



The body politic and the political body in nationalist science: Physical education at Stellenbosch University in the 1930s¹

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Abstract

Stellenbosch University (SU) was the first university in Africa to introduce a dedicated physical education certificate course in 1937. In defining the Physical Education Department's *raison d'être*, the first head of the department, Dr Ernst Jokl, declared that his main aim was to transform SU into the recognised centre for scientific physical education in South Africa. Beyond this purpose, the institutionalisation of physical education resonated with the institution's Afrikaner-nationalist ethos. At the *volksuniversiteit*, standardised physical education was intended to contribute to the strengthening of the corporate

¹ This work is based on research supported by the National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences, and the National Research Foundation.

and individual Afrikaner body. While Jokl played a pivotal role in the establishment of standardised physical education at SU, his tenure was abruptly terminated following controversy surrounding medical examinations of female physical education students. In examining the events that led up to Jokl's swift departure, we explore the origins of physical education at SU and the ways in which the university's institutional culture shaped the trajectory of this nascent discipline. In essence, we argue that Jokl's exit was precipitated by his 'scientific methods' that required students to undress for their medical inspections. While all the students underwent the same examination, the uproar was rooted in the fact that women students were subjected to the inspections. While he argued that his approach was an extension of his scientific endeavours, Jokl transgressed the traditionalist and strongly gendered values of SU and the idealised Afrikaner nation that it sought to both represent and shape.

Keywords: Physical education; Gender; Afrikaner nationalism; *Volkuniversiteit*; *Volk*; Stellenbosch University

Introduction

At the start of the 1937 academic year, the first full-time physical education students were enrolled at Stellenbosch University (SU).² As part of a mission to establish a Physical Education Department, the rector of the university, Professor Raymond William Wilcocks,³ and a mathematics professor, Ebenhaeser Theodore Stegmann,⁴ sought to secure the appointment of a man called Dr Ernst Franz Jokl.⁵ The institution which Jokl, who was employed from 1 July 1936, was to form part of became a central bastion of Afrikaner nationalism in both the intellectual and sporting arenas in the early 20th century.⁶ Despite the fact that Jokl was instrumental in the establishment of standardised physical education at SU, his employment was terminated a mere nine months into his tenure. This was due to a controversy over his medical examinations of female physical education students. In closely analysing the events surrounding Jokl's short term at SU, we will reveal a central contradiction between the scientific practices that Jokl introduced and the conservative ideals of the university. Moreover, we will demonstrate the extent to which the needs of an idealised Afrikaner *volk*⁷ held sway at SU. For the university, physical education was intended to enhance the expertise of qualified teachers, uphold the values of the broader Afrikaner society, and improve the physical condition of the white population in South Africa, as we will show. In contrast, Jokl sought to craft a 'science of the body' that required close contact with and analysis of the human physique, beyond gendered, ethnic, or even

2 HB Thom, *Stellenbosch 1866-1966: Honderd jaar hoër onderwys* (Kapaapstad, Nasionale Boekhandel, 1966), p. 117; Stellenbosch University Sport Science Department, "Department of Sport Science celebrates 80th birthday", Stellenbosch University, 25 July 2016, (available at <http://www.sun.ac.za/english/Lists/news/DispForm.aspx?ID=4035>, as accessed on 7 May 2020).

3 Born in 1892, RW Wilcocks served as Stellenbosch University Rector from 1934, following the reinstatement of the position. See Stellenbosch University, "Maties voice Prof RW Wilcocks: SU Rector 1933-1954", Stellenbosch University, (available at <https://www0.sun.ac.za/100/en/team/prof-rw-wilcocks/>, as accessed on 30 June 2021).

4 ET 'Ebbie' Stegmann served as chairperson of the Stellenbosch Rugby Football Club from 1940 to 1957 and chairperson of the Stellenbosch University Athletics Club. See GG Cillie, "Stegmann, Ebenhaeser Theodore", CJ Beyers, *Suid-Afrikaanse biografiese woordeboek deel IV* (Butterworth, Butterworth & Kie, 1981), pp. 645–646.

5 Anon, "n Fundamentele sportaanstelling aan die universiteit", *Die Stellenbosse Oudstudent*, September 1936, pp. 24–25.

