the 1870s Owens College felt time was right to approach the government regarding university status, assured of national interest in university questions at the time.<sup>208</sup> Strenuous objections were raised in the press, particularly regarding the location of such an institution in Manchester. One writer “maintained that large cities distracted

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<sup>203</sup> Barnes, “England’s civic universities and the triumph of the Oxbridge ideal”, pp. 273-274.

<sup>204</sup> Barnes, “England’s civic universities and the triumph of the Oxbridge ideal”, p. 274.

<sup>205</sup> Messinger, *Manchester in the Victorian age*, p. 142.

<sup>206</sup> Messinger, *Manchester in the Victorian age*, p. 140.

<sup>207</sup> Messinger, *Manchester in the Victorian age*, p. 140.

<sup>208</sup> Messinger, *Manchester in the Victorian age*, p. 144.

students from their studies, while a ‘very smoky town’ such as Manchester” could not cultivate the same kind of corporate spirit among students as the residential atmosphere of Oxford or Cambridge.<sup>209</sup> Some maintained that Owens College only wanted to free itself from accountability to the University of London. They argued that this would result in low standards, like had happened at Oxford and Cambridge, where students were examined by the same people who taught them.<sup>210</sup> Doubts were also expressed as to “whether a provincial manufacturing city such as Manchester could support a university with breadth of vision. Instead, it would probably ‘stoop to make its teaching a school for the learning of a particular trade, such as calico printing for instance, or put Pegasus in harness to draw the wheel of a cotton mill.’ ”<sup>211</sup>

Regardless of the opposition, during the first two decades of the twentieth century Owens and a number of other colleges petitioned for and received university charters. These events meant that the ideal of a new model of university in England was outlined, “one that owed much more to Germany, Scotland, and the emerging research institutions of the United States than to traditional English ideals.”<sup>212</sup> New subjects and different branches of knowledge were arranged into faculties, differing from Oxford and Cambridge where the same subjects were being taught by all the colleges. The civics can therefore be said to have embodied “new disciplines and new types of students”.<sup>213</sup>

The English civic universities, as an alternative to Oxbridge, were in turn influenced by other nineteenth century forms of universities. It has been stated that “[t]he English provincial universities ... looked to both the German and Scottish universities for inspiration”.<sup>214</sup> In particular, the founding civic university, Owens College was opened after trustees made “attentive visits to the Scottish universities.”<sup>215</sup> Four Scottish universities were giving instruction during the nineteenth century and, with a few exceptions, represented a form of higher education which “owed nothing to a

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<sup>209</sup> *Saturday Review*, quoted in Messinger, *Manchester in the Victorian age*, p. 145.

<sup>210</sup> Messinger, *Manchester in the Victorian age*, p. 145.

<sup>211</sup> Messinger, *Manchester in the Victorian age*, pp. 145-146.

<sup>212</sup> Barnes, “England’s civic universities and the triumph of the Oxbridge ideal”, p. 274.

<sup>213</sup> Barnes, “England’s civic universities and the triumph of the Oxbridge ideal”, pp. 274-275.

<sup>214</sup> Stephens and Roderick, “Introduction”, p. 9.

<sup>215</sup> Messinger, *Manchester in the Victorian age*, p. 141.

foreign model”.<sup>216</sup> At the beginning of that century, they were the only other universities in Great Britain besides Oxford and Cambridge. They drew their finances from the state, but apart from that were autonomous. Residence and tutorials were neither strong features, but instruction relied largely on the use of the lecture. Furthermore, the Scottish universities had a long tradition of providing professional training, especially in medicine, and were open and flexible to the introduction of new disciplines.<sup>217</sup>

The Scottish universities embraced broad and varied disciplines and embodied the idea of providing a liberal education as well as preparation for professions.<sup>218</sup> In this way, Scottish higher education attempted to link humanist training, the domain of Oxford and Cambridge, with professional training.<sup>219</sup> Their willingness to incorporate new disciplines and sciences meant that the Scottish universities were instrumental in meeting some of the needs of trained manpower in industrial Britain. Scottish universities were therefore among the first British institutions to pay attention to what were considered to be modern branches of learning, a fact which influenced the University of London and the civic universities in turn.<sup>220</sup>

An outstanding feature of the Scottish universities was their accessibility even to poorer students. Their reputation was of “providing learning for the common people”,<sup>221</sup> enabled by fees which were approximately a tenth of those asked by Oxford and Cambridge. In addition, many students studied from home or in lodgings as residence was not compulsory, thus reducing their expenses. Therefore the Scottish institutions were considered more democratic, drawing students from a much wider circle than the ancient English universities.<sup>222</sup>

English higher education also influenced the Scottish in return. While the Scottish universities differed significantly from their English counterparts, in order to give

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<sup>216</sup> Rüegg, “Themes”, p. 11.

<sup>217</sup> Rüegg, “Themes”, p. 11; Charle, “Patterns”, p. 53.

<sup>218</sup> Silver, ““Things change but names remain the same””, p. 125.

<sup>219</sup> Charle, “Patterns”, p. 54.

<sup>220</sup> Stephens and Roderick, “Introduction”, p. 9.

<sup>221</sup> Rudy, *The universities of Europe*, p. 117; Newton, *The universities and educational systems of the British Empire*, p. 24.

<sup>222</sup> Rudy, *The universities of Europe, 1100 - 1914*, p. 117; Annan, “The university in Britain”, p. 23; Charle, “Patterns”, p. 62; Newton, *The universities and educational systems of the British Empire*, p. 7.

their students a chance to find employment in high level civil and imperial service positions, Scottish universities in the late nineteenth century adapted their degrees to match the needs of examinations which were set up with Oxford and Cambridge instruction in view.<sup>223</sup>

What has been alluded to repeatedly above in the examination of nineteenth and early twentieth century university models – a tension which also existed in the establishment of institutions of higher learning further afield in the colonial world – is the two sided nature of university education. On the first side, “knowledge, mind and the interaction of one with the other were important, but so were nobility of spirit and character to which Newman later added aesthetic taste and feelings”.<sup>224</sup> These intangible aspects were best fostered in an environment of close interpersonal relationships. On the second side, in line with the German and Scottish models, weighed the needs of the state and endeavours to develop ‘modern’ scientific knowledge. Without doubt,

[t]his duality of function, represented by individual needs on the one hand and social needs on the other, is a constant theme ... . University systems vary in the degree to which they stress one at the expense of the other.<sup>225</sup>

Thus the dominant themes in this era of the university’s history in Great Britain are wrapped up in the relationship between new institutions and university ideals represented by Oxford and Cambridge, as well as the social classes and professions who inspired their establishment.<sup>226</sup> Furthermore, “[t]he history of the University of London, and the Scottish and English civic universities raised continuing questions about the relationship between liberal education and preparation for the professions.”<sup>227</sup> The balance in this relationship remains indeed an ongoing question right throughout the twentieth and into the twenty-first century, as Barnes and Jarausch both highlight how liberal education and the Oxbridge ideal gained ground in the civic universities in the early years of the century and particularly during the

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<sup>223</sup> Soffer, *Discipline and power*, p. 11.

<sup>224</sup> Stephens and Roderick, “Introduction”, p. 9.

<sup>225</sup> Stephens and Roderick, “Introduction”, p. 9.

<sup>226</sup> Silver, ““Things change but names remain the same””, p. 130.

<sup>227</sup> Silver, ““Things change but names remain the same””, p. 125.

interwar period.<sup>228</sup> It would also affect how various people would regard the development of higher education later in South Africa on the Witwatersrand and in Pretoria.

The nineteenth century was therefore a very pivotal period of change and growth in the history of the European university. Both older and newer institutions were faced with the strong force of industrialisation and related economic and social needs. This affected the scope of curricula, while the traditional emphasis on liberal studies and sometimes competing demands for training related to local and regional needs also shaped institutions. Ultimately, this period of immense change and development meant that,

[t]he twentieth century inherited conflicting views about what was appropriate for a university, but also distinctions amongst universities and between universities and other emergent forms of higher education.<sup>229</sup>

### **Spread to the colonial world**

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, universities and colleges began increasingly to be established in places outside of Europe and in each case they “reproduced existing models under new circumstances”.<sup>230</sup> After hundreds of years of development in Europe, the university’s spread to other lands was part of the “cultural migration”<sup>231</sup> linked to colonial expansion, as the establishment of universities in foreign territories closely followed European settlement in those places. Furthermore, the twentieth century saw the “greatest wave of transplantations [of universities] to foreign countries for five hundred years.”<sup>232</sup> In different places and at different times, the establishment of these universities was done with a variety of purposes in mind. Initially universities served the educational needs of the migrated European population, but later in some places, universities were established to further the training of local people.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> Barnes, “England’s civic universities and the triumph of the Oxbridge ideal”, p. 271; Lowe, “The expansion of higher education in England”, p. 53.

<sup>229</sup> Silver, *Education as history*, p. 180.

<sup>230</sup> E. Shils and J. Roberts, “The diffusion of European models outside Europe”, in Rüegg (ed.), *A history of the university in Europe. Universities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries*, p.163.

<sup>231</sup> Rudy, *The universities of Europe*, p. 135.

<sup>232</sup> E. Ashby, *Universities: British, Indian, African. A study in the ecology of higher education*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1966), p. 8.

<sup>233</sup> Rudy, *The universities of Europe*, pp. 135-136.



Whatever the motivations were for their establishment, the strong European influence in universities in the colonial world and further afield is unmistakable. In the first place, European models were imprinted on overseas universities, so that it is possible to say that “[a]ll universities outside Europe were formed in accordance with an image of the European university in the minds of their founders, at first or second remove”.<sup>234</sup> In the second place, the European mindset regarding the university’s function in society also promoted its propagation in all parts of the world. Universities came to be regarded as an indispensable part of modern society, as the belief in the need for formally recognised training and knowledge took root. Furthermore, universities were seen as not only providing necessary skills and knowledge, but also as adding prestige to a country. Thus, “[u]niversities became part of the symbolic apparatus of progressive civilization, of modernity”.<sup>235</sup>

Developments in the home country of the colonisers in particular played a very significant role in the form universities took in the colonies. In this regard it can be asserted that “an amalgam of features of the old and the modern English and Scottish universities did much to shape new North American colleges and universities as well as those of Canada, India, Australia and South Africa.”<sup>236</sup> Furthermore, the University of London played a very important prototypical role in the forms higher education came to take in the British Empire.<sup>237</sup> Furthermore, in tracing university development in various parts of the British Empire, A.P. Newton also highlights the inspirational role of the English civic universities in countries like Australia, Canada and Hong Kong.<sup>238</sup>

In the case of South Africa, it is essential to have an understanding of the higher education landscape in Great Britain in order to understand the history of universities in the region. Many of the tensions which went together with university development in Europe are also evident in their origins and development in the different parts of South Africa. University education in South Africa during this period should therefore also be located in the broader context of university education in the British Empire

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<sup>234</sup> Shils and Roberts, “The diffusion of European models outside Europe”, p.164.

<sup>235</sup> Shils and Roberts, “The diffusion of European models outside Europe”, p.164.

<sup>236</sup> Shils and Roberts, “The diffusion of European models outside Europe”, p.163. See also Rudy, *The universities of Europe*, p. 135.

<sup>237</sup> Rudy, *The universities of Europe*, pp. 135-136.

<sup>238</sup> Newton, *The universities and educational systems of the British Empire*, pp. 86-89.

when the university was becoming an accepted part of society in many parts of the world and particularly in the British Empire.

After the discovery of minerals in Kimberley (1867) and on the Witwatersrand (1886), and the South African War (1899-1902), South African society underwent dramatic changes similar to events in Europe in the nineteenth century. Industrialisation, modernisation and urbanisation became more prominent. As in Europe, these in turn affected the need for and expectations regarding higher education.

In Newton's 1924 survey of the universities of the British Empire, he observes that these institutions are "recognisably British" as opposed to universities from other parts of the world. He concludes that "... all the universities of the self-governing Dominions and India were planned at their foundation according to the prevailing educational ideas of the time".<sup>239</sup> He labels universities of the Empire, "with some few exceptions, as peculiarly British institutions."<sup>240</sup> Phillips has however also pointed out that the "imitation and replication" of the British models cannot be viewed as being linear, as it is apparent from the above discussion, that no "single British model [which] served as a standard template for such emulation ... as ... no such single model existed."<sup>241</sup>

The main influences on the form universities would take in the Empire originated from the four models of the university found in Great Britain discussed earlier. These include the older model of Oxford and Cambridge; the more democratic and utilitarian approach of the Scottish universities; the English civic universities; and finally "that artificial construction of the mid-Victorian epoch, the examining University of London".<sup>242</sup> Elements of all of these four models can be found in the history of higher education in South Africa.

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<sup>239</sup> Newton, *The universities and educational systems of the British Empire*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>240</sup> Newton, *The universities and educational systems of the British Empire*, p. 2.

<sup>241</sup> Phillips, "A Caledonian college in Cape Town and beyond", p. 122.

<sup>242</sup> Newton, *The universities and educational systems of the British Empire*, p. 2; Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, p. 259.

The model of the University of London had an enduring influence in many British colonies long after its flawed nature had led to reforms in England. The secular and cost effective model of the University of London with its emphasis on written examination, made it popular in a large number of British colonies. In the Cape Colony the University of London model appeared initially to be the most practical choice with its widespread and sparse settler population coming from a variety of backgrounds. Moreover the growth of English university colleges in the late nineteenth century, preparing students for the University of London examinations and producing great numbers of teachers for newly founded secondary schools and technical institutions was similar to later developments in New Zealand and South Africa.<sup>243</sup>

The influence of the civic or, as Newton terms them, provincial universities on university development in South Africa is evident. He places the South African universities, which at that stage included the University of Stellenbosch and the University of Cape Town, in the category of “English Provincial Type”.<sup>244</sup> Boucher also comments that this model had the greatest influence on what was to become the University of the Witwatersrand with its emphasis on technology.<sup>245</sup>

One of the older models of British universities which has had an enduring influence on higher education in South Africa is the Scottish model. The prevailing influence of Scottish higher education overseas may be attributed to the fact that, for a large part of the nineteenth century, the University of Edinburgh drew more students from the British colonies than all the other British institutions put together.<sup>246</sup> Furthermore, this University was the first to recognise the certificates of the University of the Cape of Good Hope and thus it attracted a good number of South African students.<sup>247</sup> Even in the primary and secondary schools of the Cape Colony of the nineteenth century, Scottish teachers and masters were favoured. Scotland provided both “model and men

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<sup>243</sup> Newton, *The universities and educational systems of the British Empire*, pp. 37-40 & 49-50; Boucher, “A brief history of the South African university system”, pp. 59-60; Phillips, “A Caledonian college in Cape Town and beyond”, p. 123.

<sup>244</sup> Newton, *The universities and educational systems of the British Empire*, p. 106.

<sup>245</sup> Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, p. 259.

<sup>246</sup> Newton, *The universities and educational systems of the British Empire*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>247</sup> Newton, *The universities and educational systems of the British Empire*, p. 11; M. Boucher, “Some observations upon the influence of Scotland in South African university education”, *Historia* 14(2), June 1969, p. 100.

for export” and the democratic utilitarian education it provided suited the needs of the Cape.<sup>248</sup> According to Boucher, “[i]t is in the direct impact upon South African higher education of the Scotsmen who helped to administer the old examining University [UCGH] and to staff the teaching institutions that Scotland’s great contribution is most obviously apparent.”<sup>249</sup>

Phillips indicates that more Scottish influence is apparent in the fact that in the first decade of UCT’s history (1918-1929) the professoriate remained “a male preserve dominated by graduates of the ancient Scottish universities, with South African-born professors the exception.”<sup>250</sup> There was not only a dominance of Scottish professors at UCT in its early decades, but also at its predecessor, the South African College (SAC), which was further compounded by the implementation of the Scottish university system. Scottish professors and administrators remained in the majority and their enduring influence can be seen in many dimensions of the SAC and later UCT’s history, from curriculum, with a firm belief in general education, to examination and teaching styles.<sup>251</sup> Phillips points out, however, that the Scottish model for export was one that developed before fundamental reforms to Scottish universities took place from the 1890s. He explains, that “[p]aradoxically, ... just as this old university system was being discarded in Scotland, key elements of it were being inserted into the very foundations of the new system being set up in South Africa.”<sup>252</sup> As these early colleges and the first university set the pace for higher education as it developed later in other parts of South Africa, this influence is significant.

Not only did higher education institutions bear testimony to the influence of Europe and Great Britain, but even colonial perceptions regarding universities were shaped by European university developments. This can be seen, for example, in a public lecture given in 1906 by Philosophy Professor JH Hertz at the Johannesburg TUC, entitled *The place of the university in modern life*. Apart from Hertz’s lecture, other literature

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<sup>248</sup> Boucher, “Some observations upon the influence of Scotland in South African university education”, p. 99.

<sup>249</sup> Boucher, “Some observations upon the influence of Scotland in South African university education”, p. 100.

<sup>250</sup> Phillips, *The University of Cape Town, 1918-1948*, p. 11.

<sup>251</sup> Phillips, *The University of Cape Town, 1918-1948*, p. 12; Phillips, “A Caledonian college in Cape Town and beyond”, pp. 123-126; Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, p. 259.

<sup>252</sup> Phillips, “A Caledonian college in Cape Town and beyond”, p. 127.

on the question of higher education in South Africa at the time also demonstrates that a keen awareness existed in South Africa of university developments in Great Britain, on the European continent and even further afield in the British Empire and the United States.<sup>253</sup>

## Conclusion

As “an educational system cannot be divorced from its historical antecedents”,<sup>254</sup> in order to properly understand the context in which universities developed in South Africa, it is crucial to have an understanding of the development of the university in Europe, and particularly in Great Britain, in the period prior to their growth in South Africa. An overview of this period points to a complex set of factors which acted upon universities, including industrialisation, the rise of scientific enquiry, professionalization, shifting class status and the role of the state in higher education. These factors played out in different places in varying degrees, influencing already established traditions of university education and thus resulting in different contemporary models of universities. In Great Britain, these factors meant that by the beginning of the twentieth century four distinct models of universities existed. When universities took root in the new world, the founders drew on these models, based on their own background and experience, as both the inspiration and pattern for these young institutions. Furthermore, many of the concerns and intended functions of universities in the colonial world can be traced to roots in the colonising country.

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<sup>253</sup> J.H. Hertz, *The place of the university in modern life*, (Johanneburg: R.G. McKowen & Co., 1906); J. Edgar, “Union and the university question and the case for a national university”, reprinted from *The State*, April and July 1910; M. Nathan, “A Transvaal university. An able paper”, *The Star*, 1 August 1902.

<sup>254</sup> A.L. le Roux, Book review: A.L. Behr, *New perspectives in South African education. A review of education in South Africa 1652 -1984*, in *South African Journal of Education* 5(3), 1985, p. 167.

## CHAPTER III

### THE TRANSVAAL HIGHER EDUCATION LANDSCAPE

In line with developments in the rest of the colonial world and in the British Empire, aspirations to establish institutions for higher education began to develop in South Africa in the late nineteenth century. After the interruption of the South African War (1899-1902) and the establishment of the Union of South Africa (1910), the university question became more pressing. This chapter will look briefly at the South African higher education landscape at the turn of the twentieth century, tracing national events as a backdrop to the establishment of the TUC. More specific attention will be paid to the development of higher education in the Transvaal after the South African War, and the history of the predecessors of the TUC, culminating in the start of university classes in Pretoria in 1908.

#### Higher education in South Africa

The history of universities in South Africa can be traced back to various initiatives to further secondary and higher education in the Cape Colony in the nineteenth century. This culminated in the establishment of the University of the Cape of Good Hope (UCGH) in 1873, the first university on the sub-continent, with its headquarters in Cape Town. This institution was an examining and degree conferring body only, modeled on the University of London, while teaching was carried out at various university colleges in the Cape. These colleges, which included the South African College in Cape Town and Victoria College in Stellenbosch, were in essence high schools, offering post-matriculation courses.<sup>255</sup> Their approaches also differed widely, as some took inspiration from Oxford and Cambridge, and others followed the pattern of the Scottish universities.<sup>256</sup> Ironically, the establishment of this purely examining university in the Cape came at a time when, as mentioned earlier, British higher education was beginning to have its doubts about the paramountcy of written examinations.<sup>257</sup>

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<sup>255</sup> Brookes, *A history of the University of Natal*, p. 1; Phillips, *The University of Cape Town, 1918-1948*, p. 1.

<sup>256</sup> Phillips, "A Caledonian college in Cape Town and beyond", p. 123.

<sup>257</sup> Boucher, "A brief history of the South African university system", pp. 60-61.

The examining university model, on which the UCGH was based, was fraught with defects and towards the end of the nineteenth century became the subject of much criticism for, amongst other things, its emphasis on written examinations, the rigid curriculum and the limitations imposed upon research.<sup>258</sup> Newton explains that from around the 1890s this “[r]evulsion from the examination fetish was a gradual process that began at different times in different parts of the Empire... . It was stimulated most where there were evils that it was impossible to ignore.”<sup>259</sup> Hertz, in his 1906 lecture mentioned earlier, terms the original examining university, the University of London, “a mere examining body—a shadow university”,<sup>260</sup> and he adds his voice to many others who felt that the UCGH was no longer adequate to meet the demands of the time.<sup>261</sup> The system was criticised for numerous reasons, among which it was felt that by merely preparing students for examinations and by the quality of colleges only being weighed according to the number of their students who passed, there was little teaching that would mould students’ characters and develop their intelligence.<sup>262</sup> Furthermore, aspirations to establish a South African teaching university can also be traced back to the late nineteenth century. Famously, Cecil John Rhodes, at an Afrikaner Bond congress in 1891 already spoke of his intention to found a residential teaching university in Cape Town.<sup>263</sup>

In the period following the South African War opportunities for higher education, which had previously been confined principally to the Cape Colony, expanded to the other South African colonies. After the South African War, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State appointed representatives to the Council of the UCGH and thus it began to cater officially for all four British colonies. Previously, the UCGH had not been a popular choice for students in the former Boer republics as it was regarded suspiciously due to its failure to accommodate Dutch as a medium for use in its examinations.<sup>264</sup> Also at this time, a number of university colleges were established in

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<sup>258</sup> Boucher, “A brief history of the South African university system”, pp. 63-64.

<sup>259</sup> Newton, *The universities and educational systems of the British Empire*, p. 54.

<sup>260</sup> Hertz, *The place of the university in modern life*, p. 2.

<sup>261</sup> Hertz, *The place of the university in modern life*, p. 43; See also T. Reunert, “The university question and the Rand”, paper presented to the Witwatersrand Local Centre of the South African Association for the Advancement of Science, February 1916, p. 5.

<sup>262</sup> Edgar, “Union and the university question”, pp. 1-4.

<sup>263</sup> F.C. Metrowich, *The development of higher education in South Africa, 1873-1927*, (Cape Town: Maskew Miller, Ltd., 1928), pp. 24-25.

<sup>264</sup> Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, pp. 90-93.

other centres to prepare students for the UCGH examinations. Intense debate began to develop regarding the structure of university education in South Africa and the UCGH, as there was widespread discontentment with the “current state of affairs”.<sup>265</sup> This debate was spurred along by the dissatisfied SAC and in response various proposals were put forward by the UCGH itself. Unfortunately, “the Colleges, while unanimous in their conviction that some change in the existing system was not merely desirable but indeed imperative, were quite unable to agree as to what form the desired change should take.”<sup>266</sup> On one point there was however unanimity and that was the necessity of establishing a national teaching university.<sup>267</sup>

Throughout the first decade of the twentieth century a number of unsuccessful attempts were made to find a solution to the shortcomings of the university system in South Africa and there were repeated calls for inter-colonial co-operation in reaching such a solution.<sup>268</sup> These culminated in an Inter-Colonial Conference held in 1908 with representatives from the four colonies. The result of the conference was set out in a proposal, but this however was, as F.C. Metrowich states, “stillborn, as the great question of political unity was now at last reaching its final stage and naturally cast it into the background.”<sup>269</sup> Furthermore, after Union in 1910, many of the provisions of the proposed solution accepted by this conference became obsolete, so that in the end nothing came of this attempt to sort out the university system.<sup>270</sup>

Before 1910 there was also no unity in the education systems of the four colonies, but the existence of the UCGH remained until 1916 “the outward symbol and visible token of educational unity”<sup>271</sup>. Up to the time of Union (1910), the four individual state governments had played very little part in attempts to reform higher education. These were mainly instigated by the UCGH, the colleges or private individuals. After Union, the government became responsible and the Union Ministry of Education was

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<sup>265</sup> Edgar, “Union and the university question”, p. 1; Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, p. 105.

<sup>266</sup> Metrowich, *The development of higher education in South Africa*, p. 36.

<sup>267</sup> Metrowich, *The development of higher education in South Africa*, p. 37; Edgar, “Union and the university question”, p. 1.

<sup>268</sup> Metrowich, *The development of higher education in South Africa*, pp. 38-39; Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, pp. 101 & 106-133.

<sup>269</sup> Metrowich, *The development of higher education in South Africa*, pp. 39-40.

<sup>270</sup> Metrowich, *The development of higher education in South Africa*, pp. 39-40.

<sup>271</sup> Metrowich, *The development of higher education in South Africa*, p. vi.



established. This change was significant as the government played an important role in trying to reform the system.<sup>272</sup>

Boucher observes that “it took the Union’s first Minister of Education, F.S. Malan, six weary and frustrating years of negotiation to reconstruct the nation’s university system.”<sup>273</sup> Although Union brought some centralisation to higher education efforts in the country, the events between Union and the passing of the University Acts in 1916, show that arrival at a solution was certainly not simple. Criticism of the UCGH abounded and the remark was made in the publication *Educational News* that it seemed to be “the most hated institution in the land.”<sup>274</sup> A number of commissions, namely the 1911 Thomson Commission and the 1913/14 Laurence Commission and various other proposals preceded the final scheme.<sup>275</sup> A shortage of funds and differences between the two white groups were regarded as the major obstacles in the path of reforming the system.<sup>276</sup> Related to these issues was the important influence of local interests and aspirations in the debate surrounding the future of universities.<sup>277</sup> Rivalry between the different university colleges further complicated matters.<sup>278</sup> A balance needed to be found between a practical solution which would meet the country’s needs and one that would take into account the wide range of interests of those involved. At the time of Union the situation was described as an “already delicate and intricate problem of devising a system of University education in South Africa, which would not only be in the best interests of the country at large, but would also satisfy the aspirations and ideals of all parties concerned.”<sup>279</sup>

Not unlike the debates preceding Union, the debate centred on the form higher education should take in South Africa – whether a federal system of colleges or single-college universities would be preferable.<sup>280</sup> There were a number of elements which complicated the situation, including the determined desire of some of the older university colleges to obtain university status; the multiplication of new university

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<sup>272</sup> Metrowich, *The development of higher education in South Africa*, p. 56.

<sup>273</sup> Boucher, “A brief history of the South African university system”, p. 63.

<sup>274</sup> Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, p. 145.

<sup>275</sup> Reunert, “The university question and the Rand”, pp. 4 & 6.

<sup>276</sup> Boucher, “A brief history of the South African university system”, p. 63.

<sup>277</sup> Metrowich, *The development of higher education in South Africa*, p. 83.

<sup>278</sup> Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, p. 126.

<sup>279</sup> Metrowich, *The development of higher education in South Africa, 1873-1927*, p. 41.

<sup>280</sup> Edgar, “Union and the university question”, pp. 5-12.

colleges throughout the country – a situation which was felt to exceed the demand; and the expectations of private donors and trustees.<sup>281</sup>

The prevailing idea at the time of Union was to establish a single national teaching university which would cater to students from both English and Dutch backgrounds, in a bid to strengthen white unity and conciliation and also foster national feeling.<sup>282</sup> In addition, arguments for a single teaching university also included the development of more specialised research into local South African problems and the possibility of raising the standard of higher education.<sup>283</sup> With the optimism of the age related to science and progress, Professor J. Edgar of the SAC argued in *The State* for a national teaching university in 1910, stating that “...the scientific problems which present themselves for solution in South Africa ... require a band of workers trained in a central university of the most modern type to set about the task of solving them. A university is not merely a teaching institution but primarily a school of research.”<sup>284</sup> From this it is clear that as in Europe, demands for scientific research were directed increasingly towards universities.

Private donations in the form of the Wernher-Beit bequests made by a group of mining magnates added more complications to efforts to arrive at a solution to the university question in the country, even though they did provide the much needed funding to establish the country’s first teaching university. These endowments for higher education from local industry matched those, mentioned in chapter two, which were instrumental in the establishment of the civic universities in England at around this time. In 1904 mining magnate Alfred Beit donated his Frankenwald Estate to the Transvaal government for educational purposes. On his death in 1906 he also left £200 000 to be used for the establishment of a university in Johannesburg, on condition that the money be used within 10 years of his death, otherwise it would return to his estate. Various delays and obstacles meant that the bequest was not used before the formation of Union in 1910.<sup>285</sup> Even though he was not Minister of

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<sup>281</sup> Metrowich, *The development of higher education in South Africa*, pp. 41-42; Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, pp. 111 & 163.

<sup>282</sup> Phillips, *The University of Cape Town, 1918-1948*, p. 2.

<sup>283</sup> Edgar, “Union and the university question”, pp. 14-17; Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, p. 119.

<sup>284</sup> Edgar, “Union and the university question”, p. 13.

<sup>285</sup> Metrowich, *The development of higher education in South Africa*, pp. 42-43.

Education at the time, General Jan Christiaan Smuts approached two other leading mining magnates Sir Julius Wernher and Mr Otto Beit, Alfred's brother, to see whether the Beit bequest could be used to establish a teaching university at Groote Schuur in Cape Town and to see whether additional financial support could be gained. Wernher and Otto Beit agreed and furthermore added an additional £300 000 between them. The De Beers Company also promised £25 000.<sup>286</sup> The magnanimous spirit which preceded and developed with the formation of Union, overcame purely regional considerations and long standing inter-college rivalries. In this particular instance the Beit trustees and other interested parties on the Witwatersrand were led to put their money and support behind the scheme to establish a national teaching university in Cape Town which would provide for the needs of the inhabitants of the entire Union.<sup>287</sup>

Despite the ample funding which the bequest made available for the scheme, a lack of consensus from various parties meant that by the time World War I broke out no solution had been found. There was some feeling that the university question should have been put on hold until after the World War which was raging at the time, although no one could deny the immediate and critical need for reform.<sup>288</sup> At this point the South African College made an "audacious bid to secure its goal".<sup>289</sup> It approached the Beit trustees and proposed that it be elevated to university status and relocated to the Groote Schuur estate, using the £500 000. It argued that the interests of higher education in South Africa would be best served in this way. According to Phillips, the "trustees responded positively, believing, it appears, that an upgraded SAC would be their cherished one national university."<sup>290</sup>

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<sup>286</sup> Metrowich, *The development of higher education in South Africa*, pp. 42-43; Phillips, *The University of Cape Town, 1918-1948*, p. 2; Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, p. 153.

<sup>287</sup> P. Venter, "Die groei van onderwysaangeleentede in Johannesburg. 1886-1920", (DEd thesis, University of South Africa, 1950), pp. 543-546; Reunert, "The university question and the Rand", p. 3; Edgar, "Union and the university question", p. 5.

<sup>288</sup> Phillips, *The University of Cape Town, 1918-1948*, p. 3.; Reunert, "The university question and the Rand", pp. 4 & 6; Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, p. 152.

<sup>289</sup> Phillips, *The University of Cape Town, 1918-1948*, p. 3.

<sup>290</sup> Phillips, *The University of Cape Town, 1918-1948*, pp. 3-4.

In 1916 the so-called University Acts were passed,<sup>291</sup> in which the SAC became the University of Cape Town. The Victoria College, also the recipient of private endowments of its own, became the University of Stellenbosch. The six other South African colleges (the Transvaal University College, the South African School of Mines and Technology, the Natal University College, the Grey University College, the Huguenot University College and the Rhodes University College) became constituent colleges of the new federal university the University of South Africa which succeeded the UCGH. These Acts, however, only came into effect in 1918.<sup>292</sup>

The bill encountered opposition in Parliament particularly from Johannesburg MP's who objected to the manner in which Beit's £200 000 was to be used. They believed that they had been robbed of it and that it had been dishonourably diverted from the purpose for which it was intended.<sup>293</sup> They were dissatisfied with the outcome as they felt that the consent which they had given for parting with the Beit bequest was for the establishment of a new national institution in Cape Town and not for the upgrading of the SAC. In Johannesburg, there was a sense of injustice as the sum on which Johannesburg had the first right had now gone to Cape Town and for a different purpose. Protests came from various quarters of a densely populated Johannesburg at the injury done to their plans to establish a university on the Witwatersrand.<sup>294</sup>

The 1916 Acts were a compromise which some have felt was the best solution as a single teaching University concentrated in Cape Town might have been the death knell to local initiatives. With perhaps the exception of Johannesburg, the Acts succeeded to a large degree in satisfying local interests. As the *Cape Times* commented, "the scheme appears one nicely calculated to command universal

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<sup>291</sup> The University of South Africa Act, Act no. 12 of 1916; The University of Stellenbosch Act, Act no. 13 of 1916; The University of Cape Town Act, Act no. 14 of 1916.

<sup>292</sup> Phillips, *The University of Cape Town, 1918-1948*, p. 4; Metrowich, *The development of higher education in South Africa*, p. 71.

<sup>293</sup> Phillips, *The University of Cape Town, 1918-1948*, p. 4.

<sup>294</sup> Venter, "Die groei van onderwysaangeleentede in Johannesburg", pp. 551-555; Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, p. 172; University of the Witwaterstand Archives (Wits Archives), File 100: History of Mining/University Education, "A short chronology of the university movement on the Witwatersrand".

support, for it concedes almost everything demanded by every interest engaged in the controversy which has been raging ever since the year of Union.”<sup>295</sup>

Thus, as a backdrop to the early development of higher education in the Transvaal, the southern African university question lingered as a point of debate nationally. Furthermore, developments in higher education in South Africa at the beginning of the twentieth century also coincided with similar university reforms in various other parts of Great Britain and the British Empire.<sup>296</sup>

### **Higher education in the Transvaal**

In the Transvaal, education was a major source of controversy during the Crown Colony period (1902-1907), with primary education as one of the main points of contestation. After the signing of the Treaty of Vereeniging (1902), the Education Department of the Transvaal Colony set about dismantling the schools which had been set up in the concentration camps during the South African War and began setting up schools in the towns and rural areas of the Colony. The first few years were characterized mainly by material obstacles, rudimentary school facilities and a shortage of teachers.<sup>297</sup> The education policy of the colonial government under the High Commissioner for South Africa and Governor of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, Lord Milner, based on anglicisation, soon raised the objections of many of the Dutch-speaking inhabitants of the Transvaal, leading to the establishment of a rival system of schooling in the form of “Christian National Education” (CNO). The main reasons for this challenge to the government system were the place of Dutch as a medium of instruction, the teaching of religious dogma and the fact that elected school committees had limited powers especially in the appointment of teachers. During the half dozen years of the Transvaal Colony, primary education was hotly contested. The promoters of CNO schools had repeated meetings with government

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<sup>295</sup> P. Millin, “Union’s three universities”, *Cape Times*, 24 February 1916, quoted in Metrowich, *The development of higher education in South Africa*, pp. 83-84.

<sup>296</sup> Newton points out parallel discussions and reforms in Wales and Ireland around this time. India also was going through a period of university reform. Newton, *The universities and educational systems of the British Empire*, pp. 71 & 79.

<sup>297</sup> W.B. Worsfold, *The reconstruction of the new colonies under Lord Milner*, II, (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1913), pp. 80 & 84.

officials which ended in deadlock and so this system of private “Dutch” schools persevered in spite of the financial strain it placed on parents and communities.<sup>298</sup>

The pressing need for teachers in the Transvaal meant that the first higher education institution to open in the Colony after the War was the Normal College in Pretoria in September 1902.<sup>299</sup> It was established for the training of teachers. In October 1902, a Normal College opened in Johannesburg, but four months later, the director died quite suddenly of typhoid, resulting in the move of the Johannesburg students to Pretoria and the unifying of both colleges into one institution.<sup>300</sup> In the years to come the presence of the Normal College in Pretoria would contribute to other changes in higher education, as students desiring teaching certificates of a higher class<sup>301</sup> were required to hold a BA degree.

A private body which became very involved in the development of higher education in Johannesburg in particular was the Witwatersrand Council of Education. Formed in 1895 as a result of the “backward state of education on the Rand”<sup>302</sup> and representing the English-speaking section of the community, the Council, with the financial support of the Chamber of Mines and various private mining companies, tried to advance education on the gold fields. They opened primary and secondary schools and provided equipment and educational facilities to schools. This action on the part of the “uitlander” (foreign) inhabitants of the Witwatersrand was seen as a protest against the government system of education of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (1852-1902). It also highlighted the active interest inhabitants of the Witwatersrand took in educational matters.<sup>303</sup> The need for a mining school was also raised and Johannesburg was identified as the ideal location for such a school. Although nothing materialized, by the time the South African War broke out the Council was in

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<sup>298</sup> See F.C. Symington, “Onderwys in die Transvaal gedurende die Kroonkolonie-periode”, (DEd thesis, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, 1948); Worsfold, *The reconstruction of the new colonies under Lord Milner*, p. 85.

<sup>299</sup> C.K. Oberholzer, *Die Pretoriase Normaalkollege. 'n Terugblik oor vyftig jaar*, (Pretoria: Staatsdrukker, 1952), p. 7.

<sup>300</sup> Symington, “Onderwys in die Transvaal gedurende die Kroonkolonie-periode”, pp. 193-194.

<sup>301</sup> Teachers were awarded either third class, second class or first class teaching certificates. To qualify for a first class certificate a Bachelors degree was necessary.

<sup>302</sup> Transvaal Archives Depot (TAB), Archives of the Governor-General (GOV) 1143, Correspondence File 25/8/1908, Chairman’s speech at Annual Meeting of Council of Education, Witwatersrand, April 1908, pp. 1-2.

<sup>303</sup> Reunert, “The university question and the Rand”, p. 1.

possession of a fund of £100 000 raised for the purposes of advancing primary and secondary education on the Witwatersrand.<sup>304</sup>

After the War, the British government in the Colony subsumed the primary and secondary work of the Witwatersrand Council of Education, and thus it looked for other avenues to which funds could be directed. Following the example of other English-speaking countries in which higher education was largely dependent on private funding, the Council became involved in commissions investigating the future of secondary and higher education in the Colony.<sup>305</sup> As far as higher education was concerned, in late 1902, in response to instructions of the Director of Education E.B. Sargant, a committee nominated by members of the Witwatersrand Council of Education was set up to make recommendations for a scheme for technical education for South Africa, with special reference to the Transvaal. This committee, composed largely of British settlers on the Witwatersrand, recommended the establishment of an institution “providing the highest kind of training in the arts and sciences connected with mining, agriculture, and other industries ... in the vicinity of Johannesburg”.<sup>306</sup> The committee felt that in spite of the developing state of secondary education in the Colony, the institution should offer the highest level of technical education to students equipped with a matriculation certificate from the Cape University. Part-time and evening courses could be offered to those who did not possess such a qualification. The emphasis of the report was however on the establishment of an institution which could be part of a teaching university. For this purpose the committee recommended the formation of a special commission to consider the matter in the light of the larger question of a South African university.<sup>307</sup>

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<sup>304</sup> Symington, “Onderwys in die Transvaal gedurende die Kroonkolonie-periode”, p. 9; J.P. Wagenaar, “Die ontwikkeling van tegniese onderwys in Transvaal, 1900-1944”, (MEd thesis, University of South Africa, Pretoria, 1966), pp. 16-17; Metrowich, *The development of higher education in South Africa*, p. 11; Venter, “Die groei van onderwysaangeleenthede in Johannesburg. 1886-1920”, pp. 155-160.

<sup>305</sup> TAB, GOV 1143, Correspondence File 25/8/1908, Chairman’s speech at Annual Meeting of Council of Education, p. 2; “Education on the Rand”, *The Star*, 20 February 1902.

<sup>306</sup> TAB, Transvaal Publications (TKP) 193, *Report of a committee appointed to consider the needs of South Africa in regards to technical education, with special reference to the Transvaal* (Johannesburg: Transvaal Leader Office, 1902), p. 2; Wits Archives, *Transvaal University College Calendar for the year 1907*, p. 15.

<sup>307</sup> TAB, TKP 193, *Report of a committee*, pp. 2-3; Venter, “Die groei van onderwysaangeleenthede in Johannesburg. 1886-1920”, pp. 486-487.

Difficulties in agriculture preceding the War and the state of depression after the War meant a migration from rural areas of unskilled workers looking for jobs. There was also a strong demand for skilled people in particularly the mining industry, where competition was fierce as the majority of trained workers came from overseas. In these years immediately following the War, the need for training and education on a higher level became more and more apparent, not only in areas of engineering, but also in agriculture and education, thus prompting those with an interest in education in Johannesburg in particular, to aspire to the establishment of a university.<sup>308</sup> As in Europe, training was needed in these ‘new professions’ and the university had become the accepted place for this to occur. Furthermore, this lines up with the growing middle-class nature of university education abroad.

In the meantime, in December 1902 representatives of the SAC in Cape Town and the Kimberley School of Mines met with the above committee in Johannesburg. The cooperation of the two Cape institutions for the proposed Transvaal scheme was secured and it was decided to move the work of the Kimberley School of Mines to Johannesburg as the most suitable place to carry out the mining engineering courses.<sup>309</sup> In January 1903 the special commission “to enquire into the steps to be taken to bring into existence an institution which should form part of a teaching University and which should provide the highest training in the arts and sciences connected with mining and other industries”<sup>310</sup> was appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor. This commission, known as the Technical Education Commission, was headed by Director of Education, Fabian Ware, and included almost all the members of the 1902 committee as well as representatives of the Johannesburg Town Council, the Chamber of Mines and the Chamber of Commerce.<sup>311</sup> The Commission’s report states that throughout the process of discussions and investigations its thoughts were

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<sup>308</sup> Wagenaar, “Die ontwikkeling van tegniese onderwys in Transvaal, 1900-1944”, p. 21; Venter, “Die groei van onderwysaangeleenthede in Johannesburg”, p. 528; “A Transvaal University”, *The Star*, 1 August 1902.

<sup>309</sup> TAB, Transvaal Education Department (TOD) 58, File 761, Minute on the recent history of higher education in the Transvaal, presented to the Witwatersrand Council of Education on 21<sup>st</sup> November, 1907, by T. Reunert, Chairman of the Council, p. 2; TAB, TKP 193, *Report of the Technical Education Commission, 1903*, (Pretoria: Government Printing and Stationery Works, 1903), p. 2; J. Orr, “Technical education and training”, paper delivered to The South African Institute of Electrical Engineers, April 1932, p. 18.

