

'ANGRY YOUNG MEN': FA VAN JAARVELD, TS VAN ROOYEN AND THE AFRIKANER HISTORIOGRAPHICAL POLEMIC OF 1953 - 1954

...historians mistrust and hate each other perhaps more than any other species of academic ...

Nicholas Lezard quoted on the back of Anthony Grafton, *The footnote. A curious history*, (London, 2003).

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Returning from his studies in the Netherlands in 1950, FA van Jaarsveld was scathing about the apologetic and subjective attitude of historians at the University of Pretoria (UP). His attack was not based only on concerns about the state of Afrikaner historiography, but also reflected the hostility between him and his *alma mater's* history department. In the process he acted as a surrogate for the historian GD Scholtz, a close friend, who had an axe to grind with UP historians. The main counter-attack came from TS Van Rooyen, then a temporary history lecturer at UP. Although they debated the nature of Afrikaner historiography, it was very much a personal clash, fuelled by mutual jealousy and loathing. It was a polemic that ruined Van Rooyen's reputation, deeply wounded Van Jaarsveld, and had a stultifying effect on Afrikaner historiography.

Floris Albertus Van Jaarsveld was born on 5 June 1922 on the farm Rooiwal in the Heidelberg district, the fifth of seven children of farming parents. After matriculating from the Hoër Volksskool Heidelberg he studied at UP where his MA dissertation on the role of the *veldkornet* in the history of the South African Republic until 1870 was accepted with distinction in 1945. A highly intelligent, intense student, he was passionate about his subject and had a low opinion of the intellectual and teaching abilities of his history lecturers, especially of ID Bosman, the head of the department, and his MA supervisor with whom he had a bitter disagreement over the topic for his doctoral studies.¹ Van

1. For Van Jaarsveld's family background and student years see FA van Jaarsveld, *Van stamvader Adriaan tot Ernst Jacobus van Jaarsveld 1702 - 1986. 'n Stukkie Familiegeskiedenis van Onder* (Johannesburg, 1989), pp 107 - 108; JWN Tempelhoff, 'Idee, Narratief en Diskoers: Die Vroeë Intellektuele Vorming van F.A.

Jaarsveld's contempt for his supervisor intensified when he befriended the prolific historian and prominent journalist, G.D Scholtz², who was unimpressed by the quality of academic historians, especially Bosman because of his unproductivity.³

Van Jaarsveld regarded SP Engelbrecht, with even greater contempt. Engelbrecht, the Dean of the Faculty of Theology (Section A, *Nederduits Hervormde Kerk*), a church historian and an expert on Transvaal history, was intolerant, cantankerous and was allegedly dishonest (he apparently stole documents from archives) and prone to intrigue.⁴ As a part-time but influential lecturer, in the history department he was unpopular; his intolerance, prejudices and emotional behaviour antagonised students.⁵ Van Jaarsveld resented the history department's lack of intellectual freedom and the fact that lectures presented only a nationalistic view of

van Jaarsveld 1922-1950', *Historia*, 40, 1 (May 1995). Also see National Archives, Pretoria, FA van Jaarsveld Collection (hereafter VJC), vol 58, Diary, 29 Dec. 1947.

2. Scholtz did his doctorate at the Gemeentelike University of Amsterdam and became Verwoerd's right-hand man at *Die Transvaler*. D Richard, *Moedswillig die Uwe. Perspersoonlikhede in die Noorde* (Johannesburg, 1985), pp 91 - 92; FA van Jaarsveld, 'G.D. Scholtz: Historikus van en vir die Afrikaner' in *Die Evolusie van Apartheid* (Kaapstad, 1979).
3. FA van Jaarsveld, *Afrikanergeskiedskrywing: Verlede, Hede en Toekoms* (Johannesburg, 1992), p 53.
4. *Dictionary of South African Biography*, vol 5 (Pretoria, 1987), pp 242-3; Personal communications, FA Mouton and Dr PW Venter; FA Mouton and Dr WTH Beukes; FA Mouton and Prof PS Dreyer.
5. Personal communication, FA Mouton and Dr M Hugo.

the past, not allowing any deviation from the department's orthodox version. Engelbrecht was a powerful censor and academically silenced anyone who dared to deviate from what he deemed to be politically acceptable.⁶

6. VJC, vol 16, Van Jaarsveld t - Dr M Versfeld, 25 May 1953 and Van Jaarsveld - Prof PJ van Winter, 28 Feb. 1953.

AN Pelzer⁷ was the only history lecturer Van Jaarsveld found stimulating,⁸ and they had a close relationship. After Bosman's death in 1947, Pelzer became head of the department but failed to get Van Jaarsveld appointed to the vacant permanent lecturership. The selection committee held the view that he was too young for the post. He then offered Van Jaarsveld a temporary lectureship and encouraged him to apply for a bursary to study in the Netherlands.⁹

In 1948 Van Jaarsveld entered the University of Groningen in the Netherlands where he received his doctorate in September 1950 for a study on the desire for Afrikaner unity, published in 1951 as *Die Eenheidstrewa van die Republikeinse Afrikaners: Deel I, Pioniershartstogte (1836-1864)*. After the stultifying atmosphere at UP his years in the Netherlands, as a student of PJ van Winter, H Plessner and Jan Romein, had a profound effect on him. It made him aware of the shortcomings of Afrikaner historiography with its mission of service to Afrikaner nationalism. It also drew him to the philosophy of history, historical methodology and theory, which was reflected in his work. In his dissertation he reinterpreted the relationship between the Free State and Transvaal republics by focusing on the history of the Afrikaner mentality to unity.¹⁰ He did so by making use of factors such as the mobility of people, geography, psychology and the actions of leaders.¹¹

Van Jaarsveld had to make sacrifices to complete his studies and financial difficulties resulted in his wife's return to South Africa at the end of 1948. He endured these hardships to ensure an academic post back in South Africa so that he could lead Afrikaner historiography to new heights.¹² He conveyed this vision to his impatient wife:

7. For Pelzer's career see FA Mouton, 'A.N. Pelzer: A Custodian of Afrikanerdom', *South African Historical Journal*, 37 (Nov. 1997), pp 133 - 155.

8. Tempelhoff, 'Idee, Narratief en Diskoers: Die Vroeë Intellektuele Vorming van F.A. van Jaarsveld, 35-9; F.A. van Jaarsveld, *Afrikanergeskiedskrywing*, p 55.

9. VJC, vol 58, Van Jaarsveld's diary, 29 Dec. 1947; VJC vol 16, AN Pelzer - Van Jaarsveld, 9 June 1947 and 20 June 1947.

10. This was in contrast to other Afrikaner historians with their micro studies on the Afrikaner in the Free State and Transvaal. For Van Jaarsveld this type of history created studies which were nothing more than lifeless factual storerooms, and confirmed his philosophy that a macro approach was the only way to explain trends in the past. The history of the Afrikaner *volk* had to be seen in its totality.