6 CJ Roux & JM Wassermann, "'Jokkel' - Ernst Franz Jokl's contributions to physical education in South Africa circa 1933-1950", M Bobřík, B Antala & R Pěluča, *Physical education in universities: researches – best practices – situation* (Bratislava, Slovak Scientific Society for Physical Education and Sport and FIEP: Bratislava, 2020), pp. 151–152.

7 Translates to 'nation' or 'people' in an ethnic sense.

national lines. Reflective of his training as specialist in sports medicine,⁸ Jokl's ambitions were best demonstrated in the syllabus outline that he had developed for the burgeoning course.⁹ Despite his contribution to the establishment of the discipline at SU and the fact that he was qualified to conduct the medical examinations of physical education students, Jokl's position as a lecturer within a conservative academic fraternity thwarted his scientific objectives before they could come to fruition. In examining the events of 1937, we argue that the conservative traditions of the *Afrikaner volk* and *volksuniversiteit*¹⁰ dictated the trajectory of this nascent science. We contend that physical education was not only expected to buttress but also to bend to the dominant traditions within the university. These traditions were ethnically aligned, staunchly religious, and deeply gendered.

This study is based on archival research conducted primarily within an institutional archive. As the study explores the history of physical education at SU, now presented by the Department of Exercise, Sport, and Lifestyle Medicine, primary sources used in this article have been accessed through the Stellenbosch University Archive; the SUNDigital Collection; Compact Storage; the Africana section in the Stellenbosch University Library; and the National Archives of South Africa (Cape Town Archive Repository).

Physical education at the *volksuniversiteit*

The roots of physical education at SU are located within a complicated institutional history. Formerly known as Victoria College, SU was awarded university status in April 1918, becoming one of the first independent universities in South Africa.¹¹ SU established a close affiliation to the emergent *Afrikaner* nationalism of the early 20th century and was positioned "to enable

8 Stellenbosch University Archive (hereafter SUA), Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937–1/4/1938, Brief van Dr E Jokl, 16 April 1937, pp. 24–25.

9 E Jokl, "Liggaamlike opvoedkunde aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch", *Die Stellenbossche Oudstudent*, September 1936, p. 17.

10 Translates to 'nation's university' or 'people's university'. See Stellenbosch University Library, Compact Storage, 053.936 HUI, Academicus, "Stellenbosch as volksuniversiteit", *Die Huisgenoot*, 17 January 1930, pp. 17–25.

11 Stellenbosch University, the University of South Africa and the University of Cape Town were granted university status on 2 April 1918. AM Grundlingh, H Oosthuizen & M Delpont, *Stellenbosch University 100: 1918-2018* (Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch University, 2018), p. 235–236; Stellenbosch University, "Timeline", Stellenbosch University (available at <https://www0.sun.ac.za/100/en/timeline/1918/>, as accessed on 20 May 2022).

the Afrikaner to take his rightful place in the professional life.”¹² Afrikaner roots stretch back to the 17th century when the Dutch East Indian Company established a settlement at the tip of southern Africa.¹³ Shared tales of suffering and exclusion experienced in the aftermath of British imperial conquests and the Anglo-Boer/South African War (1899–1902)¹⁴ served as a “binding agent”¹⁵ that unified a deeply stratified and class-based society under an ethno-nationalist banner.¹⁶ Moreover, from the 19th century, concern for poor white communities took centre stage across religious, political, and intellectual circles.¹⁷ Presented as a physically and mentally ‘unfit’ subset of white society, poor whites preoccupied culture brokers, politicians, and intellectuals. In an attempt to launch a national investigation and provide possible solutions for the poor white crisis, the Carnegie Commission was established in 1927 and its report on *The poor white problem in South Africa* was published in