<sup>310</sup> TAB, TKP 193, *Report of the Technical Education Commission*, p. 1.

<sup>311</sup> TAB, TOD 58, File 761, Minute on the recent history of higher education in the Transvaal, p. 2; Venter, “Die groei van onderwysaangeleenthede in Johannesburg”, pp. 490-491.



“centred on the surest means of establishing a Teaching University.”<sup>312</sup> Thus while technical education was the pressing need in the Colony,<sup>313</sup> and in Johannesburg in particular, larger aspirations for a fully-fledged university remained a constant consideration. The work of the Commission was therefore not to find short term solutions to the need for more technical expertise, but to lay the foundation for a whole system of higher education.

In July of 1903 the Commission presented its report and went further than its predecessor by recommending that simultaneous to the establishment of a technical institute, steps should also be taken towards the foundation of a university. The process envisaged by the Commission therefore had three aspects, namely: the temporary arrangements for providing technical education as soon as practically possible; the further arrangements necessary for the establishment of a permanent polytechnic institution in Johannesburg; and finally, the measures needed to form a teaching university.<sup>314</sup>

The immediate temporary arrangements would mean that third and fourth year students from the School of Mines in Kimberley could be accommodated in Johannesburg the following year. As far as the permanent institution was concerned, the Commission recommended the construction of facilities on Plein Square in Johannesburg which would include classrooms for day and evening classes; laboratories; facilities to house scientific collections; and a library which would include the Johannesburg Public Library. It was felt that from the outset classes should be offered at this facility in general university courses, such as science, the arts and literature, for those students preparing for university degrees.<sup>315</sup>

The longer term recommendations of the Commission related to the founding of a “Permanent Colonial Institution”, or teaching university for the Transvaal. In this regard, the Commission advocated centralizing all teaching and research related to higher education on one site, situated at a convenient distance to both Johannesburg

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<sup>312</sup> TAB, TKP 193, *Report of the Technical Education Commission*, p. 1.

<sup>313</sup> Orr, “Technical education and training”, p. 25.

<sup>314</sup> TAB, TKP 193, *Report of the Technical Education Commission*, p. 6; Wits Archives, “A short chronology of the university movement on the Witwatersrand”.

<sup>315</sup> TAB, TKP 193, *Report of the Technical Education Commission*, pp. 6-7; “Commission on Technical Education”, *The Star*, 13 February 1903.

and Pretoria. The immediate focus would naturally be on mining education and engineering and thus it was stipulated that the chosen site would need to have good transportation links to Johannesburg. The Commission proposed the procurement of a whole farm, large enough to accommodate a teaching university, agricultural school, state laboratories and normal college “so that the teaching staff of the University, and the laboratories and apparatus of these various institutions should serve for as large and varied a class of students as possible.”<sup>316</sup>

### **The Transvaal Technical Institute**

Following the recommendations of the Technical Education Commission of 1903, the Transvaal Technical Institute was established in Johannesburg in August 1903. From February 1904 courses were offered in engineering and mining subjects and students who had begun their studies at the Kimberley School of Mines were transferred to the Institute to continue their studies there.<sup>317</sup> In the second half of the same year, evening classes in technical and scientific subjects were presented in various surrounding towns such as Pretoria, Krugersdorp, Roodepoort, Germiston and on the East Rand. In these early years the Transvaal Technical Institute was very dependent on the financial support of the Witwatersrand Council of Education, which thus felt itself strongly bound to the new Institute and maintained a good proportion of representation on its Council.<sup>318</sup>

Furthermore, the Institute was also mandated by the Colonial government to lay the ground work for a possible Transvaal University. In his speech at the opening of the Institute, Lieutenant-Governor Sir Arthur Lawley stated that one of the jobs of the newly formed Council of the Institute was “to form the structure of higher education throughout the Transvaal, the crowning work of which will be the establishment of a teaching university.”<sup>319</sup> From the outset the Institute aspired to the status of a proper university. This was evident in the first annual report of the Transvaal Technical Institute where a plea was made for teaching and examining status as well as

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<sup>316</sup> TAB, TKP 193, *Report of the Technical Education Commission*, p. 8.

<sup>317</sup> TAB, Archives of the Colonial Secretary (CS) 586, 3056, Transvaal Technical Institute. First Annual Report of Council with Appendices, May 1905.

<sup>318</sup> TAB, CS 580, 2682; Wagenaar, “Die ontwikkeling van tegniese onderwys in Transvaal”, pp. 25-26.

<sup>319</sup> TAB, GOV 705, “Technical Institute. Opening ceremony”, *Transvaal Leader*, 30 March 1904.

objections being expressed at becoming a “mere cramming establishment” which coached students for examinations.<sup>320</sup>

Although ambitious for university status, the Transvaal Technical Institute was created primarily to answer the need for technical education. In the first of his histories of the University of the Witwatersrand, Bruce Murray pointed out the two contrasting university models which were under consideration at the time of the Institute’s establishment. As set out earlier in the discussion of university development in Britain, these two models, highlighted different views on the role of the university, and many of the factors involved in the history of the civic universities in Britain and their relationship with Oxbridge were revisited in the discussion of higher education on the Witwatersrand. Murray explains British Secretary of State for Colonies, Joseph Chamberlain’s preference for a civic university along the lines of Birmingham University, of which Chamberlain was Chancellor, offering a vocational education and serving the industrial urban society. The other was the Oxford model which consisted of a residential university in a smaller town, where the training of the student’s character and thinking was emphasized above the imparting of skills and utilitarian knowledge.<sup>321</sup> Notions here of a liberal versus a vocational or utilitarian education are implied. As discussed earlier and highlighted by Rothblatt, these are tensions that have been a persistent theme in university development since the eighteenth century and also in South African university development and in other colonies at the time.<sup>322</sup>

The years in which the Transvaal Technical Institute came into being coincided with years of increased university development in England. In his 1906 lecture Hertz, summed up recent developments by saying,

[t]he future historian of civilization in England will look back upon the opening years of the twentieth century as momentous and epoch-making in the annals of English culture. The unique event which, above all others, will cause him to so regard the years 1900 to 1905, is the coming into

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<sup>320</sup> TAB, CS 586, 3056, Transvaal Technical Institute. First Annual Report of Council.

<sup>321</sup> Murray, *Wits, the early years*, p. 16.

<sup>322</sup> For discussions regarding liberal and vocational education, see S. Rothblatt, *Tradition and change in English liberal education. An essay in history and culture* (London: Faber and Faber, 1976); Silver, *Education as history*; Rothblatt, “The Limbs of Osiris”; See also Brookes, *A history of the University of Natal*, p. 4.

being of six new Universities – London, Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds and Sheffield.<sup>323</sup>

As mentioned before, Hertz's lecture shows that an awareness existed in South Africa regarding university developments in Europe. For example, he draws inspiration from the German universities in praising the rise of scientific study, new disciplines and research at universities. He also points out the significant growth of civic universities in England and emphasizes their vigour in contrast to the seclusion of Oxford and Cambridge. In the newly self-governing Transvaal, Hertz especially points out that the function of higher education in the modern era is to educate the unschooled populace as a safeguard in the age of democracy.<sup>324</sup>

As explained in chapter two, after more than six hundred years of dominance by the old and established universities of Oxford and Cambridge, a new generation of universities was appearing, aimed at a wider student body, supported by the enthusiasm of their respective municipalities and focused on problems of modern industrial life. In this age of industrial competition, different nations began to realize the wisdom of the German university model, where no subject was considered beneath scientific study.<sup>325</sup> This point was emphasized by Chamberlain in his capacity as Chancellor of the University of Birmingham, when he warned against conservatism with respect to “the application of the highest science to the commonest of industries and manufactures”, saying that otherwise Britain would “fall very far behind in the race for a foremost place among the nations of the earth.”<sup>326</sup>

The civic university model seemed more fitting to the industrial and mining city of Johannesburg. Many felt that, as the industrial hub of the Transvaal, representing the technological achievements of the modern age, Johannesburg was most suited to taking the lead in higher education too. This was in line with the establishment of the civic universities in Britain's industrial centres and matched “the technical and utilitarian view of a university”, popular with many living in the city. This preference

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<sup>323</sup> Hertz, *The place of the university in modern life*, p. 1.

<sup>324</sup> Hertz, *The place of the university in modern life*, pp. 10-13, 18-21 & 24-35.

<sup>325</sup> Hertz, *The place of the university in modern life*, pp. 12 & 24-25.

<sup>326</sup> Quoted in Hertz, *The place of the university in modern life*, p. 28.

demonstrated how “the needs of commerce and industry ran counter to the plans of those who dreamed of a transplanted Oxford or Cambridge”.<sup>327</sup>

The Transvaal Technical Institute’s choice of H.S. Hele-Shaw, a Liverpool University College professor and inventor of a clutch mechanism, as senior professor was a clear indication of the adoption of the civic university model. Hele-Shaw’s aim was to create a thoroughly modern institution in Johannesburg as the embryo of a future “civic university” and he was strongly in favour of an urban university.<sup>328</sup> This was in line with Milner’s vision of a technical university in Johannesburg, as part of his project to promote economic growth and create a strong, stable British population.<sup>329</sup> The city of Johannesburg itself, enthusiastically supported the idea of having its own university, offering a modern education in engineering, architecture, agriculture and teachers training to suit the city’s needs, much like the local patronage which had given rise to the English civic universities.<sup>330</sup> The choice of the Institute’s assistant professor was also indicative of the civic university model. J. Orr, formerly of the South African School of Mines, was also very instrumental in the progress of technical education on the Witwatersrand.<sup>331</sup>

In contrast to this, Sargant promoted the idea of the public school and residential university and, although in the current circumstances these were easy targets of criticism, the Oxbridge model did have some advantages. Most notably, the residential aspect of the model which could bring students together in a common life, and thus promote mutual understanding and tolerance, recommended itself as a means of promoting the government policy of broad South Africanism and unity among whites in the post-War Transvaal. In addition, a more isolated university location would save students from the potentially immoral distractions of an urban centre.<sup>332</sup> As mentioned earlier, these had been some of the reasoning behind the Technical

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<sup>327</sup> Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, p. 99.

<sup>328</sup> Murray, *Wits, the early years*, p. 16; Venter, “Die groei van onderwysaangeleentede in Johannesburg”, p. 515; Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, p. 100.

<sup>329</sup> Murray, *Wits, the early years*, p. 13.

<sup>330</sup> Venter, “Die groei van onderwysaangeleentede in Johannesburg”, p. 518; “A Transvaal University”, *The Star*, 1 August 1902.

<sup>331</sup> Wits Archives, *Transvaal University College Calendar for the year 1907*, pp. 18-19; See Orr, “Technical education and training”.

<sup>332</sup> Murray, *Wits, the early years*, p. 16; Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, p. 100; “A Transvaal University”, *The Star*, 1 August 1902.

Education's Commission's recommendation of acquiring a farm near to Johannesburg as a site for a university.<sup>333</sup>

It was probably in the light of this recommendation that Beit had donated his farm Frankenwald, approximately 20 kilometres from the centre of Johannesburg in the direction of Pretoria, to the government, further strengthening plans for a Transvaal university.<sup>334</sup> In a statement by British Secretary of State for Colonies, Alfred Lyttelton, regarding the use of the Frankenwald farm, he points out that most of the British technical universities were non-residential. He also argued, however, that the “fusion of races would ... be most successfully effected not so much by common studies but by a common life”. This could take place in a residential university on the Frankenwald site to which the existing Technical Institute could be merged.<sup>335</sup> Prof Hele-Shaw drew up a plan for the Frankenwald estate, which would include faculties of education, engineering, agriculture and forestry. He argued for the economic benefits of establishing a central educational site at the estate and furthermore pointed out the immense benefit to be gained from bringing English and Dutch-speaking students, representing a good proportion of the colony's important future professions, together in social intercourse.<sup>336</sup> In some circles in the Transvaal, the move of the TUC to Frankenwald, ideally situated between the two main cities of the colony, was looked forward to with anticipation, as was the College's transformation into a mature teaching university.<sup>337</sup>

In a 1905 reply to Lyttelton, Milner deferred making a decision regarding the use of the Frankenwald farm, claiming that elementary and secondary education were in their infancy in the Colony and could not properly support a university. He also argued that the number of students seeking a university education was relatively low.<sup>338</sup> In the end, the disadvantage of Frankenwald was its distance from Johannesburg. Beit had proposed the construction of a fast electric rail connection

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<sup>333</sup> TAB, TKP 193, *Report of the Technical Education Commission*, p. 8.

<sup>334</sup> Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, p. 130.

<sup>335</sup> TAB, GOV 856, Alfred Lyttelton to Lord Milner, 11 February 1905.

<sup>336</sup> Venter, “Die groei van onderwysaangeleentede in Johannesburg”, p. 531.

<sup>337</sup> Hertz, *The place of the university in modern life*, pp. 46 & 48.

<sup>338</sup> TAB, GOV 856, Lord Milner to Alfred Lyttelton, 11 December 1905.

with the city, but it was a costly plan. In addition, donors were needed to fund the cost of buildings on the site.<sup>339</sup>

The debate around a suitable location for a Transvaal university highlighted the different points of view regarding the form the university should take and also sheds light on white Transvaal society. The 1902 Committee expressed the generally accepted view that

the best situation for such an institution is in the vicinity of Johannesburg; and, while recognizing that objections may be raised to placing any educational institution for young men in the town itself, we feel that the advantages presented by the Witwatersrand and Johannesburg for the purposes of technical education are so great that the institution should at any rate be within easy reach of Johannesburg and the different parts of the Witwatersrand.<sup>340</sup>

The committee went on to enumerate the advantages of being situated so near to some of the most advanced deep level mining in the world, equipped with specialised equipment and offering many opportunities for study and experience.

As stated before, the preference for Johannesburg was also a preference for a university along the lines of the civic university model. Critics of the Oxford model felt that it was “somewhat Utopian to hope that an Oxford or Cambridge, without the endowment, social atmosphere or traditions of either, is going to be successfully created and maintained on the veldt.”<sup>341</sup> In contrast, Johannesburg offered many advantages as an educational site. It would be more accessible and efficient in terms of cost, transportation and time considerations, and offered opportunities for a variety of practical work even apart from the mines. The opinion was also expressed that it would be a benefit to bring students from rural areas who were “accustomed to a somewhat narrow and primitive daily environment ... into contact with the wider circumstances and refining influence of modern urban social life.”<sup>342</sup> Murray

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<sup>339</sup> Venter, “Die groei van onderwysaangeleentede in Johannesburg”, p. 532.

<sup>340</sup> TAB, TKP 193, *Report of a Committee*, p. 2.

<sup>341</sup> TAB, TKP 193, “Minority Report”, *Report of the Technical Education Commission*, p. 11.

<sup>342</sup> TAB, TKP 193, “Minority Report”, *Report of the Technical Education Commission*, p. 11.

furthermore points to Milner's interest in cultivating a strong and influential city of Johannesburg as part of his imperial and anglicizing project.<sup>343</sup>

As pointed out earlier, the emergence of urban universities internationally can be viewed as a somewhat recent occurrence.<sup>344</sup> In Messinger's opinion, commenting on Manchester University, many university campuses were originally set up in places imitating the "medieval ideal of Oxford and Cambridge" based on the assumption of their rural origins and orientation.<sup>345</sup> In the light of this, one of the main objections to Johannesburg as a seat of a university was, as already indicated, the apparent "immorality" of the city.<sup>346</sup> Cape Prime Minister John X Merriman even once referred to the city as the "university of crime".<sup>347</sup> In addition, it was felt that the rural student would not be drawn to Johannesburg.<sup>348</sup> Much like the objections mentioned earlier to having a university in Manchester, *The Star* voiced its objections to a university in Johannesburg in 1902, arguing that Johannesburg, "is not a city in which the atmosphere favourable to the healthy development of men and women at the age of university students can be created, and the Boers are not in the least likely to send their children to such an institution."<sup>349</sup> Smuts also did not regard the chief city of the Witwatersrand highly. In a letter to Cape Premier Merriman he commented how

[t]he cosmopolitan population of the Rand, with its political apathy and want of principles, and its sordid absorption in material things, make me despair sometimes.<sup>350</sup>

These objections echo those doubts raised regarding the establishment of Owens College in Manchester mentioned earlier. In the minority report of the Technical Education Commission, however, Johannesburg's chief medical officer Dr Charles Porter refuted these opinions arguing that

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<sup>343</sup> Murray, *Wits, the early years*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>344</sup> Messinger, *Manchester in the Victorian Age*, p. 140.

<sup>345</sup> Messinger, *Manchester in the Victorian Age*, p. 140.

<sup>346</sup> TAB, TKP 193, *Report of the Technical Education Commission*, p. 28.

<sup>347</sup> C. van Onselen, *New Babylon new Nineveh, Everyday life on the Witwatersrand 1886-1914*, (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2001), p. 243; "Education on the Rand. The 'Varsity'", *The Pretoria News*, 25 June 1921.

<sup>348</sup> Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatam*, p. 8.

<sup>349</sup> *The Star*, 12 September 1902, quoted in Venter, "Die groei van onderwysaangeleentede in Johannesburg", p. 486.

<sup>350</sup> Quoted in F.V. Engelenburg, *General Louis Botha*, (London: George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., 1929), p. 156.



the suggestion that university students are of weaker moral fibre than their contemporaries engaged in business pursuits in towns, and must therefore be specially safeguarded by rural seclusion from the temptations of the world they must afterwards work in, is not borne out by the experience of the great towns of England, Scotland and Ireland, where universities exist.<sup>351</sup>

Johannesburg did, however, manifest one characteristic, that might make it not the easiest place to control matters from the government's point of view. In the first year of its activities, the Transvaal Technical Institute already tried to loosen itself from government control by objecting to the fact that the government had to give approval regarding the appointments of examiners. Acting Colonial Secretary Lionel Curtis interpreted this action as

merely one of several signs they have given of a tendency to regard the government with suspicion, and to pare away little by little the connection between the Institute and the Government. This feeling of aloofness from the Government which exists in Johannesburg, is I think, a legacy from the days of yore, when the power of the Government in Johannesburg lay in force without moral influence.<sup>352</sup>

In his letter to Milner, Curtis further explained that

if we allow the Council in obedience to their natural instincts to cut one by one, the ties between the Government and the Institute, it will inevitably become nothing more or less than a Rand Institute or a Rand University, subsidised from the Treasury. The country population will fight shy of it, and in years to come some other university will come into existence for them, and the best brains of the country will be for all time marshalled into two educational camps.

On the other hand nothing could be better for the future of the country than that the most promising Dutch boys should be educated in a Rand University. It is for these reasons that I would suggest that we should avowedly and professedly regard the Technical Institute as the nucleus of our national university, encouraging rich men to regard it as the proper object of endowment. But if we are to do anything in this direction, we must get the Council, now and always, to take this view and to climb high enough to look over the edge of the main reef.<sup>353</sup>

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<sup>351</sup> TAB, TKP 193, "Minority Report", *Report of the Technical Education Commission*, p. 11.

<sup>352</sup> TAB, GOV 705, L. Curtis to Lord Milner, 18 November 1904.

<sup>353</sup> TAB, GOV 705, L. Curtis to Lord Milner, 18 November 1904.

It is interesting to note that these words were somewhat prophetic as throughout the twentieth century the university which developed at Johannesburg, the University of the Witwatersrand, maintained this distance from government, even becoming a fierce and ardent critic of government policies.<sup>354</sup>

In 1906 the Institute began to offer courses in literary subjects such as the classics, modern languages and philosophy. As it appeared now to have the character more of a university than a mining school, in July 1906 its name was officially changed to the Transvaal University College. The goal of the courses offered was to fulfil the second part of its mandate, that is, to provide courses to students seeking a university degree. As many natural science subjects were already part of the engineering and mining curriculum, the addition of literary subjects would make it possible for students to prepare for a Bachelor of Arts (BA) with either a literary or science focus.<sup>355</sup> However, according to Pelzer there was little evidence of a demand for such subjects in Johannesburg.<sup>356</sup>

A survey of the staff of the TUC in Johannesburg in 1907 shows that its professors and lecturers brought a diverse set of educational backgrounds and experiences to the institution. All types of British university training were represented by the staff, although Scottish trained staff were in the majority. There were also professors who had been trained in the Netherlands, Germany and the United States.<sup>357</sup>

At the end of 1907, however, the TUC Council reported that it “found itself reluctantly compelled to suspend the classes in Arts subjects.”<sup>358</sup> The Council explained how these classes had begun in 1906 due to a perceived demand for university courses in Johannesburg. The response of students, however, in the two years in which these courses were offered did not meet their expectations. Henceforth Arts and Science classes would be offered in Pretoria where there were already thirty

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<sup>354</sup> See Murray, *Wits, the 'open' years* and Shear, *WITS: a university in the Apartheid era*.

<sup>355</sup> TAB, TOD 58, File 761, Minute on the recent history, p. 5; TAB, GOV 977, PS 25/8/1906, Transvaal Technical Institute. Report of Council to the Acting Lieutenant-Governor of the work of the year 1905, pp. 9-11; Wagenaar, “Die ontwikkeling van tegniese onderwys in Transvaal, 1900-1944”, p. 31.

<sup>356</sup> Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, p. 6.

<sup>357</sup> Wits Archives, *Transvaal University College Calendar for the year 1907*, pp. 37-38.

<sup>358</sup> TAB, CS 860, File 14802, Transvaal University College. Report of Council to His Excellency the Governor on the work of the year 1907, p. 7.

prospective students.<sup>359</sup> The seed of the rival institution was to be planted within 60 kilometres of Johannesburg by the newly formed responsible government of the Transvaal.

### **Het Volk, Smuts and Pretoria**

Pretoria was not an unusual choice for a seat of higher learning. In the late 1890s, the ZAR government had already spent some time and budgeted a fair amount of funds into plans for higher education in the capital. This plan also envisaged the establishment of a South African teaching university, but it was intended to primarily meet the needs of the ZAR and was seen as a means to prevent young people from going outside its borders to seek further education. The establishment of the Staatsgimnasium in 1893 was a step in the direction of higher education, although this institution never developed further than offering secondary education. The rector, Dr H.T. Reinink, and W.A. Macfadyen who gave English lectures would both later serve on the staff of the TUC in Pretoria.<sup>360</sup>

Pretoria was also the original site of the first School of Mines in the Transvaal before the South African War. Shortly after the War professor W. Sinclair of Owens' College in Manchester wrote to Chamberlain recommending the establishment of a teaching university specializing in medicine at Pretoria with the purpose of "keeping young Boers from resorting to Continental Schools of Medicine" who engender "bitterness of sentiments ... against everything British".<sup>361</sup> Dr H.G. Breyer, former head of the ZAR School of Mines, in an interview with the Transvaal Technical Commission, stated that despite the summer heat of the capital, it was home to many educated people with whom it would be profitable for students to commune.<sup>362</sup>

In 1906 the Transvaal was granted responsible government and the Het Volk party of Louis Botha was elected to power. Emphasizing the crucial place of education in the Transvaal, the *Transvaal Leader* wrote that "[a]fter the question of the unskilled

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<sup>359</sup> TAB, CS 860, File 14802, Transvaal University College. Report of Council, pp. 7-8. These expected prospective students were mainly from the Normal College in Pretoria and guaranteed that Arts and Sciences would have more demand in Pretoria.

<sup>360</sup> Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, pp. 1-3; Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, pp. 94-95.

<sup>361</sup> TAB, GOV 230, W.J. Sinclair to Joseph Chamberlain, 19 November 1902.

<sup>362</sup> TAB, TKP 193, *Report of the Technical Education Commission*, p. 28.

labour supply, there is none concerning which so many doubts and fears have been entertained about the policy of the Government as that of education”.<sup>363</sup> Smuts, now Colonial Secretary and Minister of Education in the new government, also highlighted the importance of the education question in his first speech on the subject given at the opening of a school in Boksburg in March 1907 where he stated that:

[w]hatever causes there were in this country, however great the difficulties were they had to face, there was one cause he thought that stood out pre-eminently and conspicuously above all others, and that was the cause of education. There was no subject so intimately bound up with the future of this country ...<sup>364</sup>

Various scholars have commented on this key issue of the division of the university college between Johannesburg and Pretoria. According to Murray, the advent of the new government “proved a fatal set-back to the initial movement to found a university in Johannesburg”.<sup>365</sup> He contends that under the direction of Smuts “Pretoria was preferred as the centre for higher education in the Transvaal”.<sup>366</sup> As Boucher states, “it became clear that he [Smuts] was not going to be an ardent supporter of the idea that higher education should be centred upon the mining capital.” He reasons that “[p]olitical considerations doubtless influenced his attitude”.<sup>367</sup> In his official history of the University of Pretoria, Pelzer goes as far as to say that Smuts only accepted the portfolio of education in the colony on condition that the arts and science subjects of the TUC would move from Johannesburg to Pretoria.<sup>368</sup>

In May 1907 Smuts communicated his plans for the restructuring of higher education in the Transvaal to the TUC Council. The committee appointed by the TUC Council to study the question agreed “with reluctance” to the scheme which proposed to divide higher education in the Colony into three different centres, each located in a place that would be more likely to draw the largest number of students to the

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<sup>363</sup> TAB, Smuts Collection (A1), Newspaper cuttings – Mrs I.K. Smuts, volume 6, “An Enlightened Policy”, *Transvaal Leader*, 28 March 1907.

<sup>364</sup> TAB, A1 Newspaper cuttings, volume 6, “Education. Colonial Secretary’s Views”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 27 March 1907.

<sup>365</sup> Murray, *Wits, the early years*, p. 3.

<sup>366</sup> Murray, *Wits, the early years*, p. 3.

<sup>367</sup> Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, p. 130.

<sup>368</sup> Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, p. 8. There are no unfortunately no footnotes to corroborate or substantiate this statement.

particular branch of education.<sup>369</sup> Mining and engineering would remain in Johannesburg, Arts and Science would move to Pretoria, while an Agricultural school was proposed for the Frankenwald estate.<sup>370</sup> A few practical points justified the Smuts's plans. The presence of the Normal College in Pretoria meant that an institution offering general university preparation would have an almost guaranteed intake of students, as such an education was favoured especially by teachers.<sup>371</sup> Furthermore, in 1907 the Pretoria Town Council gave the government a large portion of municipal land not too far from the centre of Pretoria for the purposes of secondary and higher education.<sup>372</sup>

By moving the arts and science classes to Pretoria, Smuts's proposed plans would create institutions bearing very different characters. The courses to be offered at Pretoria fit the definition of a liberal education.<sup>373</sup> Smuts also evidently favoured the Oxford model, himself a graduate of such an institution.<sup>374</sup> He later drew a comparison between the ancient English university and the young institution at Pretoria during the laying of the foundation stone for the new college buildings in 1910. In his speech, Smuts made the clear distinction between "the institution at Johannesburg for technical education ... [whose] object ... was to give technical and mining instruction to the youth of the country, and to equip them for a technical calling" and the Pretoria TUC, stating that "[t]he day might come when that Transvaal University College might mean to the Transvaal and to South Africa what Oxford University had meant to England."<sup>375</sup> To his mind, Pretoria offered a more "congenial atmosphere"<sup>376</sup> for the arts and sciences than Johannesburg.

According to his memorandum of May 1907, the main object of Smuts's tripartite organization of higher education was to make the Transvaal self-supporting as far as

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<sup>369</sup> A similar rivalry existed in Natal, between Pietermaritzburg and Durban, also representing classical education versus trade interests, as seats for higher education. See Brookes, *A history of the University of Natal*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>370</sup> TAB, CS 860, 14802, Transvaal University College. Report of Council, p. 9.

<sup>371</sup> TAB, GOV 977, PS 25/8/1906, Transvaal Technical Institute. Report of Council, p. 11.

<sup>372</sup> TAB, GOV 1241, PS 53/31/10, Transvaal University College Incorporation Act. Transvaal Legislation. Report on Act No. 1 of 1910, p. 4.

<sup>373</sup> Rothblatt, *Tradition and change in English liberal education*, p. 13.

<sup>374</sup> Smuts was a graduate of Cambridge University.

<sup>375</sup> "The University. Foundation Stone Laid by Lord Gladstone", *Transvaal Leader*, 4 August 1910.

<sup>376</sup> "The University. Foundation Stone Laid by Lord Gladstone", *Transvaal Leader*, 4 August 1910.

higher education was concerned and to prevent students from leaving the Colony in pursuit of further study.<sup>377</sup> In his Boksburg speech he had advocated

...the idea of a complete system of education which will obviate the necessity of Transvaal parents having to send their children to the education centres of the other Colonies, or across the seas, to complete the work begun here. There is no reason why the youth of this Colony should not receive within its borders the complete equipment necessary to qualify them for the larger school of life in whatever sphere they may choose. It is only a question of time and money and a strong forward movement, to establish in this Colony an indigenous system of education, based upon the finest models in the world, and second to none in the building up of an individual and national character which is the final aim and purpose of all systems of culture.<sup>378</sup>

This reasoning was echoed in the reports concerning Smuts's scheme in the press and in other circles. For example, in a circular to the Normal College and high schools of the Colony, Director of Education J.E. Adamson explained that the opening of university classes in Pretoria aimed "to prevent the exodus from the Colony of students who desire higher education".<sup>379</sup> The essence of the scheme was to offer different branches of higher education in centres which would attract the greatest number of students and where education circumstances would be the most favourable.<sup>380</sup> According to Smuts, the arts classes in Johannesburg were nearly empty and he felt the rural student would not be drawn to the city.<sup>381</sup>

The Council of the TUC in Johannesburg was not pleased as it felt that recommendations regarding the future of higher education in the colony were its domain, and not that of the Minister of Education.<sup>382</sup> Following Smuts's memorandum to the TUC Council regarding his proposed tripartite scheme, the Council appointed a committee to study the question and formulate a response. The

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<sup>377</sup> TAB, TOD 58, File 761, Report of the Committee appointed by the Colonial Secretary to consider the question of the organisation of higher education in the Transvaal, n.d., pp. 2-3; Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, p. 8.

<sup>378</sup> TAB, A1 Newspaper cuttings, volume 6, "An Enlightened Policy", *Transvaal Leader*, 28 March 1907.

<sup>379</sup> TAB, TOD 58, File 761: Organisation of Higher Education in the Transvaal, Circular No. 45 of 1907.

<sup>380</sup> Venter, "Die groei van onderwysaangeleentede in Johannesburg", p. 534; Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, p. 8.

<sup>381</sup> Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, p. 8.

<sup>382</sup> Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, p. 8.

following excerpt from the Committee's report represents their main criticism of the scheme. They wrote,

...it seems to us inevitable that while the plurality of the branches will be real, their unity will be artificial. Actual distance must bring it about that they will become to all intents and purposes separate and, so far as their inner life is concerned, independent institutions. There can be no common corporate existence in which students of the three branches can participate.<sup>383</sup>

A minor objection was the fact that Smuts's proposed plan would result in the unavoidable duplication of certain courses in science and law.<sup>384</sup> Smuts's reply to the concerns regarding the unity of the institution in its new form did not address the matter of student life at all but merely considered the question from the point of view of the administration of the College at its three centres. He suggested as a solution the maintenance of a unique council with local subcommittees.<sup>385</sup>

The official documents and correspondence in the archives show a willingness on the part of the Council of the TUC and the Witwatersrand Council of Education to go along with Smuts's tripartite scheme, in spite of their misgivings. The representations in the press, however, show that the scheme did stir up some controversy and objections.<sup>386</sup> (See Figure 1 on page 80.) One article even referred to it as a "grotesque idea".<sup>387</sup> A more informal letter from TUC Registrar, John Robinson, to Governor Selborne in the closing month of 1907, shows that below the surface much tension existed and all parties were not entirely in favour of Smuts's plans and his manner of carrying them out. Referring to a TUC Council meeting with Percy Fitzpatrick, representative of the Witwatersrand Council of Education, to discuss the proposed plan, Robinson indicates that Fitzpatrick considered the scheme "shortsighted and wrong". Furthermore "[h]e felt that the acceptance of the scheme would prejudice the University scheme for the future and for ever [sic] render impossible the bringing together within four walls the University work of the

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<sup>383</sup> TAB, TOD 58, File 761, Report of the committee appointed by the Colonial Secretary, pp. 6-8.

<sup>384</sup> TAB, TOD 58, File 761, Report of the committee appointed by the Colonial Secretary, p. 13.

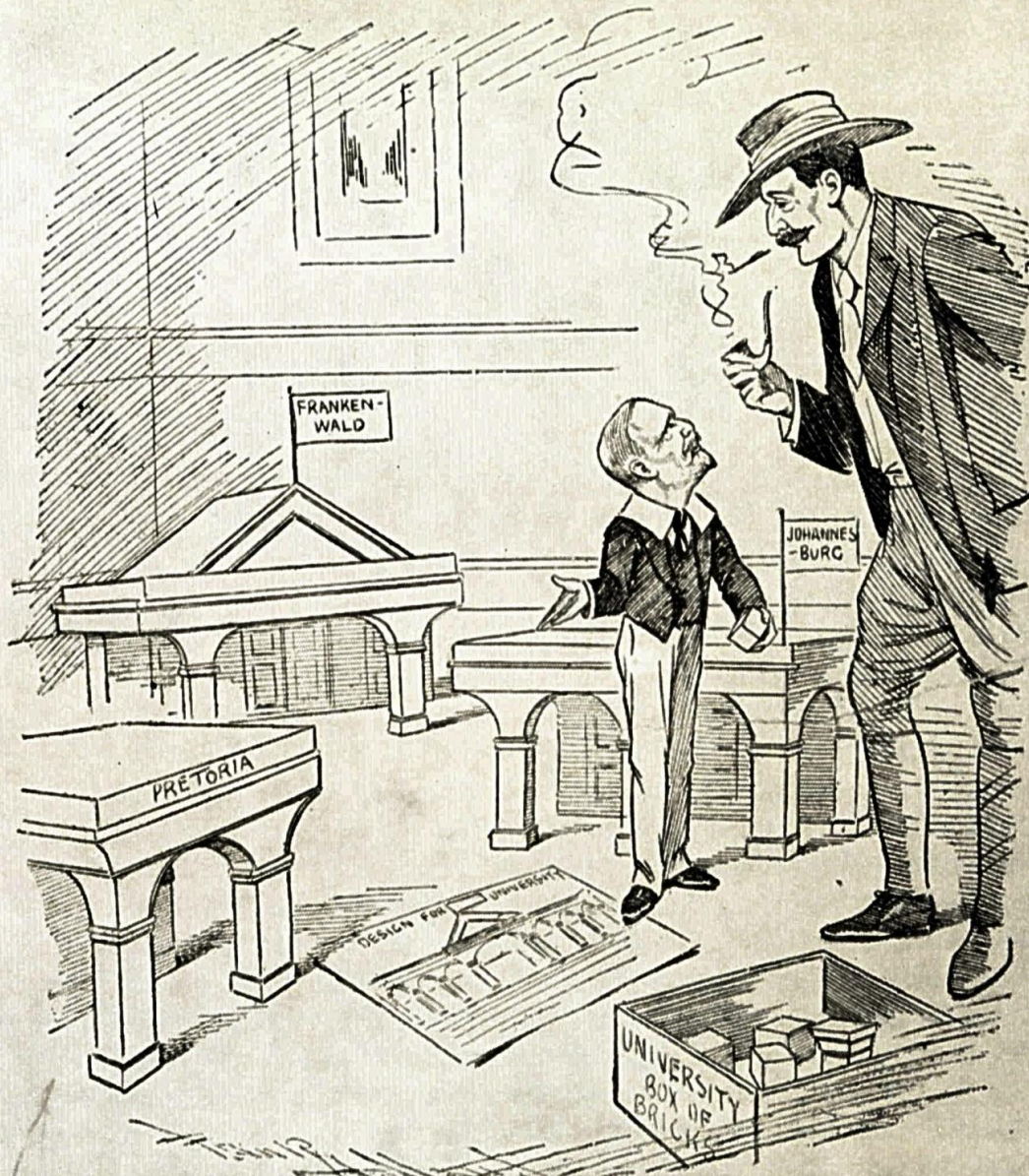
<sup>385</sup> E.H.L. Gorges to the Secretary Transvaal University College, 4 November 1907, in TAB, TKP 273, *Correspondence relating to the organisation of higher education in the Transvaal*, (Pretoria: Government Printing and Stationery Office, 1908), p. 22.

<sup>386</sup> See for example the cartoon "A Scattered Scheme", *The Star*, 28 November 1907.

<sup>387</sup> "The university", *Transvaal Leader*, 29 November 1907.

## A SCATTERED SCHEME.

Mr. Smuts is said to be in favour of a "tripartite university" for the Transvaal, to consist of the existing Technical College at Johannesburg, a College of Arts and Sciences at Pretoria, while Mr. Beit's gift and endowment of Frankenwald would be devoted only to an Agricultural College midway between the other two.



THE STAR. JOHANNESBURG. TRANSVAAL, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 1907.

Jan Smuts: "Look, papa, at the nice buildings I'm making with my box of bricks."  
The Transvaaler: "Yes, my boy, they're very nice, but why don't you build them all together in one place and make one complete thing of it?"

**Figure 1:** "A scattered scheme".

From: *The Star*, 28 November 1907.



Colony.”<sup>388</sup> The acceptance of the scheme was viewed as a major blow for Johannesburg’s aspirations of establishing a full-blown university.<sup>389</sup>

Also implied in Robinson’s letter, is a concern regarding the manner Smuts was adopting to bring into effect his plans. Initial hints at this are contained in the Assistant Colonial Secretary, E.H.L. Gorges’s reply to the TUC Council after their meeting with the Witwatersrand Council of Education. He writes that

[w]hile ... the Colonial Secretary [Smuts] feels that action with regard to the scheme of organisation should await the expression of the views of your Council, he feels so convinced of the urgency of the matter ... that he proposes to take immediate steps ... to make the preliminary arrangements with a view to establishing such Science and Art courses at Pretoria at the beginning of next year.<sup>390</sup>

Robinson comments that in spite of the deadlock existing with the Witwatersrand Council of Education, “the Colonial Secretary [Smuts] is making appointments in connection with the new work at Pretoria.” He continues by saying, “I wish I could discover some common ground on which the two parties could meet. It will be a great pity if the matter has to be settled by exercise of force majeure [sic] on the part of the Col. Secretary.”<sup>391</sup> Pelzer refers to Smuts’s actions in this instance as “typically autocratic”.<sup>392</sup> It is therefore not surprising to see Smuts and Louis Botha pictured on top of a steam roller in a cartoon of the day with the caption “under way – crushing begins”.<sup>393</sup> (See Figure 2 on page 82.)

The TUC Council offered to take over arrangements for the start of classes in Pretoria, but Smuts felt that while the Council’s approval of his scheme was still pending he should continue to head up the work in Pretoria. He even acted in the place of the Council of the new centre until the matter of approval by the TUC had been finalized.<sup>394</sup> In the meantime various professors at the TUC in Johannesburg

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<sup>388</sup> TAB, GOV 1068, File 25/26/1907, John Robinson to the Earl of Selborne, 20 December 1907.

<sup>389</sup> Murray, *Wits, the early years*, p. 3.

<sup>390</sup> E.H.L. Gorges to the Secretary Transvaal University College, p. 25.

<sup>391</sup> TAB, GOV 1068, File 25/26/1907, John Robinson to the Earl of Selborne, 20 December 1907.

<sup>392</sup> Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, p. 9.

<sup>393</sup> TAB, A1 Newspaper cuttings, volume 7, *The Star*, 15 June 1907.

<sup>394</sup> John Robinson to the Colonial Secretary, 29 November 1907, in TAB, TKP 273, *Correspondence relating to the organisation of higher education in the Transvaal*, p. 27; E.H.L. Gorges to the Secretary Transvaal University College, 3 December 1907, pp. 27-28.

THE STAR, JOHANNESBURG, TRANSVAAL, SATURDAY, JUNE, 15, 1907

# UNDER WAY--CRUSHING BEGINS



PAS OP DE STOOM-ROLLER!

**Figure 2:** "Under way—crushing begins".

From: *The Star*, 15 June 1907.

were offered posts in Pretoria and before the TUC Council could even hold its final meeting to make provisions for the scheme, classes had already started in Pretoria.<sup>395</sup> It is thus not surprising that the establishment of the Pretoria TUC was credited as Smuts's own creation.<sup>396</sup>

For the moment it was decided to lay aside the matter of the Frankenwald estate until a later time. Otto Beit felt that the establishment of a mere agricultural college at Frankenwald would not match the intentions of his brother who had made the bequest with an institution with a university character in mind.<sup>397</sup> Representing the Witwatersrand Council of Education, Fitzpatrick explained to the TUC council that the tripartite scheme did not match Beit's intentions, and the use of the Beit bequest for such a scheme would not be approved by his trustees.<sup>398</sup> Thus, the matter of the Beit bequest was put off until such time as the Transvaal could support a fully-fledged university.

Those on the Johannesburg TUC Council who were opposed to the scheme reconciled themselves to the fact that this step was to merely take care of higher education in the Transvaal and should be viewed separately from the ultimate plan of establishing a Transvaal university. It was therefore viewed as a temporary measure and for this reason claims to the Beit bequest were abandoned for the time being.<sup>399</sup>

In February 1908 arts and science classes of the TUC began in Pretoria.<sup>400</sup> This was the beginning of what ultimately would become the University of Pretoria. Unity between the two branches of the TUC in Johannesburg and Pretoria did prove difficult and impractical and already by 1910 they became two completely separate institutions. Pretoria kept the name of the Transvaal University College and the

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<sup>395</sup> "Departement van Onderwijs, Transvaal. Vestiging van Universiteits-klassen te Pretoria", *De Volkstem*, 24 December 1907.

<sup>396</sup> TAB, CS 969, 10153, G. Besselaar to Colonial Secretary, 29 November 1909; Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, pp. 9 & 11; Wits Archives, TUC Minutes of Council, 4 March 1908, pp. 281-284; University of Pretoria Archives (UPA), D-6-5-1-6-22, Tuks Alumni Herinneringe: A-M, "Herinneringe van Prof DF du Toit Malherbe"; D.M. Joubert, "Generaal Smuts by UP vereer", *Tukkie-werf* 14(4), November 1988, pp. 14-16.

<sup>397</sup> TAB, GOV 1241, PS 53/31/10, Transvaal University College Incorporation Act, p. 5; Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, pp. 130-131.

<sup>398</sup> Wits Archives, TUC Minutes of Council, 19 December 1907, p. 263.

<sup>399</sup> Wits Archives, TUC Minutes of Council, 17 January 1908, p. 269.

<sup>400</sup> "Transvaal University College. De cursus voor 1908 begint op 25 Febr.", *De Volkstem*, 21 February 1908.