11. J T du Bruyn, 'F.A. van Jaarsveld: Afrikanerhistorikus en Vernuwer', *Historia*, 27, 1, (May 1982), pp 57.

12. Tempelhoff, 'Idee, Narratief en Diskoers: Die Vroeë Intellektuele Vorming van F.A. van Jaarsveld, pp 43 - 52.

Ek het sulke hoë ideale gestel en is so entoesiasies om in S.- Afrika 'n nuwe rigting in ons wetenskaplike geskiedsbeoefening te bring. My studie hier was nie tevergeefs nie en ... as ek terug is, sal ons die vrugte daarvan pluk.¹³

13. *Ibid.*, p 52.

Van Jaarsveld's low opinion of Afrikaner historians was fuelled by Scholtz who regarded most of his fellow historians as subjective, apologetic, unable to be analytical, and, because of their local training, ignorant of modern trends, especially in the philosophy of history.¹⁴

In addition to Scholtz's personal contempt for academic historians, Afrikaner historiography had serious shortcomings. This resulted from the fact that the main task of Afrikaner historiography, with its focus on the struggle against British imperialism, was to legitimise and mobilise the *volk's* cause. Afrikaner historians believed that through research and the presentation of facts, without any embellishment, they would reinforce and strengthen the case of the *volk*. The result was historical writing that lacked analysis and coherence, often doing no more than uncritically and mechanically reproducing knowledge without any attempt at solving a clearly defined problem. Afrikaner historians had elevated the notion of 'scientific-objective' history to an inviolable principle and were prepared to use this principle denigrate to Afrikaner historians who departed from the fold.¹⁵

On his arrival in South Africa in late 1950, Van Jaarsveld was impatient and ambitious to change, improve and make his mark on Afrikaner historiography. These hopes were dashed when he was unable to secure an academic post because in the introduction to his dissertation, he had commented on the apologetic and subjective nature of historians associated with UP, while he used his footnotes to reprimand Pelzer and Engelbrecht for their shortcomings. To advertise his return, and his credentials, Van Jaarsveld sent copies of his dissertation to leading Afrikaner historians. He was apparently unaware that his criticisms would be ill-received, or that his approach to the past would be viewed with suspicion, and that established historians would object to his arrogant messianic approach to save Afrikaner historiography from

14. VJC, vol 16, GD Scholtz - Van Jaarsveld, 20 March 1950. (We are grateful to Johannes du Bruyn for this letter.)

15. A Grundlingh, 'Politics, Principles and Problems of a Profession: Afrikaner Historians and their Discipline, c.1920-c.1965', *Perspectives in Education*, 12, 1 (1990), pp 1. 8, 10.

itself. Ultimately it was Van Jaarsveld's abrasiveness, rather than his new approach to the past (the conservative and ultra-nationalistic Scholtz encouraged him in this) that alienated some fellow Afrikaner historians. Moreover, resentment to his intellectual arrogance was also fuelled by the shortcomings of *Eenheidstrewê*, for example, its clumsy and occasional disjointed approach.

Van Jaarsveld's criticisms immediately led to rumours in Pretoria that he was a supporter of the opposition United Party,¹⁶ despite the nationalistic character of the dissertation.¹⁷ Such rumours could only have weakened his chances of being appointed to an academic post as Afrikaans universities only appointed 'true' Afrikaners with impeccable nationalistic credentials. With no academic offers, burdened by student debts, and with his wife expecting their first child, Van Jaarsveld had no choice but to live with his parents-in-law and to become a high school teacher in Johannesburg. Van Jaarsveld loathed school teaching, especially as it offered no intellectual stimulation and he feared stagnation. His burning ambition was to write history,¹⁸ but he found his work exhausting and time consuming, which meant that he was only able to find the time to work late at night.¹⁹ He especially resented being subservient to autocratic principals, and what he described as the slave driving and Gestapo mentality of the Transvaal Education Department (TED) with its encouragement of a herd instinct.²⁰ To add insult to injury, the TED's remuneration policy did not recognise his doctorate which meant that he remained financially strapped.²¹ He became bitter that after all his sacrifices, as well as his proven ability he had been unable to secure an academic post.

Van Jaarsveld's intense frustration and self-pity gave an increasingly personal edge to his sharp criticism of the works of fellow Afrikaners. This culminated in the alienation of Pelzer who had been trying to find him employment. Initially Pelzer expressed his

16. VJC, vol 16, Van Jaarsveld - TT Cloete, 18 Sep. 1954.

17. JWN Tempelhoff, 'Beeld en Teorie. Sosiale Ruimte en die Filosofiese Diskoerse van F.A. van Jaarsveld', *Tydskrif vir Geesteswetenskappe*, 36, 1 (March 1996), p 29.

18. Tempelhoff, 'Idee, Narratief en Diskoers: Die Vroeë Intellektuele Vorming van F.A. van Jaarsveld', p 42.

19. VJC, vol 16, Van Jaarsveld - Romein, 7 June 1954.

20. VJC, vol 11, Van Jaarsveld - Hugo, 17 Feb. 1955.

21. VJC, vol 11, Van Jaarsveld - J Lövgren, 12 Sep. 1953.

disagreement with Van Jaarsveld's interpretations in a friendly way,²² but their relationship was eventually ruptured when Van Jaarsveld became part of Scholtz's feud with Pelzer.

22. VJC, vol 16, Pelzer - Van Jaarsveld, 22 and 24 Jan. 1951.

Pelzer regarded Scholtz's publications as highly suspect. For Pelzer, history demanded long years of labour to ensure scientific and well-reasoned studies. In 1944 he wrote a contemptuous review of Scholtz's *Dr Nicolaas Johannes van der Merwe 1888 - 1940*. He took him to task for being too prolific, and attacked him for having written a book that was not history and that it did a disservice to the discipline. He concluded that most of Scholtz's books would have to be rewritten. This led to an acrimonious correspondence with Pelzer refusing to back down.²³

Scholtz had a long memory and got his own back when he reviewed Van Jaarsveld's *Eenheidstrew*e in 1951. Van Jaarsveld's in-laws were his immediate neighbours in Orchards, Johannesburg and the two historians often met to discuss their subject and the state of Afrikaner historiography. It can be assumed that their resentment of Pelzer, and the poor standing of the UP history department were regular topics of discussion. Subsequently, in his review, Scholtz lauded Van Jaarsveld while castigating the works of other historians of the Transvaal for their lack of innovation and promotion of rigid dogma. Although not identifying Pelzer it was obvious whom he was attacking.²⁴

Van Jaarsveld added fuel to this dispute in an article for the respected literary journal, *Standpunte*, on the teaching of the theory of history at Afrikaans universitiess. He argued that in order to comprehend the underlying principles of their subject, historians needed to be more knowledgable about historical theory. He lambasted the universities for their ossified curricula and uninspired teaching. He also pointed out that too many Afrikaner academics with doctorates had no understanding of the basics of their subject. As a result, most historical works were nothing more than mechanical and fragmented catalogues. Moreover, they were too apologetic in their determination to further Afrikaner nationalism. He urged history lecturers to be more dedicated to their subject and avoid involvement in cultural and political activities, a criticism aimed at Pelzer who followed Bosman's example of

23. *Historiese Studies*, 5, 2 (1944), pp 124-6

24. *Die Transvaler*, 10 Nov. 1951; Scholtz, 'Suid-Afrikaanse Kroniek' in *Bijdragen voor de geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, pp 300 - 301.

concentrating on cultural activities.