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- 12 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XI, 9/12/1935–19/3/1937, Rapport van die uitvoerende komitee, B. Die komitee rapporteer, p. 89.; T Dunbar Moodie, *The rise of Afrikanerdom: power, apartheid, and the Afrikaner civil religion* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1975) pp. 96–114.; A Bank, “‘Broederbande’ [Brotherly bonds]: Afrikaner nationalist masculinity and African sexuality in the writings of Werner Eiselen’s students, Stellenbosch University, 1930–1936”, *Anthropology Southern Africa*, 38(3–4), 2015, pp. 180–197. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23323256.2015.1069715>; A Bank, “Fathering volkekunde: race and culture in the ethnological writings of Werner Eiselen, Stellenbosch University, 1926–1936”, *Anthropology Southern Africa*, 38(3–4), 2015, pp. 163–179. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23323256.2015.1075854>; R Gordon, “Apartheid’s anthropologists: the genealogy of Afrikaner anthropology”, *American Ethnologist*, 15(3), 1988, pp. 535–553. <https://doi.org/10.1525/ae.1988.15.3.02a00090>; AM Grundlingh, “SU and changing nationalistic trends in language over a century”, AM Grundlingh, H Oosthuizen & M Delpont, *Stellenbosch University 100: 1918–2018* (Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch University, 2018), p. 29.; CS van der Waal, “Afrikaner networks for volksdiens: Stellenbosch volkekundiges, 1926–1997”, *Anthropology Southern Africa*, 45(2), 2022, pp. 75–91. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23323256.2022.2095519>
- 13 H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: biography of a people* (Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2009).
- 14 T Simpson, *History of South Africa: from 1902 to the present* (South Africa, Penguin Random House, 2021); B Nasson, *Uyadela wen’osulapho: black participation in the Anglo-Boer War* (Randburg, Raven Press, 1999); B Nasson, *The South African War, 1899–1902* (London, Arnold, 1999); B Nasson, “Commemorating the Anglo-Boer War in post-apartheid South Africa”, *Radical History Review*, 78, 2000, p. 149.
- 15 AM Grundlingh, “The trajectory and dynamics of Afrikaner nationalism in the twentieth century: an overview”, F Freschi, B Schmahmann & L van Robbroeck, *Troubling images: visual culture and the politics of Afrikaner nationalism* (Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2020) p. 28.
- 16 AM Grundlingh, “The trajectory and dynamics of Afrikaner nationalism in the twentieth century...”, F Freschi, B Schmahmann & L van Robbroeck, *Troubling images...*, p. 28.; T Blaser, “‘I don’t know what I am’: the end of Afrikaner nationalism in post-apartheid South Africa”, *Transformation: Critical Perspectives on Southern Africa*, 80, 2012, p. 3. <https://doi.org/10.1353/trn.2012.0048>.
- 17 WA Murray, *The poor white problem in South Africa: report of the Carnegie Commission. Part IV. health report. health factors in the poor white problem* (Stellenbosch, Pro Ecclesia-Drukkery, 1932).

1932.¹⁸ The five-volume report not only gave an account of the state of the poverty-stricken and largely rural white population but also forged a plan to redeem them.¹⁹

SU's investment in Afrikaner advancement stood in stark contrast to the ethos of the university's local counterpart, the University of Cape Town, which reflected British-aligned imperial ambitions and later a liberal ambience.²⁰ While the institution "offered white students nationwide the chance to receive tuition in Dutch ... in addition to English, as well as the opportunity to help anchor and develop the emerging Afrikaans language as a fully-fledged academic language",²¹ the presence and experiences of women students and staff were relegated to the margins. From its establishment, SU emulated the patriarchal ideals of the broader Afrikaner society, which left leadership roles to men. Apart from staff members such as Lydia van Niekerk who became the first female professor (in Dutch) in 1922,²² Erika Theron who became professor of social work in 1956,²³ and Isabelle Nel who became the first female professor in physical education in the country in 1971,²⁴ women "did not feature prominently in university matters".²⁵ With regard to the student population, the first

18 JFW Grosskopf, *The poor white problem in South Africa: report of the Carnegie Commission. Part I. economic report: rural impoverishment and rural exodus* (Stellenbosch, Pro Ecclesia-Drukkery, 1932); RW Wilcocks, *The poor white problem in South Africa: report of the Carnegie Commission. Part II. psychological report: the poor white* (Stellenbosch, Pro Ecclesia-Drukkery, 1932); EG Malherbe, *The poor white problem in South Africa: report of the Carnegie Commission. Part III. educational report: education and the poor white* (Stellenbosch, Pro Ecclesia-Drukkery, 1932); WA Murray, *The poor white problem in South Africa: report of the Carnegie Commission. Part IV. health report. health factors in the poor white problem* (Stellenbosch, Pro Ecclesia-Drukkery, 1932); JR Albertyn & ME Rothmann, *The poor white problem in South Africa: report of the Carnegie Commission. Part V. sociological report: (a) the poor white in society (b) the mother and daughter in the poor family* (Stellenbosch, Pro Ecclesia-Drukkery, 1932).