Johannesburg institution became known as the South African School of Mines and Technology, the forerunner of the University of the Witwatersrand.<sup>401</sup> In fact, the first talk of separating the Johannesburg and Pretoria centres came barely a year after classes had begun in Pretoria.<sup>402</sup>

In 1910 when the Johannesburg and Pretoria branches split to form two separate institutions “[t]he separation was at best only acquiesced in by the Johannesburg members of the Council of the College. The Government told them it would be carried out with or without their consent.”<sup>403</sup> The minutes of the meetings of the TUC Council, however, do not give any clue of this kind of opposition. Rather it appears that the decision to divide the work was accepted unanimously as the logical and practical way to go forward with the work of higher education in the Transvaal.<sup>404</sup>

These events would have long term consequences for the nature of university education in the Transvaal, as the division between the Johannesburg and Pretoria branches laid the foundation for a later division based on language and other matters. What were viewed as “temporary measures”<sup>405</sup> by Smuts for the advance of higher education in the Colony, thus had important long term results, from which two quite different institutions of higher education would develop along distinct lines.

## Conclusion

The restlessness in higher education in Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth century was also duplicated in the South African context from the first attempts to introduce institutions of higher education. Not unlike its British antecedents, dissatisfaction with the examining university model generated debate particularly after the South African War. The advent of Union also changed matters and, after much debate, a solution was arrived at in the form of the University Acts of 1916. Against this backdrop, university colleges and institutions offering higher education

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<sup>401</sup> Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, pp. 22-24; Transvaal University College Incorporation Act, Act no.1 of 1910.

<sup>402</sup> Wits Archives, TUC Minutes of Council, 26 March 1909, p. 352.

<sup>403</sup> Wits Archives, “A short chronology of the university movement on the Witwatersrand”.

<sup>404</sup> Wits Archives, TUC Minutes of Council, 2 June 1909, p. 361.

<sup>405</sup> TAB, TOD 58, File 761: Organisation of Higher Education in the Transvaal, W.F. Savage to the Secretary Transvaal University College, 31 January 1908; TAB, GOV 1068, File 25/16/1907, John Robinson to the Earl of Selborne, 20 December 1907.

began to develop in a number of places in South Africa. The economic hub of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, also sought to assert itself in this matter and establish a teaching university which would match and cater for mining and industrial growth. The aim was to produce an institution from Transvaal soil, bearing the nature of the Transvaal and training its sons – both Dutch and British – for future Transvaal growth.

In addition, the reconciling and unifying role of education became important in the reconstruction of post-War white society. This perceived conciliatory function of higher education, in line with broad South Africanist ideals, will be considered in more depth in the following chapters as it was an underlying consideration when the form and location of higher education were investigated. The idea of bringing students together in order to produce lasting friendships and tolerance was best met by a residential type of institution. This type of institution also seemed best suited to a location at some distance from Johannesburg due to its very urban and metropolitan character. The civic model, however, grew more naturally on the industrial Witwatersand, but meant that the student from a rural upbringing was less likely to be reached by higher education. By the end of Crown Colony rule in the Transvaal, an institution for higher education had developed that only catered successfully to the needs of technical education.

With the advent of responsible government in 1907, the temporary solution of the new dispensation was to divide the institution between Johannesburg and Pretoria in the hope of attracting more students to the arts and science classes. The irony of this proposed arrangement is that while the new government, represented in this matter by Smuts, was strongly advocating a policy of conciliation and even viewed education as a primary means of furthering this policy, the split of the TUC would eventually work against the cause of unifying the white population. Smuts's scheme meant that the students of the Transvaal would be divided between two very different educational centres, instead of being grouped together in one place. This practical arrangement which aimed to stem the tide of students leaving the Colony for further study and create a more favourable environment for university classes led ultimately to the creation of two universities within close proximity to each other which would develop on quite different lines.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF BROAD SOUTH AFRICANISM AND CONCILIATION

As is evident in the previous chapter, it was in the period following the South African War that higher education and the university question really took root and developed in South Africa. At the same time, in the Transvaal, each successive administration pursued a policy of promoting white unity, the culmination of which was the achievement of political union between the four British South African colonies in 1910. Furthermore, higher education was viewed as a primary means of promoting this new sense of unified white identity. This chapter will examine the development of the notions of broad South Africanism and conciliation, under the Crown Colony (1902-1907) and the Responsible Government (1907-1910) respectively. It will then look at the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 in this light. This will provide the context for the examination of the relationship between the promotion of broad South Africanism and function of higher education which will be investigated in the following chapter.

#### **The South African War and white unity**

The years between 1886 and 1910 have been heralded as “amongst the most dramatic in the history of southern Africa.”<sup>406</sup> Beginning with the discoveries of minerals in Kimberley and on the Witwatersrand, an industrial revolution began “whose socio-economic and political repercussions constitute the major themes of Southern Africa’s twentieth-century history.”<sup>407</sup> The turn of the century brought the War between the two Boer republics and Great Britain, resulting in the spread of British colonial power to the Transvaal and Orange Free State with the British victory in 1902 and the start of a new political era. For ‘liberal’ historians the South African War was responsible for greater racial segregation, as Britain prioritized reconciliation with the Afrikaners in the peace settlement over the African franchise.<sup>408</sup> From this point of view, “[t]he war’s overriding significance thus became negative, in that it did not change the existing racial order.”<sup>409</sup> Furthermore, Marxist historians point out that the purpose of the War and the reconstruction period which followed it was to change the class

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<sup>406</sup> S. Marks and S. Trapido, “Lord Milner and the South African state”, *History Workshop* 8, Autumn 1979, p. 52; See also Van Onselen, *New Babylon new Nineveh*, pp. xvii-xix & 1-3.

<sup>407</sup> Marks and Trapido, “Lord Milner and the South African state”, p. 52.

<sup>408</sup> D. Omissi and A. Thompson, “Introduction: investigating the impact of the war”, in D. Omissi and A. Thompson (eds.), *The impact of the South African War*, (New York: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 4-5.

<sup>409</sup> Omissi and Thompson, “Introduction: investigating the impact of the war”, p. 5.

structure of southern African, turning it into a capitalist state.<sup>410</sup> Thus, as would be understandable after a conflict of the magnitude of the South African War, the period which followed was one of uncertainty and adjustment in social groupings and in particular in the Transvaal. This post-War period began with British rule under the Crown Colony dispensation, but was quickly followed by Responsible Government in 1907 in which former Boer general Louis Botha was elected to power. Movements for closer union between the four British colonies in South Africa resulted in political union in 1910, through which the territories of southern Africa were “meshed into a single political economy”.<sup>411</sup> Without the rupture of the War, it has been argued, the emergence of an integrated nation-state would not have been a certainty. The resolution of the South African War was instrumental in setting up the framework in which a modern unitary state would emerge.<sup>412</sup> Thus, events of this period are critical to understanding later significant developments in South African history.

South African history scholar, Saul Dubow feels that in contrast to the causes, motives and outcomes of the South African War, “one of the major themes of this period – the ideological construction of white ‘South Africanism’ – has been pushed to the margins, and the effusion of political and cultural activities associated with the creative imagining of the first ‘New South Africa’ has been overlooked, or mentioned only in passing”.<sup>413</sup> He feels that even though the version of white nationalism, which was actively promoted among various groups in the post-War period, “eventually lost out to the more exclusivist claims of Afrikaner ethnic nationalism ... this should not obscure its historic importance or interest”. He thus makes a call for scholars to devote “sufficient attention to the complex field of cultural politics that helped to bring about Union”.<sup>414</sup> This sentiment matches historian Andrew Thompson’s observation that “[a]n overarching focus on what we call ‘identity politics’ is currently helping to revive a dialogue between South African and Commonwealth Imperial historiographies”,<sup>415</sup> thus demonstrating the value of examining white South African identity during this interesting and unsettled period of the South African past. In addition, much of the rhetoric of broad South Africanism or conciliation echoes the post-Apartheid promotion of

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<sup>410</sup> Marks and Trapido, “Lord Milner and the South African state”, p. 52.

<sup>411</sup> Marks and Trapido, “Lord Milner and the South African state”, p. 52.

<sup>412</sup> S. Dubow, “Imagining the New South Africa in the era of reconstruction”, in Omissi and Thompson (eds.), *The impact of the South African War*, p. 77.

<sup>413</sup> Dubow, “Imagining the New South Africa in the era of reconstruction”, p. 76.

<sup>414</sup> Dubow, “Imagining the New South Africa in the era of reconstruction”, p. 76.

<sup>415</sup> A. Thompson, “The languages of loyalism in Southern Africa, c.1870-1939”, *Oxford Historical Review*, cvviii (477), June 2003, p. 618.

reconciliation and the forming of a ‘rainbow nation’, thus making its study relevant in the current era.

Some have said that a spirit of conciliation between the two white sections of South Africa began to emerge soon after the War, even as early as 1903. This is based on the positive personal encounter between Cape Afrikaner politician J.H. Hofmeyr and British colonial secretary Joseph Chamberlain.<sup>416</sup> Certainly during Chamberlain’s visit to South Africa after the War he promoted white co-operation and demonstrated the changing attitude of Great Britain towards her colonies which will be discussed further below. He summed up the attitude and mood among some white inhabitants of South Africa, which would be fostered from various quarters over the following decades, when he stated,

[t]he hope of South Africa lies in closer intercourse between the two [white] races. We British and you Dutch are not really separated either in interest or in character. If you go back to our and your history, you find that in centuries long ago we were kinsfolk; the resemblances between us are greater than the differences. ... I believe then that ... probably sooner than any of us now can anticipate, we shall be one free people under one flag.<sup>417</sup>

Significantly, this final part of his speech followed immediately on some words on the “native question”, highlighting how the background of black and white relations was an important motivating factor in endeavours to promote white unity after the War.

### **Milner, the Kindergarten and English-speaking South Africanism**

The reconstruction of the British colonies after the South African War was the responsibility of Lord Milner. The prevailing image of Milner in Afrikaner historical writing in particular is one of an unstoppable imperialist whose unique project was to protect British interests in South Africa and to expand British influence.<sup>418</sup> Certainly, Milner’s ideas can be linked to “the increasingly pervasive ideology of social imperialism”,<sup>419</sup> a major part of which was the belief in British racial superiority and in their destiny to be world rulers and can even be defined as “race patriotism”.<sup>420</sup> Milner’s attempts to forge white unity for the sake of British

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<sup>416</sup> S. Dubow, “Colonial nationalism, the Milner Kindergarten and the rise of ‘South Africanism’, 1902-1910”, *History Workshop* 43, 1997, p. 57.

<sup>417</sup> Quoted in Worsfold, *The reconstruction of the new colonies under Lord Milner*, p. 177.

<sup>418</sup> M.A. Basson, *Die Britse invloed in die Transvaalse onderwys, 1836-1907*, Archives Yearbook, 19<sup>th</sup> year, 1956, II, (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1956), p. 144; L.M. Thompson, *The unification of South Africa, 1902-1910*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 5.

<sup>419</sup> Marks and Trapido, “Lord Milner and the South African state”, p. 55.

<sup>420</sup> Marks and Trapido, “The politics of race, class and nationalism”, pp. 2-3 & 7; Dubow, “Colonial nationalism, the Milner Kindergarten and the rise of ‘South Africanism’”, p. 56; J. Lambert, “South African



supremacy bore an autocratic and intolerant flavour and consisted mainly of outnumbering and denationalising Afrikaners. While many of Milner's reconstruction activities were very successful, his policy of anglicisation and British immigration to South Africa did not flourish, instead it stirred up antagonism and suspicion, particularly on the part of Afrikaners.<sup>421</sup>

Part of Milner's goal was to build up a strong English-speaking community, which would be loyal to the Empire. The post-War English-speaking community in the Transvaal was, however, "unstable, factionalised, and rootless"<sup>422</sup> and divided along lines of class and ideology. The British population in the Transvaal was very divergent in comparison to the other colonies, mainly due to the variety of economic pursuits in which they were engaged. This hindered the growth of a sense of community that "by 1904, even Milner was forced to concede that there was little evidence of a 'British community' on the Rand, only one that was non-Boer in character".<sup>423</sup> Furthermore, English-speakers held varying degrees of loyalty to the Empire, although, according to Thompson, in spite of understanding different things as far as the notion of loyalty is concerned, in general they were "strongly sympathetic to the British imperial connection".<sup>424</sup> Thompson concedes that the demographic advantage of the Afrikaners and their higher rate of natural increase than British immigration meant that "preserving the British connection increasingly became a defensive action – a safeguard for an English minority against Afrikaner dominance".<sup>425</sup>

Interestingly, it was from within this disparate group of English speakers that efforts were begun to develop a sense of South African English identity. These endeavours were led largely by young graduates of Oxford and Cambridge whom Milner had appointed to aid in the reconstruction, known – due to their youth – as Milner's Kindergarten. Members of this group actively, but with more subtlety than Milner, promoted a new form of white identity known as "broad South Africanism", which included patriotic sentiment towards South

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British? Or Dominion South Africans? The evolution of an identity in the 1910s and 1920s", *South African Historical Journal* 43, November 2000, p. 204.

<sup>421</sup> M. Wilson and L. Thompson (eds.), *The Oxford history of South Africa II*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 330-333; Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 265; G.H.L. Le May, *British supremacy in South Africa, 1899-1907*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 175.

<sup>422</sup> Dubow, "Colonial nationalism, the Milner Kindergarten and the rise of 'South Africanism'", p. 63.

<sup>423</sup> Thompson, "The languages of loyalism in Southern Africa, c.1870-1939", p. 625; Lambert, "South African British? Or Dominion South Africans?", p. 205.

<sup>424</sup> Thompson, "The languages of loyalism in Southern Africa, c.1870-1939", p. 648.

<sup>425</sup> Thompson, "The languages of loyalism in Southern Africa, c.1870-1939", p. 648.

Africa and loyalty to the Empire. After Milner's departure from South Africa in 1905, the Kindergarten and Milner's successor, Lord Selborne, continued to promote British interests through the rethinking and development of white South African identity and unity.<sup>426</sup>

The feeling that it was perfectly acceptable to be a good South African and a sound imperialist was part of the way that the British Empire as a whole was redefining itself and taking account of colonial nationalisms at the beginning of the twentieth century. It was also a means of preserving the unity of the Empire.<sup>427</sup> A key influence in this idea was Australian writer Richard Jebb's *Studies in Colonial Nationalism* published in 1905, whose "underlying message was that the empire could only be sustained by working in association with local nationalisms" as according to him "to resist these forces was futile".<sup>428</sup> The members of the Kindergarten were aware of the changing relationship between Great Britain and its colonies. In this light their "efforts to promote a distinctively Anglophone form of 'South Africanism' therefore amounted to a recognition that rampant jingoism could no longer succeed, and that dominion nationalism had to be reconciled with the maintenance of broader imperial loyalties."<sup>429</sup> Their willingness to pragmatically adapt their notions of the Empire to local conditions, made some of them very influential thinkers and agents in rethinking the Boer Briton relationship.<sup>430</sup>

In 1906 Jebb travelled to South Africa and, in line with ideas developing in the Kindergarten, encouraged white South Africans to lay aside their racial discrepancies and build a unified South African patriotism based on mutual interests. With the change to a liberal government in Britain in 1906, the prospect of responsible government for the Transvaal came closer. Adherents of the Kindergarten worked behind the scenes in a wide range of spheres to promote an Anglophile form of South Africanism. One of these was the Closer Union Movement, which supported the idea of uniting the four British South African colonies. This aim was embodied in the 1907 *Selborne Memorandum*, whose opening paragraphs were

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<sup>426</sup> Dubow, "Colonial nationalism, the Milner Kindergarten and the rise of 'South Africanism'", pp. 57 & 63; Wilson and Thompson (eds.), *The Oxford history of South Africa*, p. 346; N. Bromberger, "General Botha and the conciliation policy", (BA Hons essay, University of Cape Town, 1957), p. 57.

<sup>427</sup> Le May, *British supremacy in South Africa, 1899-1907*, p. 188; Lambert, "South African British? Or Dominion South Africans?", pp. 201 & 207.

<sup>428</sup> Dubow, "Colonial nationalism, the Milner Kindergarten and the rise of 'South Africanism'", p. 66; Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 277.

<sup>429</sup> Dubow, "Colonial nationalism, the Milner Kindergarten and the rise of 'South Africanism'", p. 66; Dubow, "Imagining the New South Africa in the era of reconstruction", p. 81.

<sup>430</sup> Dubow, "Imagining the New South Africa in the era of reconstruction", p. 80.

dedicated to encouraging the fusion of the two white ‘races’, demonstrating the wisdom and advantages which would be derived from such a development.<sup>431</sup>

This seeming contradiction of being a supporter of imperialism and also a patriotic South African is seen in “the curious form of South Africanism which developed in the lead-up to Union in 1910”.<sup>432</sup> It became increasingly evident at this time as many prominent English-speakers began to voice their loyalty to South Africa and not just to Britain. This English-speaking form of South Africanism, with its new discourse, found expression in politics, fiction, art and cultural activities, both for idealistic and political reasons. This was because there was a realisation that the anglicisation of Milner, with its association to capitalist imperialism was no longer acceptable in the British Empire where power was shifting.<sup>433</sup>

Milner’s successors downplayed British triumphalism and tried to give the least offensive expression of their Britishness in an attempt to make it a concept which would appeal to and include Afrikaners. This meant that loyalty to the Empire was defined in “the neutral language of universal progress, prosperity and mutual security”.<sup>434</sup> Avoiding nineteenth century Victorian notions of civilization and improvement, progress was portrayed by highlighting scientific and technological advancement. Emphasis on advancement in agriculture and the development of infrastructure, like railways, supported the sense of progress and stimulated national pride.<sup>435</sup>

The cultivation of broad South African nationalism was also voiced in cultural productions. One example is also the monthly publication *The State* which consciously promoted South African national identity and as such was a broad South Africanist mouthpiece. It gave prominence to articles on South African art and architecture, historical vignettes and evocations of landscapes and inhabitants. Furthermore, this South African identity often drew on the Cape, with its heritage and history, as a root.<sup>436</sup> Dubow gives a fitting description of

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<sup>431</sup> Dubow, “Imagining the New South Africa in the era of reconstruction”, pp. 84-85; Dubow, “Colonial nationalism, the Milner Kindergarten and the rise of ‘South Africanism’”, pp. 67-68; Thompson, *The unification of South Africa*, p. 64.

<sup>432</sup> Dubow, “Colonial nationalism, the Milner Kindergarten and the rise of ‘South Africanism’”, p. 75.

<sup>433</sup> Dubow, “Imagining the New South Africa in the era of reconstruction”, pp. 79-80.

<sup>434</sup> Dubow, “Imagining the New South Africa in the era of reconstruction”, p. 81.

<sup>435</sup> Lambert, “South African British? Or Dominion South Africans?”, p. 200; Dubow, “Imagining the New South Africa in the era of reconstruction”, pp. 82-84.

<sup>436</sup> Dubow, “Imagining the New South Africa in the era of reconstruction”, pp. 85-86; Dubow, “Colonial nationalism, the Milner Kindergarten and the rise of ‘South Africanism’”, p. 71.

the flavour of this “complementary, and in some ways competitive, sense of English South African identity [which] began to take shape in early-twentieth-century Transvaal” when he states:

Rooted in the idea of an African interior, and drawing on the romantic qualities of a conquered if not entirely tamed frontier, it was preeminently focused on what Sarah Gertrude Millin, writing in *The State*, referred to as the ‘cult of the veld, a real or fancied delight in the vast desolateness of it all.’<sup>437</sup>

This romanticised view of the veld was coupled with a distaste for the cosmopolitan capitalism of the Witwatersrand and Johannesburg’s mining magnates, the so-called Randlords. It was a rejection of the Britishness associated with greed, the control of labour and “grubby capitalism”.<sup>438</sup> This focus on landscape and natural beauty was manifested in a new interest in conservation and veld management, under men like James Stevenson-Hamilton.<sup>439</sup> It was further epitomised in works of fiction such as Percy Fitzpatrick’s *Jock of the Bushveld* (1907) which embodied the adventurous pioneering spirit of early South African settlers, “an ethos of rough and ready manly comradeship defined by an underlying and shared sense of humanity”.<sup>440</sup> John Buchan, a Scot, also described the romance of the veld, which became a place where a new patriotism could be nurtured. Dubow explains how “Buchan contrasted life in the mining centres (‘cosmopolitan, money-making, living at strained pitch’) with ‘this silent country’ that offered so much in the way of a leisured country life, and which would serve as the ideal repository for the growth of patriotism...”<sup>441</sup> Thus art historian Foster dubs the Kindergarten’s mentality as “ruralist” and anti-urban, one which “located the nation’s strength, stability, and identity in an unchanging, semifeudal, place-bound way of life characterized by custom and repetition rather than rootless, mobile trade”.<sup>442</sup>

Some Randlords, in line with this developing sense of identity, tried to throw off the image of robbing South Africa and giving nothing in return. They provided financially for higher

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<sup>437</sup> Dubow, “Imagining the New South Africa in the era of reconstruction”, p. 87; Dubow, “Colonial nationalism, the Milner Kindergarten and the rise of ‘South Africanism’”, p. 64.

<sup>438</sup> Thompson, “The languages of loyalism in Southern Africa, c.1870-1939”, pp. 625-626.

<sup>439</sup> J. Carruthers, “National parks in South Africa”, in H. Suich, B. Child and A. Spenceley (eds.), *Evolution and innovation in wildlife conservation. Parks and game ranches to transfrontier conservation areas*, (London: Earthscan, 2009), p. 41.

<sup>440</sup> Dubow, “Imagining the New South Africa in the era of reconstruction”, p. 87; Dubow, “Colonial nationalism, the Milner Kindergarten and the rise of ‘South Africanism’”, p. 72.

<sup>441</sup> Dubow, “Imagining the New South Africa in the era of reconstruction”, p. 88.

<sup>442</sup> J. Foster, *Washed in sun. Landscape and the making of white South Africa*, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2008) p. 22.

education or used their money in cultural endeavours such as bringing art collections to the country. An interesting example is the Max Michaelis art collection of Flemish and Dutch masters, opened in Cape Town in 1913. Its intention was to remind Afrikaners of their European ties and also to reinforce the idea that Afrikaners and Britons had a common heritage and a history of peace.<sup>443</sup> The above mentioned Wernher-Beit bequests to higher education can also be regarded in this light.

The English-speaking colonial nationalism which developed between 1902 and 1910 was however not very robust. Historian Herman Giliomee has also cast doubt on the amount of genuine support broad South Africanism received from English-speakers, referring for example to *The State* (1909-1912) as a short-lived journal with an indifferent presentation of South African culture. The unsteady foundations of this colonial identity can be attributed to the rapid political changes which took place during those years. In less than a decade the political situation in the four colonies of South Africa changed in 1907 from having pro-British administrations, to self-government in the ex-Boer republics under the Orangia Unie and Het Volk political parties in the Orange Free State and the Transvaal respectively.<sup>444</sup> This was followed shortly by “the ‘convention spirit’ in which Boer/British antagonisms were swept aside in a mood of exultant optimism about the success of racial reconciliation, culminating in the formal achievement of Union in 1910”.<sup>445</sup> The significance of this event in the evolution of a broad South African identity will be discussed in more detail later. On the path to arriving at political union came the period of self-government (1907-1910) in the Transvaal under former Boer generals Louis Botha and Jan Smuts. Their political party’s policy of conciliation was akin to the broad South Africanism of Milner’s Kindergarten and also sought to promote the cause of white unity in the Transvaal and in South Africa.

### **Botha, Smuts and Afrikaner conciliation**

The post South African War Transvaal white community was one that was broken and bitter and characterised by mutual suspicion.<sup>446</sup> The Afrikaner community was deeply divided between the “bittereinders” (those who had fought until the end of the War), the “hensoppers” (those who had surrendered) and the National Scouts (those who had joined the

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<sup>443</sup> Dubow, “Imagining the New South Africa in the era of reconstruction”, pp. 89-91.

<sup>444</sup> Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 360; Dubow, “Colonial nationalism, the Milner Kindergarten and the rise of ‘South Africanism’”, pp. 75-76.

<sup>445</sup> Dubow, “Colonial nationalism, the Milner Kindergarten and the rise of ‘South Africanism’”, p. 76.

<sup>446</sup> Dubow, “Imagining the New South Africa in the era of reconstruction”, p. 81.

British forces during the War).<sup>447</sup> The Milner regime further aggravated relations between English-speaking whites and Afrikaners through its unashamed attempts to enforce British supremacy and anglicisation in the region, particularly after the atrocities Boer women and children suffered in the concentration camps during the War. When responsible government was granted and the Het Volk party came to power in 1907, under the leadership of Botha and Smuts, many English-speakers were likewise wary of Afrikaner motives and domination.<sup>448</sup>

The Het Volk policy of conciliation was intent on “the eradication of bitterness and ... cooperation over a wide range of groups and institutions”.<sup>449</sup> From the signing of peace at the end of the War, Botha and Smuts promoted conciliation and the ending of bitterness within and between white groupings. Botha’s biographer Engelenburg commented how during negotiations Botha “...repeatedly drew attention to the national aspect of things. He never tired of referring to the Colonials who had fought on our side.”<sup>450</sup> It has further also been emphasized that “[i]t was as a Transvaler that Botha had begun the war; as a South African he signed the Peace Treaty.”<sup>451</sup>

From its founding in 1904 the Het Volk party advanced the principle of forgiving and forgetting, with the primary aim of cooperation between whites of every background in the Transvaal. This policy of conciliation operated on at least four different levels. It began with conciliation in the Afrikaner community and extended to all the whites of the Transvaal. It also encompassed a broader view of conciliation in South Africa as a whole, with the ultimate goal of political union, and promoted a version of loyalty to the British Empire.<sup>452</sup> Dubow touches on a number of these levels in summing up the Het Volk policy as follows:

During this era of rapprochement, Afrikaner political leaders, most notably Botha and Smuts, worked assiduously to bury past hatreds, and to place themselves in a

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<sup>447</sup> A.M. Grundlingh, *Die “hensoppers” en “joiners”*. *Die rasionaal en verskynsel van verraad*, (Cape Town: Haum, 1979), pp. 309-313.

<sup>448</sup> Bromberger, “General Botha and the conciliation policy”, pp. 6-10; Thompson, *The unification of South Africa*, p. 17.

<sup>449</sup> Bromberger, “General Botha and the conciliation policy”, p. 10.

<sup>450</sup> Quoted in Bromberger, “General Botha and the conciliation policy”, p. 13.

<sup>451</sup> Bromberger, “General Botha and the conciliation policy”, p. 13.

<sup>452</sup> G.H.L. Le May, *The Afrikaners. An historical interpretation*, (Oxford & Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1995), p. 144; Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 268; Symington, “Onderwys in die Transvaal gedurende die Kroonkolonie-periode”, p. 333; Bromberger, “General Botha and the conciliation policy”, p. 11; Wilson and Thompson (eds.), *The Oxford history of South Africa*, p. 341; Thompson, *The unification of South Africa*, pp. 30-31.

position to capture the new South African dominion, while remaining within the family of empire.<sup>453</sup>

As mentioned, the South African War had left Afrikaners in particular a divided and embittered people.<sup>454</sup> The first priority of Botha and Smuts was to settle the discord among Afrikaners. In the founding congress of the Het Volk party, Botha encouraged policy of forgiveness towards National Scouts and “hensoppers”.<sup>455</sup>

On the Transvaal level conciliation aimed to remove animosity between English-speakers and Afrikaners, to cultivate constructive relations between whites and to nurture a single national consciousness among them.<sup>456</sup> This policy resounded with the Cape Colony party, the Afrikaner Bond, “who drew on the experience of the late nineteenth-century Cape Colony in order to imagine a South Africa in which Dutch and British traditions could flourish together.”<sup>457</sup> More than a decade before the South African War, the Afrikanerbond had pioneered this “hybrid transethnic white settler identity”<sup>458</sup> by defining Afrikaners as “all ... belonging to it, of whatever descent, who aim at the welfare of South Africa” and furthermore also encouraged “the formation of a South African nationality by the fostering of true patriotism, as preparation for its final destiny: a United South Africa”<sup>459</sup>. The underlying goal was to cultivate a national spirit that would be in line with mutual interests. Its policies were thus based on pragmatism and included the promotion of Afrikaner interests within the British Empire.<sup>460</sup>

In the Transvaal, the newly formed Het Volk party pursued a similar line. An extract from the party programme of the Het Volk Congress held in December 1906 demonstrates this:

The main goal of Het Volk is to strive for racial conciliation. To avoid every cause of mutual mistrust or division, to oppose the domination of one white race over the other and to unite all white inhabitants of the State in one great South

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<sup>453</sup> Dubow, “Imagining the New South Africa in the era of reconstruction”, p. 78.

<sup>454</sup> An estimated one third of the Boer population were *hensoppers*. 5 464 Boers had been recruited to the British army by the end of the War. Bromberger, “General Botha and the conciliation policy”, p. 6; T. Pakenham, *The Boer War*, (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 1993), p. 282.

<sup>455</sup> Bromberger, “General Botha and the conciliation policy”, p. 11; Wilson and Thompson (eds.), *The Oxford history of South Africa*, p. 341; S. G. Millin, *General Smuts*, (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1936), p. 223; Engelenburg, *General Louis Botha*, p. 128.

<sup>456</sup> Bromberger, “General Botha and the conciliation policy”, p. 12.

<sup>457</sup> Dubow, “Imagining the New South Africa in the era of reconstruction”, p. 78.

<sup>458</sup> Foster, *Washed in sun*, p. 37.

<sup>459</sup> 1883 Constitution of the Afrikanerbond quoted in Bromberger, “General Botha and the conciliation policy”, p. 1.

<sup>460</sup> Marks and Trapido, “The politics of race, class and nationalism”, p. 14.

African Nation, happily prosperous in the same purpose, with mutual pride and patriotism to South Africa as ones dwelling in her, and working with common strength for her future greatness and glory.<sup>461</sup>

Thompson maintains that “[t]hough eager to win friends in the British Liberal party, Botha and Smuts did not regard ‘conciliation’ as a mere slogan. Their policies ... were intended to reassure English-speakers that they would not be discriminated against in the new Transvaal.”<sup>462</sup> This is demonstrated, for example, by the fact that the Het Volk party included English-speakers in their government in 1907.<sup>463</sup> There was already a history of positive co-operation between English and Dutch speakers prior to the South African War. Pretoria society, for example, was varied and showed social and commercial relations existed between these groups.<sup>464</sup> This continued after the War and in some cases, Thompson has argued, demonstrated a more inclusive society than in the other colonies. An example of this is the founding of the Suid-Afrikaanse Vrouefederasie (South African Women’s Federation) in the Transvaal by an English-speaking pro-Boer, Georgina Solomon, and Annie Botha (wife of Louis).<sup>465</sup>

The ultimate goal of this conciliation policy in the Transvaal was the prospect of some kind of union of the four South African colonies. When the Het Volk party came to power Smuts proposed that the Transvaal take the lead by setting a pattern for achieving white unity. He is reported to have said “they had a great opportunity now for setting an example to the whole of South Africa and initiate that spirit of co-operation and unity which would result in a great united South African nation.”<sup>466</sup> The spirit of conciliation promoted in the Transvaal would pervade the rest of the colonies and result in the formation of a single nation. The borders would then be obsolete. Conversely, there was the idea that the achievement of political union would root out the last remnants of hostility among whites and also save the Transvaal from isolationist tendencies.<sup>467</sup>

Possibly the most complex level of conciliation pursued by Botha and Smuts, was on the Imperial level. On the surface, it “implied the renunciation of republicanism [and] the

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<sup>461</sup> Quoted in Bromberger, “General Botha and the conciliation policy”, p. 41. My translation.

<sup>462</sup> Thompson, “The languages of loyalism in Southern Africa, c.1870-1939”, p. 642.

<sup>463</sup> Bromberger, “General Botha and the conciliation policy”, p. 43.

<sup>464</sup> See B. Theron, *Pretoria at war, 1899-1900*, (Pretoria: Protea Book House, 2000).

<sup>465</sup> Thompson, “The languages of loyalism in Southern Africa, c.1870-1939”, p. 642.

<sup>466</sup> Quoted in Bromberger, “General Botha and the conciliation policy”, p. 14.

<sup>467</sup> Bromberger, “General Botha and the conciliation policy”, pp. 13-14 & 61-62.



acceptance of the Transvaal's position within the British Empire as a permanent fact".<sup>468</sup> Smuts and Botha took care to not offend the British on patriotic grounds and to let the British government realise their acceptance of their place in Empire, when seeking responsible government. This acceptance gradually became enthusiasm and even insistence on the obligations which South Africa had towards the Empire. This approach has been considered shrewd, as it was seen as the price of winning support from Transvaal English-speakers.<sup>469</sup>

Thompson has investigated the concept of loyalty to the British crown and Empire during this time and in this regard points out that the end of the War marked a turning point in Anglo-Afrikaner relations, not only because of the bitterness which the fighting had caused, but also because the "control over the concept of loyalty slipped from 'British' hands."<sup>470</sup> He explains, that "[a]fter 1902, the key figures in defining what it meant to be loyal came not from English-speaking society or from the Cape, but from moderate Afrikaners and the Transvaal."<sup>471</sup> Furthermore, the promotion of white cooperation was significant in the growth of loyalism. For moderate Afrikaners, loyalty to Britain encompassed the ideal of an inclusive white nationalism which embraced goodwill and respect. After 1907 loyalty to the Empire also arose from gratitude towards the newly elected liberal government in Britain who dealt generously with the Transvaal in terms of financial aid as well as regards expediting the granting of responsible government.<sup>472</sup>

Loyalty to the British crown among South Africans of all backgrounds arose from a variety of different interests and was used for multiple purposes. It was not always a personal loyalty to the crown itself. Given the recent War with Britain and the heterogeneous society in the Transvaal, it is not always easy to understand the motivations for and depth of professed loyalty to Britain. Even leaders sympathetic to Het Volk, like Cape Premier and Afrikanerbond leader Merriman could not completely shake doubts regarding the sincerity of

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<sup>468</sup> Bromberger, "General Botha and the conciliation policy", p. 14.

<sup>469</sup> Engelenburg, *General Louis Botha*, p. 138; Bromberger, "General Botha and the conciliation policy", p. 15; J. Darwin, "Afterword: the imprint of the war", in Omissi and Thompson (eds.), *The impact of the South African War*, p. 291.

<sup>470</sup> Thompson, "The languages of loyalism in Southern Africa, c.1870-1939", p. 640.

<sup>471</sup> Thompson, "The languages of loyalism in Southern Africa, c.1870-1939", pp. 640-641.

<sup>472</sup> Thompson, "The languages of loyalism in Southern Africa, c.1870-1939", pp. 640 & 647; Bromberger, "General Botha and the conciliation policy", pp. 21-22; Thompson, *The unification of South Africa*, p. 32.

the Het Volk party leaders' loyalty.<sup>473</sup> Thompson points out the complexities of particularly Afrikaner leaders' loyalty when he states:

Botha and Smuts were loyal to the empire, but how far this was born of political expediency, and how far it signalled a genuine sympathy for the British cause, it is difficult to discern, not least because of the scanty evidence for Botha's views and because of Smuts's complex character. Certainly, in proclaiming their imperial loyalty, these men felt little conflict with other aspects of their identity based on language, culture, religion or community.<sup>474</sup>

A "tangible expression of the conciliation policy"<sup>475</sup> which demonstrates how the concept of loyalism had fallen into the hands of Afrikaners was the presentation of the Cullinan diamond to the King of England in 1907 by the Het Volk government. The gift has been regarded as evidence of political realism on the part of Botha and Smuts. It also placed the English opposition parties in the Transvaal in the awkward position of opposing the gift on grounds of principle.<sup>476</sup>

Certainly on the surface conciliation was a policy driven by realism. Its adoption "was undoubtedly in the first place good practical tactics; it was adopted for what it would yield."<sup>477</sup> Once a reasonable chance of military victory no longer seemed to exist, Botha felt that "it was his duty to salvage as much as possible from the ruins."<sup>478</sup> This led to his insistence on economic recovery and the promise of self-government in the near future in the peace settlement. Moreover, the relative numbers of the two main white groups in the Transvaal also made conciliation there more desirable or more necessary than in the Orange Free State, especially with a view to securing political power. These groups were also interdependent and therefore co-operation was more essential. Furthermore, the possible threat of the 'native peril' also motivated Afrikaners to co-operate with English-speakers for the sake of their common survival in the region.<sup>479</sup>

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<sup>473</sup>Thompson, "The languages of loyalism in Southern Africa, c.1870-1939", p. 620; Engelenburg, *General Louis Botha*, p. 157; Lambert, "South African British? Or Dominion South Africans?", p. 202.

<sup>474</sup> Thompson, "The languages of loyalism in Southern Africa, c.1870-1939", p. 621.

<sup>475</sup> B. Guest, "The "Row about the Great Diamond": the presentation of the *Cullinan Diamond* to the British Crown, 1907", *Historia* 52(2), November 2007, p. 112.

<sup>476</sup> Guest, "The "Row about the Great Diamond": the presentation of the *Cullinan Diamond* to the British Crown, 1907", pp. 112 & 117; Engelenburg, *General Louis Botha*, pp. 161-162.

<sup>477</sup> Bromberger, "General Botha and the conciliation policy", p. 18.

<sup>478</sup> Bromberger, "General Botha and the conciliation policy", p. 18.

<sup>479</sup> Bromberger, "General Botha and the conciliation policy", pp. 20-21; Engelenburg, *General Louis Botha*, p. 115.

The policy of conciliation has also been called “a logical extension of the personal attitudes and inclinations of some of the Boer leaders – particularly Botha and Smuts”.<sup>480</sup> Botha was highly regarded by the rural Afrikaner and spontaneously looked to as a leader after the South African War. His biographer, F. Engelenburg praises him for his moderate speech and actions. Certainly, his pragmatic and approachable personality appears to have contributed to the success of conciliation among Afrikaners.<sup>481</sup>

Of the Het Volk party leaders, Smuts was the more philosophical and complex personality. His background in the Cape with Afrikanerbond traditions of white co-operation, as well as his education at the University of Cambridge must have contributed to his belief in white conciliation.<sup>482</sup> Conciliation also fell in line with his philosophy of Holism, which highlighted his preference for “synthesis and universality” over “isolationism or particularity”, although Bromberger concedes that “opportunism and ambition must also be reckoned to figure in his motivation.”<sup>483</sup> In fact, historian G.H.L. Le May attributes Smuts’s professions of loyalty to the Empire to “a smouldering ambition” that the Transvaal under the leadership of Het Volk would become the centre of South African politics and would play the leading role in a future union of the colonies.<sup>484</sup>

It is not difficult to find evidence of Smuts’s support for and strong belief in conciliation.<sup>485</sup> He felt keenly that the perpetuation of boundaries and walls between peoples would be equivalent to the digging of South Africa’s grave.<sup>486</sup> On the positive side, he believed that the fusion of the white ‘races’ would be a source of strength to the country. In his view “[s]uch mingling makes a great people”,<sup>487</sup> as each ‘race’ would bring their strengths and balance out the weaknesses of the other.

In practice a main feature of conciliation was concession, as co-operation involved being flexible and making adjustments. For Afrikaner leaders, balancing the need to appeal to

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<sup>480</sup> Bromberger, “General Botha and the conciliation policy”, p. 18.

<sup>481</sup> Engelenburg, *General Louis Botha*, p. 130; Thompson, *The unification of South Africa, 1902-1910*, p. 30; Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 357.

<sup>482</sup> Bromberger, “General Botha and the conciliation policy”, p. 26.

<sup>483</sup> Bromberger, “General Botha and the conciliation policy”, p. 26; Millin, *General Smuts*, p. 223; Lambert, “South African British? Or Dominion South Africans?”, p. 199.

<sup>484</sup> Le May, *British supremacy in South Africa, 1899-1907*, p. 212.

<sup>485</sup> See for example P.B. Blanckenberg (ed.), *The thoughts of General Smuts*, (Cape Town & Johannesburg: Juta & Co Ltd, 1951); Millin, *General Smuts*.

<sup>486</sup> *Volkstem*, 3 March 1908, quoted in Bromberger, “General Botha and the conciliation policy”, p. 27.

<sup>487</sup> Millin, *General Smuts*, p. 222.

English-speakers without appearing to be too friendly with the former ‘enemy’ in the eyes of fellow Afrikaners was not a simple task. It is difficult to ascertain how much support Transvaal Afrikaners gave to the policy as it is clear that very strong anti-British sentiments existed, particularly related to the practical implications of conciliation. Few, however, spoke out against conciliation before the formation of Union. Many Afrikaners appeared to support the policy based on their personal devotion and loyalty to Botha and Smuts. An undercurrent of opposition would only come to the fore after Union under the influence of J.B.M. Hertzog, leader of the Orangia Unie party and other Free State politicians.<sup>488</sup> Thompson has cast doubt on the degree to which Afrikaners were brought around to the idea of conciliation with the South African War so fresh in their memory. He feels that “[i]solationism and anglophobia were too deeply rooted to be summarily expunged in favour of fusion with the British.”<sup>489</sup> Furthermore, Milner’s overt policy of anglicisation had entrenched suspicion regarding the English among many Afrikaners and has even been credited with fuelling exclusive Afrikaner nationalism.<sup>490</sup> This was reinforced on many occasions by the very attitude of English-speaking South Africans themselves. In the wake of the War, Afrikaners also found themselves in a rapidly industrialising political economy dominated, despite their smaller numbers, by English-speakers. These factors contributed to Afrikaner misgivings regarding conciliation.<sup>491</sup> However, while the extent to which English-speakers and Afrikaners were reconciled is not clear and rather difficult to fathom, Botha has been given credit for “knitting together the torn fabric of Afrikanerdom” to the extent of achieving relative cohesion before the advent of responsible government.<sup>492</sup>

The alternative direction to conciliation offered to Afrikaners was one of isolation in order “to preserve the national purity and integrity of the nation in all aspects of its national life”.<sup>493</sup> In contrast to broad South Africanism and conciliation, this standpoint promoted racial distinction and the cultivation of exclusive national unity within Afrikanerdom. For these

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<sup>488</sup> Lambert, “South African British? Or Dominion South Africans?”, pp. 200-201; H. Giliomee, “The beginnings of Afrikaner nationalism, 1870-1915”, *South African Historical Journal* 19, 1987, p. 141; Dubow, “Imagining the New South Africa in the era of reconstruction”, p. 81; Bromberger, “General Botha and the conciliation policy”, pp. 17, 40-42, 58 & 60.

<sup>489</sup> Thompson, *The unification of South Africa, 1902-1910*, p. 33.

<sup>490</sup> Marks and Trapido, “The politics of race, class and nationalism”, p. 15.

<sup>491</sup> A. Grundlingh and S. Swart, *Radelose rebellie? Dinamika van die 1914-1915 Afrikanerrebellie*, (Pretoria: Proteaboekhuis, 2009), pp. 52-53; Lambert, “South African British? Or Dominion South Africans?”, p. 202; Marks and Trapido, “The politics of race, class and nationalism”, pp. 2-3.