Van Jaarsveld also attacked an apologetic and subjective northern school of history, with Engelbrecht as the leading figure. He accused historians associated with the UP, Pelzer, JH Breytenbach, J Ploeger and FAF Wichmann of being subjective, because they defended preconceived ideas. He also took Pelzer to task for his *Geskiedenis van die Suid-Afrikaanse Republiek Deel I: Wordingsjare*, which was published in 1950 to critical acclaim, for being lifeless. By contrast Van Jaarsveld praised the southern school of historians at the University of Stellenbosch, with which he linked Scholtz, for being more objective. He believed this was so because most of them had had their training in Europe, and their writing attempted to understand and explain the past.

Van Jaarsveld also had harsh words for the Afrikaner *volk*, accusing it of being too isolated and reluctant to digest hard intellectual work, requiring historians to tell them what they wanted to hear. He made it clear that history could no longer serve to justify the will of the *volk*.²⁵

Van Jaarsveld's article exposed the shortcomings of Afrikaner historiography, but his identification of two history schools obscured this aspect and created the impression of personal animosity. His criticisms of the northern school could equally be applied to southern historians. His identification of two schools was also artificial. Scholtz, for example, had no link with Stellenbosch, nor could he be seen as a paragon of objective history. On the other hand Breytenbach had done his doctorate at Stellenbosch with HB Thom, respected head of the department as his supervisor.²⁶

Eenheidstrewes' new approach and Van Jaarsveld's attacks on fellow historians caused a stir among Afrikaner historians and led to a backlash from those he had criticised. The first reaction came from Breytenbach in a review for *Hervormde Teologiese Studies*.²⁷ He mocked what he called Van Jaarsveld's infatuation with the totality of the past, rejecting it as immature. He also accused him

25. FA van Jaarsveld, 'Oor die Teoretiese Aspek van die Geskiedeniswetenskap in Afrikaans' in *Standpunte*, 6, 1 (Oct. 1951), pp 12 - 22.

26. FA van Jaarsveld, 'Dr.J.H. Breytenbach, 1917 - 1994, *Historia*, 39, 1 (May 1994), p 2.

27. It was a theological journal for the *Hervormde* church's ordained ministers and seminary students.

of using philosophical speculation to cover his ignorance. He also listed a string of alleged factual and interpretative errors in *Eenheidstrew*e and condemned Van Jaarsveld's lack of judgement. In addition, he chastised him for his dismissal of Afrikaner patriots. Breytenbach concluded that the book was one of the most one-sided studies he had ever encountered as a historian and declared that Van Jaarsveld had done himself, and Afrikaner history, a disservice. He urged him to return to conventional ways of writing history, based on archival research.²⁸ The effect of the review seemed, however, to have been limited since Breytenbach was a young and relatively junior archivist in the Pretoria State Archives and his review appeared in a theological journal with limited circulation.

28. JH Breytenbach, "'Nuwe Benaderingswyse' van ons Geskiedenis', *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* (May 1952), pp 101 - 105.

By contrast, Pelzer's review was devastating. Through his position on various cultural organisations, especially the *Afrikaner-Broederbond*, Pelzer had built up a power base, making him a highly respected and powerful, but also feared figure in academia. He used this position to defend and preserve orthodox Afrikaner historiography and to prevent any revision of its standardised views. To earn his displeasure could harm a career since he played a crucial role in determining what qualified as 'good' history, and also who a good and true Afrikaner was. As a result few Afrikaner historians dare challenge the parameters set by the *volksleiers*.²⁹ In his review Pelzer dismissed *Eenheidstrew*e as a disappointing study. He claimed that it made no real contribution because it dealt with a well-known period that had already been researched, and that, in the absence of any new information, it had to rely too much on interpretation to make it appear different. Moreover, Pelzer argued, to justify his study, Van Jaarsveld mindlessly opposed the conventional and general interpretations of Transvaal history. Even more damaging was his conclusion that the book lacked objectivity. To be accused of subjectivity was fatal in the small Afrikaner community with its strict adherence to 'objective-scientific' history. Such an accusation cast doubt on Van Jaarsveld's abilities as historian. Pelzer concluded on a paternalistic note by pointing out that Van Jaarsveld was talented and could still go far if he could be more self-controlled and forget his fictional grievances.³⁰

That Pelzer's attack deeply wounded Van Jaarsveld is clear from the underlined passages in his copy of the review.³¹ He felt that it was an emotional

29. For Pelzer's career as a cultural leader see Mouton, 'A.N. Pelzer: A Custodian of Afrikanerdom'.

30. *Inspan*, Dec. 1951.

31. VJC, vol 84, reviews of *Eenheidstrew*e.

attack without any basis.³² His perception that Pelzer was targeting him personally must have intensified when Thom, Afrikanerdom's most respected historian, wrote a complimentary review, making special mention of Van Jaarsveld's quest for objectivity.³³

32. FA van Jaarsveld, 'Oor Beginselgrondslae in die Geskiedeniswetenskap', *Standpunte*, 8, 3 (Mar. 1954), p 31.

33. *Die Huisgenoot*, 9 May 1952.

In March 1953, the Pelzer - Scholtz - Van Jaarsveld feud intensified when Scholtz reviewed the published thesis of TS van Rooyen, Pelzer's protégé. Thomas Stephanus van Rooyen was born on 22 February 1922 in Pietersburg, one of four children. His father, a railway worker, died when Van Rooyen was seven and left his widow and children in impoverished circumstances. Through hard work and gritty determination Van Rooyen entered the UP in 1940. In 1943, he was awarded a BA degree and then taught in rural towns such as Pietersburg, Potgietersrust and Middelburg. While teaching he registered for an MA at UP which meant that he had to travel weekly from Middelburg to Pretoria for the examination part of this degree.³⁴ With his MA, and later with a D.Phil, Van Rooyen attempted to inaugurate a new approach in South African history by focussing on black and white relations. He argued that any study of this relationship could not just be based on archival documents as most of them had been written by whites who were prejudiced towards black cultures. He firmly believed that an image of the past based solely on documents produced by whites, would be a false image. The other (black) side of the story also had to be told. It was thus essential to have a sound knowledge of indigenous culture before attempting any such project.³⁵ He was, moreover, opposed to the attitude amongst Afrikaner historians that blacks should be to the periphery, or characterise them as mere problems in South African history.³⁶

Even before his MA degree had been awarded in April 1948, Van Rooyen, as a hard and fast worker, started his D.Phil, with Pelzer as his supervisor. He analysed the relations between the Boers, the Pedi and Zulu before the era of British imperialism in the Transvaal in 1876, and showed how this new arrival led to the destruction of the Pedi and Zulu armies.³⁷ He completed his D. Phil, 'Die verhouding tussen die Boere, Engelse en Naturelle in die geskiedenis van die Oos-Transvaal tot 1882', in October 1950, and the degree was awarded in

34. For Van Rooyen's early years see Albert van Jaarsveld, 'Dr TS van Rooyen (1922 - 1967) en die Historiese Geleerdheid', *Historia*, 30, 1, (May 1985), pp 50 - 53.