19 WA Murray, *The poor white problem in South Africa: report of the Carnegie Commission. Part IV. health report. health factors in the poor white problem* (Stellenbosch, Pro Ecclesia-Drukkery, 1932).

20 AM Grundlingh, "SU and changing nationalistic trends in language over a century", AM Grundlingh, H Oosthuizen & M Delpont, *Stellenbosch University 100: 1918-2018...*, p. 29.; H Phillips, *UCT under apartheid: from onset to sit-in: 1948-1968* (Cape Town, Jacana Media, 2019), pp. 11-15.

21 H Heese, "The origins of Stellenbosch University", AM Grundlingh, H Oosthuizen & M Delpont, *Stellenbosch University 100: 1918-2018* (Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch University, 2018), p. 3; FJ Cleophas, "Race and politics in sports science", J Jansen & C Walters, *Faultlines: a primer on race, science and society* (Stellenbosch, African Sun Media, 2020), p. 192.; FJ Cleophas, "A political-institutional history of the Stellenbosch University Physical Education Department, 1936-1939", *Sport in Society*, December 2021, pp. 618–631. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2021.2013203>

22 AM Grundlingh, "SU and changing nationalistic trends in language over a century", AM Grundlingh, H Oosthuizen & M Delpont, *Stellenbosch University 100: 1918-2018...*, p. 34.

23 JA Tayler, "With her shoulder to the wheel: the public life of Erika Theron (1907-1990)" (Ph.D., UNISA, 2010), pp. 180–183.

24 I Anthonissen, "Die bewegingsopvoedkundige, H. Isabelle Nel: 'n historiese-filosofiese studie" (M.A., SU, 1997), p. 19.

25 AM Grundlingh, "SU and changing nationalistic trends in language over a century", AM Grundlingh, H Oosthuizen & M Delpont, *Stellenbosch University 100: 1918-2018...*, p. 34.

female student to graduate from Victoria College, Katie Tindall, was one of eight students to graduate with a BA degree in 1897.²⁶ As the number of women students enrolled at the college steadily increased²⁷ from the 1890s, many outperformed their male peers and were awarded for their academic success.²⁸ Notwithstanding their increased visibility on campus, women were still excluded from full participation in student life. As discussed by the then rector and notable chair of the Afrikaner Broederbond,²⁹ Professor Hendrik Bernardus Thom,³⁰ one of the only ‘trump cards’ that male students could use to marginalise women was excluding them from admission to the converted debating societies. Up until 1909, when the first five women were inducted as members, women were only welcomed as guests, especially if they wanted to deliver a song.³¹ As will be discussed in this paper, while white women students were not excluded from enrolling in physical education courses, their participation was strictly regulated and controlled. While catering to the educational needs of the broader white population in South Africa, the institution’s core identity remained focused on Afrikaner society. In an article outlining the university’s place and purpose in the latter half of the 20th century, Thom penned his thoughts in 1969, stating that “*die feit bly egter staan dat die Universiteit van Stellenbosch uit die nood van die Afrikaner gebore is*” (the fact remains that Stellenbosch University was born out of the need of the Afrikaner).³² Commending the extent to which the Afrikaner *volk*³³ contributed to the expansion of the university, Thom asserted that SU had been created for and strengthened

26 HB Thom, *Stellenbosch 1866-1966...*, pp. 305–309.

27 HB Thom, *Stellenbosch 1866-1966...*, pp. 305–309.

28 HB Thom, *Stellenbosch 1866-1966...*, pp. 305–309.

29 The Afrikaner Broederbond (AB) was a clandestine, exclusively male, secret society established in 1918. As an Afrikaner nationalist organisation, the AB was founded upon Calvinist and white supremacist principles and was dedicated to ensuring the advancement of the Afrikaner population through the infiltration of governmental structures, the church, public sector, and industry across the South African landscape. I Wilkins & H Strydom, *The super-Afrikaners: inside the Afrikaner Broederbond* (Jeppestown, Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2012), pp. 430–431. See also N Smith, *Die Afrikaner Broederbond: belewinge van die binnekant* (LAPA Uitgewers, Pretoria, 2009).