<sup>492</sup> Le May, *British supremacy in South Africa, 1899-1907*, p. 215.

<sup>493</sup> Kirstein quoted in Bromberger, “General Botha and the conciliation policy”, p. 16.

opposers of conciliation, the formation of a new South African nationality equalled racial intermixture and the sacrifice of specifically Afrikaner rights.<sup>494</sup>

### **The Union of South Africa and white identity**

For both Milner's supporters and Botha and Smuts, the achievement of political union between the four South African British colonies in 1910 was a means and basis to solidify white unity. For members of the Kindergarten and others who subscribed to Milner's views, such a union would erase the political and geographic foundations of separatist memory and provide a clean slate for a new unified white history. The basic difference between their view of South African identity and that of Botha and Smuts was that for them the new South African identity would mean the submergence of Afrikaners into something British or Anglophile, while Botha and Smuts based their ideal of unity on the equality of the two races. As indicated earlier, the Kindergarten's manner of achieving such a goal was more careful and discreet than Milner's had been.<sup>495</sup> Foster highlights the role of these "cultural activists"

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a loose association of educated, upper-middle-class activists [who] promoted a number of ostensibly apolitical initiatives designed to help a broad assortment of citizens imagine themselves as a unified group, situated in the historical time and geographic space of a new nation.<sup>496</sup>

Dubow also emphasizes the continued influence of Milnerism, even after Milner's departure, in shaping the way South Africans imagined themselves. Milner's Kindergarten "understood that they could only achieve their objectives for closer union by drawing on, and encouraging, local colonial nationalist sentiment, and by thinking of 'British' identity in terms that allowed for overlapping loyalties."<sup>497</sup> "[P]olitical and cultural compromise" was accepted as "the price of a united South African state".<sup>498</sup> In a sense the achievement of the Union of South Africa in 1910 was the consummation of both broad South Africanism and conciliation. Dubow highlights how this new state, a high point in the quest for white unity, "managed the remarkable feat of thinking of itself, almost unquestioningly, as an independent white man's country in Africa exhibiting continuing affiliations to the British

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<sup>494</sup> Bromberger, "General Botha and the conciliation policy", p. 16.

<sup>495</sup> Lambert, "South African British? Or Dominion South Africans?", p. 199; Foster, *Washed in sun*, p. 27; Thompson, *The unification of South Africa, 1902-1910*, pp. 60-63.

<sup>496</sup> Foster, *Washed in sun*, p. 38.

<sup>497</sup> Dubow, "Imagining the New South Africa in the era of reconstruction", pp. 91-92.

<sup>498</sup> Darwin, "Afterword: the imprint of the war", p. 291.

Commonwealth.”<sup>499</sup> Foster confirms this by stating, “[t]he imagined Greater South Africa was part of a larger imagined territory, the British Empire, and the identity of its ideal citizen combined the best qualities of South Africa’s two white ‘races’ ”.<sup>500</sup>

This inclusive white nationalism necessitated the exclusion of the country’s black population from the rights of proper citizenship. It was a bolstering of white South Africa in order to effectively manage its black inhabitants and also control the flow of much needed cheap labour for particularly the country’s mining industry, the backbone of its economy. This background unashamedly provided momentum for the movement towards a unified white nation and political Union.<sup>501</sup> More than two decades after the formation of Union, Smuts looked back at the event and also highlighted the significant role of black-white relations in relation to its formation. He stated, that since the creation of the Union,

the Native question can now be attacked on uniform lines in a general policy covering all the Provinces. With divergent Native policies in the various parts of the Union, a solution would have been impossible, and the situation may easily have become far worse. Union has thus created the opportunity for South Africans to co-operate in finding a solution for the most difficult of all our problems.<sup>502</sup>

A review of the progress of the Union in 1930, however, suggested that the “preoccupation” with white relations had led to the neglect of more significant and urgent issues, including most prominently the question of how to deal with South Africa’s multiracial situation.<sup>503</sup>

For Smuts Union was a high point on the path of nation building and he later termed it “the greatest blessing that has ever come to South Africa”.<sup>504</sup> Twenty-five years after its formation he still referred with great confidence and optimism to its unifying role when he stated:

Without Union there would scarcely have been a united nation, and the old colonial and racial fissures might have led to still greater cleavages in future. South Africa, a nation, will follow from South Africa, a Union.<sup>505</sup>

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<sup>499</sup> Dubow, “Imagining the New South Africa in the era of reconstruction”, p. 92.

<sup>500</sup> Foster, *Washed in sun*, p. 29.

<sup>501</sup> Lambert, “South African British? Or Dominion South Africans?”, p. 200; Dubow, “Imagining the New South Africa in the era of reconstruction”, p. 81.

<sup>502</sup> Blanckenberg (ed.), *The thoughts of General Smuts*, p. 7.

<sup>503</sup> J.H. Hofmeyr, “Introduction”, in E.H. Brookes et al., *Coming of age. Studies in South African citizenship and politics*, (Cape Town: Maskew Miller Ltd, 1930), p. 2.

<sup>504</sup> Blanckenberg (ed.), *The thoughts of General Smuts*, p. 6.

<sup>505</sup> Blanckenberg (ed.), *The thoughts of General Smuts*, p. 7.

An outward and initial evidence of the nationalising effect of the Union is the fact that it was only after Union that the term ‘English-speaking South Africans’ came into use. Before terms like ‘British South Africans’ or ‘British element’, ‘colonial British’ or merely ‘British’ were used. Likewise ‘Dutch’ or ‘Boer’ was used more often than ‘Afrikaner’ in the pre-Union period.<sup>506</sup> Historian John Lambert has argued however, that this shift in description was only well-established by the 1950s, thus showing the slow evolution of these new identities. Furthermore, the fact that English-speakers were a minority in a new political dispensation dominated by Afrikaner leaders led to the strengthening of their particular identity for some.<sup>507</sup> Material representation of the unified white nation, was symbolically displayed in the construction of the two towers of the new government buildings in Pretoria – the Union Buildings – depicting the “reconciliation and partnership”<sup>508</sup> of the two white races. But, the “unresolved character of the new nation” was also apparent in the matter of the equality given to both English and Dutch as official languages in the constitution and in the existence of three capital cities: Cape Town, Pretoria and Bloemfontein.<sup>509</sup>

In spite of these outward signs of rift, “[t]he Union was launched on a wave of optimism. There was widespread belief, in England and in South Africa, that Boer and Briton would spontaneously fuse into one nation.”<sup>510</sup> Dubow sums up this period aptly in the following description:

Making, delimiting and defining the new South Africa should therefore be seen as a fluid and unpredictable process whose eventual outcome – political unification – was achieved in unlikely and often unpropitious circumstances. ... The drive to union bears some resemblance to the ‘miracle’ of South Africa’s transition in the 1990s, in that it was floated on a palpable and effusive, if ephemeral, ‘spirit of reconciliation’ which exceeded the expectations of even its more optimistic enthusiasts.<sup>511</sup>

In his study of the unification of South Africa, however, Thompson finds that the basis of conciliators’ belief in the certainty of white unification was general and insubstantial.<sup>512</sup> The rift in the project became evident only two years after the formation of Union when Hertzog separated from Botha and Smuts and began promoting a more exclusive Afrikaner

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<sup>506</sup> Dubow, “Colonial nationalism, the Milner Kindergarten and the rise of ‘South Africanism’”, p. 62.

<sup>507</sup> Lambert, “South African British? Or Dominion South Africans?”, pp. 203 & 212.

<sup>508</sup> Foster, *Washed in sun*, p. 28.

<sup>509</sup> Foster, *Washed in sun*, p. 28; Bromberger, “General Botha and the conciliation policy”, pp. 68-69.

<sup>510</sup> Thompson, *The unification of South Africa, 1902-1910*, p. 480.

<sup>511</sup> Dubow, “Imagining the New South Africa in the era of reconstruction”, p. 78.

<sup>512</sup> Thompson, *The unification of South Africa, 1902-1910*, p. 480.

nationalism, leading to his establishment of the National Party in 1914. In the same year, the divide increased dramatically with opposition from Hertzog and his supporters to South African participation in World War I and the Afrikaner Rebellion.<sup>513</sup> On the surface South Africa's entry into World War I made it appear that Botha and Smuts had "sold themselves to the English"<sup>514</sup> and the swift public upsurge of what has been described as English jingoism, brought about a state of affairs that the policy of conciliation had precisely tried to avoid. The sudden paramountcy of British interests left some Afrikaners feeling that their concerns were suffering neglect, as national identity was very much tied up with the British Empire for many English-speakers. For many South Africans of British extraction the World War strengthened their sense of Britishness.<sup>515</sup> These events exposed the tenuous nature of the proposed new South African nationality and made the quest for white unity more uncertain, as in some respects its effects contributed to "an increasingly sharpening definition of an Afrikaner".<sup>516</sup>

These challenges to the durability and soundness of newly emerging white South Africanism and its ability to forge a new nation out of groups with historically divergent interests meant that the ideal of conciliation was "confronted [with] forces and currents stronger than itself".<sup>517</sup> The trouble with the ideal of developing a unified white nationalism is that it was vague and ambiguous, particularly in terms of practice, and therefore susceptible to challenge. By contrast, the nationalism of Hertzog was more definite and clear and exposed the loose conception of broad South Africanism.<sup>518</sup> Moreover, while many whites proclaimed the doctrine of conciliation and broad South Africanism, it has been argued that it was only a reality to a few, while for most it was only on the surface and more of a means to an end. From the British side, there were those who still hoped that the English would eventually outnumber Afrikaners and the new South African nation would become British in flavour. The more indomitable impression was that of Afrikaners who still cherished republican aspirations and exclusive national sentiment, so that the conciliation policy fuelled concerns

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<sup>513</sup> Dubow, "Colonial nationalism, the Milner Kindergarten and the rise of 'South Africanism'", p. 76; Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, p. 149; Grundlingh and Swart, *Radelose rebellie?*, p. 56.

<sup>514</sup> Thompson, "The languages of loyalism in Southern Africa, c.1870-1939", p. 643.

<sup>515</sup> Grundlingh and Swart, *Radelose rebellie?*, pp. 15-16; Lambert, "South African British? Or Dominion South Africans?", pp. 204 & 213.

<sup>516</sup> Hofmeyr, "Building a nation from words", p. 107; R.F. Currey and T.J. Haarhof, "South African Nationality", in Brookes et al., *Coming of age. Studies in South African citizenship and politics*, p. 25.

<sup>517</sup> Bromberger, "General Botha and the conciliation policy", p. 76.

<sup>518</sup> Dubow, "Colonial nationalism, the Milner Kindergarten and the rise of 'South Africanism'", p. 75.



regarding the loss of a distinct national identity. Furthermore, the changing socio-economic times with which many Afrikaners were faced after the South African War fostered nostalgia for the lost ZAR republic, a “golden” and idyllic era for many Afrikaners who did not have faith in the liberal British system of government.<sup>519</sup>

The quest for fostering broad South African national sentiment did not totally succumb. In the period between the two World Wars it developed alongside other influences, so that Boucher describes it as a time in which “the Union of South Africa was tentatively seeking to reconcile a growing South Africanism, a narrower Afrikaner nationalism and the mellow imperialism of those autumn days of empire...”<sup>520</sup> For Foster, the 1920s was the period in which broad South Africanism was most prevalent.<sup>521</sup> The economic depression of the early 1930s and the more aggressive pursuit of an exclusive Afrikaner nationality at this time led to a general sense of disquiet and apprehensions on the part of English-speakers, as the promise of white unity seemed fleeting.<sup>522</sup> In the end, Dubow proposes that,

it was only after 1948 that the spirit of ‘broad’ South Africanism was finally dislodged as the dominant force in white politics. Formulated in the years after the South African War, and founded on the unpromising principles of compromise and conciliation, it nonetheless endured for over half a century.<sup>523</sup>

## Conclusion

White national unity was an ideal pursued by both successive administrations of the Transvaal after the South African War and by the first government of the Union of South Africa. At each time the understanding of what this unity meant and the motivations for its promotion differed by degrees. Furthermore, white South African responses to these endeavours and aspirations clearly show that the white population was a complex and diverse group which would not be easily submerged in a unifying common identity. The memory of the South African War and British imperialism, industrialisation and the effects of the First World War all undermined plans to promote a new South African nationalism. Despite the growing counter trend which strengthened the idea of distinct national identities, the notion of a unified white South African identity was one that endured throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Furthermore, this notion was also one that had been linked historically to

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<sup>519</sup> Thompson, *The unification of South Africa, 1902-1910*, pp. 480-481; Grundlingh and Swart, *Radelose rebellie?*, pp. 54-55.

<sup>520</sup> Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, p. 260.

<sup>521</sup> Foster, *Washed in sun*, p. 35.

<sup>522</sup> Hofmeyr, “Introduction”, pp. 6-7.

<sup>523</sup> Dubow, “Imagining the New South Africa in the era of reconstruction”, p. 92.

higher education and in the first few decades after the South African War it was viewed as a primary function of higher education, a condition which shall be explored further in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER V

### BROAD SOUTH AFRICANISM AND CONCILIATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The period following the South African War was one in which university institutions took root and multiplied in South Africa. As has been shown in the previous chapter, this period was also one in which the ideal of building a new unified white South African identity enjoyed the most currency, particularly under the first three successive administrations of the Transvaal and the Union of South Africa, although with varying forms and motives. These two developments came together in much of the debate surrounding the form and functions of universities in the country. This chapter will consider how the ideals of broad South Africanism and conciliation were related to education in general and higher education more specifically, by looking at the official and public view of the purpose of higher education at the time. It will begin by briefly reflecting on the way these notions were evident in higher education prior to the South African War. Under each administration following the War, the perceived unifying and nationalising function of universities will then be explored. The outcome of the university debate after the formation of Union will also be evaluated in this light.

#### **Higher education and white unity at the end of the nineteenth century**

A primary means for many of buttressing white South African nationhood and culture in the early twentieth century was higher education. It is easy to see that the advancement of a growing economy and industry, necessitating the acquisition of specialised skills and knowledge, is a motivating factor in the expansion of higher education. However universities and colleges have also been viewed as essential agents of nation building through the bringing together of students of different backgrounds. This thought relates to the nineteenth century relationship between universities and nationalism in Europe mentioned in chapter two. A 1930 survey of education and research in South Africa during the period of Union, pointed out the accepted notion that the primary objective of education for a state is citizenship and thereafter vocational training or research.<sup>524</sup>

As far as can be ascertained, the first memorable evidence of this view of higher education in South Africa was a speech given by Cecil John Rhodes at an Afrikaner Bond congress in

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<sup>524</sup> T.J. Haarhof and R.F. Currey, "Education and research", in Brookes et al., *Coming of age. Studies in South African citizenship and politics*, p. 396.

1891 in Kimberley.<sup>525</sup> As indicated earlier, Rhodes spoke of his intention to found a residential teaching university in Cape Town explaining his motives in the following way:

I have obtained enormous subscriptions in order to found a teaching university in the Cape Colony. I will own to you why I feel so strongly in favour of that project. I saw at Bloemfontein the immense feeling of friendship that all the members had for the Grey Institute, where they had been educated and from which they had gone out to the world. It was the pleasantest dinner I had there, and I said to myself that If [sic] we could get a teaching university founded in the Cape Colony, taking the young people from Bloemfontein, Pretoria, Natal, having the young men going in there from the ages of 18 to 21, they would go back to the Free State, to the Transvaal, and to Natal—let me even say they will go back to Mashonaland—tied to one another by the strongest feelings which can be created, because the period of your life when you indulge in friendships which are seldom broken is from the age of 18 to 21. Therefore, if we had a teaching, residential university, these young men would go forth into all parts of South Africa prepared to make the future of the country, and in their hands the great question of Union could safely be left. ... I feel that should a teaching university such as I have indicated be established the young men who attend it will make the Union of South Africa in the future. Nothing will overcome the associations and the aspirations they will form under the shadow of Table Mountain.<sup>526</sup>

But there were many obstacles to Rhodes' plan, including those who felt such a teaching university would damage the position of local colleges. It is significant that this earliest attempt to create a single South African university also met with opposition precisely because of the cross cultural contact between students which it implied. For example, representatives from the Victoria College voiced objections at a meeting to discuss the plan. One Dutch Reformed minister said "that he feared the association of the Dutch students with the Rooineks—or Englishmen—on moral grounds!"<sup>527</sup> In spite of local rivalries, Rhodes was confident his scheme would succeed. But the Jameson Raid and impending War put university plans on hold and then Rhodes passed away in 1902. His disillusionment in the scheme can be seen in his not leaving a bequest for setting up such a teaching university, but in his leaving his money rather in the Rhodes Scholarship scheme.<sup>528</sup>

Parallel to aspirations regarding the unifying possibilities of higher education, in the period prior to the South African War there were also already signs of the disunity which would follow later. The key issue was the one that would eventually also become the dividing point, that is, language. Already in the 1890s, there were demands for the use of Dutch in UCGH

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<sup>525</sup> Metrowich, *The development of higher education in South Africa*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>526</sup> Quoted in Edgar, "Union and the university question", p. 19.

<sup>527</sup> Quoted in Edgar, "Union and the university question", p. 19.

<sup>528</sup> Metrowich, *The development of higher education in South Africa*, p. 25.

examinations. Boucher explains that, “If the university persisted in ignoring the weight of evidence in favour of Dutch, the result might well be a strengthening of separatist tendencies in the Colony, a boost for the Taalbond which Merriman disliked so much and even desires for two universities divided on the issues of language and race.”<sup>529</sup> In the ZAR at this time attempts were made to provide higher education apart from the Cape and ties were rather forged with the Netherlands to assist students in receiving such an education.<sup>530</sup>

During the South African War, the hope that a university would contribute to nation building persevered. Vice-Chancellor Sir John Buchanan of the UCGH pointed to this object in his graduation day speech in 1902. The carrying on of the work of the university during the conflict was explained as an opportunity “to dispel the mists of prejudice, born of ignorance, which prevent the growth of the feeling of mutual respect, the precursor of mutual co-operation”.<sup>531</sup>

### **Education in the Crown Colony period**

With the end of the South African War, as seen in chapter four, the stress of the reconstruction era was “the moulding of conquered territories along British lines”.<sup>532</sup> For the British administration, education was a means to produce loyal British subjects. Thus, it was important that all sectors of the white population would be brought together in schools and educational institutions where they could be tempered and moulded in their impressionable years. Two main factors were needed to accomplish this task, namely the English language must be preeminent in education and higher education more particularly,<sup>533</sup> and British teachers were needed to impart British character. On the first question, the British women’s society, the Transvaal Women’s Educational Union, reporting on the educational needs of the Transvaal Colony in 1901 stated that “[i]t is of considerable importance, politically, that the use of any language but English should die out in the Transvaal; it is also of political importance that it should die out without friction”.<sup>534</sup> On the second question, Director of Education E.B. Sargent also explained the need of British teachers as follows: “One of my

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<sup>529</sup> Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, p. 94.

<sup>530</sup> Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, pp. 92-94.

<sup>531</sup> “Vice-Chancellor Buchanan, Degree Day”, *The Cape Argus*, 15 February 1902, quoted in Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, p. 96.

<sup>532</sup> Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, p. 99.

<sup>533</sup> Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, p. 99.

<sup>534</sup> Report on the educational needs of the Transvaal Colony—1901, quoted in Basson, *Die Britse invloed in die Transvaalse onderwys*, p. 177.

principal aims it to secure the services of men winning over the young generation of Dutch Afrikaner to English ways of thought and speech, and English ideas of truthfulness and loyalty.”<sup>535</sup> For this, mining magnate Abe Bailey told Milner, the need was for “teachers imbued with British ideas and ... *British instincts*”.<sup>536</sup>

Sargant shared Milner’s enthusiasm for imperialism. He was instrumental in importing British teachers and also believed that English should be the sole medium of education, as in his view, it would inevitably become the sole language of the country.<sup>537</sup> Milner himself also promoted this view and pointed to the importance of education in the anglicising mission in the following significant statement,

Next to the composition of the population, the thing which matters most is its education ... In the new Colonies the case will be easier to deal with, provided we make English THE LANGUAGE OF ALL HIGHER EDUCATION. Dutch should only be used to teach English, and English to teach everything else. Language is important, but the tone and spirit of the teaching conveyed in it is even more important.<sup>538</sup>

This idea of higher education as a means of bridging divides between the diverse white population of the Transvaal who had recently been at war with each other, is one that occurs throughout this period in the correspondence and discussions related to education. For example, in a letter to the editor of *The Star*, T.C. Ward states, “It will, therefore, depend more on education than on anything else to unite South Africa and overcome the feeling of race hatred, which I think exists more on the part of the irreconcilables in Europe than amongst the farmers of South Africa”.<sup>539</sup> Another example is the Governor of the Transvaal, Lord Selborne’s insistence in 1905 that at least half of the students attending the Pretoria Normal College should be British in order for “friendships of a lifetime to be formed between Boer and Briton”.<sup>540</sup> The Normal Colleges were seen as key in the project of promoting white unity as Sargant felt that “in the Normal Schools lay the best chance of educating the young teachers to a sense of their national duty and of obliterating racial prejudice”.<sup>541</sup>

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<sup>535</sup> Quoted in Basson, *Die Britse invloed in die Transvaalse onderwys*, p. 159.

<sup>536</sup> Quoted in Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, p. 99. Emphasis is Bailey’s.

<sup>537</sup> “Sargant, Edmund Beale”, in W.J. de Kock and D.W. Kruger (eds.), *Dictionary of South African Biography I*, (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1968), pp. 685-686.

<sup>538</sup> Quoted in Basson, *Die Britse invloed in die Transvaalse onderwys*, p. 146. Capitalisation is in the original. Higher education at this time was used to refer to all teaching beyond primary school.

<sup>539</sup> “The education question”, *The Star*, 12 September 1903.

<sup>540</sup> TAB, GOV 854, Selborne to Colonial Secretary, 27 November 1905.

<sup>541</sup> Quoted in Basson, *Die Britse invloed in die Transvaalse onderwys*, p. 163.

The 1903 Report of the Technical Education Commission referred to in chapter three also highlighted the belief in higher education as a place of conciliation. This motivated the recommendations of the Commission regarding a centralised educational site and also informed their argument for the establishment of an agricultural school. The report states,

[t]hat in view of the large proportion of the population engaged in agricultural pursuits we consider this school is of hardly less importance to the future well-being of the country than a School of Mines, and it is our earnest hope that the Government will devote no less attention to the establishment of the one than the other. Should these two schools be placed side by side, as we suggest, that intercourse amongst those representing the two foremost classes of the population, which is essential to the future settlement of the country, will be ensured at the impressionable stage of a young man's career, when lasting friendships are most readily formed.<sup>542</sup>

Other Britons cast doubt on the wisdom of the overtly anglicising mission of the administrators of the Transvaal Colony, seeing instead its potential to backfire. For example, when Ramsay MacDonald, who would later become British Prime Minister, visited the Transvaal after the South African War he observed, "I can only see an attempt to educate Dutchmen into Englishmen end in disaster, voluntary schools, and a continuation of embittered race antagonism".<sup>543</sup>

### **Conciliation in education in the responsible government period**

As already indicated, in the period of responsible government under the Het Volk party in the Transvaal, Jan Smuts was not only appointed Colonial Secretary but also Minister of Education. Furthermore, as discussed in chapter four, Smuts was a strong proponent of the Het Volk policy of conciliation and also a firm believer in education as a means to unite the white population.<sup>544</sup> This accorded with the Milner drive to unite the white population through education, but did not obviously include the anglicisation process.

In Smuts's landmark 1907 speech in Boksburg referred to earlier he outlined his educational policy for the colony, which was later embodied in the Education Act of 1907. He indicated

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<sup>542</sup> TAB, TKP 193, *Report of the Technical Education Commission*, p. 8.

<sup>543</sup> Quoted in Basson, *Die Britse invloed in die Transvaalse onderwys*, p. 147.

<sup>544</sup> W.K. Hancock, *Smuts. The sanguine years, 1870-1919*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), p. 232; "Education. Colonial Secretary's views", *Rand Daily Mail*, 27 March 1907.

that his policy would be similar to that of Milner, in which Boer and Brit children would be educated together in order to promote unity.<sup>545</sup> Smuts proposed that:

Their children would sit on the benches together, English, Dutch, Jew and German, no matter what their nationality or origin, they would sit together, be playmates together, think together and in that way they would be able to build the surest and best foundation of a happy race for the future.<sup>546</sup>

His speech was received with approval by the *Transvaal Leader*, which wrote,

Mr Smuts, with the eye of a true statesman, sees clearly enough that the question of race will be settled within a measurable distance of time in the schools. This is the way of unity, the way of amity, the way of comradeship and peace. Friendly emulation in the schools, whether in the class or the playground, makes for the permanent pacification of the Colony and the end of embittered division and intolerance.<sup>547</sup>

The 1907 Act attempted to bring together two systems of education – the CNO schools and British system – and to create a uniform system. In line with Smuts’s philosophy of Holism, it was a move to create and serve the “whole” in the Transvaal. It has also been called “a positive and fundamental contribution towards the development of that ‘een natie’ that Smuts and Botha spoke so much about”.<sup>548</sup>

The most significant part of the Act was the language provisions: mother tongue instruction was provided for in the lower standards, thereafter English became the medium. Dutch was allowed as a medium in a maximum of two subjects. English became a compulsory subject, while Dutch was optional. The Act caused discord among Afrikaners, but was received with relief and approval among English-speakers. What is important is that the language concessions show Smuts’s attempts at a balanced conciliation in practice.<sup>549</sup> The gravest disappointment to Afrikaners was that Smuts’s policy gave up the principle of language equality. It showed that “Smuts adopted an extremely liberal and generous attitude to all languages, but he raised English above all these languages by making it compulsory for all children”.<sup>550</sup> Dutch, on the other hand, was given a status equal to foreign languages. Smuts’s unwillingness to defend the Afrikaans language has also been viewed, like conciliation, as the

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<sup>545</sup> Basson, *Die Britse invloed in die Transvaalse onderwys*, p. 248.

<sup>546</sup> “Education. Colonial Secretary’s views”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 27 March 1907.

<sup>547</sup> TAB, A1 Newspaper Cuttings, volume 6, “An Enlightened Policy”, *Transvaal Leader*, 28 March 1907.

<sup>548</sup> Bromberger, “General Botha and the conciliation policy”, p. 52.

<sup>549</sup> Giliomee, “The beginnings of Afrikaner nationalism”, p. 138; Bromberger, “General Botha and the conciliation policy”, pp. 53-54.

<sup>550</sup> Basson, *Die Britse invloed in die Transvaalse onderwys*, p. 256. My translation.



natural conclusion of his philosophy of Holism in which the Afrikaner nation was a small part of the whole. This philosophical standpoint has come under fire for promoting British influence in education in the Transvaal.<sup>551</sup>

Smuts's message for higher education was also one of conciliation. In the following speech given at the time of his installation as Chancellor of UCT in March 1937, entitled "South Africa is a great human laboratory", he emphasized and encouraged tolerance and co-operation,

In this country especially are we called upon to practice the larger faith and follow the larger vision. In this South Africa of ours, there is a variety of race, colour, language, religion, tradition and civilization which calls for real generosity of outlook, breadth of view and sweep of statesmanship. Only in this way can our differences be woven together into a common pattern, which will in future give South Africa distinctive character among the countries of the world. More than perhaps any other country in the world South Africa is a great human laboratory, where experiments in racial co-operation are essential to our future success. We are not without light and guidance in this enterprise. The progressive history of the human race, the testimony of great reformers, the march of ideas towards the liberation of mankind from its primitive fears and taboos, our religion and the traditions of the stocks from which we spring—all these point to the path of goodwill, sympathetic understanding and tolerance as the real line of advance for us. This is the higher wisdom of our race.

You can only be a good citizen and a patriotic South African in the measure that you show reverence for the spirit of tolerance and humanity which is the highlight of our civilization.<sup>552</sup>

In the same year, Smuts also urged this broad attitude on listeners at the University of Pretoria at the laying of the foundation stone of the Merenkys Library. He encouraged students to study modern languages and to do justice to both official languages, English and Afrikaans.<sup>553</sup>

Thus, from a brief overview of Smuts's educational policy, it is clear that he believed in the conciliatory role of schools and universities. What is interesting, however, is that when it came to the practical arrangement of higher education in the Transvaal Colony, Smuts's plan was one that divided higher learning between the two principle cities of the colony, as outlined in chapter three. The strongest objection to Smuts's plan to divide the TUC was

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<sup>551</sup> Basson, *Die Britse invloed in die Transvaalse onderwys*, p. 260.

<sup>552</sup> Blanckenberg (ed.), *The thoughts of General Smuts*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>553</sup> "Laying of foundation stone of university library. General Smuts refers to the importance of language study", *Pretoria News*, 11 October 1937.

based on the feeling that by such a step, he would also divide the student population and discourage the intended harmonizing of the Transvaal youth. Its division was however based on the disciplines which would be offered and was not intended to separate the English and Afrikaans-speaking youth.

In the TUC Council's report on the tripartite scheme, as discussed earlier, the main objection was that there would be no corporate unity in an institution divided geographically into different faculties. The report reads as follows,

This effect of the proposed organisation is to be profoundly regretted. The students will represent the future aristocracy of the professional, agricultural, and industrial sections of the inhabitants. From their ranks the leaders will be recruited. But they will not meet during their most impressionable years. They will have no opportunity to develop the mutual understanding, toleration and respect through the discipline of common fields, common class-rooms, a common hall and a common chapel. The organisation proposed will indeed fail in respect of one of the highest of university functions, namely, the cultivation of social magnanimity. The aggregate of the ablest and most cultivated members of the three fundamental sections of the inhabitants of the Colony will remain, for all that university education will do, a mixture of disparate elements, not a blend in which difference of vocation and of race are lost or at least exist but to strengthen the whole. This is the cardinal weakness of the scheme and it is only because we understand that the difficulties in the way of finding any one place where the three branches can be developed side by side are insurmountable ...<sup>554</sup>

Objections voiced in the press were similar, as an article reporting on the tripartite scheme stated that the community on the Witwatersrand would certainly have misgivings about “any scheme likely to continue the separation of young students of the two sections of the European population, instead of bringing them together and housing them together in their impressionable years, which is surely the obvious thing to do”.<sup>555</sup>

It appears that in this case, higher aspirations regarding conciliation were sacrificed to practical needs. The arrangement was considered temporary but the effects were of a much longer duration. This initial split of the TUC ultimately became a deeper division, as each of the resulting universities eventually came to cater for exclusive white language groups. Thus, the outcome of Smuts's plan contradicted his goal of conciliation. Furthermore, the question of language medium was also showing its head in the university reform debate at this time, highlighting that the one hundred percent English policy would not remain unchallenged.

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<sup>554</sup> TAB, TOD 58, File 761, Report of the committee appointed by the Colonial Secretary, pp. 6-8.

<sup>555</sup> “The university”, *The Transvaal Leader*, 29 November 1907.

This matter was vital in the relationship between broad South Africanism and higher education.<sup>556</sup>

### **Union and the search for a national teaching university**

The prospect of Union and its eventual achievement turned the university question into one that involved the whole country and inspired the hope of establishing a national teaching university among broad South Africanists and those who believed in conciliation alike. In fact, the university debate at this point became increasingly characterised by the expression of broad South African sentiment and aspirations.

The crux of the drive for a national teaching university was that such an institution would aid in unifying white students from both ‘races’, thus practically carrying out the work of Anglo-Afrikaner conciliation. F.C. Metrowich’s late 1920s study of higher education presents the prevailing belief of the time that,

...the proposed University would serve as a great nationalizing force in South Africa. Indeed, no better instrument could be devised for binding the Dutch and English races together in that bond of friendship, respect and admiration for one another, which alone would create a true South African spirit of Nationality. Moreover, students would associate together, and would thus learn to appreciate that corporate spirit which was so badly lacking a feature under the existing system.<sup>557</sup>

In arguing for such a university in 1910, Edgar also underlined what he felt were the benefits of “the gathering of all classes of students in one central university”.<sup>558</sup> His argument, like that of the afore-mentioned TUC Council’s report, went further than just promoting relationships between English and Dutch-speaking students, to point out the benefits of students from different faculties and fields of study mixing together. He explained, “[a]ssociation with other students with different interests cultivates tolerance and breath [sic] of view, which are the two main advantages to be derived from a university education”.<sup>559</sup>

This thought of a university education promoting broad-mindedness echoed what Hertz had outlined as the principle definition and purpose of higher education in his public lecture at the

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<sup>556</sup> Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, pp. 105, 120-123 & 130.

<sup>557</sup> Metrowich, *The development of higher education in South Africa*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>558</sup> Edgar, “Union and the university question”, p. 17.

<sup>559</sup> Edgar, “Union and the university question”, p. 17.

TUC in 1906. This purpose, which he summed up as “self-estrangement leading to orientation”,<sup>560</sup> involved, in brief, the discovery of unfamiliar and different environments and perspectives. Much like a young person who visits foreign countries and in so doing “comes back far more tolerant, more broad-minded, less a slave to prejudice. He has learnt that there may be good men and true, even beyond his native parish”.<sup>561</sup> This experience would do away with racial generalisations by furthering mutual understanding.<sup>562</sup> Furthermore, this kind of education, which went beyond the scope of examinations, was best achieved by bringing together “face to face in living intercourse, teacher and teacher, teacher and student, student and student”.<sup>563</sup>

Minister of Education F.S. Malan appointed in the first Union cabinet in 1910 was also a proponent of conciliation and broad South Africanism.<sup>564</sup> He envisaged the establishment of such a national institution at Groote Schuur “... which would not only weld the races of the country into one, but also direct the thought and energies of the best sons of South Africa in the future.”<sup>565</sup> His aspirations in this regard represented a widely accepted expectation of higher education at the time. For example, in 1911 the *London Times* published an article on education in South Africa, also promoting the establishment of “a central residential teaching university ... an institution which will assist to break down localism and racialism”. Such a university would match the intentions of the Wernher-Beit bequests, mentioned earlier, if its planning were comprehensive.<sup>566</sup>

The flavour of discussions regarding the role of the university at this time matched the characteristics of South Africanist endeavours discussed in chapter four. For instance, in Hertz’s lecture on the role of the university, in the spirit of embracing all things South African, he praised the ZAR government for the foresight and initiative it had shown in budgeting and planning for a university in the Transvaal as early as 1889. Speaking at the TUC, he stated “[w]e are only continuing in the work undertaken by the Boer Government

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<sup>560</sup> Hertz, *The place of the university in modern life*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>561</sup> Hertz, *The place of the university in modern life*, p. 17.

<sup>562</sup> Haarhof and Currey, “Education and research”, pp. 400-401.

<sup>563</sup> H. Rashdall quoted in Hertz, *The place of the university in modern life*, p. 44.

<sup>564</sup> Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, p. 163.

<sup>565</sup> *Cape Times*, 7 November 1910, quoted in Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, p. 154.

<sup>566</sup> Quoted in Wits Archives, File 100: History of Mining/University Education, “A short chronology of the university movement on the Witwatersrand”.

years before the War”.<sup>567</sup> He therefore linked the current Transvaal to the pre-War ZAR and highlighted the common history of Transvaal inhabitants. Furthermore, in a fine example of a conciliatory view, he gave them credit for displaying “wise educational statesmanship”.<sup>568</sup>

Edgar’s discourse on the university question also bears the marks of South Africanism. He emphasizes the pressing needs in the country for training to address local needs in agriculture, mining and engineering, railways, harbours, public works, medicine and law, thus elevating local South African conditions and the need for the cultivation of specifically South African knowledge. He called for “botanical, geological and zoological departments to build up a great school of South African science”.<sup>569</sup> His lecture, published in *The State*, emphasized this view point that “if South Africa is to be a nation worthy of the name she must train up her own men of science in the future and collect a body of facts, through research and experiment, which will enable her to deal successfully with her own peculiar problems”.<sup>570</sup> What was needed for the new country was the building up of “a sound and liberal culture in the arts as well as in the sciences”.<sup>571</sup> Edgar concluded that “[t]he task of evolving a South African nation has not been completed by the creation of a new Constitution; it has just begun”.<sup>572</sup> Thus a national university would not only bring together and promote the unity of white students, but also furnish the cultural material for a new South African nationalism. This is much like the notion of *bildung* which found expression in German universities in the previous century discussed in chapter two.

Despite the optimism and the widespread advancement of the nationalising benefits of a national teaching university at this time, Edgar’s lecture also gives some hints of the seeds of division in the sphere of South African higher education. He explains the need of a single teaching university in order to prevent “the twin evils of racialism and provincialism” which had dogged South African education. He continues almost prophetically:

If the present system is continued these evils will remain and will become exaggerated. There will be a Dutch college and there will be an English college, and the two races will never have the chance of coming together and being educated together. A central university where all met on equal terms and associated together in a common work would promote solidarity in the nation and

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<sup>567</sup> Hertz, *The place of the university in modern life*, p. 46.

<sup>568</sup> Hertz, *The place of the university in modern life*, p. 47.

<sup>569</sup> Edgar, “Union and the university question”, p. 1.

<sup>570</sup> Edgar, “Union and the university question”, p. 11.

<sup>571</sup> Edgar, “Union and the university question”, p. 1.

<sup>572</sup> Edgar, “Union and the university question”, p. 1.

tend to obliterate racial and provincial divisions. All would feel themselves to be working together for the common good of the country and not merely in the interests of a district or of a class. And the educational advantages would be equally great. If there is to be a Dutch system of education and an English system existing side by side, as will be inevitable if the Dutch all flock to one centre and the English to another, the two sections of students will never be able to stand on a common footing in after life or be able to work harmoniously together. They will be inspired by different ideals and trained in different methods, and their energies will be wasted in fighting each other instead of being spent in co-operating together for the development of the country.<sup>573</sup>

The fact that not everyone would be brought around to appreciate the unifying benefits of a national university can be seen in the not always tactful opposition of the Victoria College supporters towards the Groote Schuur plan for a national university. This, they felt, was an attempt to bring a foreign element into South African soil, and it was precisely the nationalising effect that Afrikaners wished to avoid. Supporters of Victoria College felt that a single teaching university would mean the end of Dutch as a medium beyond primary education. According to Boucher, “the Victoria College stood for an ideal which was cherished by many Afrikaners, unwilling, as former President Steijn put it, to sell their children for half a million pounds [referring to the Werhner-Beit bequest].”<sup>574</sup> The College had come to represent the cultural interests of Afrikaners.<sup>575</sup> Indications that support for a national teaching university was also weak from Afrikaners further afield are seen in the TUC’s report regarding the proposals for the establishment of such an institution. The report warned that Dutch-speaking parents would prefer local centres for their children’s education and would be wary of “the cosmopolitan atmosphere of a large national university”.<sup>576</sup>

In fact, the political situation shortly after Union showed that the dream of white unity was not to be achieved so smoothly. The split between Botha and Hertzog, referred to in the previous chapter, further strengthened supporters of Victoria College as a Dutch-speaking centre in their endeavours to protect the college in impending university reforms. Evidently, considerations of the various role-players in solving the university question were not always merely educational. In fact, popular perceptions of some of the university colleges in the years immediately following the Union show that polarisation was already taking place in the realm of higher education at the very time when the hope of conciliators was to use higher

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<sup>573</sup> Edgar, “Union and the university question”, p. 18.

<sup>574</sup> Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, pp.164-165.

<sup>575</sup> Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 363.

<sup>576</sup> Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, p. 157.

education as a unifying force. For instance, it has been stated by English-speakers that Victoria College was viewed as a breeding ground for Hertzogism and Reactionism. On the other hand, Afrikaners felt that the School of Mines in Johannesburg was an English institution and that insufficient attention was given to Afrikaans and Dutch culture at the SAC. Generally speaking, there was also a feeling from some quarters that not enough was being done in the domain of higher education to promote the Dutch language and the national sentiments of Dutch-speakers.<sup>577</sup>

Thus, the underlying issue which lacked resolution in all aspects of the new Union of South African, including university affairs, was the matter of equality between the two white races. What this meant in effect and how it would be carried out practically was uncertain. It was entrenched in the language clause of the new Union and increasingly would come to be represented by the quest for language rights in practice.<sup>578</sup>

### **The 1916 University Acts and beyond**

The desire to carry out conciliation by means of the country's higher education was put to the test when it came to finding an actual practical solution to the university question. The eventual solution was the 1916 University Acts, which instead of creating one national teaching university, created one federal university and two teaching universities. Furthermore, these two universities ultimately came to represent the separate interests of the two white language groups.

The Werhner-Beit bequests which gave the necessary financial impetus for the establishment of a teaching university were not only made with a view to the development of higher education in the country, but also for the advancement of a unified South African nationalism. The donors, like many others, were firmly persuaded "that nothing would weld the new nation more firmly together than that its future leaders should spend the most impressionable years of their lives in the social atmosphere of a residential university".<sup>579</sup> The actual outcome of the university scheme in 1916, however, raised serious doubts as to whether this latter goal had been achieved. For example, in the mayor of Johannesburg's telegram to Lionel Phillips, asking him to intervene in the matter of the Beit bequest, he

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<sup>577</sup> Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, pp. 148 & 164.

<sup>578</sup> Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, pp. 147-148.

<sup>579</sup> Reunert, "The university question and the Rand", p. 3.

pointed out that the 1916 Acts went against the ideal of a national teaching university which would cater for both white ‘races’ and opened the way for universities to grow along racial lines.<sup>580</sup>

Much like the division of teaching between Johannesburg and Pretoria in 1908, the 1916 Acts showed that practical choices had to be made which did not always match the aspiration that higher education would bring the nation’s students together. In the case of the 1908 decision, two separate and increasingly divergent institutions in terms of language, identity and ideology emerged. In 1916 a foundation for divergence on the point of language was also laid in the Cape, right at the time when promoters of university education in the country were endeavouring to establish a *national* teaching institution. Edgar also acknowledged the difficulties which arose from “vested interests in the separate colleges, and the strength of local feeling” and concedes that there is an argument for a practical solution in contrast to what is “ideally perfect”.<sup>581</sup>

The 1916 Acts show two major obstacles to the achievement of a national and unifying university. Firstly, the social distances between different sections of white South Africans were not so easily overcome by just over a decade of attempts to unify them. The suspicion and antagonism resulting from events of the recent past, such as the South African War and Milnerism, still lingered. In the second place, the important influence of “deeply rooted” local aspirations and interests has also been pointed out. Regional sentiment was linked strongly to white identity and was even influential in expressions of loyalty.<sup>582</sup> It also had a strong influence over the course of higher education, as cities competed to establish colleges and universities in later years. An article in *The Pretoria News* in 1921, on the eve of the granting of university status to the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, shows how regional interests persisted. The writer again expresses the view that the atmosphere in Johannesburg is not suited to a university and comments that the wealthy citizens of Johannesburg who had made endowments for the university cause had better given their money for the establishment of a university in Pretoria or a surrounding rural area. According

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<sup>580</sup> Reunert, “The university question and the Rand”, p. 11; Venter, “Die groei van onderwysaangeleenthede in Johannesburg”, pp. 555-556.