35. TS van Rooyen, 'Die sendeling Alexander Merensky in die Geskiedenis van die Suid-Afrikaanse Republiek', *Archive Yearbook*, 1954, II, p 99; TS van Rooyen, 'Die Verhouding tussen die Boere, Engelse en Naturelle in die Geskiedenis van die Oos-Transvaal tot 1882', *Archive Yearbook*, I, p X.

36. C. de Jong argues that by not studying in Europe Van Rooyen was more sensitive to the need for closer cultural relations between white South Africans and the rest of Africa. 'Nabeskouing oor Dr TS van Rooyen', *Pretoriana*, 9 (Nov. 1986), pp 55 - 56.

37. Van Jaarsveld, 'Dr TS van Rooyen', pp 52 - 53.

April 1951. He was now regarded as one of Afrikanerdom's rising historical stars. This was a remarkable achievement because, in contrast to Van Jaarsveld, he completed his thesis as a full-time teacher in Johannesburg, living in Benoni and researching in Pretoria.

Van Rooyen and Van Jaarsveld had much in common. They were the same age and were both highly intelligent, frustrated teachers with ambitions to follow an academic career. They also shared the characteristic of being complex personalities, volatile mixtures of egocentricism, insecurity and abrasiveness. They were hypersensitive to real or imagined slights to their status or criticism of their writings, and they lashed out wildly at critics. They were especially prone to see criticism or the writings of their 'enemies' as a conspiracies.³⁸ Despite these similarities their relationship was marked by mutual jealousy and even loathing, as they were competitors for any future post at an Afrikaans university.

In July 1951 Van Rooyen seemed to be in the inner lane to such an appointment when he became a temporary lecturer in the UP's history department. Van Rooyen was so eager to take up an academic career that he paid for the move from Benoni to Pretoria.³⁹ As a temporary lecturer he was a success. Pelzer found him a pleasant colleague and he was popular among students.⁴⁰ His career was further boosted by the publication of his D.Phil in the *Archives Yearbook*. Since only the most outstanding theses and dissertations were supposed to be published in the *Yearbook* students' reputations were enhanced if their work was accepted. While Van Rooyen's career was on an upward

38. Personal communication, FA Mouton and WA Stals.

39. UP archive, Van Rooyen's personnel file, AN Pelzer - Prof Cronje, 26 Nov. 1953.

40. *Ibid.*, Pelzer's testimonial, 26 April 1954; Pelzer - Cronje, 26 Nov. 1953.

course, a bitter Van Jaarsveld languished as a school teacher.

Van Rooyen's ambitions as a historian and academic, however, received a devastating blow as a result of the Scholtz's review in *Die Transvaler* on 5 March 1953. In a short and crushing article Scholtz bluntly concluded that Van Rooyen was no historian.⁴¹ His main complaint was that the thesis focused only on the eastern Transvaal without taking note of the rest of the republic, and that it was too fragmented. He also castigated Van Rooyen for slavishly accepting the views of other historians. Although he did not name them, it was obvious that Scholtz had Pelzer and Engelbrecht in mind. Scholtz scathingly concluded that the problem with the thesis resulted from Van Rooyen's lack of theoretical knowledge of his subject. He listed works by Huizinga, Hofer and Collingwood that should be consulted if Van Rooyen hoped to become a historian.

The attack on Van Rooyen's lack of theoretical knowledge is significant as Van Rooyen regarded himself as an expert in this field, and regarding Van Jaarsveld as something of a joke.⁴² It is possible that this part of Scholtz's attack was encouraged by Van Jaarsveld's resentment, as well as his envy and anger at Van Rooyen's appointment as a temporary lecturer at the UP. Normally such an appointment would have been the first step to an academic career. For Van Jaarsveld it must have been a bitter pill that despite his Dutch qualification he had not been approached by Pelzer.

Scholtz added salt to Van Rooyen's wounds in a second review in his overview of South African publications of 1951 for the journal, *Bijdragen voor de geschiedenis der Nederlanden*. He again condemned the thesis as immature.⁴³ That the thesis was not as bad as Scholtz had suggested is clear from the respected Dutch historian W Ph Coolhaas's balanced and positive review. Coolhaas was impressed by Van Rooyen's focus on the role of Africans.⁴⁴ Ultimately, 'Die verhoudinge tussen die Boere, Engelse en Naturelle' was an important contribution, despite some shortcomings.⁴⁵ Scholtz's review was based on

41. The review appeared under the damning heading, 'Afrikaanse historici is dun gesaai'.

42. Personal communication, FA Mouton and JW Kew.

43. GD Scholtz, 'Suid-Afrikaanse Kroniek, 1951' in *Bijdragen voor de geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 7, (1953), p 297.

44. *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis*, vol 66, 1953, pp 291 - 293.

45. The dissertation's importance is reflected in Peter Delius' extensive use of it in his revisionist study of the Pedi, *The Land belongs to us* (Johannesburg, 1983). For more on Delius' use of 'Die verhouding tussen die Boere, Engelse en Naturelle' see Ken Smith, 'The Pedi polity: a

prejudice rather than intellectual reason. Van Rooyen was ambushed for being Pelzer's protégé, having a local doctorate, and for being a temporary lecturer at the UP. To see his dissertation so contemptuously dismissed in the leading Afrikaans daily in the Transvaal was a shattering blow for Van Rooyen's self-esteem. He became embittered.

Van Rooyen's public humiliation did not soothe Van Jaarsveld's resentment at his marginalisation. He felt that Engelbrecht had made use of Pelzer and Breytenbach as surrogates to destroy him, without dirtying his own hands.⁴⁶ Although Van Jaarsveld seemed oblivious to the possibility that other historians could take offence to public attacks, he was not wrong in suspecting Engelbrecht of wanting to use others to destroy him.⁴⁷ Pelzer, for example, was close to Engelbrecht who had promoted his career. Engelbrecht's testimonial had been crucial to Pelzer's appointment as head of the History department.⁴⁸ In private, however, Pelzer had doubts about Engelbrecht as a person and a historian. When he accidentally bumped into Van Jaarsveld in June 1955, at a rugby match, in Johannesburg they had a heart to heart discussion. Pelzer claimed that his anger towards Van Jaarsveld had been sparked by his resentment at being publically linked to Engelbrecht. Then, according to Van Jaarsveld, he proceeded to badmouth Engelbrecht.⁴⁹

Apart from the Pelzer connection, Engelbrecht made use of other historians to counter Van Jaarsveld. After the publication of *Eenheidstrewé*, Engelbrecht invited Dr Maria Hugo, who had studied with Van Jaarsveld in the Netherlands, to tea. He launched a personal attack on Van Jaarsveld, and then offered Hugo the use of his personal library if she criticised Van Jaarsveld in a review. Hugo, who loathed Engelbrecht, refused to do so.⁵⁰ Engelbrecht, however, found in Van Rooyen the perfect surrogate to get at Van Jaarsveld. Years later, a bitter Van Rooyen confided to Van Jaarsveld that he had been egged on by Pelzer and Engelbrecht with promises of a permanent appointment.⁵¹ Van Rooyen, however, was straining at the leash to attack Scholtz and Van Jaarsveld, and to prove his worth as a historian.