30 Serving as Stellenbosch University Rector from 1955 to 1969, Prof. HB Thom was born on 13 December 1905 in the Eastern Cape. Thom started his undergraduate studies at Stellenbosch University in 1924 and would continue his studies in Berlin, Paris, and Amsterdam. Rejoining the Stellenbosch University fraternity as a lecturer in the History Department, Thom was promoted to full professorship in 1937. See S du Toit, “SU Chancellor 1983 and SU Rector 1955-1969”, (available at <https://www0.sun.ac.za/100/en/team/prof-hb-thom/>, as accessed on 21 Aug. 2022).

31 HB Thom, *Stellenbosch 1866-1966...*, p. 309.

32 HB Thom, “*n Paar gedagtes oor Stellenbosch as volksuniversiteit*”, SUNDigital Collection: HB Thom Collection, 16 May 1969 (available at <https://digital.lib.sun.ac.za/handle/10019.2/3433/discover>, as accessed on 27 Oct. 2021).

33 Translates to ‘people’ or ‘nation’.

by the Afrikaner nation. Arguing that the university served as an exemplary beacon for the country, he affirmed that Stellenbosch had an inherent responsibility to reciprocate the Afrikaner *volk's* investments by advancing its interests.³⁴ This is the context that gave rise to the culture of SU in the early 20th century. While lately the university has made significant strides in terms of institutional transformation,³⁵ the history of SU is one originally shaped by and for a particular nation-making moment in which the launch of physical education played an essential role. As stated by Claude Smith (the first professor of physical education at the University of Pretoria)³⁶ in an address delivered to SU's physical education students in the late 1930s, "if you are not prompted by the idea of helping to improve your race physically then you should not take this course."³⁷ This call to action symbolises the ways in which the national appeal for *volksdiens*³⁸ was inculcated into the student body.

Body language: Exercising gender constructs in academic spaces

Operating within a network of Afrikaans-medium institutions, SU served as an intellectual factory in the production and homogenisation of Afrikaner identity. As Isabel Hofmeyr contended, the reinvention of Afrikaans as a respectable "white man's language"³⁹ transcended language standardisation as the process was pertinent in an ethnically aligned nation-building effort.⁴⁰ In considering language as a building block of Afrikaner

34 HB Thom, "n Paar gedagtes oor Stellenbosch as volksuniversiteit", SUNDigital Collection: HB Thom Collection, 16 May 1969 (available at <https://digital.lib.sun.ac.za/handle/10019.2/3433/discover>, as accessed on 27 Oct. 2021).

35 See A Fataar & E Costandius, *Evoking transformation: visual redress at Stellenbosch University* (Stellenbosch, African Sun Media, 2021); P Gobodo-Madikizela, "Stellenbosch University is white no longer, despite resistance from those who wanted the status quo", *Daily Maverick*, 20 April 2023 (available at <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2023-04-20-stellenbosch-university-is-white-no-longer-despite-resistance/>, as accessed on 9 May 2020).

36 Claude Smith served as a physical education administrator for the Union Department of Education. Later, as Director of the Physical Education Institute at the University of Pretoria, Smith was appointed as the first professor of physical education at the university in September 1946. See AS Daries, "The history of physical education at Stellenbosch University, 1937-2019" (Ph.D., SU, 2023), p. 139.

37 C. Smith, "What is your aim, students of physical education?", *Liggaamsopvoeding/Physical Education*, 1(2), 1939, p. 35.

38 Translates to 'national service' or 'civil service'.

39 I Hofmeyr, "Building a nation from words: Afrikaans language, literature and ethnic identity, 1902-1924", S Marks & S Trapido, *The politics of race, class and nationalism in twentieth-century South Africa* (Routledge, New York, 1987), pp. 106-107.

40 I Hofmeyr, "Building a nation from words: ...", S Marks & S Trapido, *The politics of race, class and nationalism in twentieth-century South Africa ...*, pp. 106-107.

nationalism, language standardisation was key. The process of language standardisation is likened to a form of social fabrication. Similarly, the body was as malleable as the language in this bigger project of creating an ideal Afrikaner. Regarding the institutionalisation of physical education, the 'body' was the discipline's central sight of inquiry. In order to keep the discipline in line with the values of the university and broader Afrikaner society, well-defined gender constructs were implemented.