<sup>581</sup> Edgar, “Union and the university question”, p. 19.

<sup>582</sup> Metrowich, *The development of higher education in South Africa*, p. 83; Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, pp. 259-260; Thompson, “The languages of loyalism in Southern Africa, c.1870-1939”, p. 647.



to the writer, the inevitability of this short-sighted act would be the establishment of two universities in close proximity to each other.<sup>583</sup>

The key issue which was at stake, however, and was beginning to become increasingly manifest was again the matter of language. In the wake of the Second Language Movement, which began in the first decade after the South African War, efforts grew to establish Afrikaans,<sup>584</sup> the local offshoot of Dutch, on equal terms with English in all spheres of life. In fact, the Afrikaans language grew increasingly in the twentieth century to be the focus of Afrikaner culture and nationalism. After the South African War the developing Afrikaans literature encouraged Afrikaners to stand against British influence and to seek to bring Afrikaans into education. Afrikaans writer Eugène Marais explained the necessity of Afrikaners recognising Afrikaans as their language otherwise he warned that within a generation English would be the only language in South Africa.<sup>585</sup> Under the surface, many English-speakers felt that in the end English would prevail as a natural matter of course. The South African Party government under Botha after Union was inclined to let the matter of language take its course and allow for the survival of the fittest.<sup>586</sup> Furthermore, in line with their policy of conciliation towards English-speakers, Botha and Smuts were unwilling to insist on the matter of language. It was in this matter of language that a growing Afrikaans intelligentsia would differ from the nationalism of Botha, Smuts and Het Volk.<sup>587</sup>

Especially after the split between Botha and Hertzog and the outbreak of World War I in 1914 language became increasingly “the key badge of identity”. As such Foster claimed that it “posed a powerful, and in some ways unanswerable, challenge to proponents of a more inclusive colonial national (but ultimately Anglophone) construction of white nationhood.”<sup>588</sup> He continues that this “shift toward the reification of language as the primary signifier of identity placed an inclusive, nonethnic construction of national identity at a distinct disadvantage”.<sup>589</sup>

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<sup>583</sup> “Education on the Rand. The ‘Varsity’”, *The Pretoria News*, 25 June 1921.

<sup>584</sup> The growth of Afrikaans has been investigated by a number of historians. See for example, Hofmeyr, “Building a nation from words”, pp. 95-123.

<sup>585</sup> Basson, *Die Britse invloed in die Transvaalse onderwys*, p. 238.

<sup>586</sup> Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 362.

<sup>587</sup> Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, pp. 358-359; Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, pp. 143-144; Marks and Trapido, “The politics of race, class and nationalism”, pp. 11-12 & 17.

<sup>588</sup> Foster, *Washed in sun*, p. 32.

<sup>589</sup> Foster, *Washed in sun*, p. 32.

In the sphere of higher education, Dutch had finally been given recognition by the UCGH in 1910, although English remained the dominant language of higher education. The Second Language Movement, however, meant that among some it was felt that Afrikaans should take the place of Dutch. In 1914 provision was made for Afrikaans to be taught in schools and in 1918 it was introduced as a subject in two university institutions.<sup>590</sup> There were also calls for the introduction of Afrikaans by Unisa as a medium of instruction from the time of its inception in 1918.<sup>591</sup> At this time the Minister of Education put forward the view that “the bilingual student should be regarded as the normal student”.<sup>592</sup> In a sense bilingualism can be regarded as the new symbol of broad South Africanism in higher education in the second decade of the twentieth century.

But a situation in which two mediums exist is difficult to maintain in practicality and failure to put this into practice satisfactorily led to single medium institutions which ultimately signalled divisions along ideological and other lines. The difficulties attached to upholding bilingual systems at various institutions and the increasingly ideologically charged matter of language, created a dual system of universities which went completely counter to the goal of broad South Africanism and conciliation. It was in this period in which universities and colleges in the country were in their infancy that the movement to establish Afrikaans also took place. These events profoundly influenced these young institutions and brought a strong sense of cultural identity and even national ideologies into the realm of universities.

Boucher confirms this in summing up:

Tradition, language, culture—taken so much for granted by those of British stock, but given heavy emphasis by the Afrikaner in the struggle for equal rights—seemed to be erecting a barrier between the two white sections, a barrier reinforced by suspicion of motives and political hostility. South Africa, when the federal university was young, was far from being a united nation.<sup>593</sup>

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<sup>590</sup> Grey University College and the University of Stellenbosch.

<sup>591</sup> Hofmeyr, “Building a nation from words”, pp. 106-107; Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, pp. 143-144 & 190.

<sup>592</sup> Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, p. 190; University of Pretoria Archives (UPA), B-5-1-1, Notules van die Senaat: 1916-1923, Appendix: Copy of circular from Under Secretary for Education, 12 June 1918, p. 261.

<sup>593</sup> Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, p. 191.

Instead of institutions specialising according to fields of study as some suggested they should in the early 1920s and what Smuts and others had proposed even earlier, the distinction between universities and colleges would grow based on the matter of language.<sup>594</sup>

### **Nation building and higher education**

In spite of the fact that the conciliatory spirit seemed to fail to get off the ground in the South African university system, the idea that universities were a primary factor in nation building is an idea which prevailed throughout the first three decades of the twentieth century. Two significant commissions of inquiry into university matters, the Van der Horst Commission (1928) and the Adamson Commission (1933) highlight this enduring belief in the university's unifying role.

The Van der Horst Commission, which investigated the relationship between universities, university colleges and technical institutions, suggested:

that the main justification for Universities lies in the claim that they are essential safeguards in the development of communities. The organisation of groups within the community is a marked feature of modern everyday life, and the struggle between groups may endanger the very existence of our complex civilisation. The best safeguard against that danger seems to be an education which will give every member of the community an idea of the interdependence of all groups and a feeling for the interests of the whole. It is through the secondary schools in the first place that the community will have to furnish the education that will be proof against the evils of sectionalism and occupationalism, but Universities are bound to have a large influence upon the formation of the national character in this respect.<sup>595</sup>

The so-called Adamson Commission, which was investigating the question of university subsidies, quoted this section from the Van der Horst Report, and expanded on it by explaining that,

by communities the Commissioners seem to have had national units in mind. They held it to be the primary function of universities to counteract the centrifugal effect of group rivalries and by affirming the interdependence of their interests to buttress the ideal of national unity. Indeed they looked beyond nationality for they spoke of a danger in sectionalism and occupationalism to civilisation itself. ... If we can all hold fast to the ideal of contribution rather than rivalry, then the very diversities of origin and tradition which our university institutions enshrine will be a source of strength rather than weakness. State

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<sup>594</sup> Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, p. 198.

<sup>595</sup> J.G. van der Horst et al., *Report of the University Commission*, (Pretoria, The Government Printing and Stationery Office: 1928), p. 16.

subsidies will be justified on the highest ground of all, that of a contribution to a sane and tolerant nationality.<sup>596</sup>

A key factor regarded as a necessity for promoting this function of the university, was the existence of a certain “atmosphere”. Though intangible, this atmosphere would be present “where the number of students and teachers is sufficiently large and diversified, and where the manner of living brings them sufficiently into contact with each other.” Such “contact and the resulting interchange of ideas is of far greater importance in University education than the mere passing of examinations.”<sup>597</sup> For this reason, the Van der Horst Commission was critical of certain university colleges, like the Huguenot University College and the Potchefstroom University College, where it was felt that the limited number of students and the lack of diversity “deprive[d] them of one of the most important benefits of University life—the friction of mind upon mind”.<sup>598</sup> Furthermore, the establishment of an institution like Potchefstroom was also regarded as a sign of regionalism, as it was felt by some that its existence could not be justified in such close proximity to the university colleges in Johannesburg and Pretoria.<sup>599</sup>

Metrowich’s 1928 study of higher education in South Africa echoed this thought that “the real meaning and value of a University training is to be acquired only outside the walls of the lecture rooms.”<sup>600</sup> In his estimation, universities like UCT needed to play a leading role in building a South African nationality, as it was an institution which attracted both Dutch and English students. He also lamented the fact that certain institutions drew students from certain backgrounds, such as Stellenbosch attracting Dutch-speakers, while English-speakers favoured Rhodes University College in Grahamstown.<sup>601</sup>

Metrowich’s definition of the intangible atmosphere necessary to cultivate unity at a university is *esprit de corps* or “corporate spirit”.<sup>602</sup> The real essence of a university is “an indefinable spirit, and ideal, an expression of the culture, of the history, of the traditions, of a

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<sup>596</sup> J.E. Adamson, J.J.I. Middleton & S.F.N. Gie, *Report of the Committee of Enquiry into Subsidies to Universities, University Colleges and Technical Colleges*, (Pretoria, The Government Printer: 1934), p. 5.

<sup>597</sup> Van der Horst et al., *Report of the University Commission*, p. 16.

<sup>598</sup> Van der Horst et al., *Report of the University Commission*, p. 17.

<sup>599</sup> “Higher education”, *The Pretoria News*, 3 October 1921.

<sup>600</sup> Metrowich, *The development of higher education in South Africa, 1873-1927*, p. 99.

<sup>601</sup> Metrowich, *The development of higher education in South Africa, 1873-1927*, p. 101.

<sup>602</sup> Metrowich, *The development of higher education in South Africa, 1873-1927*, p. 90.

people which have been melted and fused together in the crucible of the ages”.<sup>603</sup> This essence, he felt was sorely lacking in South African institutions, in which even the distinctions between subjects appeared unbreachable.<sup>604</sup> However, university residences were viewed as a vital means to promote this corporate spirit. At a meeting of the Transvaal Philosophical Society in 1902, Dr Kendall Franks commented on a paper that was given on the subject of a Transvaal University by stating that, “[h]e would also like to lay stress upon the necessity of residence in a university. ... A great many people held, and to a large extent he agreed with them, that perhaps the greatest value to a young man of a university career was the knowledge he obtained by rubbing against his fellow-men.”<sup>605</sup> Metrowich’s complaint in 1928 was of a lack of *esprit de corps* in larger university institutions where day students outnumbered those in residence. In his estimation, day students were not united and sought their social life elsewhere, merely attending lectures. He called this “a canker eating into the very heart of the University itself.”<sup>606</sup> Realising that it was not financially practicable to make residence compulsory, his suggested remedies included the forming of a Day Students Committee and the provision of club rooms.<sup>607</sup> He also stated, “it must be pointed out that the various literary and scientific societies which flourish at all our Universities and Colleges are very potent factors in fostering that broad spirit of tolerance and broadmindedness which are so necessary for uniting all in the bonds of service to the Alma Mater.”<sup>608</sup>

Metrowich’s description of the lack of corporate feeling at South African universities and colleges also highlights the very important matter of the youth of the institutions in question. The universities of which he wrote were not even a quarter of a century old. They could not have walls, like Oxford and Cambridge, “pregnant with the history, traditions, and ideals of our race”.<sup>609</sup> The slow task of nation building was in its earliest stages and for it to be an effective heritage it could not be manufactured overnight. The intangibles of “atmosphere” and *esprit de corps* needed time to develop and in a sense an unfair burden was placed on the youthful university institutions of the new Union.

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<sup>603</sup> Metrowich, *The development of higher education in South Africa, 1873-1927*, p. 90. This echoes Haskins’s description of a university as an association of masters and scholars referred to in chapter two.

<sup>604</sup> Metrowich, *The development of higher education in South Africa, 1873-1927*, pp. 90-91.

<sup>605</sup> “A Transvaal University”, *The Star*, 1 August 1902.

<sup>606</sup> Metrowich, *The development of higher education in South Africa, 1873-1927*, p. 99.

<sup>607</sup> Metrowich, *The development of higher education in South Africa, 1873-1927*, p. 100.

<sup>608</sup> Metrowich, *The development of higher education in South Africa, 1873-1927*, p. 100.

<sup>609</sup> Metrowich, *The development of higher education in South Africa, 1873-1927*, p. 91.

Nonetheless, his investigation shows that optimism regarding the conciliatory role of universities persisted even in the 1920s, amid the rifts which were beginning to form within and between institutions. As a student Metrowich testified to:

the very cordial relations which invariably exist among students of all nationalities at the University of Cape Town as compared with the bitter political controversies which are continually being carried on in the local press and in Parliament, I cannot but feel that our students are in the near future destined to put an entirely new complexion on the political relations at the present existing in South Africa. "Racialism," that bogey which is still preserved for political purposes by our politicians, has been killed once for all at our Universities and youth of the English and Dutch races are being welded together in the firm bonds of a common culture and common ideals, which will assuredly stand the test of time. It is then not too much to predict that the spirit of South African patriotism and nationality which is so potently fostered in our Universities will soon spread throughout the length and breadth of our country and entirely leaven our whole political system with the new spirit of co-operation and toleration.<sup>610</sup>

Confidence was bolstered by the formation of the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) in 1924 which brought students together from different institutions at communal events. Intervarsity sport was also seen as an important means of fostering corporate spirit.<sup>611</sup>

In fact Metrowich's optimism is characteristic of the support the ideal of broad South Africanism enjoyed in the 1920s, particularly among English-speakers.<sup>612</sup> This "loyalist Greater South African identity" has been described as "engagingly idealistic and pragmatically vague",<sup>613</sup> thus accounting for the broad support it received. Furthermore, at this time Afrikaner national sentiment was only beginning to develop and it has been stated that before 1930 there was "a more fluid relationship between language and identity, and consequently a looser definition of national identity, than that which later became associated with the country."<sup>614</sup> Dubow, however, has indicated that the highpoint for the spirit of conciliation in the country probably occurred somewhere between Milner's departure and the outbreak of World War I.<sup>615</sup> A 1930 survey of the progress of the Union by a group of liberal thinkers pointed to some disappointment and impatience at the slow progress of national

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<sup>610</sup> Metrowich, *The development of higher education in South Africa, 1873-1927*, p. 100.

<sup>611</sup> Metrowich, *The development of higher education in South Africa, 1873-1927*, p. 101.

<sup>612</sup> Thompson, "The languages of loyalism in Southern Africa, c.1870-1939", pp. 644-645.

<sup>613</sup> Foster, *Washed in sun*, p. 30.

<sup>614</sup> Foster, *Washed in sun*, p. 30.

<sup>615</sup> Dubow, "Imagining the New South Africa in the era of reconstruction", p. 78.

unity.<sup>616</sup> What is evident, however, from the above brief examination of white identities in these first decades of the twentieth century is their fluid and hybrid natures. In the end, the more robust national identity fostered by Afrikaners would come to wear down this imagined sense of white unity.<sup>617</sup>

## Conclusion

Historically, the matter of universities in South Africa was strongly linked to endeavours to build white unity and a new South African nationalism even prior to the South African War. In the first few decades of the twentieth century this notion regarding higher education developed further in the hope that the bringing together of students in universities would help to eradicate the antagonisms surrounding the South African War and British imperial activity in the region. The development of higher education and its perceived function was very much wrapped up with this pursuit of a new South Africanism and among broad South Africanists and conciliators its potential nationalising influence was highly prized. The expression of broad South African sentiment, on the one hand, can be traced as a main feature of the university reform debate. On the other hand, a parallel line of exclusive national feeling also can be found which favoured universities which would endeavour to preserve and build up more unique cultural and national interests. These two lines formed part of the early years of many higher education institutions around the country and the predominance of one over the other ultimately formed the character of a number of South African universities in the twentieth century. The way in which broad South Africanism, conciliation and the emerging pursuit of an exclusive Afrikaner identity were manifested in the early years of the TUC in Pretoria in particular will be explored in the following chapters.

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<sup>616</sup> Hofmeyr, “Introduction”, pp. 1 & 5.

<sup>617</sup> Thompson, “The languages of loyalism in Southern Africa, c.1870-1939”, p. 649; Foster, *Washed in sun*, p. 29.

## CHAPTER VI

### INTENDED BROAD SOUTH AFRICANISM AT THE TUC

As is evident, the start of university classes in Pretoria had raised concerns among some regarding the unity of higher education in the Transvaal and the possible damage this development might have on the conciliatory aims of the evolving Union. This chapter will begin by considering the particular qualities of the TUC which make it an excellent example of endeavours to put into practice broad South African aspirations in the sphere of higher education. It will therefore explore the official and public manifestations of an intended broad South Africanism at the College in the first few years of its existence. As seen in the previous chapters, broad South Africanism represented an attempt at the incorporation of the best of both white races into a new unified South African nationality. This will be followed by the first part of a chronological detailed analysis of the response of students at the College to broad South Africanism through an examination of student activities, student writing and student demands.

This detailed analysis is justified on two counts – firstly, in the light of the contention that the real worth of the University was to be found outside of the lecture halls, in the various student societies and associations, where they would be rubbing shoulders with each other; and secondly, these documents add a new and fresh insight into the discussion as they have as yet not been utilised to the full in this context. The focus will be on how these student expressions either reinforced or ran contrary to the ideals of broad South Africanism. This lengthy discussion will be substantiated by a critical reading of selected extracts from the College's student publication *The T.U.C. Students' Magazine*, highlighting the attitudes of students regarding questions of identity, unity, higher education and national or patriotic sentiment in response to broad South Africanism. An attempt will be made to include student texts which touch on these matters, even in a small way, in order to make a detailed analysis of the surviving voices. Furthermore, in order to allow these voices to speak for themselves and to avoid the risk of generalisations, much of the original texts will be included in the discussion.

The first part of this discussion will be included in this chapter, investigating events at the TUC from its establishment in Pretoria in 1908 until the end of 1913. Although a somewhat artificial break in the course of events, these initial years appear to represent a more



promising time for broad South Africanism at the College before the disruption of World War I and the 1914 rebellion. The second part of the discussion (1914-1919) will fall into the following chapter. As will be shown, this second period was one in which opposition to broad South Africanism at the College increased in frequency and expressiveness.

### **The TUC: a broad South Africanist endeavour**

Many features of the TUC make it a very interesting institution for the study of broad South Africanism and conciliation in the second decade of the twentieth century. In fact, it can be argued that the TUC was unique among university colleges of the time in terms of the potential that it offered for experiments in forging white unity. Furthermore, in the first quarter century of its existence, the TUC boasted that it was an example of white South African diversity. For example, in 1923 the Senate declared that the TUC was “an institution which prides itself on being truly representative of the Union as a whole and less provincial or sectional in character than any other University or University College in South Africa”.<sup>618</sup>

The TUC was situated in a town which itself was interesting in terms of white South African composition. It had been the capital of the former ZAR, and therefore had a large Afrikaner and Dutch population. It also was home to a good number of English-speakers, many of whom were established in the town before the South African War. This section grew undoubtedly as Pretoria remained the capital after the British military and civil take over after the War. Thompson notes regarding these Transvaal British that

[a]mong an older generation of settlers, particularly those living in Pretoria, ... there was little evidence of the jingoistic imperialism associated with a movement like the South African League. ... Others had simply resided in close proximity to the Dutch, mixing with them commercially and socially, and developed a less insular and chauvinistic identity as a result. In Pretoria, for example, there was a sizeable English-speaking community which entrenched itself in the city’s commercial and banking sector and which was influential in shaping its culture and arts.<sup>619</sup>

Moreover some of this British community dated back to before the first Anglo Boer War of 1881 and many had close relations with progressive Boers, therefore its attitude to Britain was ambivalent.<sup>620</sup> Furthermore, once Pretoria had secured its status as the executive capital city of the Union in 1910, the notion that the capital’s university college, and later university,

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<sup>618</sup> UPA, B-5-1-1, Minutes of a regular meeting of the Senate, 20 June 1923, p. 454.

<sup>619</sup> Thompson, “The languages of loyalism in Southern Africa, c.1870-1939”, p. 626.

<sup>620</sup> Thompson, “The languages of loyalism in Southern Africa, c.1870-1939”, p. 626.

should bear the flavour of the whole Union became more popular. The TUC had a special responsibility to fulfil in the Union, as an example of co-operation, tolerance and unity in the midst of diversity and adversity.<sup>621</sup> This expectation was very much like that of Smuts and the Het Volk party leaders, discussed in chapter four, regarding the Transvaal's role as a model of conciliation in the period before Union. The reports in the English press regarding the activities of the College in its early years also demonstrate the active interest and even the sense of ownership English-speaking Pretorians felt for the TUC. The English-speaking section of Pretoria was also known for its substantial financial input in the College.<sup>622</sup> It was also expected that the College would attract rural Afrikaans-speaking students. Therefore, in terms of public support, the TUC was championed by both sections of the white population.

In addition, Smuts's choice of the first four professors at the Pretoria branch of the College in 1908 represented the diversity of backgrounds of the white South African settler population. Professor H.T. Reinink was a Hollander who had been the Rector of the Staatsgimnasium in the ZAR; Professor A.C. Paterson was a Scot who had studied in Scotland and on the continent; Prof Purves was another Scot who for a period had taught in France; and Prof DF du Toit Malherbe was an Afrikaner from the Cape who had studied in Germany.<sup>623</sup> The bringing together of these four men to form a new educational institution was therefore itself a test of conciliation. Furthermore, they represented a good number of the divergent educational models and experiences described in chapter two. Prof Purves commented in later years that despite the strong contrasts that existed between these four professors, their working environment was characterised by harmony. He spoke of "the complete absence of academic jealousy and dissension ... we were all conscious of being engaged in launching a new enterprise in which human relations would be of great importance."<sup>624</sup>

Later staff appointments also took into account the need to accommodate both sections of the white population. The 1909 appointment of Leo Fouché as a history lecturer demonstrates this awareness. There was the feeling that a local man was needed to lecture history, so that

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<sup>621</sup> "The University of Pretoria", *The Pretoria News*, 9 October 1930; "True functions of the university. Welding influences of the lecture room", *Rand Daily Mail*, 10 October 1930; "Language and the T.U.C. Students' scheme. Bilingualism: the ideal", *The Pretoria News*, 19 September 1922.

<sup>622</sup> "Past students and the university", *The Pretoria News*, 14 September 1932; "Shoulder high!", *Rand Daily Mail*, 15 September 1932; UPA,B-5-1-1, Re Medium Question at the Transvaal University College, 1 May 1918, p. 253.

<sup>623</sup> Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>624</sup> Quoted in Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, p. 14.

“vaderlandsgeskiedenis” (national history) would be properly taken care of. There was some manoeuvring on the Council and Senate to have the Afrikaans-speaking Fouché appointed.<sup>625</sup> This appointment was apparently balanced by the appointment of Prof Gundry, an Englishman, as a professor in Physics. Fouché, however, was an interesting case. His appointment was for the furthering of Afrikaans interests and was based on his sound Afrikaner background. He was also an ardent supporter of Smuts. Apparently acting on Smuts’s instructions, he published a controversial study of the 1914 rebellion which caused him to lose respect among Afrikaners and even to be regarded as an outcast in some Afrikaner circles.<sup>626</sup>

In fact, many of the early staff of the TUC embodied some of the apparent contradictions and diversity of interests characteristic of broad South Africanism. For example, Prof Purves’s literary interests lined up with broad South African tastes: he was interested in South African English literature and also in the developing Afrikaans poetry.<sup>627</sup> Professor E.H. Brookes, who was head of the Department of Politics and Public Administration in the early 1920s, is also a striking example. From an English-speaking background, he landed the College in hot water in 1922 when he published a collection of poems with a strong republican flavour.<sup>628</sup>

An outstanding example of the spirit of broad South Africanism can be found in Prof Paterson who was later appointed as the first rector of the College in October 1918.<sup>629</sup> As indicated, Paterson was a Scot who had come to South Africa in 1903 to help with primary education in rural areas under the Milner administration. In 1905 he was appointed to the staff of the Normal College. By all accounts, Paterson seems to have been a remarkable personality.<sup>630</sup> He, like others on the staff of the TUC, embodied the ideal of broad South Africanism, perhaps showing that it was an exceptional ideal, only really lived out practically by exceptional men. He was not only a keen sportsman, but his knowledge of languages

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<sup>625</sup> UPA, D-6-5-1-6-22, Tuks Alumni Herinneringe: A-M, “Herinneringe van Prof DF du Toit Malherbe”.

<sup>626</sup> UPA, D-6-5-1-6-22, Tuks Alumni Herinneringe: A-M, “Herinneringe van Prof DF du Toit Malherbe”; Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, pp. 16 & 112; F.A. Mouton, “Prof Leo Fouché, the history department and the Afrikanerization of the University of Pretoria”, in Mouton, (ed.), *History, historians and Afrikaner Nationalism*, pp. 15-20.

<sup>627</sup> Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, p. 110.

<sup>628</sup> “Teaching the young idea”, *The Pretoria News*, 27 September 1922; “Poetry, republics and sentiment”, *The Pretoria News*, 1 October 1922; “’n Engelse republikein”, *Die Burger*, 21 Oktober 1922; Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, pp. 54-55.

<sup>629</sup> Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, p. 29.

<sup>630</sup> Van der Watt, *Rectores magnifici*, pp. 18-19; A.A. Roberts, “Stray pictures from the U.P.’s prehistory”, *Souvenir Number Students’ Magazine* 18(25), October 1930, p. 18.

included Greek, Latin, Hebrew, German, French, High Dutch and Afrikaans, which he apparently spoke with a High Dutch accent, having been a student in the Netherlands at one point.<sup>631</sup> Paterson was also very noticeably involved in the activities of the student body, long before he was appointed rector. He was active in a number of student societies and also eagerly played a variety of sport with the students. He is credited with having the capacity to make personal friends among the students and his friendly personality and warm interest in their affairs won him loyalty and respect from the student community.<sup>632</sup>

Undoubtedly, in spite of these outward signs of diversity among whites at the College, the influence of the English language and British culture at the TUC was marked during its first years. In line with Milner's plan for higher education, at first the only language used at the College was English. Classes were given in English, books were only available in English and names for buildings were English.<sup>633</sup> Furthermore, as discussed earlier, the influence of Britain on the whole university culture and system was prevalent. In 1921, the TUC's first rector explained that "all parts of the Empire were looking to the Old Country as their spiritual home, the intellectual Mecca of our Commonwealth of Nations".<sup>634</sup> The prevalence of British influences and the English language also emphasizes that broad South Africanism for some implicitly implied Britishness or an Anglophone identity.

In spite of these early exclusively English language roots, however, at the time of the passing of the University Acts in 1916, the TUC was "proud of its claim to be the only college to foster a truly bilingual approach".<sup>635</sup> Two dozen years later, a 1932 advertisement in the *Cape Times* still proudly announced that UP was "[t]he only FULLY BILINGUAL University Institution in South Africa".<sup>636</sup> For the staff at the TUC, the willingness to offer classes in Afrikaans was a practical expression of conciliation and thus broad South Africanism in this context became gradually synonymous with bilingualism. Bilingual classes represented a step

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<sup>631</sup> Roberts, "Stray pictures from the U.P.'s prehistory", p. 18; Van der Watt, *Rectores magnifici*, p. 18; Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, p. 29.

<sup>632</sup> Van der Watt, *Rectores magnifici*, p. 20.

<sup>633</sup> UPA, D-6-5-1-6-22, "Herinneringe van Prof DF du Toit Malherbe".

<sup>634</sup> "Universities of the Empire. The Pretoria delegate. A record of impressions", *The Pretoria News*, 6 September 1921.

<sup>635</sup> Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, p. 174.

<sup>636</sup> *Cape Times*, 27 February 1932. Capitalisation in the original.

towards putting into effect the language clause of the Union.<sup>637</sup> At the end of the second decade of the twentieth century, a letter to the editor of *The Pretoria News* defending the bilingual approach claimed “the policy of the College was to give effect to the entrenched language clause of the South Africa Act”.<sup>638</sup> The writer tells of an interview with one of the first professors who gave classes in Afrikaans at the College who “referred in appreciative terms to the life-work of the late Gen. Botha” and to show “that the College authorities were imbued with this very conciliatory spirit, the professor instanced his own attitude in making provision for those students who desired to take the subjects under discussion through the medium of Afrikaans”.<sup>639</sup> Thus, in a very real sense, it was this experiment with bilingualism and the efforts to accommodate both English and Afrikaans speakers at the College which made it an excellent example of broad South Africanist endeavours. It represented on a smaller scale the drive to bring whites of different backgrounds together and promote unity and understanding. It is therefore, among university institutions of the time, a somewhat unique case of the experiment of conciliation and efforts to foster a broad South African nationality.

This concern for the promotion of both “white” languages was present practically from the outset among those in authority at the College. For example, one of the first matters brought up in a Council meeting of the newly independent TUC in 1910 was a request to approach the Council of the UCGH in order to obtain the right to use both official languages in its examinations.<sup>640</sup> This request would only be fulfilled at a later date, but the fact that it was made so early on highlights the important role language rights would play at the TUC. On the one hand it emphasizes, as mentioned above, the keen aspiration among some of the College authorities, even from these earliest years, to be practically inclusive, while on the other hand it was a first plea for Dutch (and later Afrikaans) to be given the same treatment as English. In 1916 there was a more significant triumph for Afrikaans-speakers as the UCGH allowed students for the first time to use Dutch as a medium in their examinations. As indicated, the request for the introduction of Dutch had been consistently made over the preceding years.<sup>641</sup>

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<sup>637</sup> Article 137 of the South Africa Act, 1909 declared, “Both the English and Dutch languages shall be official languages of the Union, and shall be treated on a footing of equality, and possess and enjoy equal freedom, rights, and privileges”.

<sup>638</sup> C.P. Bresler, “Letter to the editor”, *The Pretoria News*, 19 September 1922.

<sup>639</sup> Bresler, “Letter to the editor”.

<sup>640</sup> UPA, B-4-1-2, Notules van die Universiteitsraad: 1910-1925, Minutes of the first meeting of the Council, 14 June 1910, p. 6.

<sup>641</sup> Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, p. 49.

The coat of arms, drawn up in 1910, also demonstrated the College's commitment to both white cultural backgrounds and the issue of broad South Africanism. By incorporating the classic European tradition of learning, represented by the head of Pallas Athena, the English were accommodated, while the powerful symbol of the Great Trek, the ox wagon, included the Afrikaans.<sup>642</sup>

Later in 1910 the cornerstone was laid of the Arts building, in preparation for the move of the College to its own campus on the eastern side of Pretoria. This event, in particular, was an opportunity for the display of conciliation and broad South African sentiment. Speeches were made in both Dutch and English to a mixed crowd, representing the cream of white Pretoria society. Smuts was also present, having had a personal role in drawing up the legislation which officially separated the Johannesburg and Pretoria branches that year. It was on this occasion that he made the well-known comment, referred to in chapter three, comparing the College to Oxford University. Smuts's involvement with the College declined after this time, as in the new Union cabinet he was no longer Minister of Education but was responsible for three other ministries: interior, defence and mines. Smuts was very involved in South Africa's military role in World War I and the peace settlement thereafter. He did however play a role in negotiations regarding a successor to Paterson as Rector in 1922 and in raising funds in a campaign for the College's independence. He took part in the opening of the Agriculture Building in 1921, supported the establishment of a chair in Botany in 1926 and was involved in the laying of the foundation stone of the Merensky library in 1937. Fittingly he was awarded the first honorary doctorate by the University of Pretoria after it achieved university status in 1930 in honour of his role in the establishment of the institution.<sup>643</sup>

Smuts's 1908 decision to transfer Arts and Sciences classes to Pretoria had appeared almost immediately justified, as the number of Arts students at the Pretoria branch of the TUC more than trebled in the first three years.<sup>644</sup> In 1910 when the Pretoria and Johannesburg branches split, J.E. Adamson, in his report as Director of Education, emphasized that this was not to be a division along "racial" lines, but that students of both English and Dutch backgrounds

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<sup>642</sup> Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, pp. 364-365.

<sup>643</sup> Joubert, "Generaal Smuts by UP vereer", pp. 14-15.

<sup>644</sup> UPA, E-7-2, Knipsels, *Lockhead's Guide, Handbook & Directory of Pretoria*, 1913, p. 120.

would be accommodated in both languages at both institutions. The division at this stage was according to fields of study.<sup>645</sup>

The opening speech by Adamson, at the above foundation stone occasion emphasized the significance of the new campus for the College as

a proper home – a home where a corporate sense could be developed and a home which would exercise in that slight but none the less effective way in which a proper environment does work, an elevating and refining influence on the aesthetic and moral sides of the characters of the pupils who are fortunate enough to inhabit it.<sup>646</sup>

Adamson’s reference to the “character building” role of the College matched the sentiments of the Governor General Lord Gladstone on this occasion. Gladstone touched on the popular ideal of a national teaching university when he said,

I look forward to the time when, linked up with this most interesting institution, there will arise a South African teaching residential university ... perhaps above all, a university which will be the means of bringing men together, to a clearer experience, as well as knowledge by contact, with those who are not only there for the purpose of seeking knowledge in one direction, but of all those who are seeking education and knowledge in all directions. There lies the true value of a great national university.<sup>647</sup>

Thus, the aspirations of Adamson and Gladstone corresponded to the notion of universities as a means of furthering tolerance, broad-mindedness and co-operation between students of different backgrounds. These notions also matched the English models of liberal education embodied by Cambridge and Oxford, discussed in chapter two, where character training and corporate spirit were key elements of a university training. Furthermore, this highlights how underlying assumptions of broad South Africanism matched essentially British ideas concerning education.<sup>648</sup>

Interpersonal contact, of the kind referred to by Adamson and Gladstone, does not seem to have been lacking in these first years of the College’s life. A review of the early sporting activities and clubs at the TUC shows enthusiastic and lively participation in sport on the part of both students and staff. Interestingly this was also in line with British notions of the value

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<sup>645</sup> Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatam*, p. 48.

<sup>646</sup> “The University. Foundation stone laid by Lord Gladstone”, *The Transvaal Leader*, 4 August 1910.

<sup>647</sup> “The University. Foundation stone laid by Lord Gladstone”, *The Transvaal Leader*, 4 August 1910.

<sup>648</sup> See Lambert, “South African British? Or Dominion South Africans?”, pp. 209-210.

of sport in education.<sup>649</sup> There was much social contact on the tennis court and staff members held honorary positions and were actively involved in a range of sport, from rugby and cricket, to athletics. Student reminiscences of the TUC highlight the personal interaction students had with teaching staff and the corporate spirit which existed in the College's residences.<sup>650</sup> Pelzer also notes that in these initial years an informal and free atmosphere existed between students and staff, where everyone knew each other.<sup>651</sup> Thus, it is evident from the above discussion that from the side of the College authorities and staff, there were strong intentions to foster broad South Africanism and conciliation at the TUC in these early years.

### **“To sink or swim” (1908-1913)**

With the peculiar qualities of the TUC and its surrounds as well as these early official endeavours mentioned above to promote broad South Africanism in mind, it is informative to investigate expressions of and responses to broad South Africanism and conciliation at the College in its early years on the part of the students. This includes, by extension, examining trends that ran counter to the unifying ideal.

The first group of students to enrol at the Pretoria branch of the College in 1908 also epitomized the diversity of the white Transvaal population and therefore also seemingly provided a good foundation for broad South Africanism. From a perusal of their names and backgrounds, it appears that there was approximately a fifty-fifty division between English and Afrikaans speakers. This is noteworthy as Afrikaans-speaking students were not yet in the majority, as would be the case by the end of the first decade. Furthermore, the first group also included German, Jewish and French-speaking students.<sup>652</sup> The diverse composition of the student body in this early period can be attributed to the fact that the College's location in Pretoria attracted rural Afrikaans-speaking students, as was hoped, as well as drawing a good number of English-speaking and other students from the surrounding area.

One of the initial indications of the broad South African ideal can be seen in the character of the first student society at the TUC, the “Literary and Debating Society” also known as the

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<sup>649</sup> Lambert, “South African British? Or Dominion South Africans?”, pp. 210-211.

<sup>650</sup> UPA, D-6-5-1-6-22, Tuks Alumni Herinneringe: A-Z, J.J. duToit – C.H.Cilliers, 25 March 1980.

<sup>651</sup> Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, p. 27.

<sup>652</sup> UPA, D-1-2, Transvaal University College (Pretoria Branch) Register, 1908; Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, p. 18.



“Letterkundige Debat-Vereniging” which was established in 1908. The object of the society embodied in its constitution was “the reading and criticism of essays, for debates, and ... the encouragement of literary composition in English, Dutch and Afrikaansch”.<sup>653</sup> The society was divided into an English and a Dutch section with two respective chairpersons, while Smuts was the first honorary president of the society. The programme shows that debates and lectures were held alternately in both languages. The society appears to have been a lively one, with a full programme covering a wide range of subjects ranging from Pompeian excavations to the place of sport in everyday life. There were also topics with a specifically South African flavour, such as a lecture on “Het Zuid-Afrikaansch Tooneel” (“South African theatre”) and a debate on whether “Unification as contrasted with Federation is the better form of Union for the South African Colonies”.<sup>654</sup> One of the first four professors, prof DF du Toit Malherbe, used this to show that it was the students who were the first to distinguish between the languages. He pointed out in later years that, “[e]verything was English from A to Z except the students in their debating society.”<sup>655</sup> The first dramatic performance given by students at the TUC was however also held in English and Dutch – a trend which was repeated in these early years.<sup>656</sup>

Another indication of endeavours to promote co-operation and tolerance on the part of the students is found in the first Students Representative Council (SRC) of 1909. The Council itself was evidence of the diversity of the student body. The first elected chairperson was W.F. Candy, whom Pelzer describes as a “raw Tommy”<sup>657</sup> who had fought against the Boers in the South African War. The other seven members came from a variety of backgrounds. Pelzer points out the comfortable relations which existed in the SRC in these first years, evidenced by the fact that the chairperson of 1909 became the secretary of 1910.<sup>658</sup>

One of the first College events organised by the SRC was a College dance in 1909. The discussion which related to the printing of the invitation cards for the event demonstrates a sensitivity regarding both sections of the white student body. The minutes record a decision to print some of the invitations in Dutch. Admittedly, this awareness was a little after-the-

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<sup>653</sup> UPA, D-11-4-1, The Transvaal University College Literary and Debating Society, Constitution.

<sup>654</sup> UPA, D-11-4-1, The Transvaal University College Literary and Debating Society, Programme, 1908.

<sup>655</sup> UPA, D-6-5-1-6-22, “Herinneringe van Prof DF du Toit Malherbe”. My translation.

<sup>656</sup> Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, p. 391; UPA, D-11-3-2-1, Students’ Representative Council Minutes, 1909-1914, 3 May 1910.

<sup>657</sup> Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, p. 324.

<sup>658</sup> Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, p. 325.

fact, as the printer had nearly completed printing the English invitations and the print order was halted in order to have an additional number of Dutch cards made.<sup>659</sup> This decision apparently also saved the chairperson Candy from losing his position. Pelzer gives an account of a petition to have Candy removed as chairperson of the SRC because of his participation in the South African War.<sup>660</sup> Another poll was held and he and another student received equal votes. The vice-chairperson diplomatically moved to have Candy reappointed, based on the fact that he had spoken strongly in favour of both official languages when it came to the printing of dance invitations, which were originally only printed in English.<sup>661</sup> It is not clear where Pelzer got this information, as the SRC minutes only mention the decision to print some dance invitations in Dutch. Nonetheless, even here in the earliest days of student life at the College the extent to which students would embrace the inclusiveness and co-operation of broad South Africanism was apparent but was also being tried.

While students were the first to take steps to accommodate both languages at the College, from the outset endeavours to promote exclusively Afrikaans culture and language are also evident. In 1910 the first discipline related society, “Loquela”, was established by Prof T.H. le Roux with the goal of practising Dutch and Afrikaans literature. As Afrikaans was still in its infancy, most discussions were held in Dutch, giving students an opportunity to practise spoken Dutch.<sup>662</sup>

In November 1912 the students of the College published the first issue of *The T.U.C. students' magazine / Die studentebblad van die T.U.K.*. The magazine, which consisted of student essays, poems and other literary contributions, offers interesting insights into students' perspectives. While the contributions often bear witness to the naivety and sometimes sensational viewpoints of youth, they nonetheless offer a window on the interests and opinions of some of the student body. It can be further inferred that these feelings and opinions were probably also shared by others outside the College. In a sense the students represented the backgrounds and social circles from whence they were drawn and therefore shed some light on opinions beyond the TUC. In addition, the June 1917 Dutch editorial of the magazine stated that the aim of the magazine was to have articles which were more or less a reflection of the ordinary

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<sup>659</sup> UPA, D-11-3-1-2, 3 September 1909.

<sup>660</sup> Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, p. 370.

<sup>661</sup> Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, p. 370.

<sup>662</sup> Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, p. 399.

student.<sup>663</sup> This strengthens the case for using the magazine as a means to explore the sentiments of students at the TUC and the prevalence or lack of support for broad South Africanism.

Even from the point of view of its layout, the student magazine testified to attempts to incorporate on equal terms both sections of the white population. Both parts of the bilingual title appeared in equal parts on the cover. Each issue had a Dutch and an English editor and their separate editorials appeared in side-by-side columns in the opening pages of many of the early issues of the magazine, emphasizing the fact that no language took preference over the other. (See Figure 3 on page 140.) English and Dutch (or at this point a written language which more closely resembled Afrikaans) articles were roughly alternated throughout the issues covering a wide variety of topics from more serious essays to comic sketches and poems.

It is striking that this first 1912 issue of the magazine includes two articles examining the Afrikaans language. The first article, “Die “Praatkuns” (“The art of speech”), is a plea for the adequate teaching and practice of Afrikaans speech. The writer felt that much emphasis had been given to the need to write Afrikaans and even interestingly viewed the language as a written one. In the writer’s opinion, however, not enough attention had been given to the way in which Afrikaans was spoken, with “feeling”, “thought” and “expression”. The argument is made that more practice needs to be given to the reading of Afrikaans poems and that this kind of endeavour will open the way for Afrikaans theatre.<sup>664</sup> The second article is entitled “Volksetymologie in die Afrikaans” (“Popular etymology in Afrikaans”). This contribution looks at the way words from other languages have been incorrectly or amusingly adapted in Afrikaans.<sup>665</sup> These are both very significant articles as they appear quite early in the development of the Second Afrikaans Language Movement.

In this first 1912 edition there is also a wonderful example of broad South Africanist writing in an improvisation entitled “South Africa and the Africander”. The piece epitomises many of the interests of broad South Africanists. It begins by praising the Union as “a land of blue skies and sunshine”, a place “whose inhabitants with their manners and morals are gathered

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<sup>663</sup> H.J. Grobler, “Editoriaal”, *The T.U.C. students’ magazine* 2(1), June 1917, p. 1.

<sup>664</sup> H.H.B., “Die ‘praatkuns’”, *The T.U.C. students’ magazine* 1(1), November 1912, pp. 11-13.

<sup>665</sup> NODROG, “Volksetymologie in die Afrikaans”, *The T.U.C. students’ magazine* 1(1), November 1912, pp. 25-26.