46. VJC, vol 16, Van Jaarsveld - Van Winter, 28 Feb. 1953.

47. Engelbrecht could be ruthless in hounding those he opposed. In the 1960s he would play an important role in the persecution of Prof. A. Geysers for heresy after the latter had broken with the Afrikaner establishment and criticized apartheid, I. Wilkins and H. Strydom, *The Super-Afrikaners: Inside the Broederbond* (Johannesburg, 1980), pp 299, 303.

48. UP archive, Pelzer's personnel file, SP Engelbrecht's testimonial, 17 April 1947, Engelbrecht - C.H. Rautenbach, 30 April 1947.

49. VJC, vol 11, Van Jaarsveld - M Hugo, 21 Aug. 1955.

50. Personal communication, FA Mouton and Maria Hugo.

51. VJC, vol. 58, diary, 30 Nov. 1958.

By then Van Jaarsveld, in a self-published pamphlet, *Van Apologetiek en Objektiviteit in ons Kerkgeskiedskrywing*, mercilessly dissected Engelbrecht's subjectivity and dishonest manipulation of sources in his *Geskiedenis van die Nederduits Hervormde Kerk van Afrika* (1936). Van Jaarsveld regarded it as a work that had influenced historians such as Pelzer, Wichmann, Breytenbach and Van Rooyen.

Initially, the Van Jaarsveld pamphlet was well received. The University of Cape Town philosopher Martin Versfeld appreciated Van Jaarsveld's argument that historians had to have a knowledge of philosophy to assist them in reflecting on their work and to avoid superficiality and dishonesty.⁵² More importantly, the pamphlet was welcomed by the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), Afrikanerdom's biggest church, which was involved in a dispute with the *Hervormdes*, the second largest Afrikaans church, on the competing histories of their churches in nineteenth - century Transvaal. Van Jaarsveld's criticism was welcomed as neutralising the effectiveness of Engelbrecht's book.⁵³ In an article in *Die Voorligter* HDA du Toit, an influential professor in the UP's DRC theology department urged congregations to buy the pamphlet. He reiterated Van Jaarsveld's claim that Pelzer and Van Rooyen had simply repeated Engelbrecht's interpretations of Transvaal history.⁵⁴

Pelzer and Van Rooyen were upset that their reputations as historians had been so dismissively treated in a respected organ. Pelzer made an appointment with Du Toit to deny Engelbrecht's influence on his work.⁵⁵ Pelzer, however, was in a difficult position as he was beholden to Engelbrecht. He came to Engelbrecht's defence in a measured

52. *Die Huisgenoot*, 1 May 1953.

53. Review in *Die Kerkbode*, 15 April 1953.

54. *Die Voorligter*, April 1953.

55. VJC, vol 11, HDA du Toit - Van Jaarsveld, 8 June 1953.

review of *Van Apologetiek en Objektiviteit*. He avoided any reference to personal differences, instead taking Van Jaarsveld to task for his artificial division of a northern and southern school of history and for pursuing a personal feud against Engelbrecht. He also claimed that the book contributed nothing new to the methodology of history.⁵⁶ Pelzer, moreover, effectively countered Van Jaarsveld's criticism by spreading the word that Van Jaarsveld was angry for not being appointed by the UP.⁵⁷

56. Review by Pelzer, *Tydskrif vir Wetenskap en Kuns*, 41, 1 (Apr. 1954), pp 244-6.

57. VJC, vol 16, Van Jaarsveld - J Romein, 7 June 1954; Van Jaarsveld - H.D.A du Toit, 11 June 1953 (incorrectly dated as 1952) vol 16, Van Jaarsveld - R Antonissen, 30 July 1954 and 18 Sep 1954 and TT Cloete, 18 Sept 1954.

Van Rooyen was outraged by Du Toit's comments in *DieVoorligter*. In contrast to Pelzer, he wrote a lengthy and abrasive open letter, published in *Die Hervormer*⁵⁸ of June 1953, upbraiding Du Toit for accepting Van Jaarsveld's views at face value. Van Rooyen's reaction was personal and sharp, and could only have created a negative perception among Du Toit's colleagues at the UP. Van Rooyen thus bolstered the DRC's support for Van Jaarsveld as the latter could claim that the attack on him was motivated by *Hervormde* spite, with Engelbrecht as the manipulating puppet master.⁵⁹

By now Van Jaarsveld suspected Pelzer of actively undermining his chances of a post at the University of the Orange Free State (UOFS). Charles Uys, head of the history department, offered him a temporary lecturership for three months in 1953. Van Jaarsveld was so desperate to escape school teaching that he resigned his post, at a financial cost.⁶⁰ He enjoyed his term in academia, but when there was no offer of a permanent appointment, Van Jaarsveld believed that Pelzer had discredited him at the UOFS.⁶¹ During this period, Scholtz also fanned Van Jaarsveld's contempt of academic historians, and encouraged his attacks on Engelbrecht.⁶² Van Jaarsveld had no choice but to return to the drudgery of school teaching,

58. Official mouthpiece of the *Hervormde* church and distributed to all its members.

59. VJC, vol 16, Van Jaarsveld - HDA du Toit, 11 June 1953 (incorrectly dated as 1952).

60. VJC, vol 11, Van Jaarsveld - Hugo, 21 Aug. 1955.

61. VJC, vol 16, Van Jaarsveld - HDA du Toit, 11 June 1953 (incorrectly dated as 1952) and 4 Jan. 1954; Van Jaarsveld - Stoffel (Nienaber), 28 July 1954. Years later Charles Uys told Van Jaarsveld that Pelzer had actually supported his application for a temporary appointment. VJC, vol. 16, Van Jaarsveld - CJ Uys, 12 Sep. 1953; vol. 17, Uys - Van Jaarsveld, 11 May 1958.

62. VJC, vol 16, Scholtz - Van Jaarsveld, 30 April and 2 June 1953. (We are grateful to

and his feud with the UP historians, especially Van Rooyen.

Van Rooyen came to Engelbrecht's defence in a rumbustious review in *Die Hervormer* of *Van Apologetiek en Objektiviteit* in which he accused Van Jaarsveld of subjectivity. The most striking feature of the review was his frustration and anger at Van Jaarsveld and Scholtz's contemptuous dismissal of his use of anthropology to cast new light on the history of the Transvaal.⁶³

Johannes du Bruyn for these letters.)

63. TS van Rooyen, 'Apologetiek en Kritiek. Enige Apekte i.v.m die Werkie', *Die Hervormer*, March 1953, p 8.

It was not Van Jaarsveld's nature to turn the other cheek. In an essay 'Geskiedenis en Lewe' in *Standpunte* of June 1953, he lambasted Engelbrecht, Pelzer, FAF Wichmann and Van Rooyen, referring to their work as examples of apologetic, lifeless history, representing only storerooms of facts. He also criticised them for their unawareness of the totality of history and portrayed Pelzer as living in a fool's paradise with his rigid and uncritical approach to history, especially his attitude that a final judgement could be achieved in history.⁶⁴

Van Rooyen retaliated in *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* in August 1953 and again attacked Van Jaarsveld's stance of a subjective northern school. He argued that his methodology to determine subjectivity was itself subjective and artificial. Van Rooyen correctly pointed out that Van Jaarsveld's approach also condemned Thom and Scholtz of the so-called southern school as subjective historians. Van Jaarsveld's campaign against the UP historians, according to Van Rooyen, was nothing more than irresponsible opportunism. Van Rooyen, however, spoiled the legitimate points he raised by claiming that Van Jaarsveld and Maria Hugo had been so influenced by Jan Romein during their stay in the Netherlands that they could be regarded as Marxists.⁶⁵ Engelbrecht thus got his revenge for Hugo's refusal to be a surrogate.

That Van Rooyen saw the Romein connection as a chink in Van Jaarsveld's armour is evident from the fact that he sent a copy of his article to the respected Dutch historian Pieter Geyl.⁶⁶ The ploy was seemingly that Geyl, a leading critic of Romein,⁶⁷ would react and that this could be used to discredit Van Jaarsveld. In the end, the Marxist accusation backfired. In South Africa in the early fifties Van Rooyen's smear was an extremely serious charge and Hugo wanted to sue him for libel. Van Jaarsveld's attorney, however, advised him not to proceed. Van Jaarsveld knew that his fellow Afrikaner historians would not be so naive as to believe such nonsense.⁶⁸ He

64. FA van Jaarsveld, 'Geskiedenis en Lewe: 'n Metodologiese-Kritiese Opstel', *Standpunte*, 7, 4 (June 1953), pp 17-33.

65. TS van Rooyen, 'Jan Romein in Afrika', *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* (Aug. 1953), pp 255-6, 263-4.

66. VJC, vol 16, DJ Opperman - Van Jaarsveld, 13 Sept. 1953.

67. V Mehta, *Fly and the Fly-Bottle. Encounters with British Intellectuals* (New York, 1983), p 155.

68. VJC, vol 11, Van Jaarsveld - Hugo, 19 Aug. 1953.

also felt that Van Rooyen lacked the theoretical knowledge to have authored this attack:

Van Rooyen het eintlik nie self daardie stuk geplaas nie - hy is nie op hoogte met die geskiedeniswetenskap nie en beheers nog geen "teoretiese" taal nie - die inhoud is aan hom gedikteer; hy was maar die spreekbuis om die gedagtes van sekere teologiese professore uit te druk.⁶⁹

In the long term, the Marxist smear did Van Rooyens's reputation as a historian no good. By the end of 1953, his dreams of an academic career was in tatters.

69. VJC, vol 16, Van Jaarsveld - JM Romein, 7 June 1954.

As a temporary lecturer with three children Van Rooyen found it difficult to cope financially, and he placed his hopes for an increased salary in the Holloway Commission which had been appointed to investigate the financial position of universities. After hearing that the Commission's proposed increases did not apply to temporary lecturers, a furious Van Rooyen wrote an emotional letter of resignation to the principal in November 1953.⁷⁰ The letter and his departure caused some offence and Pelzer had to intervene to explain his protégé's behaviour.⁷¹ He also provided Van Rooyen, who joined the Native Affairs Department as its assistant-chief information officer, with a glowing testimonial.⁷²

Van Rooyen's departure from the UP was not the end of his struggle with Van Jaarsveld as victory in debate over his antagonist could revive his hopes of an academic career. The debate between the two historians took on the nature of a gladiatorial battle. Van Rooyen wrote a lengthy reaction to Van Jaarsveld's 'Geschiedenis en Lewe' for *Standpunte*, which was accepted on condition that he reduced its length. The original article was published in the *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* of December 1953⁷³ He reiterated some of the points he had raised in August, and challenged Van Jaarsveld to give a more detailed analysis of his theory on the writing of history. He also confronted Van Jaarsveld over his use of concepts such as subjectivity, the influence of the spirit of the times on the historian, historical judgement and totality. He argued that Van Jaarsveld's subjective use of historical theory to attack only certain historians was motivated by sensationalism. Van Rooyen argued that Van Jaarsveld over-emphasised the use of philosophy as a panacea in the writing of history. In addition, Van Jaarsveld's *Eenheidstrew*e was too deterministic as he forced a

70. UP archive, Van Rooyen's Personnel file, Van Rooyen - Principal, 11 Nov. 1953.

71. *Ibid.*, Pelzer - Cronje, 26 Nov. 1953.

72. *Ibid.*, Pelzer's testimonial, 26 April 1954.

73. TS van Rooyen, 'Een discussie zonder eind. 'n Antwoord op die jongste metodologiese veronderstelling van Dr. F.A. van Jaarsveld', *Hervormde Teologiese Studies*, Dec. 1953, pp 10 - 31.

preconceived idea on his material, which encouraged subjectivity. He linked this to Van Jaarsveld's approach that the historian had to make use of preconceived historical problems. For Van Rooyen this was unacceptable because the historian had to be led by his sources.

Van Rooyen's article created the impression of a person who was knowledgeable about his subject. In reality, however, he lacked theoretical and philosophical depth, and his writings were insufficiently nuanced to compete with Van Jaarsveld. Van Jaarsveld had serious shortcomings as a philosopher and a theoretician,⁷⁴ but Van Rooyen was too limited to expose them. Moreover, he undermined the effectiveness of the article by using a large section to defend his dissertation against the criticisms of Van Jaarsveld and Scholtz. This created the impression that he was determined to settle a personal score. Van Jaarsveld would subsequently exploit Van Rooyen's sensitivity to the Scholtz review.

In the same issue of *Hervormde Teologiese Studies*, AMT Meyer of the UP's philosophy department, another Engelbrecht surrogate, was more effective in his attack on Van Jaarsveld. He averred that Van Jaarsveld had limited knowledge of philosophy, offered incorrect interpretations, and possessed a poor understanding of method and historical totality. He also objected to Van Jaarsveld's use of philosophers to attack certain historians, as well as his refusal to see anything positive in the works of those he criticised.⁷⁵ Meyer's criticisms could not as easily be dismissed as those of Van Rooyen and they hurt as he had been a fellow student of Van Jaarsveld in the Netherlands.⁷⁶

74. M Hugo, 'Waarhede en verwardhede', *Standpunte*, April 1963, pp 14 - 20.

75. AMT Meyer, 'Enkele kenteoretiese begrippe in die geskiedenis', *Hervormde Teologiese Studies*, Dec. 1953, pp 77 - 86.