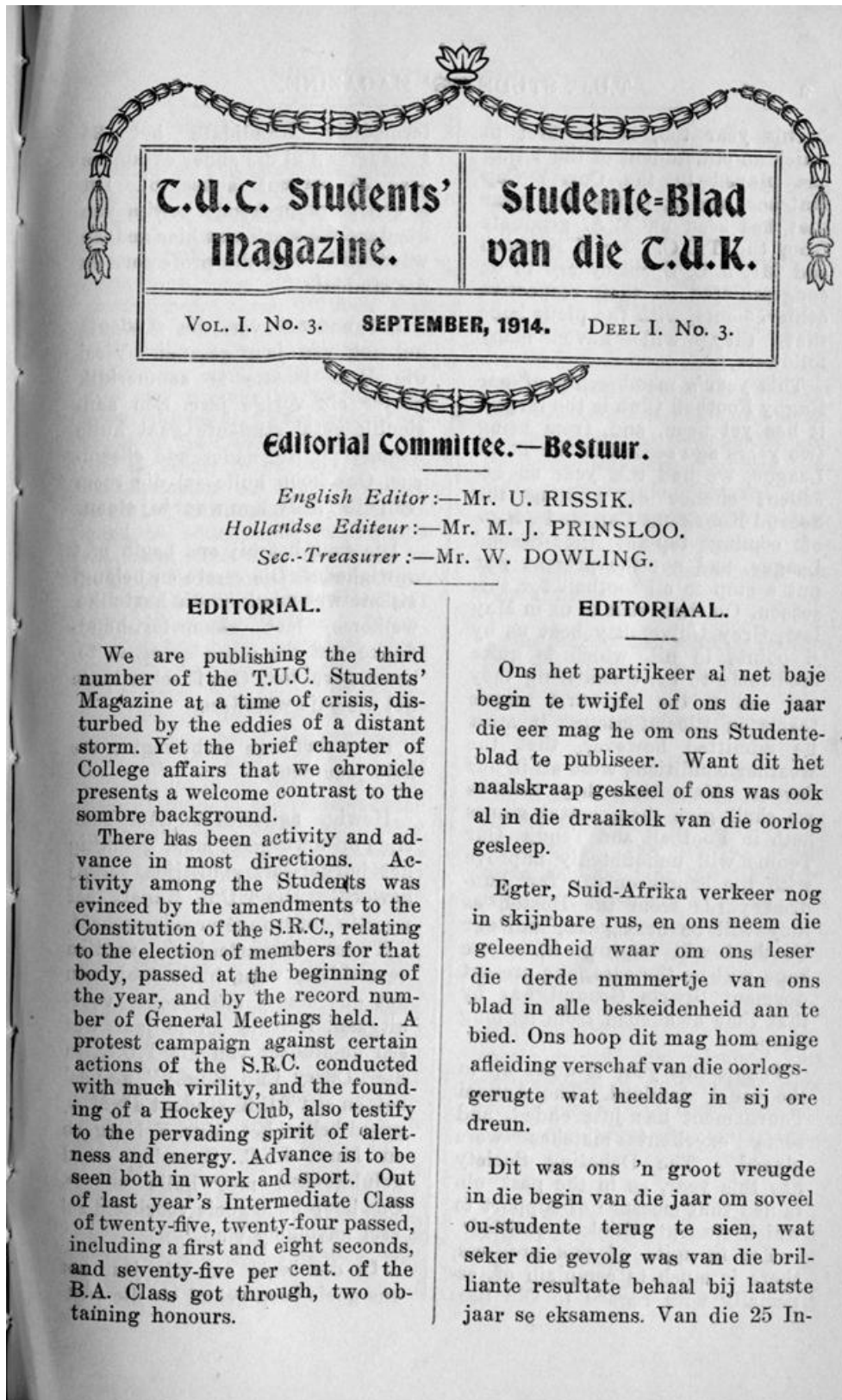


Figure 3: Editorial page of the September 1914 issue of *The T.U.C. Students' Magazine*.

From: *The T.U.C. Students' Magazine* 1(3), September 1914, p. 1.

together from all parts of this great, free and enlightened world!” The writer pays particular attention to the bounty and variety of agricultural and mineral wealth in the country, speaking poetically of “[a] land of great pastures, extensive sugar plantations, stores of mielies, barrels of wine, bunches of ostrich feathers, hidden coffers of gold and stretches strewn with diamonds.” This is followed by the inclusion of an Afrikaans poem along a similar vein.<sup>666</sup> These expressions demonstrate the writer’s sense of pride and ownership of the South African landscape. This lines up with the love of South African landscape expressed by broad South Africanist creative writing of the time and the sense of belonging this displayed on the part of English-speakers.<sup>667</sup>

In this piece the student defines the typical Afriander as “a *man* in the real sense of the word”, though living in “dark Africa” able to meet the standards of the rest of the world. He continues by explaining that in his view an Afriander and a South African are one and the same. He also talks of those who do not embrace this broad spirit, those

who style themselves as Afrianders and seek to promote illegally the members of their clique at the expense not only of widows and orphans, but also of justice and honour. Such people are not Afrianders. They are a disgrace, an imminent danger, a pest to the community. In fact the English vocabulary is too poor to furnish a suitable word by which to call them, for even the air which surrounds them is poisonous and envenoms everything that comes within reach.<sup>668</sup>

According to this student, “The Afriander should ... try ... to become a bilingualist.” The student explains in this regard that,

[t]here is a certain section of the population who want only Dutch, and nothing but Dutch is good to them. They speak Dutch and drink Dutch. Again we have a party to whom English is the thing. They talk English, walk English, smell English and spoon English.—These parties are of imminent danger to South Africa. They are constantly retarding the progress of the country. They maintain that any compromise between the two chief elements of the population is an impossibility.

Alas, we are living in an age of narrow-mindedness which is falsely called patriotism.<sup>669</sup>

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<sup>666</sup> R. Vale, “South Africa and the Afriander”, *The T.U.C. students’ magazine* 1(1), November 1912, pp. 14-15.

<sup>667</sup> See Lambert, “South African British? Or Dominion South Africans?”, pp. 207-208; J. Lambert, “‘An unknown people’: reconstructing British South African identity”, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 37(4), December 2009, p. 607.

<sup>668</sup> Vale, “South Africa and the Afriander”, p. 15.

<sup>669</sup> Vale, “South Africa and the Afriander”, p. 16.

In contrast to those who narrowly pursue only their own culture the student claims “there is a third section”. These are those who exemplify the true broad South African, who are described as

the so-called broad-minded people who are constantly quoted as a source of danger to the country. They may be a source of danger in so far as they are hostile to the principles of the narrow-minded ... . This is the class of people we require—they are Afrianders and are building up the South African nation. They will prosper and govern South Africa in future because their principles are founded on a sound foundation, on tact, on perseverance and principle, or liberty, equality and fraternity, and be there arrayed against them convention and orthodoxy, pride and prejudice, storms,—social and religious—they fear not, neither will they throw up the sponge but persevere. Finally, their endeavours will be crowned with success, and in the end, which is not far off, they will rule supreme.<sup>670</sup>

The article ends on a high note regarding the duty of the “Africander” towards the new nation:

The proper business is the improvement of South Africa. In the day of peace they advance the arts, the science, the works of peace. They develop the resources of the country, call forth its power, build up its institutions and see whether they also in their age, in their generation, cannot perform something worthy to be remembered. They cultivate a true spirit of union and harmony. ... May that country S.A. become a monument not of narrow-mindedness, oppression and terror, but of peace, wisdom, harmony, prosperity and success upon which the nations may look with admiration. To sink or swim—to perish or survive—to live or die—union, broadmindedness, justice, equality, liberty, fraternity—now and for ever—one and inseparable.<sup>671</sup>

The rather lavish tone of this article, resulting from the use of exaggerated expressions and generously quoted platitudes like “liberty, equality, fraternity”, “to sink or swim” and others, perhaps highlights a false optimism related to broad South Africanism and its inherent vagueness. Despite the overly effusive expression in this article, it does point to the presence of broad South Africanist thought at the TUC, whether it was seriously subscribed to or not.

Immediately following this article is one written in Afrikaans by a TUC graduate busy with doctoral studies in Munich, Germany with the title, “Wat die Europeer van Suid-Afrika af weet” (“What the European knows about South Africa”). This student’s comments regarding what is commonly known about South Africa in Europe are quite telling. He explains that,

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<sup>670</sup> Vale, “South Africa and the Africander”, p. 16.

<sup>671</sup> Vale, “South Africa and the Africander”, p. 17.

[m]ost [Europeans] naturally have a wrong impression regarding the current situation and, for example, will not know that there is a “boer” government at the head of affairs now in S.A. Thus the complete surprise of one Austrian, with whom I recently conversed in a train, when I told him that the country’s two languages in S.A. have equal rights, and that both languages were spoken in parliament, that documents appeared in both languages etc.<sup>672</sup>

In spite of the government’s policy of conciliation and endeavours to reconcile whites as a new nation, the student labels the current dispensation a “boer” government and highlights language rights as an important feature of the country, emphasizing the differences of the two distinct white cultures rather than the pursuit of a unified national identity.

Another noteworthy contribution to this first issue is a poem by well-known Afrikaans poet Jan F.E. Celliers written especially for the magazine. This poem entitled, “Komaan!” (“Come on!”)<sup>673</sup> is an incitement to rise up and participate in the task of nation building.

Be strong!  
There’s a nation to lead,  
there’s a fight to fight,  
there’s work!  
There’s no looking to favour or honour,  
there’s no yielding to right or left,  
there’s only to be silent and to stride on,  
Come on!

Be true.  
There’s a nation to teach  
To honour itself,  
to build,  
to fear, God, and God only,  
to be true to character and language—  
healthy and true in heart and spirit,  
Come on!

Be proud  
Of your forefathers worthy  
in will and deed  
strong!  
Their way of life has shown us  
to be true to truth’s demand,—  
whoever reproaches may reproach, whoever praises may praise,  
Come on!

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<sup>672</sup> I. De V. Malherbe, “Wat die Europeer van Suid-Afrika af weet”, *The T.U.C. students’ magazine* 1(1), November 1912, p. 18. My translation.

<sup>673</sup> J.F.E. Celliers, “Komaan!”, *The T.U.C. students’ magazine* 1(1), November 1912, p. 8. My translation.

Although this poem does not specifically refer to Afrikaners as the nation which is addressed, certain references to language and heritage and the fact that it was written in Afrikaans indicate that they were probably the intended audience. It certainly does not appear to be an encouragement along broad South African lines, as there is no reference to unity, inclusivity or tolerance. The rallying call in this poem hints at the downcast state of Afrikaners in this period after the South African War as they were faced with a completely altered way of life and the challenges of urbanisation, industrialisation and poor whitism. Hence, the poet's mobilizing call to be strong and yet to remain true to and proud of their heritage and roots. The idea that the past afforded legitimacy and strength is one that conflicted with broad South Africanism which necessitated in some respects a clean slate and the burying of past conflicts and interests. Many of the ideas and images in the poem recur in contributions by Afrikaans-speaking students later in this period.

### **Conclusion**

From the above discussion it is therefore evident that from the side of the staff and College authorities, the government and in some public spheres, the TUC in Pretoria was intended as a greenhouse for the cultivation of a broad South African identity among Transvaal students. The actions of the College's Council in particular show a readiness, although it was often cautious, to accommodate the interests of both sections of white society in the name of conciliation. This does not correspond with Pelzer's view that the College authorities deliberately suppressed the interests of Afrikaans-speaking students.<sup>674</sup> However, it must also be stated that implicit in the broad South African project was also the acceptance of many British notions and models regarding education.

These initial years at the TUC also show that just as the staff and authorities at the College had intended that broad South Africanism be developed at the College through the accommodation of both sections of the white population, there was too a response among some students which matched these intentions. In the student societies, the SRC and the student magazine, evidence is found of both broad South Africanism and of faltering attempts to foster equality of interests. At the same time, it is apparent that the College remained a predominantly Anglophone environment and that there were already stirrings among some to defend an exclusive Afrikaner identity. The following chapter will investigate how this

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<sup>674</sup> Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, pp. 48-58.



delicate and tentative foundation for broad South Africanism at the College would be put to the test when World War I broke out in Europe, stirring up past divisions and suspicions among white South Africans.

## CHAPTER VII

### DISCORD IN BROAD SOUTH AFRICANISM AT THE TUC

Before the outbreak of World War I, broad South Africanism appeared to have had a tentative but solid beginning at the TUC. As seen in earlier chapters, this international conflict reignited tensions among white South Africans and students at the TUC were no exception. Following the same approach as the previous chapter, this chapter will continue to investigate developments at the TUC from 1914 onwards. This section is necessarily longer than the previous because, as will be apparent, students became more vocal and active particularly in promoting an exclusive Afrikaner identity and in demanding rights for the Afrikaans language. The 1919 flag incident will also be re-examined as a culmination of the various trends identified in the foregoing discussion. In this way an attempt will be made to shed more light on the complexities of broad South Africanism and its practice at the College. This will of course include an examination of arguments and sentiments which supported an exclusive Afrikaner identity as a reaction to the policy of conciliation. An attempt will also be made to understand the positions of the less vocal English-speaking students.

#### **“We have already been bribed into schism” (1914-1918)**

The outbreak of World War I in 1914 had a dramatic influence on the tentative pursuit of the white unity at the TUC envisaged by broad South Africanism. From the beginning there was disruption, even on such seemingly minor issues like whether SRC funds should be donated to the War fund.<sup>675</sup> The armed rebellion this same year led by former Boer generals against the government’s decision to participate in the War on the side of Britain was particularly influential in polarising the campus and breaking down the intended broad South Africanism.

The third edition of *The T.U.C. Students’ Magazine* was published in September 1914, at the time of the outbreak of World War I. (See Figure 3 on page 141.) The English editorial notes that its publication came “at a time of crisis, disturbed by the eddies of a distant storm”.<sup>676</sup> At this stage, the only outward or noteworthy impact the War had had on student life was the cessation of certain sports tournaments, notably rugby.<sup>677</sup> The Dutch editor notes that the

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<sup>675</sup> UPA, D-11-3-1-2, 30 October 1914.

<sup>676</sup> U. Rissik, “Editorial”, *The T.U.C. students’ magazine* 1(3), September 1914, p. 1.

<sup>677</sup> Rissik, “Editorial”, p. 2.

outbreak of War also nearly meant that the student magazine did not go to press.<sup>678</sup> The shortage of recreational distractions for students in the War years made it a difficult time for them.<sup>679</sup> This may have also been a reason that students took up more serious issues in these years, as will be shown.

It is interesting to note that the English editor of the student magazine expresses great disappointment in this third issue at the lack of subscriptions obtained from past students of the TUC for the magazine. This lack of interest he ascribes to “the pervading spirit of utilitarianism with regard to educational institutions”.<sup>680</sup> It is a small point, but it may be inferred that, possibly due to the young age of the institution, strong bonds of attachment had not been formed with its alumni. This may point to the fact that the project of creating a prevailing corporate spirit at the College had not yet been very successful.

In line with the timing of its publication, war was a prevailing theme in many of the contributions published in this September 1914 issue. Interestingly, the outbreak of World War I in Europe brought to mind the recent South African War for many students and the latter features prominently among Afrikaans contributions. For example, a student M.J. Schoeman gave some perspective on the outbreak of the World War in a piece entitled “’n Paar gedagtes” (“A few thoughts”). He explains the necessity and inevitability of war in bringing in new orders and change and in shaping nations. Human suffering is counterbalanced with patriotism which the writer defends and celebrates. Interestingly, patriotism was equated with narrow-mindedness in the article on the true South African in the previous issue and was thus viewed as the antithesis of broad South Africanism.<sup>681</sup> The piece speaks generally of the role of conflict in the world, but ends with a very specific reference to South Africa’s recent war and Britain’s scorched earth policy. The student writes,

Griefs bring forth life, new life, greatness. Therefore do not condemn patriotism, the treasure of the nations, more valuable than life, stronger than death, higher than love. It is the source of freedom, the strength for heroism and survival, the working of the natural law of self-preservation. Houses can burn and women and children be exterminated, but through this the nation lives and becomes great.<sup>682</sup>

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<sup>678</sup> M.J. Prinsloo, “Editoriaal”, *The T.U.C. students’ magazine* 1(3), September 1914, p. 1.

<sup>679</sup> UPA, D-11-9-3-2, Kollegetehuis, “Sewentig jaar van Kollegetehuis”, *Kollegetehuisgedenksblad (1915-1985)*, p. 5.

<sup>680</sup> Rissik, “Editorial”, p. 3.

<sup>681</sup> Vale, “South Africa and the Africander”, p. 16.

<sup>682</sup> M.J. Schoeman, “’n Paar gedagtes”, *The T.U.C. students’ magazine* 1(3), September 1914, p. 9. My translation.

“n Winternag in die bosveld” (“A winter night in the bushveld”) describes in romantic terms a bushveld evening, with typical South African animals, sounds and scenery, highlighting again the significant emotive place of landscape. This contribution also makes reference to the scorched earth policy and the corresponding suffering of Boer families. Here the tone is more nostalgic and sad, drawing on the strong associations of Republic, a Boer and his gun and the “brandwag” (night watch) with a religious tone, as the following extract demonstrates:

In the south the Southern Cross shines, unforgettable for the old Republican who thinks back to the days when he still, with his weapon in his hand, fought for right and for country. He still remembers to himself how at night he passed the lonely hours on watch, and, with eyes turned towards home, sent in silence a prayer towards Heaven for wife and children at home. Now the cross only brings a tear to his eye, because both wife and children rest already in the cold earth at one of the women’s camps.<sup>683</sup>

“Terugblik” (“Retrospection”) by H. Grobler also paints a scene of night watch during the South African War in which a Boer fighter considers his experiences, first of being removed from his farm, joining the commando and then hearing of the peace “and that our independence had been given up for the preservation of our nation”. He describes his return to a burned and devastated farm and also poignantly tells of a wife who died in the concentration camps and a son who was killed at the front. Interestingly the piece ends on an optimistic note with the achievement of Union in 1910: “The time is past. It is eight years since the signing of the peace. Now grief no longer reigns, but joy from the Cape right to the Limpopo. The Union has been established. A purified nation has been formed, aware of its own nationality and language.”<sup>684</sup>

It is significant that the optimism related to Union is not related to a unified nation in line with broad South Africanism, but a distinct purified nation, with its own particular identity and language. All three of the above extracts highlight the impact of the concentration camps of the South African War and the deaths which they caused. These and the common memory of the War as “a shared national tragedy”<sup>685</sup> had a long-lasting and unifying effect on Afrikaners, through its common victims, common suffering and the common wish for the

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<sup>683</sup> J. Beyers, “n Winternag in die bosveld”, *The T.U.C. students’ magazine* 1(3), September 1914, pp. 17-18. My translation.

<sup>684</sup> H. Grobler, “Terugblik”, *The T.U.C. students’ magazine* 1(3), September 1914, pp. 21-23. My translation.

<sup>685</sup> A. Grundlingh, “The war in twentieth-century Afrikaner consciousness”, in Omissi and Thompson (eds.), *The impact of the South African War*, p. 24.

return to Republicanism.<sup>686</sup> In contrast to this, English-speakers “had few myths or heroes to symbolize their place in South Africa”<sup>687</sup> and thus had a less certain identity and heritage in the country behind which to rally. The comparative silence of English-speaking students in the magazine on political, historical and national issues is also evidence of this state of affairs.

Albert Grundlingh has stated that there was relatively little writing about the South African War from the Afrikaner perspective in the first few decades after the War.<sup>688</sup> It is therefore striking that it was such a recurrent theme in the *The T.U.C. students' magazine*, hardly a decade after the conclusion of the War. Furthermore, Republican nostalgia has been identified as a main feature in sentiments which led up to the 1914 rebellion. This nostalgia was not necessarily a desire for a particular political system, but more of a hankering for a past way of life, which was idealistically linked to the former Republican era. These sentiments were not necessarily based so much on practical politics as on the feelings arising from poverty, loss of identity as “Boer” and the way racial questions were experienced. This hankering for a lost past, as well as an uneasiness over the present, is discernible in these student contributions and became increasingly a stumbling block in the path of furthering a broad South African identity.<sup>689</sup>

World War I received direct treatment in this issue in a story called “Die eerste gewonde van die Unie” (“The first casualty of the Union”). It is a tongue in cheek description of a naive young man’s anticipation of participating in World War I. He patriotically considers the honour and bravery attached to such a noble calling until he is actually called up to join the Union Defence Force. He then reconsiders the situation and the terrible possibilities which await him in active combat and therefore stages an “accident” while cleaning his gun, thus becoming the first wounded soldier of the Union.<sup>690</sup> It may be assuming too much regarding

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<sup>686</sup> Le May, *British supremacy in South Africa, 1899-1907*, p. 213; Grundlingh, “The war in twentieth-century Afrikaner consciousness”, p. 24.

<sup>687</sup> Lambert, ““An unknown people”: reconstructing British South African identity”, p. 602.

<sup>688</sup> Grundlingh, “The war in twentieth-century Afrikaner consciousness”, p. 24.

<sup>689</sup> Grundlingh and Swart, *Radelose rebellie?*, p. 121; Giliomee also points out the role of belief in “a common descent and shared history” as part of the construction of a national identity. He characterizes the Afrikaner nationalist narrative at this time as one that was “built around a common origin, the notion of two cycles of suffering and death – the Great Trek and the Anglo-Boer War – and the imagined promise of a republican future.” Giliomee, “The beginnings of Afrikaner nationalism”, p. 139.

<sup>690</sup> Paul, “Die eerste gewonde van die Unie”, *The T.U.C. students' magazine* 1(3), September 1914, pp. 24-25.

this humorous piece, but it highlights perhaps the lack of enthusiasm among some Afrikaners for participation in the World War by linking stupidity to the desire to fight in it.

“The khaki line” is an English poem in this 1914 issue which tells of the call to the whole Empire to take up arms.<sup>691</sup> As such this poem sheds light on the initial reaction of South Africans of British descent to the War and demonstrates the fact that for some of these, loyalty to the British Empire was a part of their South African nationality and that these two matters for them were not incompatible.<sup>692</sup> The writer refers to the unity of interest and duty in the Empire in the lines,

The Sons of the Flag come forth to war  
When the Empire calls ‘To Arms!’

In fact, Lambert feels that for most British South Africans their national sentiments were rather tied to Britain and to the Empire and thus to some the notions of broad South Africanism had little appeal. For a large part of the early twentieth century, many English-speakers in South Africa still regarded themselves as British subjects and despite the diversity of the English-speaking population, the rallying point remained for many the Union Jack and the crown. World War I served to strengthen these sentiments, as seen in this poem.<sup>693</sup> Furthermore, duty to the Empire was viewed as both reasonable and worthy, in light of the “benefits” the Empire afforded, as the following lines of the poem also illustrate:

The land of Ind sends forth her sons  
To die in the foremost line,  
Saying, ‘I have eaten the White King’s bread  
And the White Kings’ foes are mine.

The demands of the Empire, to which this poem refers, made some Afrikaners feel ill at ease as their sense was that the most important connection for many English-speaking South Africans was with Britain and not with South Africa. As mentioned in chapter four, this type of attitude, which in many instances amounted to jingoism, has also been considered as a significant obstacle to the furthering of white unity envisaged by broad South Africanism.<sup>694</sup>

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<sup>691</sup> Anon., “The khaki line”, *The T.U.C. students’ magazine* 1(3), September 1914, p. 13.

<sup>692</sup> See Lambert, “South African British? Or Dominion South Africans?”, pp. 202-207.

<sup>693</sup> Lambert, “South African British? Or Dominion South Africans?”, pp. 202-204 & 213; J. Lambert, “Engelssprekende Suid-Afrikaners: onseker van hul identiteit”, in F. Pretorius (ed.), *Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika. Van voortye tot vandag*, (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2012), p. 537; Lambert, ““An unknown people”: reconstructing British South African identity”, pp. 601 & 606.

<sup>694</sup> Lambert, “Engelssprekende Suid-Afrikaners: onseker van hul identiteit”, pp. 531 & 533.

Interestingly, the colour “Khaki” referred to in the title represented to many Afrikaners the despised colour of the British army.<sup>695</sup>

In contrast to the above poem, Gilbert Chittenden’s poem “Voortrekker” is an interesting example of broad South African expression in this September 1914 issue. It is an English poem written about the archetypal hero of Afrikaner history, the pioneering Voortrekker. It tells of a fallen Voortrekker, buried in a grave in the Soutpansberg, and alludes to the conflict between the Voortrekkers and the Zulus. It also paints the landscape in a poetic and romantic light, referring in one place to “the arid sun-scorched veld”. It praises the Voortrekker’s fortitude amid danger and admires his heritage.<sup>696</sup> This appreciation of the past and character strengths of the “other” section of the white population was a recurring theme in the public expression of those who promoted broad South Africanism. This poem also demonstrates the presence of broad South Africanist sentiment at the College.

The events of the year which followed the September 1914 issue severely tested unity among the students at the TUC and stirred up controversy, albeit at this time the discord appeared short-lived. Although the 1914 rebellion had an immediate effect on student politics at the TUC, its influence on the student body was also of a much longer duration.

The Dutch editor of the November 1915 issue of *The T.U.C. students’ magazine* begins immediately by commenting on national events which had taken place since the previous issue. South African events took precedent over the War in Europe as the editor commented, “The blood of brothers has flowed in our beloved South Africa, and today some of our unforgettable heroes are still sitting behind bars; others are no longer with us. Also in Europe the canons still rumble and thunder over the old battlefields. The great struggle is still undecided.”<sup>697</sup> The Dutch editorial continues by also referring to disharmony among the student body. The editor explains, “The year was also witness of a mutual discord among the students. We were nevertheless prepared to solve our differences satisfactorily by taking recourse in a court of arbitration.”<sup>698</sup> The editor continues by referring to political differences among students, “and rightly so, as what would the world become if it were only made of

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<sup>695</sup> Grundlingh and Swart, *Radelose rebellie?*, pp. 48-49.

<sup>696</sup> G.E. Chittenden, “Voortrekkers”, *The T.U.C. students’ magazine* 1(3), September 1914, p. 19.

<sup>697</sup> H.J. Grobler, “Editoriaal”, *The T.U.C. students’ magazine* 1(4), November 1915, p. 1. My translation.

<sup>698</sup> Grobler, “Editoriaal”, *The T.U.C. students’ magazine* 1(4), p. 2.

people who thought alike?”<sup>699</sup> The political atmosphere of the country even permeated the annual SRC election which revolved around the rebellion. Candidates were elected based on their support for or against the rebellion and when M. Prinsloo, known as the “Rebel king” was elected the comment was made among students that “The ‘rebs.’ seem to have won the day”.<sup>700</sup>

On the other hand, the English editorial comments that “there has come that harmony amongst the students for which many have had cause to pray. Uproar has ceased, and a comfortable keenness reigns again.”<sup>701</sup> The rest of the editorial is written with a rather tongue in cheek tone so that it is unclear how serious the discord on the campus was, or in what kind of serious light this English-speaker regarded it.

Apart from the editorials, there is no indication of discord in the rest of this 1915 issue. There are a few interesting contributions like an extract from a prize-winning novel *The rock in the slush belt, or the bold buc* by Basider E. Staggard. This is a satirical and exaggerated portrayal of life in South Africa. The chapter included in the magazine gives a scene in Johannesburg which ends with desperadoes killing a man and kidnapping the heroine. The text is interspersed with common South African words in Afrikaans and even Zulu. These are given satirical definitions and etymological explanations in the footnotes.<sup>702</sup> In spite of its very comic tone, the piece testifies to an English-speaking pride in South African peculiarities.

The heritage of Pretoria, still a thorny political issue today, is considered in an article entitled “Naar wie heet Pretoria?” (“Who is Pretoria named after?”) which gives the origin of the town and its name. It also recounts the history of some of the most influential members of the Pretorius family from the Cape Colony, during the Great Trek and after.<sup>703</sup> In “Gedagtes om te herkouw” (“Thoughts to ruminate on”), a short set of maxims are taken from the magazine *Die Brandwag*. This is the first contribution to directly address the matter of language in the magazine. This question, which would play an important role in the assertion of exclusive

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<sup>699</sup> Grobler, “Editoriaal”, *The T.U.C. students’ magazine* 1(4), p. 2.

<sup>700</sup> Quoted in Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, pp. 370-371.

<sup>701</sup> G. Findlay, “Editorial”, *The T.U.C. students’ magazine* 1(4), November 1915, p. 2.

<sup>702</sup> B.E. Staggard, “The rock in the slush belt, or the bold Buc”, *The T.U.C. students’ magazine* 1(4), November 1915, pp. 8-11.

<sup>703</sup> Anon., “Naar wie heet Pretoria?”, *The T.U.C. students’ magazine* 1(4), November 1915, pp. 21-22.



Afrikaner identity at the College, is encapsulated in the short line: “In die volkstaal woon die volkssiel” (“The nation’s soul resides in the nation’s language”).<sup>704</sup>

1915 was an important year in the development of student life at the TUC as the male students moved into a residence, College Hostel,<sup>705</sup> on the College grounds. This was the more formal start of a long tradition of residences at the institution. A formative experience in the residence’s first year, according to later accounts, was the women’s march to the Union Buildings. About 4 000 women gathered in Pretoria on 4 August 1915 and marched in rows in silence to the Union Buildings, in order to plead for clemency for some of the leaders of the 1914 rebellion. In light of the fact that 11 500 men in the four provinces participated in the rebellion, the number of women who participated in the protest was remarkable.<sup>706</sup> In descriptions of this event the presence of young men is noted, who walked next to the rows of women in case of possible violence.<sup>707</sup> The College Hostel commemorative magazine, published seventy years later includes recollections of College students who acted as escorts for the women and emphasizes how this event was believed by some to have left a permanent impression on the spirit of the residence.<sup>708</sup>

Evidence of some discord in the student body can be seen in a complaint received by the SRC in the middle of 1915 that only English was used at general student meetings and that minutes of these meetings were only read in English. The SRC noted that Dutch was not disallowed at meetings and resolved to alternate between reading minutes in English and Dutch in the future. Hereafter followed the first recorded minute in Afrikaans and generally the language of the following minutes alternated between English and Afrikaans.<sup>709</sup> These events show how the talk of unity, conciliation and broad South African principles was being tested by demands that its promise of equal rights and mutual respect be put into practice. These demands would become however increasingly complicated to accommodate practically.

On the student front, a noteworthy event in 1916 was the establishment of the Afrikaanse Studentebond (ASB). Pelzer feels, not without reason, that though this was not the first student society to be established at the TUC, it was the most influential. This was certainly

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<sup>704</sup> Anon., “Gedagtes om te herkouw”, *The T.U.C. students’ magazine* 1(4), November 1915, p. 26.

<sup>705</sup> Known in Afrikaans as *Kollegetehuis*.

<sup>706</sup> Grundlingh and Swart, *Radelose rebellie?*, p. 64.

<sup>707</sup> Grundlingh and Swart, *Radelose rebellie?*, p. 63.

<sup>708</sup> UPA, D-11-9-3-2, “Sewentig jaar van Kollegehuis”, p. 5.

<sup>709</sup> UPA, D-11-3-1-2, 17 April 1915 & 15 May 1915.

true for a substantial part of the first century of the institution's life. It was formed during the April holidays of 1916 at a conference of Transvaal and Free State students in Pretoria. In September a branch was formed at the TUC. The society's aim was "the advancement of Afrikaans culture and the scientific development of the Afrikaans tradition and national character".<sup>710</sup> While this society did work to promote the interests of Afrikaans-speaking students, its greatest period of activity came later, particularly after the 1930s.

In 1917 and 1918 the matter of the language medium was examined officially by the College's Senate and Council for the first time. Interestingly, the lengthy consideration was the result of action on the part of the students. In April 1917 the Senate received a request from students that lectures in Greek and History be given through the medium of Dutch. The Senate's initial response was to note that though the majority of these classes would favour instruction in Dutch, there were students who did not understand Dutch. Senate requested that the TUC Council consider the matter.<sup>711</sup> Chairperson of the TUC Council, Sir Johannes Wessels, wrote in a report about the matter that a single medium institution would offer a possible solution to the question. This recommendation did not appeal to the Council who considered that it was neither "desirable or indeed practicable".<sup>712</sup>

One lecturer, Prof DF du Toit Malherbe, began to give lectures in Afrikaans to some of his senior students in Chemistry in 1917. According to Malherbe's own account and to Pelzer's retelling, he extended these Afrikaans medium lectures to his first year classes the following year.<sup>713</sup> The account of a former student, however, differs from these. This student explains how a number of first year chemistry students put together a memorandum in 1918 which was given to the Senate, accompanied by a petition with the signatures of 77 students, requesting that the Chemistry lectures be given in Afrikaans.<sup>714</sup> This student states that the request was refused but that they were given permission to write the examinations in Afrikaans. Du Toit Malherbe gave them a copy of a small brochure of chemical terms which he had translated into Afrikaans. Five students took the examinations in Afrikaans, having

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<sup>710</sup> Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, p. 382. My translation.

<sup>711</sup> UPA, B-5-1-1, Minutes of a regular meeting of Senate, 2 April 1917, p. 212.

<sup>712</sup> UPA, B-4-1-2, Minutes of meeting of the Council, 18 May 1917, p. 202; Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, p. 48.

<sup>713</sup> UPA, D-6-5-1-6-22, "Herinneringe van Prof DF du Toit Malherbe".

<sup>714</sup> This was more than a quarter of the student body of 325 students in 1918. UPA, A-1, Overview histories, Studentegetalle.

used Malherbe's brochure and a Dutch textbook which they had specially ordered from the Netherlands.<sup>715</sup>

Pelzer attributes the awakening of national sentiment among Afrikaans-speaking students to Du Toit Malherbe's actions, stating "[a]s if woken from a slumber, the generation of 1918 discovered itself and for the first time in the history of the T.U.C. showed signs of an enlivened national feeling." He also comments on the number of articles in the June 1918 issue of the *The T.U.C. Student Magazine* which gave expression to this "slumbering national feeling".<sup>716</sup> While a more definite direction concerning the language policy was begun in 1918 and the June 1918 magazine was a highpoint in distinctly ethnic expression, Afrikaans-speaking students had already "woken up" by 1917, as the request to Senate and the June 1917 issue of the magazine also affirm. From 1917 there is a marked increase in the number of patriotic contributions written in Afrikaans in the TUC magazine and there is even one which addresses the question of the Afrikaans-speaking student and higher education specifically. By contrast, the English contributions remain intriguingly apolitical, in the form of philosophical, academic or humorous articles and sketches.

It is noteworthy that the June 1917 Dutch editorial of the magazine speaks of the student body or the College community as "democratic" and even "cosmopolitan", alluding to the variety of backgrounds of students at the TUC.<sup>717</sup> In this issue the English editor makes reference to a development in the TUC's residential affairs. In spite of the newly constructed College Hostel on the campus, space for male students was soon insufficient. In 1917 the Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk, the church to which many Afrikaans-speakers belonged, established a private men's residence known as "Sonoptehuis" (Sonop Hostel). It was open to all students regardless of their religious persuasion, but was under the protection and administration of the church.<sup>718</sup> The English editor, in referring to this event, spoke hypothetically of a time twenty years on when "there will be, alas, some fifteen or so **denominational** hostels, and there will be many glorious scraps and skirmishes. The

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<sup>715</sup> UPA, D-6-5-1-6-22, Tuks Alumni Herinneringe: A-M, W.J. du P. Erlank – C.H. Celliers, 21 September 1974.

<sup>716</sup> Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, p. 50. My translation.

<sup>717</sup> H.J. Grobler, "Editoriaal", *The T.U.C. students' magazine* 2(1), June 1917, p. 1.

<sup>718</sup> Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, pp. 289-290. The idea of nations and national feeling waking from a slumber is a typical feature of nationalist narratives. See Giliomee, "The beginnings of Afrikaner nationalism", p. 115.

beginnings of all these things are clearly visible. We have already been bribed into schism, and the results make us all long for the breezy turmoil of those distant days.”<sup>719</sup>

He was not far wrong as in 1918, in response to the establishment of Sonop Hostel, the Church of England also opened a residence named Buxton Hostel after the Governor-General. It housed mainly English-speaking students.<sup>720</sup> Thus, the person to person contact with students from other backgrounds in the close environment of a university residence was restricted by interested parties from outside the university. The intentions behind the establishment of these residences may have been honourable, but their establishment was a sign of unwillingness on the part of both sections of the white population to sacrifice their interests and a disregard for the conciliatory and broad South Africanist aspirations linked to a common residence. A student testimony from 1919 describes the residents of Buxton Hostel as “English and English-orientated students” under the English professor, J.P.R. Wallis, as house father who was so outspokenly English that he was given the ironic nickname of Hendrik van Wyk.<sup>721</sup> This type of description shows how despite efforts to promote broad South Africanism, to a certain extent barriers remained among students of different backgrounds. As far as English-speakers were concerned, Lambert has pointed out that in general “most bonds, including their religion, their language and culture, and their loyalty to the crown, linked them to Britain and did not give them cohesion as South Africans.”<sup>722</sup>

Also in the June 1917 issue is a poem, “Die beeld van Oom Paul” (“The statue of Uncle Paul”) which is a nostalgic view of Paul Kruger. It describes the statue of Kruger in the rain, giving the impression of tears, symbolically portraying the longing for the lost Republican era. It ends by comparing the death of Kruger in 1904 to the deaths of other heroes of the Boer struggle and to the demise of Afrikanerdom.<sup>723</sup> It lines up well with historian G.H.L. le May’s statement that there was in “the tragic figure of Kruger, dead in exile, a martyr around whom myths could be woven”<sup>724</sup> and a powerful symbol of Afrikaner aspirations.

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<sup>719</sup> G. Findlay, “Editorial”, *The T.U.C. students’ magazine* 2(1), June 1917, p. 2. Bold print in the original.

<sup>720</sup> Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, pp. 290-291.

<sup>721</sup> UPA, D-6-5-1-6-22, W.J. du P. Erlank – C.H. Celliers, 21 September 1974.

<sup>722</sup> Lambert, “‘An unknown people’: reconstructing British South African identity”, p. 602.

<sup>723</sup> F.v.d.H., “Die beeld van Oom Paul”, *The T.U.C. students’ magazine* 2(1), June 1917, p. 6.

<sup>724</sup> Le May, *British supremacy in South Africa*, p. 213.

The November 1917 issue contains a rather dramatic but telling prediction of the future for Afrikaners under the title “Proloog aan die eeuwigheid” (“Prologue to eternity”).<sup>725</sup> It paints some imaginary scenes in 1916 and is discussed in some detail due to the telling commentary on the two white races. The first scene is in the home of an English civil servant in Pretoria where the family are having dinner with a young soldier. The English are not portrayed in a positive light at all. The master of the house is referred to as a “klein Engelsmantjie” (“a little Englishman”) and his wife is introduced scolding their black servant unreasonably. The daughter is “weak but full of life.” The father complains about the backward state of the country due to all the strikes and rebellion. The dinner table discussion confirms their belief in the superiority of British culture as the hope for the country’s future. The father explains, “in the future South Africa will blossom under the civilization which Britain now so magnanimously offers her. The wonder and greatness of modern British ideals will be clearly proven in South African, and then the land will surely be of some importance in the world. ... it will become another pillar of British power and imperialism.”<sup>726</sup> The English are thus presented as narrow-minded imperialists who are both physically and socially unappealing. This description reinforces the feelings of distrust which Afrikaners felt towards English-speakers particularly regarding their loyalty to Britain and the Empire. It also highlights the perception among Afrikaners that English-speakers viewed themselves as racially and culturally superior.

The second sketch is an idyllic portrayal of a scene at a farmhouse on a “boere plaas” (boer farm). On the “stoep” (verandah) in conversation are the farmer, the local doctor, a local lawyer and a “dominee” (minister of the Dutch Reformed Church). In contrast to the previous dinner table scene, the lawyer feels that “British patriotism is an unnatural imported object which has no real emotional foundation.” He claims that, “[t]he only real patriotic foundational work which can give South Africa real life and national evolution is Afrikaans patriotism which has grown up by itself in the Afrikaners.” He explains this as “the genuine old “boere” feeling: a strong inclination for independence, a deep respect for faith and a obvious nobility of heart.”<sup>727</sup> Afrikaners are thus imbued with honour and depth of character in contrast to the superficial English depicted in the previous scene.

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<sup>725</sup> Anon., “Proloog aan die eeuwigheid”, *The T.U.C. students’ magazine* 2(2), November 1917, pp. 6-10.

<sup>726</sup> Anon., “Proloog aan die eeuwigheid”, p. 7. All translations are my own.

<sup>727</sup> Anon., “Proloog aan die eeuwigheid”, p. 8.

The dominee continues by describing the evils of Johannesburg as an example of the influence of the “uitlander” (foreigner). He depicts it as a place of drunkenness and immorality. He concludes that Johannesburg is “a hopeless and, through and through, terrible place”. This view of this “foreign” city in the Transvaal is repeated in this issue in an article entitled “Uit die goudstad” (“From the city of gold”) in which Johannesburg is presented as a city that was, and still is, full of “skelms” (“crooks”) and thieves.<sup>728</sup> The doctor confirms that Johannesburg is also a city full of sickness and adds the amazing point that “[i]t’s a wonderful and unusual phenomenon in history; There is not another single nation which has settled among barbarians and which is still so pure in morals and blood as the boers.”<sup>729</sup> He asserts that it is the destiny of the Boer to rule in South Africa and that only Boer patriotism will make anything out of the country. What can be viewed as outright racism on the part of the doctor is balanced by the farmer himself as he voices his doubts whether the Boer shall rule the country in his lifetime and comments that the Boer nation also has faults and is not as good as what the others have made it to be. The combination of people in this scene favourably presents Afrikaners as balanced and tolerant, although full of legitimate patriotism.

The last and very telling scene takes place in the future in the year 2200. It depicts three men sitting outside an old Cape Dutch house. They are evidently wealthy as they are all well-dressed and they speak English with a stiff accent. Each discusses their heritage as an Afrikaner, whether they have Portuguese, English or other blood, agreeing that English blood has counted most in South Africa. The one man, however, says that he has an unusual genealogy, as he comes from a small group of unknown people known as Boers. The story ends by revealing that the three men in the last scene are all black and that the only white person in the scene is their waiter who is “bijna wit” (almost white). There is a tragic outburst, “[i]s this the destiny Afrikaners must expect?”<sup>730</sup> Thus, for the writer the end result of British influence in South Africa would be the extinction of the Boers as a pure white race. In an early twenty-first century context it is easy to only see how this essay is permeated with racist sentiment. One cannot, however, disregard the very real angst it expresses regarding the future of whites and more particularly Afrikaners in South Africa.

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<sup>728</sup> Anon., “Uit die goudstad”, *The T.U.C. students’ magazine* 2(2), November 1917, p. 19.

<sup>729</sup> Anon., “Proloog aan die eeuwigheid”, p. 8.

<sup>730</sup> Anon., “Proloog aan die eeuwigheid”, p. 10.

In stark contrast to the serious and foreboding tone of the previous essay, it is followed immediately in this issue by an English poem entitled “Drinking Song” which is a tongue-in-cheek toast to a number of Roman figures, full of classical Latin references.<sup>731</sup> This highlights the seeming difference in the interests and preoccupations of English and Afrikaans-speaking students. This issue also includes a fiery piece in Afrikaans entitled “Ichabod” – the first article to address the question of higher education and Afrikaner interests. The main complaint of the writer of this article is against the intellectual food which students are given in South African university colleges, which he feels opposes their faith and culture. According to him, the colleges are meant to be training institutions for both sections of white students but he claims that Afrikaner interests are not cared for. He argues that,

We are dealing here with the result of a state of affairs which the Afrikaans nation and we as Afrikaner students may no longer accept with peace, in the first place out of honour for the sovereign authority of the Holy God and of His Word; but also out of honour for our national past and national character, out of pure self-respect if we have no more honourable motives.<sup>732</sup>

He deplores the idea that religion should be separated from politics and science and argues that the logical conclusion will be the mixing of all the races when he states, “we must all be brothers and co-operate—Boer and Brit and also possibly Kaffir [sic]: the past must be forgotten and that God has made us all differently, this must no longer be considered: but religion is now a ‘private affair’, is it not so?”

This article is a direct attack on the notions of broad South Africanism and conciliation, using as a base what would be the philosophical foundations of the policy of segregation pursued during most of the twentieth century. This was the belief in the need to maintain ethnic and cultural differences. He argues directly against the unifying role of university colleges as follows, “And look, this is how we get in the end one big brotherly hodge-podge which is supposed to be totally neutral and colourless, but which becomes in actuality **anti-Christian** and anti-Afrikaans. Our Afrikaans University Colleges are also such pot-pourri’s. And an end must be made of it!”<sup>733</sup>

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<sup>731</sup> Anon., “A drinking song”, *The T.U.C. students’ magazine* 2(2), November 1917, p. 10.

<sup>732</sup> L.J. du P., “Ichabod”, *The T.U.C. students’ magazine* 2(2), November 1917, p. 13. All translations are my own.

<sup>733</sup> L.J. du P., “Ichabod”, p. 13. Bold print in the original.

In quite strong language the student argues for the preservation of a separate cultural and ethnic identity for Afrikaners through the provision of exclusive Afrikaner higher education. He states, “[a]nd what is the effect of the essential **unafrikaansness** [sic] of our Higher Education? It means the degeneration (“verbastering”, literally interbreeding) of our afrikaans [sic] race from above, the violation of our national life. It means that one of God’s creatures will not reach his full potential; that the world will be one national manifestation poorer and the three centuries of suffering and struggling of the Afrikaans race will be lost.”<sup>734</sup> The writer here highlights “the contradiction that lies at the very heart of constructed identities”, such as the one broad South Africanists were trying to cultivate, which is “to start over is to cut oneself off from the master narrative of history, the unspoken basis for authenticity and standing.”<sup>735</sup>

The student concludes by writing, “What therefore is the claim? This, that the Afrikaner, based on the strength of his **separate national history** and **his Separate outlook on life**, has the right to a **separate scientific training**.”<sup>736</sup> This article is therefore plainly an assault from a student on the cherished broad South Africanist object of government, higher education administrators and certain sections of the white population, to cultivate a new sense of white identity which included those from both English and Afrikaans-speaking backgrounds.

This is followed by an article in English entitled, “On the artificial production of naturally occurring organic bodies”. Once again, the disparate subject matter of these contributions causes one to wonder whether the English and Afrikaans students read each others’ compositions or how much real communication took place between these groups. Even in the divergent literary contributions one can see that the task of unifying the two groups was not a simple one. The articles appear side by side, but there appears to be a hidden barrier and they do not relate to each other. In a sense, like the two columns of the editorials which share a common page, according to the official policy, and yet are completely distinct from one another in the real situation.

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<sup>734</sup> L.J. du P., “Ichabod”, p. 14. Bold print in the original.

<sup>735</sup> Foster, *Washed in the sun*, p. 40.

<sup>736</sup> L.J. du P., “Ichabod”, p. 14. Bold print in the original.



This 1918 issue contains a further two interesting articles which touch on powerfully symbolic subjects for Afrikaners. The first is called “Die Afrikaanse Vrou”<sup>737</sup> (“The Afrikaans Woman”) and is a tribute to Afrikaner women. The Afrikaner woman is given the position of heroine in the eyes of the nation and all its success is attributed to her. This extremely hagiographic piece enumerates the positive virtues of the Afrikaner woman. She is remembered for the suffering in the concentration camps. She is also given credit for the decision taken by Voortrekkers to leave Natal for the North. She is seen as responsible for encouraging her men to stand up against Britain in the South African War. Finally, she is praised for the Women’s protest at the Union Buildings in 1915 asking for the release of those convicted in the rebellion. The assertion mentioned earlier that this event had left an indelible impression on some of the TUC students is confirmed in this article as the author, two years after the actual event, refers to the women’s protest as “one of the greatest milestones in South African history” and as “an act ... that will live on forever in the history of South Africa”.<sup>738</sup> Interestingly, this protest, led mainly by older women from prominent Afrikaner families, an “old guard of Boer matriarchs”,<sup>739</sup> has been regarded as having had a very real influence. The women’s protest gave the rebellion a more respectable flavour, even breathing a second life into what was in some ways a hopeless cause. The rebellion, carried out mainly by poor white Afrikaners, was lent an air of dignity and a more robust public character through the action of Afrikaner women. This protest was considered a defining moment in the moulding of the idea of an Afrikaner nation and provided rich material for the later cultivation of national sentiment.<sup>740</sup>

The second topic with even stronger symbolic power which appeared in this issue was the matter of language. In a short poem entitled “Moedertaal” (“Mother tongue”) the mother tongue is likened to the sweetest sound on earth. The man who does not value his mother tongue is considered unworthy. The final stanza gives a sense of the depth of sentiment attached to the Afrikaans language:

Lift up your eyes, free, full of courage,  
Be proud of Afrikaner blood;  
Hold truth **high**, and honour and faithfulness;  
But always you must hold **sacred**

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<sup>737</sup> J.N., “Die Afrikaanse Vrou”, *The T.U.C. students’ magazine* 2(2), November 1917, pp. 29-30.

<sup>738</sup> J.N., “Die Afrikaanse Vrou”, p. 30. My translation.

<sup>739</sup> Grundlingh and Swart, *Radelose rebellie?*, p. 61.

<sup>740</sup> Grundlingh and Swart, *Radelose rebellie?*, pp. 65-66.

Your mother tongue!<sup>741</sup>

These concerns and sentiments regarding the rights and position of the Afrikaans-speaking student, the Afrikaans language and Afrikaner culture and heritage at the College which came to the surface in 1917 became even more prominent in 1918. Both in their writing and in their actions, some Afrikaans-speaking students began a more focused plea for the use of their language at the TUC. Furthermore, a former student remarked that 1918 was an extremely tense year at the TUC with the lingering effects of the rebellion and the coming end of World War I.<sup>742</sup>

In March 1918 the Senate considered a petition from a section of students requesting Afrikaans or Dutch as a medium of instruction.<sup>743</sup> This petition was probably the one referred to earlier, related to the teaching of Chemistry in Afrikaans. A former student, D.J. van Rooy, also later told of how he and another student, L.J. du Plessis, stirred up some feeling among first years to demand lectures in Afrikaans early in 1918. It is quite likely that Du Plessis was the author of the fervent article “Ichabod” in the November 1917 magazine, as his initials match those of the author.<sup>744</sup> According to Van Rooy, he and others approached the chairman of the Council, Sir John Wessels, with regard to the language question.<sup>745</sup>

The reaction of the Senate to the petition was significant, as it became clear that the English only policy could not continue. Pelzer feels that instead of looking for a solution, however, the Senate and Council thought up flimsy ways of escaping the issue.<sup>746</sup> The memorandum drawn up by the Senate in response to the request illustrates the complexity of the whole matter and that no easy answer was to be found. As mentioned, the first conclusion the Senate

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<sup>741</sup> Anon., “Moedertaal”, *The T.U.C. students’ magazine* 2(2), November 1917, p. 32. Bold print in the original. My translation.

<sup>742</sup> UPA, D-6-5-1-6-22, W.J. du P. Erlank – C.H. Celliers, 21 September 1974.

<sup>743</sup> UPA, B-5-1-1, Minutes of a regular meeting of Senate, 4 March 1918, p. 247.

<sup>744</sup> L.J. du Plessis was later an academic, jurist, economist and political philosopher. He worked at the Potchefstroom University College for Higher Education and was also active for many years in the National Party and the Ossewa-Brandwag. In light of Du Plessis’s student article mentioned here, it is interesting to note that he differed with later National Party leaders, D.F. Malan, J.G. Strijdom and H.F. Verwoerd on issues like the republic and segregation. His disagreement with Verwoerd led to his expulsion from the National Party in 1959. According to the *Dictionary of South African biography*, du Plessis favoured a “broader conception of nationhood”, one that included English-speakers and other population groups. For du Plessis, the segregation policies of Verwoerd were equivalent to another form of imperialism. P.J.J.S. Potgieter, “Du Plessis, Lodewicus Johannes”, in C.J. Beyers (ed.), *Dictionary of South African biography* IV, (Durban & Pretoria: Butterworth & Co., 1981), pp. 137-139.

<sup>745</sup> UPA, D-6-5-1-6-22, Tuks Alumni Herinneringe: Ad Destinatum I, Briefwisseling met oudstudente en ander instansies, D.J. van Rooy – A.N. Pelzer, 12 February 1959.

<sup>746</sup> Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, p. 51.

arrived at was that the English medium only policy was no longer possible. The Senate did not, however, feel that it was wise to pursue a Dutch only policy, reasoning that it would alienate Pretoria's English-speaking section, who also contributed financially to the institution, as well as others in the country. This policy would also send English-speaking students to the TUC's rival institution in Johannesburg, possibly leading to the establishment of a rival Faculty of Agriculture and would also boost the Johannesburg Arts and Science classes. It was felt that duplication of courses was both impractical and undesirable. The Senate felt that expenditure caused by the language medium should be covered ideally by a special grant from the government for those purposes.<sup>747</sup> The solution arrived at was that each case should be considered on its merit "in a method of give and take ... relying on the good sense of the students and the public not to demand the impossible and unattainable."<sup>748</sup> This attitude very much lined up with the idea of compromise and cooperation embodied in the broad South African ideal. The Senate also opted for a vague solution, much like the ill-defined application of conciliation. The Senate expressed the hope that as student numbers grew, there would be the means to appoint more staff and provide bilingual instruction. Furthermore, there was the belief that the gradual introduction of a dual medium policy in schools would eventually solve the medium question at the College.<sup>749</sup>

The Council's initial response to the students' petition and to the Senate committee's report regarding the medium question was to request the Senate "to meet the students' wishes in this matter as far as possible, and further, to advise the Council as to whether Afrikaans or Dutch is the better medium for general instruction".<sup>750</sup> It is really striking that the struggle to introduce Afrikaans as a language at university level was taking place at a time when the language itself was still battling to assert itself.<sup>751</sup>

The College approached the Minister of Education with the question and proposed that a solution lay in the complete duplication of all courses. As a temporary measure to begin with certain key professorships and lectureships could be duplicated. The Minister of Education replied to the interview with the TUC Council and Senate regarding the medium question by sending a circular out to all the country's universities and colleges, referring to the matter of

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<sup>747</sup> UPA, B-5-1-1, Re Medium Question at the Transvaal University College, 1 May 1918, p. 253; Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, p. 51.

<sup>748</sup> UPA, B-5-1-1, Re Medium Question at the Transvaal University College, 1 May 1918, p. 253.

<sup>749</sup> UPA, B-5-1-1, Re Medium Question at the Transvaal University College, 1 May 1918, p. 253.

<sup>750</sup> UPA, B-4-1-2, Minutes of meeting of Council, 21 March 1918, p. 219.

<sup>751</sup> See Hofmeyr, "Building a nation from words".

making provision for instruction in Dutch as “pressing”. In this circular the Minister began by stating that “[t]he bilingual student ... be regarded as the normal student”. As the expense of duplicating professors and lecturers was considered out of the question for the foreseeable future, the Minister’s suggestion was that instruction be divided into English and Dutch medium subjects, as circumstances demanded, at the discretion of the Council. There was the realisation that the matter was “a most important one” that would have “far reaching effects”.<sup>752</sup> Thus, the College was left with the unsolved problem of how to practically deal with the language medium question, again highlighting the ambiguities and difficulties at the heart of broad South Africanism. As mentioned earlier, broad South Africanism in terms of language was equated with bilingualism, but at this point bilingualism, like broad South Africanism, was not well-established among white South Africans.

The Senate’s response to the Minister’s circular was that a solution could only be properly carried out if English and Dutch were both made compulsory subjects for entrance to the country’s universities.<sup>753</sup> In June 1918 a joint meeting of the College’s Senate and Council was held to consider the question in light of the circular.<sup>754</sup> After this meeting a response was drawn up to the Minister’s circular. The Council felt that the Minister was premature in his view that the bilingual student should be considered as the normal student, as that time had not arrived. The College felt that “[i]t would be wrong to start University courses on the assumption that the normal type of student is bi-lingual, unless such is actually the case. If the premises are wrong, any policy founded on those premises is bound to be wrong also.”<sup>755</sup>

There were in essence three objections to the Minister’s proposal to divide courses between the two mediums. Firstly, the Council felt that it was “a well-known fact” that English students did not possess a sufficient knowledge of Dutch to be able to follow lectures in it. Thus presenting certain subjects in English and others in Dutch would be a risky policy for the College. Secondly, this would “certainly cause English students to congregate in Colleges, where the medium is bound to be exclusively English”. This would impact negatively on the TUC as the College felt English students would be driven to the Johannesburg College and, due to the two Transvaal Colleges proximity to each other, the

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<sup>752</sup> UPA, B-5-1-1, Appendix: Copy of circular from Under Secretary for Education, 12 June 1918, p. 261; Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, pp. 51-52.

<sup>753</sup> UPA, B-5-1-1, Minutes of a special meeting of Senate, 17 June 1918, p. 264.

<sup>754</sup> UPA, B-4-1-2, Minutes of a special joint meeting of the Council and Senate, 27 June 1918, p. 230.

<sup>755</sup> UPA, B-4-1-2, Minutes of a special joint meeting of the Council and Senate, 27 June 1918, p. 231.

TUC would invariably become exclusively Dutch. This would cause the third problem, namely, the withdrawal of “the sympathy of English-speaking people of Pretoria” from the College, which would result in “a disastrous effect on the finances of the College.”<sup>756</sup> The TUC was thus caught between a rock and a hard place: having opened the door to the Afrikaans medium with a view to accommodating Afrikaans-speaking students’ interests, it now stood at risk of alienating English-speakers, thus highlighting the tenuous foundations of broad South Africanism.

The TUC felt that although it would be costly the “ideal solution of the difficulty is a duplication of teaching-staff”, urging that the Minister again consider the temporary measure of appointing extra professors. The Council concluded that it was “of opinion [sic] that no adequate solution of the bi-lingual difficulty—compatible with the financial resources of the country—will be found, until the great bulk of University students are fully capable of following lectures in either language.” This would only happen if the languages were properly taught in the primary and secondary schools of the Union.<sup>757</sup>

While these discussions regarding a way forward for the language policy at the TUC were taking place in 1918, a significant event occurred in the progress of higher education in the country, namely, the enactment of the 1916 University Acts discussed in chapter three. Pelzer viewed these events which created Unisa as a step in the right direction in the struggle for the place of the Afrikaans language. By giving greater autonomy to the constituent university colleges, it meant that steps taken at one of these colleges for the furtherance of Afrikaans would have an influence on the other constituent colleges.<sup>758</sup>

It is noteworthy that the students of the TUC also regarded these Acts as significant. In the Dutch editorial of the June 1918 issue, the editor, who happened to be the student D.J. van Rooy mentioned earlier,<sup>759</sup> referred to the “great changes ... in the area of Higher Education” and the implication of the Acts that “our college too has now got the chance to develop into

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<sup>756</sup> UPA, B-4-1-2, Minutes of a special joint meeting of the Council and Senate, 27 June 1918, p. 231.

<sup>757</sup> UPA, B-4-1-2, Minutes of a special joint meeting of the Council and Senate, 27 June 1918, p. 231.

<sup>758</sup> Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, p. 50.

<sup>759</sup> D.J. van Rooy was later an academic at the Potchefstroom University College for Higher Education. He was also involved in the leadership of Afrikaner cultural organisations like the Voortrekkers, the Reddingsdaadfonds and the Ossewa-Brandwag. J.C. Coetzee, “Van Rooy, Dirk Jan”, in D.W. Krüger and C.J. Beyers (eds.), *Suid-Afrikaanse biografiese woordeboek III*, (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1977), pp. 839-840.

an independent University”.<sup>760</sup> It is meaningful that apart from the editorial, two other contributions to the magazine take account of the changes in higher education. Furthermore, all three of these pieces are in Afrikaans, while no English-speaking student writes about these events.

Van Rooy continues to explain the significance of this newly enacted legislation by looking ahead to the future and asking,

will our college still develop further into an Afrikaans college, an Afrikaans University, in which in the first place Afrikaans will be cultivated? Will our college itself one day feel completely at home on Afrikaans soil, in the midst of our national life? It is our hope, our ideal. But then we also must sit still now. We have work to do if we want to achieve our ideal. And that is why it is gladdening and encouraging to see that the students begin to recognise it, and that at least in the area of language there is life. The Dutch speaking students at the T.U.C. also have the right to stand up for their rights. We appreciate the efforts of Dr. Malherbe and some of our other professors, who have shown themselves willing to satisfy our demands. In the meantime, let us remember that our goal has not yet been achieved.<sup>761</sup>

He also mentions that it is evident that the Afrikaans-speaking TUC students can write, as is seen by local newspapers and publications like *Die Huisgenoot*. The Student Magazine however, is treated as a stepmother by students and he complains of the difficulty in recruiting articles. The English editorial also complains about the quality of the articles. Beginning with the statement that “[t]he most loveable thing about a child is his foolishness”.<sup>762</sup> He explains that though the College is growing in corporate spirit and even public stature, these facts do not easily make it into print. He makes no mention of national events or of the language question.

The first article in this June 1918 issue to look at the impact of the newly implemented University Acts on the TUC is “Wat ons als Afrikaners van die hoofsetel van die federale universiteit van S.A. kan en moet verwag” (“What we as Afrikaners can and must expect from the headquarters of the federal university of S.A.”). It begins as follows:

The 2<sup>nd</sup> of April 1918 began just like other days before and after it, but yet with a difference: on this day one of the foremost milestones in the history of our Higher Education was achieved. On this day the ‘University of the Cape of Good Hope’ gave its last breath—naturally or unnaturally, I will leave it there—and out of it

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<sup>760</sup> D.J. van Rooy, “Editoriaal”, *The T.U.C. Students’ Magazine* 2(3), June 1918, p. 1. My translation.

<sup>761</sup> Van Rooy, “Editoriaal”, *The T.U.C. Students’ Magazine* 2(3), p. 1.

<sup>762</sup> G. Findlay, “Editorial”, *The T.U.C. Students’ Magazine* 2(3), June 1918, p. 2.

arose three bodies, viz. the University of Cape Town, of Stellenbosch and the Federal University of South Africa with its headquarters in Pretoria.<sup>763</sup>

For the writer, the significance of these events for the TUC was that under the old system the College was third on the list, but now in the new system it was the first university college among those which formed the new federal University of South Africa and as such could give some direction. The main expectations of the new system expressed in this article are the shift of emphasis onto practical training and the development of studies which could lead to the growth of industry and agriculture. Again the broad South Africanist idea that local knowledge would aid local progress appears here. The race question is also mentioned here as one that required particular local expertise.<sup>764</sup>

The writer ends by saying,

The last and yet not the least of which can be expected of our University: the recognition and application of the Afrikaans language as medium of instruction in the subjects in which Afrikaans Professors and students are available. All honour to the Professors who are willing to do this and especially Dr Malherbe has spared himself no effort by giving extra lectures and by translating chemistry terms in order to facilitate the transition from English to Afrikaans. In such a way the Afrikaans student is accommodated and they obtain their rights. Let us hope that the spirit of attachment to the english [sic] language and opposition and prejudice towards Afrikaans may speedily disappear, then and then only will it be the University for Afrikaners par excellence and will become what we have also been long yearning for: an Afrikaans and National University.<sup>765</sup>

This article has a more measured tone than the article from the previous issue of 1917 which demanded language rights for Afrikaans-speaking students. It deals thoughtfully with the implications of the new higher education legislation and embraces some of the notions of broad South Africanism in terms of progress. It is not a mere hankering for the restoration of past Republican days. What is interesting is that in this context, the plea for the place of Afrikaans at the College is a natural consequence of conciliation. Dr Malherbe's actions are presented as conciliatory towards Afrikaans students, by allowing Afrikaans-speaking students and the Afrikaans language to stand as equals with English-speakers and the English language. This matches the thought which was defended by TUC lecturers, that when they

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<sup>763</sup> TIKKA, "Wat ons als Afrikaners van die hoofsetel van die federale Universiteit van S.A. kan en moet verwag", *The T.U.C. Students' Magazine* 2(3), June 1918, p. 15. All translations are my own.

<sup>764</sup> TIKKA, "Wat ons als Afrikaners van die hoofsetel van die federale Universiteit van S.A. kan en moet verwag", pp. 15-16.

<sup>765</sup> TIKKA, "Wat ons als Afrikaners van die hoofsetel van die federale Universiteit van S.A. kan en moet verwag", p. 16.

were willing to present their classes in Afrikaans, they were doing so out of a desire to promote conciliation. This also lines up with the notion that for some broad South Africanism equalled bilingualism.

The article “Afrikaner, wees uself” (“Afrikaner, be yourself”) also takes account of the effect of the new University Acts and the TUC’s new status as a constituent college of Unisa. It also attempts to give a future perspective, at the beginning of this new phase in higher education. This is a particularly interesting contribution as it supports many of the notions of broad South Africanism and conciliation while arguing firmly for the maintenance of distinct identities among white South Africans. The writer first explains that the life of the college consists necessarily of different elements in terms of race, religion and other matters. These different elements represent different aspects of the Afrikaans community (here Afrikaans seems to be used more generally to mean South African). Each student comes from a particular home life and family background, as a part of a greater community where there is not uniformity. But, the writer asks, is this to the advantage or disadvantage of the College? He shows that in certain matters, like national security, differences are overcome for the common defence of the Afrikaans nation. The writer then makes an appeal for the university colleges to be in the service of the Afrikaans community, that is, to build up local knowledge and science, in harmony with the nation and bearing the stamp of the nation. This lines up with broad South Africanist notions of cultivating local science and culture.<sup>766</sup>

The writer then returns to the discussion regarding diversity at the College:

But to come back now to our point of departure and to answer it: is the mutual variety to the advantage or disadvantage of our development? A general opinion is that it is precisely so beneficial for a student and his shaping if he comes into contact with many different elements at college. We agree with this, but then each such element must be itself. Then we must not follow at college a kind of “conciliation politics”. Only when each appears for what he is can we get to know and appreciate each other, and can we receive from each other good points, can we really contribute to mutual victory.<sup>767</sup>

It is clear that in the mind of this student conciliation meant the loss of a particular identity. This loss, it appears, was more threatening to the Dutch-speaking student whose conduct is described as “mostly a kind of apology for our presence here, just as if we did not have the

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<sup>766</sup> Anon., “Afrikaner, wees uself”, *The T.U.C. Students’ Magazine* 2(3), June 1918, p. 30.

<sup>767</sup> Anon., “Afrikaner, wees uself”, p. 30. All translations are my own.



right to be here and to show that we are here”.<sup>768</sup> The writer felt that the College should be more representative, not merely in makeup of the student body but in the magazine, the societies and in sports and cast doubt on whether these really reflected the Dutch-speaking section. The environment at the College was certainly still overwhelmingly English, both in terms of language and with respect to the principal foundations of the university system. Furthermore, Lambert has shown how many English-speakers still viewed themselves as fundamentally British and embraced and promoted this Britishness in various spheres of their lives.<sup>769</sup> Thus, understandably the writer expresses the sentiments of Dutch or Afrikaans students who were left feeling inferior and under threat. What the writer touches on here is the unspoken element of conciliation and broad South Africanism in higher education which assumed that the one national white identity was an English-speaking identity. It can be argued that in the minds of those promoting conciliation and a new white South African identity, the section which needed or was expected to change and adapt was the Afrikaans-speaking sector. This writer resists this tacit arrangement and encourages fellow Afrikaans-speaking students that they must “stay ourselves in the first place.”<sup>770</sup>

The rallying against the “foreign” university environment is further encapsulated in the writer’s argument that should the South African student study overseas, it should be done as an Afrikaner. Then the student would be better equipped to bring the new knowledge home and adapt it to the South African context. The knowledge will then not be imported foreign knowledge, but the foreign knowledge will be “africanised”.<sup>771</sup> This corresponds to current opinions regarding the importance of developing specifically African knowledge and customs at South African universities.

Continuing the trend set in the 1917 magazine, the June 1918 issue also has a number of “patriotic” contributions from Afrikaans-speaking students. “Alles sal regkom” (“Everything will be alright”) gives a brief overview of Afrikaner history, including the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck, the frontier wars and Great Trek. A recurring theme is the conflict between whites and blacks who are referred to as “the natural opponent of the White man”. Emphasis is also laid on the shedding of “precious Afrikaner blood”.<sup>772</sup> Regarding the decision by

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<sup>768</sup> Anon., “Afrikaner, wees uself”, pp. 30-31.

<sup>769</sup> Lambert, “South African British? Or Dominion South Africans?”, pp. 208-209.

<sup>770</sup> Anon., “Afrikaner, wees uself”, p. 31.

<sup>771</sup> Anon., “Afrikaner, wees uself”, p. 31.

<sup>772</sup> M.K., “Alles sal regkom”, *The T.U.C. Students’ Magazine* 2(3), June 1918, p. 4. All translations are my own.

Voortrekkers to leave Natal, the student writes quite tellingly that it was “because the Mothers of South Africa chose to rather trek barefoot over the Drakensberg than to spend another day under the flag of England”.<sup>773</sup> Reference is again made to the concentration camps of the South African War and encouragement is found in the formation of the Union. This matches some of the sentiment inspired by Union in the September 1914 article “Terugblik”. After viewing the historical scenery, the writer looks forward to the future where the following scenes are imagined: the education of the youth who achieve the highest positions in the land; the growth of industry and exports; joy on the lips and in the hearts of the nation; an end to the question of poor whites; progress in the military and transportation – images which line up with the idea of technological advance being linked to progress. The final scene in the future shows the gathering of a great crowd at the Union Buildings, with cries of praise to the free nation and the writer sees a Vierkleur<sup>774</sup> being raised into the blue sky by a pretty young lady. And the moon seems to whisper to him, “what is now not, can and will at some point take place”.<sup>775</sup> Thus, this is another example of yearning for the restoration of the Republic, with a strong focus on the heritage of Afrikaners. It also is by implication a rejection of broad South Africanism in its reviling of the British flag and in its imagined future of a republic free of the British Empire.

“Gedagte van ‘n Afrikaner in 1918” (“Reflection of an Afrikaner in 1918”) is a window on Afrikaner sentiment of the time. The whole poem reads as follows:

Let larger nations murder and fight,  
Let smaller nations suffer patiently,  
Let the conqueror be who they may,  
We remain silent, quiet in calm rest:  
There’s One above who never forgets,  
And brings each to their destination  
Who leads nations through many afflictions  
Even though the test was heavy and severe:  
Lift up the eye, take courage my soul,  
For whatever may have been in the past,  
The Ruler of All watches as before:  
But, – if our nation will rule in freedom  
And Union blossom and move forwards  
Or later be brought to be destroyed, –  
Let Afrikaners always remain

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<sup>773</sup> M.K., “Alles sal regkom”, p. 5.

<sup>774</sup> The flag of the former Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek.

<sup>775</sup> M.K., “Alles sal regkom”, pp. 5-6.

Voortrekker children devout and free!<sup>776</sup>

This poem makes reference to World War I, but shows that the “proper” attitude of the Afrikaner is one of detachment from such events. It gives a sense of providence – divine protection and destiny – and a call to remain true to the Voortrekker heritage.<sup>777</sup> It is a call to not break away from one’s heritage, despite the present or future situation. It is also an attempt to establish Afrikaner identity and the proper attitude of Afrikaners, as seen in the title. It is also in a sense a rejection of broad South Africanism as it urges Afrikaners to preserve their own identity.

In the piece “The call of the new age” a past TUC student rages against the human suffering and loss of World War I in the name of patriotism and duty. He concludes that the existence of Empires was a root of the War as it allowed countries the means and the men to engage in such large scale conflict, without regard for the minority groups involved.<sup>778</sup> His solution is an end to Empires and the rise of “Republicanism ... where small minorities shall not be bludgeoned into fighting for causes for which they have no regard”. This essay clearly underscores a mistrust in the British Empire which resulted from World War I. The notion of republicanism expressed here is not however related to the former Boer Republics, but one that would isolate the country from the horrors of another world war. The student concludes,

The world is now at the cross-roads—the one road, Imperialistic leading to new centuries of confusion, new vast and stupid wars, new despairs, new catastrophes, new beginnings in a plotless endless drama—the other Republican, leading to a new world, freed from tyranny, from armaments, from hatred, and one in which the ‘white passion of Statecraft’, shall be substituted for the concupiscent lust of Empire.<sup>779</sup>

This contribution is interesting as it is one of the few English pieces to deal directly with current affairs. Furthermore, it is noteworthy as it is an appeal by an English-speaker to throw off the obligations of the British Empire. It shows that already for some English-speakers, though exceptional at this stage, the sense of belonging to Great Britain was waning. While it is a call to exit the Empire, this is not at all linked in the essay to the question of identity.

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<sup>776</sup> L.W.H., “Gedagte van ‘n Afrikaner in 1918”, *The T.U.C. Students’ Magazine* 2(3), June 1918, p. 7. My translation.

<sup>777</sup> Giliomee points out “a strong tendency to see a Divine Hand in Afrikaner history”. Giliomee, “The beginnings of Afrikaner nationalism”, p. 139.

<sup>778</sup> J.D., “The call of the new age”, *The T.U.C. Students’ Magazine* 2(3), June 1918, pp. 12-13.

<sup>779</sup> J.D., “The call of the new age”, p. 14.

Furthermore, this piece also highlights the fact that English-speakers were not a monolithic group.<sup>780</sup>

The contribution “Besware teen die gees van onse eeuw” (“Objections to the spirit of our age”) bears great resemblance to “Ichabod” of the previous November 1917 issue, leading one to conclude that the author “L.P.” probably wrote both articles. It is another fiery protest against the spirit of broad South Africanism embodied in the thought, as the student puts it, that “everything must be the same, colourlessly, monotonously the same—everyone the same as the majority”.<sup>781</sup> He argues for the preservation of a distinct identity and complains that “[t]he man who dares to preserve his own soul inviolable: this one is a trouble-maker, a narrow-minded contrary fellow and many other pretty little bugs.” He states that he does not want to engage with politics, but with a general cultural undercurrent in the consciousness of the country’s leaders. He feels that the move toward “co-operation, brotherliness, everyone the same” runs contrary to what he understands to be a divine principle of division between people.

The student turns his attention to education which he perceives is the primary place where “this poison eats away deeply: in the lower education, which must be religiously neutral and politically imperialistic, for sure! But more than anywhere else in the Higher Education: there it crawls with it, in our colleges, with birds of every feather and colour.” The unifying goals of education he equates with homogenizing, the end result being an Anglophone and imperial product. He complains, that

all the diverse personalities must complete *one* training course, must become the same, everyone just like the majority. They must swallow the wisdom of the ruling clique there: an English unbelieving scientific plaster must paint everyone equally, dull and dead. It is tyranny which kills every kind of Afrikaans life, all healthy self-consciousness, all strongly built power of faith which grasps the truth and thereby receives life.

Interestingly, the article mentions a letter the author received from a fellow student which warned against the fostering of sectionalism and said that the government and the College authorities only recognised two sections. The implication is that it was felt that this author was promoting something other than the two officially sanctioned sections. The author

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<sup>780</sup> See Lambert, “South African British? Or Dominion South Africans?”, p. 205.

<sup>781</sup> L.P., “Besware teen die gees van onse eeuw”, *The T.U.C. Students’ Magazine* 2(3), June 1918, p. 19. All translations are my own.

protests that this apparent recognition of the two sections merely meant that official correspondence in English was sometimes translated into high Dutch and “and thus the difference of natures between the Boer and the Brit is taken into account!!”<sup>782</sup> He feels that this purposeful suppression of diversity is detrimental to the future of Afrikaner youth. In opposition to what he views as the suppression of the minority by the majority, he argues for separation, “[a]nd the first separation which is required is between Boer and Brit. Boer is the ‘besembos’ (broom-brush), he must have sun above and rocky ground below; Brit is the fern which grows in the shade and damp, in the same soil the two can never get along! It is the law of nature!”<sup>783</sup> In other words, attempting to unify the two sections according to broad South Africanism is contrary to both natural laws and divine principles. One could even extend his argument further and draw the conclusion that the British fundamentally do not belong in South Africa according to this student. The “Boer” here is adapted to the rocky sunny environment, but the climate described for the “Brit” seems to refer to the climate of England and not to South Africa. This is in line with the idea that for many Afrikaners their English-speaking counterparts were not considered to be true South Africans.

In September 1918 another ASB deputation to the Senate requested that emphasis be laid on the appointment of bilingual professors in the newly established Faculty of Agriculture or that those appointed in posts in the Faculty acquire an adequate command of the second language within two years. The Senate appointed a sub-committee to consider a practical scheme for 1919 regarding the language medium at the entire TUC.<sup>784</sup> Based on their findings, the Senate replied to the ASB, making reference to the Minister of Education’s earlier circular. A “transitional solution” was offered as eight academic departments were prepared to offer classes in either medium on a first year level the following year, depending on the wishes of the majority of students in those classes.<sup>785</sup> Pelzer makes the deduction that in these departments the majority of students were English-speaking, although it is not clear upon what evidence this is based. He concedes, however, that the result of this arrangement was that more classes were presented in Afrikaans.<sup>786</sup>

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<sup>782</sup> L.P., “Besware teen die gees van onse eeuw”, p. 19.

<sup>783</sup> L.P., “Besware teen die gees van onse eeuw”, p. 20.

<sup>784</sup> UPA, B-5-1-1, Minutes of a regular meeting of Senate, 11 September 1918, p. 278.

<sup>785</sup> UPA, B-5-1-1, Secretary of the Senate – Secretary ASB, 26 September 1918, p. 280.

<sup>786</sup> Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum* p. 52.

The November 1918 English editorial of the student magazine begins by highlighting the ending of World War I. The editor expresses his hope that the battle would now continue on intellectual grounds for the rebuilding of ideals. He also notes the changes in education, probably in reference to the University Acts, stating, “We have a new and untried system of education a raw affair, with all the appearance of primitive simplicity. It is an experiment and is necessarily dangerous.”<sup>787</sup> It is not clear what dangers he is referring to here, but it is interesting that the only English comment to appear in the magazine on the enactment of the University Acts is full of doubt, while all the Afrikaans commentary was full of expectation regarding the prospects the new university system might offer Afrikaans students. Finally, the English editor also comments that “[t]he strenuous sincerity of former issues has fortunately abated very largely, and though there is rubbish enough, in all conscience, it is satisfactory rubbish if examined closely.”<sup>788</sup> The November issue certainly did not continue the trend of weighty and earnest subjects seen in the previous two issues.

The Dutch editorial also comments on the change of tone in the magazine from the June issue. Even the editor himself, again D.J. van Rooy, seems to be more light-hearted. Furthermore, he feels that as far as the Afrikaans articles are concerned, the November 1918 issue is the best one yet. He criticises the June issue saying that it,

appeared outwardly so typically afrikaans [sic]. It crawled with patriotic propaganda! But, although we welcome the effervescent feeling about national affairs, only a pure art-sentiment can give life to feelings. Propaganda is explanation; art is inspiration. The one belongs in the columns of a newspaper; the other is founded in the sacredness of the human soul.<sup>789</sup>

In closing the editor remembers some students who died in the conflict of World War I. He concludes that “[t]here is peace on earth. What lies ahead in the future is uncertain, but we hope for the best for South Africa. ... And in these doubtful circumstances, we bring you our gravity and humour.—T.U.C. Student Magazine!—”<sup>790</sup> Thus seemingly the end of the World War coincided with an ebb in nationalist fervour at the College. The flag incident of the following year caused these questions to resurface again in an apparently more visible manner.

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<sup>787</sup> G. Findlay, “Editorial”, *The T.U.C. Students’ Magazine* 2(4), November 1918, p. 1.

<sup>788</sup> Findlay, “Editorial”, *The T.U.C. Students’ Magazine* 2(4), p. 1.

<sup>789</sup> D.J. van Rooy, “Editoriaal”, *The T.U.C. Students’ Magazine* 2(4), November 1918, p. 2. All translations are my own.

<sup>790</sup> Van Rooy, “Editoriaal”, *The T.U.C. Students’ Magazine* 2(4), p. 3.

## The flag incident revisited

At the end of 1918 the College was affected by the Spanish flu epidemic to such an extent that it closed early, thus bringing to a close a rather tense year at the TUC in terms of patriotic and nationalist sentiment.<sup>791</sup> Without doubt feelings regarding the language question were at a high point among students in 1918 so that Pelzer feels that if the College had not closed early something would probably have happened. Something did happen, but this event, which involved the burning of a British flag, took place the following year.<sup>792</sup> In addition, the incident was related to the ending of World War I in 1918, so in a sense it was a continuation of this year. The episode was identified in later years as a critical milestone in the passage of the College to becoming an exclusively Afrikaans medium institution.<sup>793</sup> Furthermore, it was the only act of outward aggression related to patriotic feeling which took place at the TUC in these early years.

Following the end of World War I and the return of the Union's soldiers from the front, the town of Pretoria arranged festivities to receive the country's returning leaders, Botha and Smuts, and to celebrate the peace in August 1919. All over the town Union Jacks were raised and in the tense situation which existed at the TUC, Pretoria folk wondered whether English students would have the courage to raise the flag on the College grounds.<sup>794</sup> The Union Jack was a powerful symbol for English-speakers, one of the few behind which they would mobilise.<sup>795</sup> A few English-speaking students approached Prof Wallis and asked permission to borrow his Union Jack for this purpose. This particular flag had been recovered by Wallis from the retreat at Mons during World War I. They asked permission to raise the flag and the fire brigade arrived and tied it to the top of the pole as a preventative measure so that it could not be removed.<sup>796</sup> This was seen by Afrikaans students as a direct challenge which they could not let go by. One student, the later famous Afrikaans poet, W.J. du P. Erlank<sup>797</sup> on an impulse, climbed up the pole and tore the flag off the top. He then took it into the tea room of College Hostel where a number of other nationalistically inclined students were still gathered

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<sup>791</sup> UPA, D-11-9-3-2, "Sewentig jaar van Kollegehuis", p. 5; UPA, D-6-5-1-6-22, W.J. du P. Erlank – C.H. Celliers, 21 September 1974.

<sup>792</sup> Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, p. 52.

<sup>793</sup> UPA, D-11-9-3-2, Kollegehuis, "Die Vlaginsident", *Kollegehuisgedenksblad (1915-1985)*, p. 7; Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, p. 53.

<sup>794</sup> UPA, D-6-5-1-6-22, W.J. du P. Erlank – C.H. Celliers, 21 September 1974.

<sup>795</sup> Lambert, "'An unknown people': reconstructing British South African identity", p. 606.

<sup>796</sup> UPA, D-6-5-1-6-22, W.J. du P. Erlank – C.H. Celliers, 21 September 1974.

<sup>797</sup> Also known as Duke Erlank or Eitemal.

discussing the matter of the flag. Some of these tore up the flag and then it was doused with lamp oil and burned in a coal bin behind the hostel.<sup>798</sup>

According to Erlank's account of the event, the time leading up to the event was characterised by hostility in Pretoria, largely due to the returning soldiers. There were periodic physical clashes between these soldiers and TUC students in the town and a lot of mutual antagonism existed. Some Afrikaners resented the upsurge of loyalist sentiment for Great Britain and the Empire which the conclusion of the War had engendered. On the campus, however, he explains that "a kind of more serious underground stirring"<sup>799</sup> was taking place. According to Erlank, though not an organised movement, in the tea rooms of the residence small groups of students gathered periodically to discuss the situation and their priority was to transform the College into an Afrikaans institution.<sup>800</sup>

A few days after the flag incident, Prof Paterson addressed the student body in what Erlank describes as "the most troubled speech that I have heard in years". He describes Paterson's shaking voice, expressing more disappointment than anger. After this meeting Erlank went to see Prof Paterson and claimed responsibility for the incident. Prof Paterson's handling of the affair, as told by Erlank, is very interesting and displays, as do other aspects of this story, that a sense of honour and broad-mindedness in line with broad South Africanism existed among staff and students, regardless of their political or patriotic convictions. Erlank gave Paterson three reasons for his actions.<sup>801</sup> In the first place, he objected to political speculation at the College; in the second place, as one who was "republican born" he saw the flag as a symbol of lost independence; and in the third place, he objected to the fact that the flag was not raised in the proper way but tied at the top of the pole by the fire brigade, thus making it "a challenge to every nationalist Afrikaner". He went on, "and we have a queer way of accepting all challenges forced upon us, like for instance the challenge of the Anglo Boer War." Erlank states that for a brief moment he saw something of a smile behind Paterson's glasses. Paterson conceded that he could understand Erlank's last two reasons but objected to

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<sup>798</sup> UPA, D-6-5-1-6-22, W.J. du P. Erlank – C.H. Celliers, 21 September 1974. Van der Merwe casts doubt on many of the details of the incident, although the account of W.J. du P. Erlank which is the primary source regarding the event does not appear to be untrustworthy due to the amount of detail it includes and Erlank's critique of his own part in the affair.

<sup>799</sup> UPA, D-6-5-1-6-22, W.J. du P. Erlank – C.H. Celliers, 21 September 1974. All translations from Erlank's reminiscences are my own.

<sup>800</sup> UPA, D-6-5-1-6-22, W.J. du P. Erlank – C.H. Celliers, 21 September 1974.