76. VJC, vol 16, Van Jaarsveld - HDA du Toit, 4 Jan. 1954; Van Jaarsveld - Romein, 7 June 1954.

Van Jaarsveld ignored Meyer, claiming that he refused to react to anything that appeared in *Die Hervormer* or *Hervormde Teologiese Studies*. Van Rooyen, however, played into his hands when the shortened version of his article appeared in *Standpunte*.⁷⁷ Van Rooyen had created a perfect platform for Van Jaarsveld to take vengeance, and to expose the theoretical limitations of the UP's history department. DJ Opperman, the highly regarded poet and the journal's editor of *Standpunte*, admired Van Jaarsveld and encouraged his writings; persuading *Die Burger* to give publicity to the young historian's opinions. In addition, he kept Van Jaarsveld informed of Van Rooyen's reactions. Van Rooyen suspected Opperman's pro-Van Jaarsveld bias, but could not prove it.⁷⁸

First Van Jaarsveld settled an outstanding score with Breytenbach for his critical review in an article on history and politics in *Standpunte* of December 1953. By analysing the first two volumes of Breytenbach's *Die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog* as a case study, he concluded that Breytenbach's writings were biased, apologetic, emotional and propagandistic. As with his other *Standpunte* articles, Van Jaarsveld's personal attack overshadowed the important statements he made on the need for distance in the writing of history.⁷⁹

After Breytenbach had been put in his place,⁸⁰ Van Jaarsveld concentrated his fire on

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77. TS van Rooyen, 'Filosofie en geskiedenis. 'n Antwoord op die jongste metodologiese veronderstelling van Dr. F.A. van Jaarsveld', *Standpunte*, 8, 2 (Dec. 1953), pp 56 - 62.
78. VJC, vol 16, Opperman - Van Jaarsveld, 30 Oct. 1951 and 13 Sep. 1953. (We are grateful to Johannes du Bruyn for these letters.)
79. The article can also be found in FA van Jaarsveld, *The Afrikaner's interpretation of South African History*, (Cape Town, 1964), pp 105 - 115.
80. Although Breytenbach did not reply, he took revenge in 1979 as a witness in mitigation of sentence for the convicted neo-fascist Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging members who had tarred and feathered Van Jaarsveld.

Van Rooyen. In the March 1954 issue of *Standpunte*,⁸¹ he denied that his criticisms of certain historians were personal attacks. Rather they were part of a constructive attempt to have an open discussion to stimulate good historical writing. He emphasised Scholtz's criticisms of his theoretical limitations in 'Die verhoudinge tussen die Boere, Engelse en Naturelle'. This created an image of Van Rooyen as a bumbler while flaunting his own expertise in the theory and philosophy of history. A hallmark of the polemic was that despite the copious quotes, numerous footnotes and academic language, Van Jaarsveld and Van Rooyen could not mask their mutual loathing.

81. FA van Jaarsveld, 'Oor beginselgrondslae in die geskiedeniswetenskap', *Standpunte*, 8. 3 (March 1954), pp 30 - 41.

In the next issue, an obviously desperate Van Rooyen reacted by claiming that Van Jaarsveld had said nothing that Afrikaner historians were not already aware of. He claimed that Van Jaarsveld's approach to history did not differ much from his own and took him to task on issues such as subjectivity and the influence of contemporary events on the historian's view of the past. He categorically denied that the historian had to make use of preconceived historical problems in order to understand the past, and rejected Van Jaarsveld's claims that his attacks on other historians were motivated by his desire to improve Afrikaner historiography. As with his previous articles, Van Rooyen's hurt and anger about the Scholtz review was again evident.⁸²

Opperman allowed Van Jaarsveld to react in the same issue. He claimed that Van Rooyen's discovery that there were no real differences between them signified capitulation. To Van Jaarsveld Van Rooyen's inability to counter his methodological principles revealed his immaturity, ignorance and confusion in his use of theoretical works. He focused on Van Rooyen's Achilles' heel, namely his sensitivity to criticism of his dissertation. Van Jaarsveld concluded that the shortcomings of this study were symptomatic of Van Rooyen's lack of theoretical grounding.⁸³ It was a brutal conclusion. Van Jaarsveld was the undisputed victor. Van Rooyen had been humiliated.

Still Van Jaarsveld persisted. In reviewing his antagonist's MA, published in the *Archive Yearbook*, 1954, II, he claimed that Van Rooyen's approach of viewing the past from the Africans perspective was not as original as he had claimed. He also reprimanded Van Rooyen for being too biased, apologetic and vague, and for repeating large sections of his MA in his doctorate.⁸⁴ Van Jaarsveld was intellectually the victor in the polemic; but it was a pyrrhic victory in that the controversy seriously dented his standing among Afrikaner historians, and he was marginalised by Afrikaans universities. Afrikaner historians realised that Van Jaarsveld possessed exceptional talent, and that Afrikaner historical methodology had to be debated, but they were not blind to the fact that he had used this as a pretext for attacking certain historians.⁸⁵ The polemic left a lasting suspicion in

82. TS van Rooyen, 'Beginsels, grondslae en kritiek', *Standpunte*, 8, 4, (June 1954), pp 33 - 39.

83. FA van Jaarsveld, 'Onrypheid in ons geskiedwetenskap', *Standpunte*, 8, 4, (June 1954), pp 40 - 44.

84. FA van Jaarsveld, 'Suid-Afrikaanse kroniek, 1955', *Bijdragen voor de geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 1956, pp 281 - 283.

85. JJ Oberholster, 'Suid-Afrikaanse kroniek, 1953', *Bijdragen voor de geschiedenis der*

Afrikaner academic circles that Van Jaarsveld was unsound and abrasive.

While Van Jaarsveld was still respected as a talented historian, Van Rooyen was denied this solace. His smear tactics and mauling at Van Jaarsveld's hands had destroyed his reputation as a promising young historian. The possibility of an academic appointment therefore seemed extremely remote. Van Jaarsveld's continued marginalisation embittered him even more. Making matters even worse was the realisation that the polemic had impacted negatively on his career in the TED, and he was afraid that he would never rise above the level of Assistant B teacher. His sense of persecution was bolstered when his application for a history post at the Normaal Teachers College, Pretoria, was rejected in favour of a person of his age with only a BA. His disappointment was heightened by Pelzer's success at the UP, where he became Dean of the Arts Faculty. To Maria Hugo, Van Jaarsveld gave his frustration free rein:

Pelzer is ongelukkig weer een van ons “groot” - skyngeleerdes wat in 'n land soos Holland dit waarskynlik nooit verder sou gebring het as om voor 'n std. VI - klas te gestaan het nie.⁸⁶

He also resented the fact that the purpose of history at school was to instil propaganda to create young Afrikaner nationalists.⁸⁷ Van Jaarsveld became so despairing of the narrow-mindedness and intolerance of Afrikanerdom, that he felt his people had rejected him. This feeling of rejection combined with the political situation in South Africa made him contemplate emigration to the United States of America.⁸⁸

In desperation he applied unsuccessfully for posts at the English-speaking Universities Natal, and the Witwatersrand. Edgar Brookes, the well-known liberal, was aware of Van Jaarsveld's predicament of being rejected by his own people while not being accepted by English-speakers, and would have appointed him at the University of Natal in the 1950s had there been a vacancy.⁸⁹ Brookes also recommended van Jaarsveld as a possible assistant

86. VJC, vol 11, Van Jaarsveld - Hugo, 22 Dec. 1954.

87. VJC, vol 11, Van Jaarsveld - Hugo. (Letter is addressed to her married surname, De Pauw), 22 Dec. 1954; 5 Feb. 1955, 21 Aug. 1955.