<sup>801</sup> Van der Merwe casts doubt on later beliefs in Erlank's nationalist motivations and merely ascribes Erlank's actions to the boisterousness of youth.



his first stating, “I would be the last person in the world to make this college a field for political speculation”. The meeting ended with a warm handshake.<sup>802</sup>

In the period following the incident Paterson did what he could to soften the official reaction to Erlank’s actions, demonstrating his commitment to conciliation and his hopes to preserve the broad South African ideal at the College. In later accounts of the flag incident emphasis is laid on how Erlank was punished for his role, without mention of the fact that the decision to rusticate him for six weeks was a much softer punishment than what other parties had desired.<sup>803</sup> This punishment was viewed as harsh for an act of “youthful indiscretion”.<sup>804</sup> Erlank later heard that Paterson pleaded for him like a father when the matter was discussed on the College Council and certain members felt that he should be expelled from all South African universities for a period of five years. There was also a bitter struggle in the joint meeting of Senate and Council regarding the matter. Furthermore, when Paterson wrote to Erlank’s father about the matter, he attempted to soften the blow by only referring briefly to Erlank’s actions and punishment and expanding at length regarding Erlank’s commendable attitude.<sup>805</sup>

Another aspect of Erlank’s firsthand account of the flag incident which is missing from various retellings of the episode is the pervasive sense of broad-mindedness which existed among a good number of the students and staff. Van der Merwe also feels that this is an aspect that is missing from the official account of the institution’s history as a whole.<sup>806</sup> The later abridged versions of the flag incident which evidently used Erlank’s account as a base omit sections such as his experiences at the English Potchefstroom High School, the details of his dealings with Prof Paterson, the fact that the English-speaking but republican minded registrar Advocate A.A. Roberts offered Erlank lodging at his home when he was asked to leave the College residence and the visit of the English students who had been responsible for the raising of the flag to Erlank to discuss the matter over a cigarette. The actual burning of the flag captures the nationalist imagination, but many of the details confirm that white

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<sup>802</sup> UPA, D-6-5-1-6-22, W.J. du P. Erlank – C.H. Celliers, 21 September 1974.

<sup>803</sup> Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, pp. 52-53; UPA, D-11-9-3-2, “Die Vlaginsident”, p. 7.

<sup>804</sup> Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, p. 52; UPA, D-11-9-3-2, “Die Vlaginsident”, p. 7.

<sup>805</sup> UPA, D-6-5-1-6-22, W.J. du P. Erlank – C.H. Celliers, 21 September 1974.

<sup>806</sup> Van der Merwe, ““Taal op Tuks””, p. 161.

identity was not such a cut and dried affair and that broad South Africanist sentiment was not completely lacking at the College.<sup>807</sup>

There is no doubt thought that the flag incident was very definitely a blow for those who had been pursuing broad South African ideals at the College. Erlank recalls how in Paterson's speech to the student body after the event he said, among other things, that "[o]ne night of racialistic hooliganism has destroyed what we have arduously built up in ten years time".<sup>808</sup> This event had brought to the surface the undercurrent of disaffection among some students at the TUC who, even according to Erlank's account, were a minority among Afrikaans-speakers. It was the first open protest that went outside the more acceptable lines of petitions and deputations, through its wild rash nature. Furthermore, though the act of a minority, it would damage the image of the College in the eyes of English-speakers, thus Paterson tried to keep the incident from reaching the ears of the public.<sup>809</sup> Apart from punishing Erlank, the response from the College administration was also to try to limit the effects of the incident. For example, with regard to Erlank "it had been urged in the interests of Education that the boy concerned should not be sent to his home, where political ill feeling was bound to be engendered."<sup>810</sup> Instead he was provided lodgings with the registrar.<sup>811</sup>

As already indicated, the official retelling of this account in later years from an Afrikaner nationalist perspective viewed the flag incident as an important milestone in the College's path towards becoming an Afrikaans institution. What is interesting is that while emphasis is always laid on Erlank's behaviour as a rash act of youth, it is also credited with important meaning in the struggle for Afrikaans rights at the TUC. Pelzer feels that though this was a passing act, it highlighted among some the backward position of the Afrikaans-speaking student and inspired them to strive to further their interests.<sup>812</sup> A later Rector of UP, E.M. Hamman, explained the significance of the event as follows:

That flag incident of early 1919, symbol of the resistance of the Afrikaner student at Tukkies against foreign control and against foreign ideologies, I regard as

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<sup>807</sup> UPA, D-6-5-1-6-22, W.J. du P. Erlank – C.H. Celliers, 21 September 1974; UPA, D-11-9-3-2, "Die Vlaginsident", p. 7; "Die vlag-episode sal Duke Erlank ewig met Tuks verbind", *Hoofstad*, 23 April 1980; Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, pp. 52-53.

<sup>808</sup> UPA, D-6-5-1-6-22, W.J. du P. Erlank – C.H. Celliers, 21 September 1974.

<sup>809</sup> UPA, B-5-1-1, Minutes of a special meeting of the Senate, 27 August 1919, p. 334.

<sup>810</sup> UPA, B-5-1-1, Minutes of a special meeting of the Senate, 1 September 1919, p. 336.

<sup>811</sup> UPA, D-6-5-1-6-22, W.J. du P. Erlank – C.H. Celliers, 21 September 1974.

<sup>812</sup> Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, p. 53.

having been the seed out of which this great Afrikaans University, the largest among the residential universities in the RSA rose up and grew.<sup>813</sup>

What is interesting here is that the English-speaking influence at the College was regarded as “foreign”. This strengthens the thought, highlighted by Lambert, that for many Afrikaans-speakers in the twentieth century, English-speakers were not regarded as true South Africans, a fact which stood in the way of cultivating a new broad South African nationality.<sup>814</sup>

Much like the rebellion, the retrospective retelling of this incident added more symbolic significance and meaning to it than was probably due. The version told by the chief protagonist, Erlank, reveals that it was more nuanced and complex. Nonetheless, it did in some respects signal the decline of broad South African ideals at the College. The language medium question would flare up again in the early 1920s at the College, with a stormy battle in the press in which the foundations of conciliation and broad South Africanism were debated.<sup>815</sup> Paterson resigned as Rector in 1921 due to ill health, although some perceived that his departure was as a result of the growing tide of Afrikaner cultural aspirations at the College. In 1924 he took up a position at the University College of Auckland in New Zealand.<sup>816</sup>

## Conclusion

On the one hand, the overall environment at the TUC seemed to genuinely favour the cultivation of broad South Africanism. There is much evidence of the atmosphere as one of personal contact between staff and students and of a vibrant student life, indicating the existence of the “friction of mind on mind” deemed essential for promoting broad mindedness and tolerance. Certainly this broad mindedness did exist at the College to a greater degree than was later portrayed in the institution’s official history. Students and staff were willing to give equal recognition to both sections of the white population and even in the more aggressive flag incident, there is evidence of a broad South Africanist spirit of understanding and conciliation. On the other hand, however, there was a growing, albeit

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<sup>813</sup> UPA, D-11-9-3-2, “Die Vlaginsident”, p. 7. My translation.

<sup>814</sup> Lambert, “South African British? Or Dominion South Africans?”, p. 203.

<sup>815</sup> “Politics and the T.U.C. Charge refuted”, *The Pretoria News*, 25 August 1922; “The T.U.C. A question of medium”, *The Pretoria News*, 2 September 1922; “Politics and the T.U.C. Dr. Reinink’s letter”, *The Pretoria News*, 5 September 1922; “Medium question. Another open letter”, *The Pretoria News*, 12 September 1922; “Language and the T.U.C. Students’ scheme. Bilingualism: the ideal”, *The Pretoria News*, 19 September 1922; “The T.U.C.”, *The Pretoria News*, 21 September 1922; “The T.U.C.”, *The Pretoria News*, 25 September 1922.

<sup>816</sup> Van der Watt, *Rectores magnifici*, p. 26.

small, voice of opposition to the homogenizing effect of broad South Africanism. This voice calling for the preservation and furtherance of an exclusive white Afrikaner identity became stronger after the outbreak of World War I. This international conflict stirred up sentiments at the College among students of both white backgrounds. English-speakers were quick to embrace the rallying call of the British Empire while for Afrikaans-speakers, the World War brought to mind associations with their own recent conflict with Britain during the South African War. Thus it can be argued that World War I and the ensuing 1914 rebellion hindered the development of broad South Africanism at the TUC. The pursuit of an exclusive Afrikaner identity is also apparent in the increasing demands for the introduction of Afrikaans as a medium at the College which took place during these years of World War I. The 1919 flag incident brought many of these sentiments into the open, but also should not be interpreted too narrowly as a sign of a planned movement on the campus. Rather it was a kind of bubbling over of the frustrations of a very small group of nationalistically inclined students. In a sense the above events pointed to broad South Africanism's increasing lack of real success at the institution

## CHAPTER VIII

### EPILOGUE

The growth of universities worldwide is a significant feature of the history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries so that today universities are a prominent feature of the education landscape throughout the globe. The history of these essentially European institutions' development offers historians another angle on the past. This is particularly true when university history moves away from being merely commemorative and places the university in its historical context, highlighting the relationship between universities and the particular societies they serve. In the case of this study, by investigating broad South Africanism in the context of universities, more light is shed on the one hand, on white South African identity politics and on the other hand, on higher education in the country.

South African university establishment occurred after universities in Europe had enjoyed a number of centuries of change, expansion and growth. These developments were particularly marked in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the period prior to the main era of university expansion globally. By the end of the nineteenth century a number of models and features of universities had become established in various places. Growing nationalisms, industrialisation, urbanisation and professionalization caused universities to evolve to include new focus on research, increasing vocational studies, new disciplines and expansion in student numbers and in the social classes these represented. In Great Britain a number of models developed which would profoundly influence the South African university system. While mutual influences can be traced between these models, their existence highlights the lack of uniformity in the higher education landscape at the time universities were beginning to develop in South Africa.

The Transvaal University College was established at this time amidst much debate and reform of the university system in South Africa as a whole. In the wake of the South African War and in the time around the formation of the Union of South Africa, the form and functions of universities and colleges were contested issues. This is particularly true in the Transvaal where amid controversy higher education was divided between the regions two principal cities. This division between Johannesburg and Pretoria highlighted different understandings of the function of universities and was in essence a division over which British model would best suit the Transvaal's needs. Proponents of the civic university model

favoured Johannesburg and the more functional vocational training which an institution of higher learning could offer. Those who advocated a kind of Oxbridge education preferred the more rural environment of Pretoria. It is interesting, as these preferences related to the city which should be the centre of higher education also matched some of the discourse regarding broad South Africanism. Pretoria, which was Smuts's choice, appeared more in keeping with the needs of those who promoted broad South Africanism. The capitalism of Johannesburg did not appeal to broad South Africanists while Pretoria seems to have been better suited to the broad South African ideal of being rooted in the land. Interestingly, however, Smuts's "temporary" arrangement of higher education between the region's two principal cities ultimately provided the basis for higher education in the Transvaal to develop along separate linguistic lines and therefore in fact produced the opposite effect of that envisaged by broad South Africanism.

The matter of broad South Africanism was a critical part of the discourse surrounding white identity and unity in this period after the South African War when racism between the two white races was rife. It was promoted in slightly differing forms by the Milner administration in the Transvaal and the Het Volk government of the responsible Transvaal government. The formation of the Union was regarded by broad South Africanists as a significant milestone in the quest for white unity. The desire to promote broad South Africanism was very much tied up with the perceived function of the newly established universities and colleges in the country. It is significant that broad South Africanist concerns feature prominently in the literature of the time regarding the university question in the country. The idea of conciliation being a critical part of education is often credited entirely to Smuts in popular consciousness, but in fact this notion can already be seen earlier in Rhodes and in the case of the Transvaal it is articulated clearly ahead of Smuts by founding Transvaal Technical Institute Professor, H.S. Hele-Shaw.

Despite the promotion of broad South Africanism from the side of government, this period also saw the emergence and development of a more exclusive white Afrikaner nationalism. This competing white identity drew on language, ethnic ties and religion as binding factors and "can perhaps be best understood as a response to the social dislocations and problems posed by the uneven development of capitalism in South Africa, the direct outcome of the

changes wrought by the mineral discoveries in the political economy of southern Africa and the imperial interventions that ensued.”<sup>817</sup>

These above differing aspirations regarding white identity can be identified in the first decade of the history of the TUC. It is evident that from the outset, there was a commitment on the part of the College’s authorities to the government’s stance on broad South Africanism. Furthermore, student activities and writing show that initially broad South Africanism also received support from the student body. The student contributions to *The T.U.C. Students’ Magazine* in this first decade of the College’s life offer some interesting insights into the ways in which some students experienced the notions of broad South Africanism and conciliation. In a general sense, many of the themes common to broad South Africanism, like the romance of the veld and the belief in the progress of technology and industry in improving the welfare of South Africans, are referred to in both English and Afrikaans student writing. They are however not always linked to the idea of white unity and did not necessarily promote this goal of broad South Africanism. Furthermore, the way many of these themes are addressed in the contributions shows that both English and Afrikaans writers identified strongly with South Africa as a motherland and had a sense of ownership of and loyalty to the country.

Practically speaking, for both staff and students at the College, broad South Africanism and conciliation translated into the accommodation of demands for the use of both white languages. Bilingualism thus became synonymous with broad South Africanism in this context. Although it is interesting to note that in this period after the formation of Union, the notion of equal opportunities in education did not actually include in the mind of the government the idea of multiracial education or of bilingualism.<sup>818</sup> This points to the tacit side of broad South Africanism which assumed that this identity would be Anglophone. It also highlights the interesting position of the TUC as a College which endeavoured to introduce a medium other than English at this time.

Among the student contributions which touched on specifically South African topics, the large majority was written in Afrikaans, making it appear that Afrikaners engaged more directly with questions related to their identity than their English-speaking counterparts.

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<sup>817</sup> Marks and Trapido, “The politics of race, class and nationalism”, p. 10.

<sup>818</sup> Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, p. 153.

These articles, essays and poems pick up a number of themes which became powerfully symbolic in Afrikaner nationalist rhetoric. A recurring theme is Republican nostalgia. This was alluded to in references to Boers, portrayals of rural life and descriptions which demonstrated reverence for the nobility of character and core values of the Boers. Another frequent theme in Afrikaans contributions was the South African War and the suffering associated with it. The predominance of this theme was an understandable consequence of the War and a notable characteristic of growing Afrikaans literature of the time.<sup>819</sup> The interest in and hankering for the past in these themes can be seen as an endeavour to establish a sense of Afrikaner identity. As mentioned earlier, the master narrative of the past was important in justifying and legitimising Afrikaner identity. Furthermore, the presentation of these themes in the students' writing often conveyed repugnance for the British imperial connection. This connection, as seen earlier, was also an important part of both conciliation and broad South Africanism. Thus, much of this writing in the Afrikaans language undermined the cultivation of this identity.

The white unity which was envisaged by the promotion of broad South Africanism was thus to prove to be elusive. After the South African War, both white groups were on the defensive footing. English-speakers, though dominating commerce were in the minority numerically and also losing ground in national and local politics. Furthermore, for the majority of English-speakers the granting of equal language rights was merely a gesture and there was not much thought given to the implementation of such a stipulation. Many Afrikaners were more economically disadvantaged and some faced a changed economy from agrarian pursuits to a rapid industrialisation with accompanying urbanisation. The overt imperialism and anglicisation associated with the South African War and the initial period of recovery, also led to sentiments of loss, suspicion and threat to their distinct identity. The cultivation of a new national identity was a means to raise up and unite an equally disparate Afrikaner population. In this struggle to regain a distinct and exclusive national identity, the Afrikaans language assumed the paramount position. The defence of equal language rights in particular was therefore no light matter for Afrikaners.

Into this already fragile situation came the storms of World War I and the 1914 rebellion, further polarising white South Africans. In a sense the proximity of the World War to the

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<sup>819</sup> Hofmeyr, "Building a nation from words", p. 109.



South African War pushed the ideal of broad South Africanism beyond reach and meant that conciliation did not stand a fair chance at all. The striking effect of these events on the consciousness of the TUC students is clearly seen in student contributions to *The T.U.C. Students' Magazine*. It is also confirmed in later student testimonies and in Erlank's description of the flag incident. For example, the latter describes himself as rebel-minded with an admiration for Jopie Fourie, the executed rebel.<sup>820</sup> For Afrikaans-speaking students in particular, World War I had two noticeable effects seen in their writing: on the one hand it stirred up the memory of the recent South African War and on the other hand its elevation of British interests left them feeling threatened. The response at the College to these events confirms Dubow's feeling that broad South Africanism's highpoint was somewhere between Milner's departure and the outbreak of World War I.<sup>821</sup>

It is significant that from the perusal of the magazine, English-speaking students were silent and became more peripheral on many of these matters relating to broad South Africanism and national and international affairs. Except for the article on the definition of a true South African in the first issue, there are no articles in English which deal with the questions of identity, language, culture and even very little that directly relates to politics or world affairs, with perhaps the exception of the World War I. Just as English-speaking South Africans' history is often obscured by an emphasis on Afrikaner national identity and its development,<sup>822</sup> so the English-speaking students' views are difficult to discern amidst the more overwhelming Afrikaans voice in the magazine. This may point to an ill-defined sense of English identity.<sup>823</sup> Many English-speaking South Africans had not yet picked up peculiarly South African culture, perspectives and customs, like Afrikaners had. Lambert highlights this vague sense of English-speaking identity in the following attempt to define South Africans of British descent:

Britishness can be seen as essentially social and cultural, based on a common language and shared social and cultural values. It was, however, an allusive and changing concept and British South Africans, like Britons elsewhere, would have been hard-pressed to define precisely what it meant. Negatively it implied being neither Afrikaner nor black while politically it involved ... acceptance of an imperial ideology centring on loyalty to crown and empire.<sup>824</sup>

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<sup>820</sup> UPA, D-6-5-1-6-22, W.J. du P. Erlank – C.H. Celliers, 21 September 1974.

<sup>821</sup> Dubow, "Imagining the New South Africa in the era of reconstruction", p. 78.

<sup>822</sup> Lambert, "'An unknown people': reconstructing British South African identity", p. 599.

<sup>823</sup> Lambert's articles refer to the English-speaking South Africans as "an unknown people" and as "uncertain of their identity". See Lambert, "'An unknown people': reconstructing British South African identity" and Lambert, "Engelssprekende Suid-Afrikaners: onseker van hul identiteit".

<sup>824</sup> Lambert, "'An unknown people': reconstructing British South African identity", p. 606.

This loyalty was stirred up with the outbreak of World War I, also seen in one submission to the magazine, indicating that many English-speaking South Africans still had strong ties to Britain and that their notions of nationalism included belonging to the British Empire. The only hint that broad South Africanism enjoyed currency with English-speaking students is in the English descriptions of the South African landscape which demonstrated a sense of ownership and belonging to the country. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that though the contributions were not numerous, the only positive support for broad South Africanism was in articles written in English.

Many of the Afrikaans literary contributions can be viewed as attempts by students to define what it meant to be an Afrikaner, often in reaction to the pervasive influence of broad South Africanist thought. This highlights the great uncertainty regarding identity which some Afrikaners felt in the changed situation after the South African War where the status of Boer was associated with the previous dispensation. These literary pieces therefore confirm the fragmented condition of Afrikaners who had undergone dramatic changes in their whole way of life. This is in line with Isabel Hofmeyr's identification of a seeking among Afrikaans-speakers to define more clearly what it was to be an Afrikaner and to create a stronger sense of self in Afrikaans literary and media productions of this time.<sup>825</sup> Furthermore it also confirms the idea that there was at this stage a looser, more shifting relationship between language and identity than that which was later connected with the country.

The writing which concerned itself most overtly with Afrikaner identity represented on the one hand a concern for Afrikaner rights, particularly related to language, and an encouragement to remain true to Afrikaner heritage. On the other hand, a more extreme version of the above concern expressed in the magazine was outright opposition to conciliation, white unification and broad South Africanism. It is significant that a good number of Afrikaans articles commented particularly on higher education matters as they related to Afrikaners. These expressed the desire to transform the College into an Afrikaans institution, with whatever that entailed. It referred not merely to the use of the Afrikaans language but also to the penetration of a certain culture. This also matched endeavours in popular Afrikaans magazines such as *Die Brandwag* and *Die Huisgenoot* to repackage all

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<sup>825</sup> Hofmeyr, "Building a nation from words", p. 110.

aspects of life as ‘Afrikaans’.<sup>826</sup> To the list of Afrikaans food, architecture, dress, etiquette, humour, music, handcrafts, agriculture and others, an Afrikaans university college was a natural addition. In contrast, English-speakers still largely relied on British cultural products in the form of literature, popular reading and even newspapers and thus did not develop a distinct South African identity. This also hindered the development of genuine broad South Africanism, as it was coupled for many in an underlying belief in British racial superiority.<sup>827</sup>

Expressions of this desire to transform the College into a distinctly Afrikaans institution grew in the TUC magazine hand in hand with growing action on the part of the student body to demand rights for the Afrikaans language. But both the contributions in the magazine and the testimony of Erlank related to the flag incident reinforce the notion that groups on the campus were not monolithic and that the drive to establish the place of Afrikaans was more random and unpremeditated than it was later described. Erlank emphasizes that the sentiments related to furthering Afrikaans interests were below the surface and did not represent an organised movement.<sup>828</sup> This corroborates Van der Merwe’s criticism of the presentation of the language question in *Ad Destinatum* as a focused struggle to establish the place of Afrikaans.<sup>829</sup>

In addition, Erlank’s account of the College in 1918 and 1919 describes the overwhelming majority of Afrikaans-speaking students as being in themselves inwardly divided, on the one hand wanting to defend the politics of “their generals” which was coming under fire from nationalists and, on the other hand, feeling the threat to their cultural tradition consisting of their language, way of life and religion, from what he viewed as the more and more provoking English both in Pretoria and from Buxton hostel.<sup>830</sup> This kind of description shows that not only were Afrikaners not homogenous, but the movement to secure their rights was not organised. It also shows the “schism” which did exist between English and Afrikaans students, which the establishment of denominational hostels only aggravated. Furthermore, it highlights the sense of threat which Afrikaans students experienced, particularly as national

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<sup>826</sup> Hofmeyr, “Building a nation from words”, p. 111.

<sup>827</sup> Lambert, “South African British? Or Dominion South Africans?”, p. 209; Marks and Trapido, “The politics of race, class and nationalism”, p. 7.

<sup>828</sup> UPA, D-6-5-1-6-22, W.J. du P. Erlank – C.H. Celliers, 21 September 1974.

<sup>829</sup> Van der Merwe, “Taal op Tuks”, pp. 155 & 163. Giliomee highlights how the historiographical presentation of the Afrikaans language movement and of Afrikaner nationalism “as unstoppable progressive forces” was a characteristic of Afrikaner nationalist writing in the 1960s and 1970s. This corresponds to the time at which Pelzer wrote *Ad Destinatum*. Giliomee, “The beginnings of Afrikaner nationalism”, p. 122.

<sup>830</sup> UPA, D-6-5-1-6-22, W.J. du P. Erlank – C.H. Celliers, 21 September 1974.

and international events like World War I, the government's handling of the 1914 rebellion and the post-World War I peace celebrations highlighted the apparent preeminence of Britain's interests. These events polarised white South Africans, as English-speakers rallied behind the cause of the British Empire and Afrikaners were left feeling insulted.

In essence, broad South Africanism envisaged the blending of the best of both white sections into a new South African identity. In practice, however, particularly in higher education, Afrikaans-speakers felt at risk and that their distinct cultural identity was under threat in a very Anglophone system. The unifying goal was mistaken for an anglicising mission, perhaps understandably. Erlank's story tells of the serious discussions among nationalistically minded Afrikaans students in 1918 which were not merely "an intellectual game, but a menacing fight for self-preservation".<sup>831</sup> This corresponds with a wider sense among Afrikaners in the first half of the twentieth-century that "[l]anguage, culture and nation were endangered".<sup>832</sup> Furthermore, some of the submissions to the student magazine hint at the idea that the end result of conciliation and broad South Africanism would be black-white racial mixing, something which was unacceptable for most Afrikaners and white South Africans at the time.

Furthermore, the location of the College in the country's administrative capital may also have strengthened this foreboding feeling, as the TUC was right in the heart of the place where the gospel of conciliation and broad South Africanism was being proclaimed. The proximity of the TUC to the executive seat of government in Pretoria is therefore significant. *Lockhead's Guide, Handbook & Directory of Pretoria's* 1913 edition comments on the fact that the Union buildings was a "prominent feature" in the panorama seen from the College buildings.<sup>833</sup>

Interestingly, as mentioned earlier, English-speakers appear silent on many of the above matters. When they do engage with issues of unity and discord among the student body, there is a levity attached to their discussions which is very different from the attitude of Afrikaans-speakers for whom these questions were more a matter of life and death. The self-assured attitude may be attributed to a wider sense of faith in the benefits of Empire and even to ideas of racial superiority, mentioned earlier, linked to economic power.

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<sup>831</sup> UPA, D-6-5-1-6-22, W.J. du P. Erlank – C.H. Celliers, 21 September 1974.

<sup>832</sup> Marks and Trapido, "The politics of race, class and nationalism", p. 18.

<sup>833</sup> UPA, E-7-2, *Lockhead's Guide, Handbook & Directory of Pretoria*, 1913, p. 120.

The above discussion confirms that language became increasingly a symbol of identity for Afrikaners and that language rights equalled Afrikaner rights. The point of dispute therefore became the language. While the idea of conciliation and broad South Africanism did not oppose the place of Afrikaans in essence – in fact it can be argued that the beginning of Afrikaans medium classes arose out of a conciliatory spirit on the part of the College’s administration – in practice, the strengthening of separate language rights set up barriers between the two groups. The College was left in an impossible position as authorities felt that English students would be drawn away if too much concession was given to Afrikaans students, while it appears that Afrikaans students too began to favour institutions which catered more specifically for them.<sup>834</sup> Therefore, the language question became an insurmountable obstacle to bringing students together and showed that white South Africans from both sections had not really bought into the project of conciliation, which in this context became synonymous with bilingualism, and were at heart unwilling to have their identity, habits and language adjusted. It can also be argued that it was perhaps too much to expect from a young institution which was still lacking the influences which are derived from a longstanding atmosphere of tradition and university culture to promote a lasting new white identity on its campus.

As regards the official policy regarding the language medium, it is certainly not as simple a matter as Pelzer presents. He claims that the fact that the TUC Council did not for more than a decade embrace the idea of a single medium policy was viewed as evidence that this body was not favourably oriented towards Afrikaans.<sup>835</sup> He states, that

[i]t should thus be apparent that the University Council which was in the first place responsible for determining the policy of the institution, was for many years not in favour of an Afrikaans orientation.<sup>836</sup>

On the contrary, however, the first discussion of the language medium showed that the College authorities realised that the English-only policy could not proceed. The action of the Council, therefore shows the opposite, that is, that the Council was from the beginning willing to accommodate a language other than English, unlike many other university colleges, where no steps were taken to introduce another medium. In addition, as seen in the above

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<sup>834</sup> The percentage of Afrikaans-speaking students who supported the idea of a single Afrikaans medium institution at this time is unclear. Van der Merwe, “‘Taal op Tuks’”, p. 158.

<sup>835</sup> Van der Merwe, “‘Taal op Tuks’”, p. 153.

<sup>836</sup> Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, p. 49. My own translation.

discussion, earlier policies and actions pursued by the College's authorities attempted to accommodate to a degree the second official language. Furthermore, as certain colleges pursued a default English only policy, it was difficult to sustain a bilingual college, as English students would probably favour exclusively English institutions. It can be concluded that one problem with regard to the medium question was that if bilingual education was the ideal, it should have been pursued at other colleges.

Giliomee has commented that “[t]he language issue was the weak spot of the Het Volk leaders.”<sup>837</sup> These leaders were at this point the chief promoters of broad South Africanism and yet, perhaps exposing the flaws in this ideology, they did not take a definite stance on the matter of language, hoping that the issue would resolve itself.<sup>838</sup> The Minister of Education F.S. Malan's response to the TUC demonstrates the weak response of government to this critical question. Furthermore, the TUC Council and Senate's attempts to deal with the matter highlight the difficulties of applying broad South Africanism in practice. As mentioned earlier, the fact of opening the door to the Afrikaans medium in the name of conciliation raised questions of practice to which there were no simple answers and in the end undermined the very ideal of broad South Africanism which it was trying to promote. In a sense the very pursuit of broad South Africanism was also perceived as a threat to some Afrikaners who reacted by more strongly defending and promoting a distinct cultural identity. Therefore, this lingering debate at the TUC exposed the weaknesses of broad South African notions, particularly related to the practical implementation of the ideal and the implications of accommodating realistically diverse linguistic and cultural needs.

Former Dean of Education at UP, Jonathan Jansen's study of white Afrikaans-speaking students at UP at the beginning of the twenty-first century makes some interesting points regarding current issues of integration at the institution which relate in some ways to its early history. His investigation caused him to conclude that concepts regarding race and culture are formed in the earliest years of a child's education, in the home and in primary schools. He argues that an insular culture at home, or early on, makes it difficult for students to adapt at university.<sup>839</sup> In spite of common residences, lecture halls and cafeterias, not much real integration is apparent. The mere fact of placing students together side by side in various

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<sup>837</sup> Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 271.

<sup>838</sup> Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 362.

<sup>839</sup> J.D. Jansen, *Knowledge in the blood. Confronting race and the Apartheid past*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), pp. 83-113.

settings does not necessarily promote genuine understanding or even interaction.<sup>840</sup> These notions were already present in the minds of some who were promoters of broad South Africanism in education. For example, as seen earlier, the 1928 Van der Horst Commission pointed out the important role of primary and secondary education in genuinely overcoming “racial” barriers. The awareness of the influence of a students’ home on their outlook is also apparent in the flag incident when the College authorities felt it would be better for Erlank not to return home, as part of his punishment, where he was bound to be influenced by political ideas. With regard to the TUC, even though it was a mere fraction of the size of today’s university and the atmosphere was one where students and professors knew each other more personally, the strength of cultural background for some from both English and Afrikaans-speaking homes still prevailed.

However, it can be argued that broad South Africanism and the bilingual ideal endured for at least two decades at the College, despite the simmering dissatisfaction related to the language medium question. It was an ideal, embodied in what became known as the 50-50 policy, which the staff especially endeavoured to embrace. In the 1920s sentiments flared up again, this time in the press, as the College was labelled “a hot-bed of Nationalism”.<sup>841</sup> On closer inspection, the charge was made not because there were so-called nationalist professors or students who promoted nationalism. In this case the very fact that certain subjects were taught through the medium of Afrikaans was seen by English-speakers as a form of aggressive nationalism.<sup>842</sup> In response Professor Reinink commented on the extensive amount of hours which had been devoted to the discussion of the medium question in the Senate.<sup>843</sup> At this time again the unwillingness to adopt a unilingual policy was given as evidence of aspirations to carry out the ideals of broad South Africanism and conciliation at the college. The reaction of students to this flaring up of the medium question was a resolution at a general meeting in favour of a bilingual approach at the College. Significantly, an article in *The Pretoria News* reporting on this meeting states that,

[n]ot a single voice was raised in defence of uni-lingualism. Every speaker professed himself imbued with the fact that bi-lingualism was the only way out of the difficulty and every speaker laid stress on the fact that all personal

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<sup>840</sup> Jansen, *Knowledge in the blood*, pp. 134-144 & 244-246. Jansen also demonstrates the difficulties of various methods to accommodate two language mediums in the university setting administratively.

<sup>841</sup> “Politics and the T.U.C. Charge refuted”, *The Pretoria News*, 25 August 1922.

<sup>842</sup> “Politics and the T.U.C. Charge refuted”, *The Pretoria News*, 25 August 1922; “The T.U.C. A question of medium”, *The Pretoria News*, 2 September 1922; “Politics and the T.U.C. Dr. Reinink’s letter”, *The Pretoria News*, 5 September 1922.

<sup>843</sup> “Medium question. Another open letter”, *The Pretoria News*, 12 September 1922.

considerations should be subordinated to the greater ideal of a truly bi-lingual college as an example to South Africa, an institution worthy of the Administrative Capital of the Union, and a true embodiment of the principles of bi-lingualism and toleration.<sup>844</sup>

For others, however, the bilingual question was too mixed up in political considerations to merit its serious pursuit at the College and had even caused the atmosphere at the TUC to become “violently disturbed”.<sup>845</sup> The College found itself in a difficult place as the Council was aware that a number of Afrikaans-speaking students were planning to go to Grey College in the Orange Free State in order to have certain classes in Afrikaans.<sup>846</sup> This situation became even more complicated when English-speakers were outraged by Prof Brookes’ publication of republican poetry in 1922. In 1923 calm appears to have returned to the College until virtually the end of the 1920s.<sup>847</sup> In the meantime, the Senate set itself the impossible task “to subordinate considerations of medium to the maintenance of the highest possible efficiency in the work of the College, but subject to this to do all it can to meet the legitimate claims of both sections of the population”.<sup>848</sup> The critical factor in furthering facilities for instruction in both medium remained the need of further funds.<sup>849</sup>

Despite the undercurrents which had surfaced in the 1920s, when the TUC received its university charter in 1930, becoming the University of Pretoria, the chief function of the institution was still understood by some to be its unifying and nationalising role in line with broad South Africanism. Speaking on this occasion, UP’s first Chancellor, Justice Tielman Roos echoed the aspirations which have been discussed at length in this study related to the institution’s initial establishment in the following statement:

The University of the Capital, representative more than any other of every section of the national life, has an unequalled opportunity of demonstrating to the South African people co-operation and goodwill in practice. If it makes diversity in unity its goal, if the racial groups represented will set the example of speaking and thinking rather of the contributions which they can make to the common weal than of their rights, if in a spirit of real fair-play and common sense the needs of all sections are met up to the limit of possibility, the University of Pretoria will set an example to South Africa the value of which it will be impossible to over-

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<sup>844</sup> “Language and the T.U.C. Students’ scheme. Bilingualism: the ideal”, *The Pretoria News*, 19 September 1922.

<sup>845</sup> “The T.U.C.”, *The Pretoria News*, 21 September 1922.

<sup>846</sup> UPA, B-4-1-2, Minutes of Council meeting, 2 November 1922, p. 438.

<sup>847</sup> Boucher, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa*, pp. 204-205; Rautenbach (ed.), *Ad Destinatum*, pp. 54-56.

<sup>848</sup> UPA, B-5-1-1, Minutes of a regular meeting of the Senate, 20 June 1923, p. 454.

<sup>849</sup> UPA, B-5-1-1, Minutes of a regular meeting of the Senate, 20 June 1923, pp. 454-455.



estimate. Pretoria will always support its University, but the support will be universal and enthusiastic only if the University refuses to know racial limitations or sectional boundaries.<sup>850</sup>

For Roos, the success of broad South Africanism depended on “absolute language equality” at the University as two pillars upon which to build the future of the country.<sup>851</sup> Roos’s speech highlights how among some the hope of broad South Africanism was still alive after almost two decades of the institution’s life. Reminiscent of the earlier dream of a national university, Roos declared,

We must not make this in the narrow sense of the word an African or an Afrikaans University; but, in the widest sense of the word a South African University. (Applause.) It will be for the first time in South African history; because I do not regard any university as South African university unless both languages are known when the students leave it—it may be the most wonderful university in the world, but unless they know both languages it would not be a South African university. ... If it becomes a purely Afrikaans University it will be the graveyard of my hopes; if it becomes an English University it will be the graveyard of my hopes; but if it becomes a South African University in the fullest sense of the word we may fear no graveyard of our hopes, but enjoy the realisation of our aspiration fully.<sup>852</sup>

The broad South African sentiment of Roos’s speech was strengthened by UCT Vice-chancellor and Principal, Sir Carruthers Beattie’s response on this occasion. He echoed that by bringing students from both white sections together and promoting unity among them, a solution would be found to many of the problems the country faced.<sup>853</sup> Thus at the closing of the period of the TUC, the aspiration that higher education would promote broad South Africanism remained alive.

Two years later, however, the Council of the University of Pretoria decided that in terms of the language medium, the university would cater primarily for Afrikaans-speakers. This decision to move away from the bilingual 50-50 policy was the final blow to broad South Africanist aspirations at the institution.<sup>854</sup> To use the words of Tielman Roos, it was to be the

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<sup>850</sup> “The University of Pretoria”, *The Pretoria News*, 9 October 1930.

<sup>851</sup> “To unify South Africa. Ideal of the University of Pretoria. Chancellor’s statement of policy”, *The Pretoria News*, 13 October 1930.

<sup>852</sup> “To unify South Africa. Ideal of the University of Pretoria. Chancellor’s statement of policy”, *The Pretoria News*, 13 October 1930.

<sup>853</sup> “To unify South Africa. Ideal of the University of Pretoria. Chancellor’s statement of policy”, *The Pretoria News*, 13 October 1930.

<sup>854</sup> Interestingly, even in this decision one can see evidence that the ideal of broad South Africanism had not yet worn off in then Rector A.E. Du Toit’s letter motivating the adoption of the single Afrikaans medium policy to the Council. Du Toit’s tone is not nearly as militantly Afrikaner nationalist as later Afrikaner nationalist writing

“graveyard of our hopes” – the hopes of a broad South Africanism. Quite aptly shortly before the adoption of the single medium policy Director of Education in the Transvaal, S.P.E. Boshoff “hinted at something which practically every educationalist will admit, that the whole structure of education in this province is being wrecked on bilingualism, on an ideal which, in very many cases, is utterly impracticable, at any rate so far as the schools are concerned. It is a political rather than an educational ideal.”<sup>855</sup> Boshoff touched here on the ideological significance of language in education as well as the practical difficulties of accommodating multiple language mediums. Both of these matters are seen clearly in the writing of the students in *The T.U.C. Student Magazine* and in the Senate and Council’s lengthy considerations of how to actually implement a dual medium policy.

The decision to adopt Afrikaans as the single medium at the University stirred up opposition from Pretoria’s English-speaking population who had made substantial financial investments in the institution.<sup>856</sup> UP’s founding father, Smuts, added his voice to those who disapproved of the university’s new course, terming it “a lamentable decision”.<sup>857</sup> On this occasion he again expressed his hopes regarding conciliation and broad South Africanism in education. In an article entitled “The University decision. Deplored by Gen. Smuts”, *The Pretoria News* reported that,

Alluding regretfully to the separatist tendency in education in South Africa at present, General Smuts said: ‘When I was in charge of education in the Transvaal I made a point of keeping the children of both sections together. I regret that since then new tendencies have prevailed, and we have Afrikaans medium and English medium schools. I have always thought it wrong, and still think so. I agree that keeping the children together is more difficult than separating them. But then the right course is most often the more difficult. By this policy of separation a certain amount of friction may be avoided, but it is only at the risk of creating greater friction at a later stage.’<sup>858</sup>

From the above discussion and the preceding analysis it is evident that the creation of a new broad South African white identity was not as simple as merely placing students of different backgrounds side by side in lecture halls and residences. While broad South Africanism did

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would portray him. In fact, it rather tells of numerous attempts over a long period to maintain and promote the bilingual 50-50 policy. UPA, D-6-5-1-6-22, Tuks Alumni Herinnering: Ad Destinatum I, Briefwisseling met oudstudente en ander instansies, A.E. du Toit – The Chairman of the Council, 17 August 1932.

<sup>855</sup> “Bilingualism wrecking education”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 29 August 1932. Boshoff was referring mainly to primary and secondary education but the thought can also be applied to higher education.

<sup>856</sup> “Past students and the university”, *The Pretoria News*, 14 September 1932; “Shoulder high!”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 15 September 1932.

<sup>857</sup> “The University decision. Deplored by Gen. Smuts”, *The Pretoria News*, 14 September 1932.

<sup>858</sup> “The University decision. Deplored by Gen. Smuts”, *The Pretoria News*, 14 September 1932.

to some degree take root at the TUC in its initial years, the outside storms of war and ensuing political and national developments, adversely affected its further growth and establishment. Attempting to care for another language medium added a further complication and ultimately placed the College on the path to becoming a single Afrikaans medium institution. This introduced distinctions in higher educational institutions based on language which would endure through most of the twentieth century. Thus, in some respects the burden of broad South Africanism was an impossible one for the College to bear in these beginning years amid the outside tensions which accompanied this historical period.

This failure to successfully cultivate broad South Africanism at the College was not limited to the TUC. Phillips also comments on how UCT's commitment to broad South Africanism failed to thrive between 1918 and 1948, linking it to the post-Apartheid drive to create a new South African identity and commenting on how this early lack of success may provide the university's administration with insight into their current endeavours.<sup>859</sup> In the same way today UP consists of a far more diverse and cosmopolitan student body than at any other time in its history. This diversity is regarded by the University as an "overarching strength"<sup>860</sup> and is viewed as an opportunity for the University to develop a model which would "harness" it "including its commitment to teaching in English and Afrikaans, for which the University could potentially receive international recognition."<sup>861</sup> Furthermore, similar to the discourse surrounding broad South Africanism, the section under institutional culture in the White Paper on Higher Education of 1997 states that mechanisms should be in place at South African higher education institutions which "promote a campus environment that is sensitive to racial and cultural diversity, through extracurricular activities that expose students to cultures and traditions other than their own, and scholarly activities that work towards this goal."<sup>862</sup> This document also tasks higher education with a nation building responsibility, stating that it

has an unmatched obligation, which has not been adequately fulfilled, to help lay the foundations of a critical civil society, with a culture of public debate and tolerance which accommodates differences and competing interests. It has much

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<sup>859</sup> Phillips, *The University of Cape Town*, p. ix.

<sup>860</sup> University of Pretoria, *Strategic plan. The vision, mission and plan of the University for 2025*, (Pretoria: University of Pretoria, 2011), p. 3. Internet: [http://web.up.ac.za/sitefiles/file/publications/2012/eng/STRATEGIC\\_PLAN\\_\(V11\)\\_13%20Feb.pdf](http://web.up.ac.za/sitefiles/file/publications/2012/eng/STRATEGIC_PLAN_(V11)_13%20Feb.pdf), access: 2013/03/11.

<sup>861</sup> University of Pretoria, *Strategic plan. The vision, mission and plan of the University for 2025*, p. 8.

<sup>862</sup> "Education White Paper 3. A programme for the transformation of higher education", *Government Gazette* 386(18207), 15 August 1997, p. 43.

to do, both within its own institutions and in its influence on the broader community, to strengthen the democratic ethos, the sense of common citizenship and commitment to a common good.<sup>863</sup>

The legacy of South Africa's Apartheid past, much like the South African War though of a much longer and more serious and widespread influence, makes the unifying task a complex one. One wonders whether this is an unfair demand on an institution which is also essentially burdened with the task of imparting knowledge and skills, or is the task of the university still to shape a student's character producing broad-minded, tolerant citizens?

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<sup>863</sup> "Education White Paper 3. A programme for the transformation of higher education", *Government Gazette* 386(18207), 15 August 1997, p. 8.

## CHAPTER IX

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