88. VJC, vol 11, Van Jaarsveld - Hugo, 14 Jan. and 17 Feb. 1955.

89. Apart from Brookes, and JS Marais at Wits, there seems to have been little interest in the polemic among academics at English-speaking universities.

to Alan Paton to write his Hofmeyr biography.⁹⁰

90. University of the Witwatersrand, Alan Paton Collection, Edgar Brookes - Alan Paton, 21 Feb. 1955.

Van Jaarsveld's love of history was, however, not stifled and he was determined to prove himself as a historian.⁹¹ In 1957, his stimulating and thought-provoking book *Die ontwaking van die Afrikaanse nasionale bewussyn, 1868 - 1881* was published. It liberated him from the drudgery of teaching and led to his appointment as a senior lecturer at the University of South Africa in 1958, being rapidly promoted to professor in 1960. Moving to Pretoria, Van Jaarsveld purchased a house in 18th street Menlo Park, close to Van Rooyen's residence in 20th street. Their wives became close friends and succeeded in bringing the two antagonists together. They also commuted on the same bus to work in the city centre. Their daily meetings led to a friendship and an embittered Van Rooyen confessed to Van Jaarsveld how he had been used by Engelbrecht and Pelzer, only to be discarded when he had served his purpose.⁹²

In contrast to Van Jaarsveld's rapid rise, Van Rooyen remained a civil servant (in 1957 he was seconded to the Press Commission for two years) and wrote no significant historical publications. He did, however, still have the support of Pelzer and maintained contact with his subject through the South African Historical Association, the editorial board of *Historia*, the Association of Old Pretoria, and as editor of its mouthpiece *Pretoriana*. These were all institutions in which Pelzer was an influential figure.

Being in academia made Van Jaarsveld calmer and more conformist. He even rediscovered Pelzer's *Wordingsjare*, praising it as an important and trail-blazing work that he had previously misunderstood.⁹³ He became friendly with Pelzer again and confided in Hugo that he had underestimated Pelzer and not realized how open-minded he was. He also claimed that Pelzer had offered him a senior lectureship in the UP history department.⁹⁴ It is

91. VJC, vol 16, Van Jaarsveld - Romein, 7 June 1954.

92. VJC, vol 58, Diary, 30 Nov. 1958.

93. Van Jaarsveld, *Afrikanergeskiedskrywing*, p 56.

94. VJC, vol 11, Van Jaarsveld - Hugo, 9 Nov. and 21 Dec. 1959.

doubtful that such an offer was sincere. Although Van Jaarsveld had become more conformist, Pelzer's low opinion of him had not changed, and when he applied for the UP chair of history in 1970, Pelzer opposed his candidature.⁹⁵ It is more likely that such an offer had been made by Pelzer, knowing that Van Jaarsveld, about to be promoted to a professorship at Unisa, would not wish to accept it.

95. Personal communication, FA Mouton and FJ du Toit Spies and W. Schellack.

As a result of Pelzer's influence, Van Rooyen was eventually appointed a senior lecturer at the UP in February 1961. His years at the UP were an anti-climax as his early promise had been dimmed by disappointment. As a historian, he produced nothing but a few unexceptional essays on the philosophy and methodology of history. Although his colleagues recognised his intelligence and ability they found him unstable and ill-tempered. In 1962, a furious Van Rooyen stormed into Pelzer's office and verbally abused him for promoting his colleague, FJ du Toit Spies, instead of him, to an associate professorship.⁹⁶ Van Rooyen also became involved in a fistcuffs with WA Stals, a junior colleague.⁹⁷ Although some students found Van Rooyen stimulating, and a model to emulate,⁹⁸ many found him a bully. On more than one occasion he became involved in ugly confrontations with students. His lectures also reflected a deep sense of cynicism and bitterness.⁹⁹

Van Rooyen's volatile behaviour at the UP finally alienated Pelzer. Without Pelzer's support, Van Rooyen realised that he would never be promoted. Deeply unhappy at the UP, he applied for the chair at the newly founded University of the North, and then at the University of Port Elizabeth. By then his ill-temper was so notorious that no university was prepared to appoint him. These failures embittered him even further.¹⁰⁰ Even more galling was that the prolific Van Jaarsveld came to be regarded as the Afrikaner's historian who was internationally respected as one of South Africa's leading historians. When Van Rooyen heard in 1963 that the UPE chair had been offered to Van Jaarsveld, who turned it down, he exploded in fury and abruptly ended their friendship.¹⁰¹ By 1967, Van Rooyen applied for a senior lectureship at Unisa. Van Jaarsveld, then occupying the chair at the newly established Rand Afrikaans University, was a member of the selection committee. Van Rooyen did not get the post and he blamed Van Jaarsveld, whom he felt had humiliated him during the interview.¹⁰² A few months later, Van Rooyen died suddenly on 14 December 1967 from

96. Personal communication, FA Mouton and FJ du Toit Spies.

97. Personal communication, FA Mouton, Albert van Jaarsveld and WA Stals.

98. JL Hattingh and J.W. Kew, 'Dr. T.S. van Rooyen - An appreciation', *Historia*, 13, 1 (May 1968), p 2.

99. Personal communication, FA Mouton and D Prinsloo, FJ Nöthling.

100. Personal communication, FA Mouton and JL Hattingh.

101. Personal recollection Albert van Jaarsveld.

102. Personal communication, FA Mouton and SB Spies, JW Kew.

heart failure. By then he had been so discredited at the UP that Pelzer was considering initiating proceedings to have him dismissed.¹⁰³

The polemic of 1953 - 1954 had deeply wounded and marred the careers of both Van Rooyen and Van Jaarsveld. It effectively destroyed Van Rooyen's reputation. He never recovered from the mauling he had received at the hands of Scholtz and Van Jaarsveld. In addition, it contributed to the failure of his pathbreaking dissertation on black and white relations in the eastern Transvaal to get the recognition it deserved. His appointment at the UP came too late to compensate for his disappointments. For Van Jaarsveld the polemic also left lasting wounds. Despite his successes after 1958, the legacy of the polemic increased his sensitivity and intolerance to criticism. It also encouraged his blindness to the fact that scholars do not need to resort to abuse and sneers to establish the validity of their contentions. The knocks Van Jaarsveld took also made him more conformist, culminating in his ultra-conservative and chauvinistic book, *Afrikaner quo vadis*, in 1971. It would take the shock of the collapse of the Portuguese empire in 1974 and the Soweto uprising of 1976 to return him to a more enlightened and realistic stance.

The polemic, which degenerating into a feud, also harmed Afrikaner historiography. Van Jaarsveld's comments on its shortcomings, namely Afrikaner historians' involvement in ethnic mobilisation and the need to legitimise the present, as well as the factual character of most studies, became obscured. Instead of encouraging self-examination and innovation the polemic had a stultifying effect. Van Jaarsveld's subsequent difficulty in securing a university appointment served as a warning to fellow Afrikaner historians not to challenge the custodians of the orthodox interpretation of the Afrikaners' past.

103. Personal communication, FA Mouton and WA Stals.