The figure of the *volksmoeder* or mother of the nation was one of the most powerful expressions of gender ideology in the early 20th century. In the construction of idealised womanhood in this mainly patriarchal society, historian Elsabe Brink argues that "one of the means by which ... male-dominated societies control women is by giving them a well-defined but circumscribed position within society, to which some status, honour and respectability are attached"⁴¹ While ideologies related to Western suffragette feminism were mainly excluded from Afrikaner women's politics of the 1910s, republican ideology, philanthropy, and language issues were focal points as Sandra Swart notes.⁴² Furthermore, while the construction of the *volksmoeder* ideal subscribes to Brink's conceptualisation, existing literature indicates that homogenised idealisation of Afrikaner womanhood was not only imposed on women but shaped by women as well.⁴³ In considering this, it is important to understand the ways in which the *volksmoeder* paradigm⁴⁴ existed in various iterations in popular culture and literature from the late 19th century. While women in Afrikaner society helped to define Afrikaner nationalism, "'motherhood' was cast in a republican mould,

41 E Brink, "Man-made women: gender class and ideology of the *volksmoeder*", C Walker, *Women and gender in Southern Africa to 1945* (London, James Currey, 1990), pp. 273–292.; D Allen, "Mother of the nation: rugby, nationalism, and the role of women in South Africa's Afrikaner society", *Sport in Society*, 17(4), 2014, p. 467. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2013.815513>

42 S Swart, "'Motherhood and otherhood' - gendered citizenship and Afrikaner women in the South African 1914 Rebellion", *African Historical Review*, 39(2), 2007, p. 47–48. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17532520701786160>

43 See S Swart, "'A boer and his gun and his wife are three things always together': republican masculinity and the 1914 Rebellion", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 24(4), 1999, pp. 737–751. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057079808708599>; S Swart, "'The 'Five Shilling Rebellion': rural white male anxiety and the 1914 Boer rebellion", *South African Historical Journal*, 56(1), 2006, pp. 88–102. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02582470609464966>. See also AM Grundlingh and S Swart, *Radelose rebellie: dinamika van die 1914–1915 Afrikanerrebelleie* (Pretoria, Protea Boekhuis, 2009).

44 See C van der Westhuizen, "(Un)sung heroines: the rise and fall and rise of the Afrikaner nationalist *volksmoeder* in South Africa", *Matatu*, 50(2), 2020, pp. 258–279. <https://doi.org/10.1163/18757421-05002004>; C Bignaut, "Untold history with a historiography: a review of scholarship on Afrikaner women in South African history", *South African Historical Journal*, 65(4), 2013, pp. 596–617. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02582473.2013.770061>; LM Kruger, "Gender, community and identity: women and Afrikaner nationalism in the *volksmoeder* discourse of *Die Boerevrou* (1919–1931)" (M.A., UCT, 1991).

but it was an awkward and ambivalent republicanism.”⁴⁵ The duality of empowerment and subjectivity circumscribed the status of white women in the segregationist era. As we argue, while white women students enjoyed the liberties associated with higher education, their voices were muted and their choices were constricted. In discussing the ‘awkward and ambivalent’ status of Afrikaner women in the segregationist and later apartheid periods, Ria van der Merwe analyses how traditionalist values were reified at another Afrikaans-medium university, the University of Pretoria.⁴⁶ Van der Merwe argues that in the absence of an all-encompassing policy detailing the status assigned to women, the university worked to ensure that the place of women students was defined clearly according to a domestic ideal.⁴⁷ Confined to the status of helpmate, women students at the University of Pretoria were pushed toward studying nursing, social work and domestic science.⁴⁸ Similarly, the status afforded to women physical education students at SU was shaped within the boundaries of perceived docility, purity, and piety. As will be explored in this paper, the burgeoning physical education courses at SU were designed to produce ideal citizens; thus, the rules and traditions that dictated conventions in Afrikaner society were embedded within the discipline.

As a national symbol, the *volksmoeder* ideal ushered Afrikaner women and girls into the private and public domains: into domestic and national service.⁴⁹ In demanding women’s suffrage from the 1920s, some Afrikaner women employed *volksmoeder ideology and its* “language of home making”⁵⁰ as means to legitimise their campaign for full citizenship.⁵¹ Presented as a unifying identity, *volksmoeder ideology led women* “to believe that mothering was so important that it encompassed all other differences that might exist between women [with the] exception [that] motherhood did not and could not transcend ethnic and racial boundaries.”⁵²

45 S Swart, “Motherhood and otherhood...”, *African Historical Review*, 39(2), 2007, p. 41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17532520701786160>

46 R van der Merwe, “Molding *volksmoeders* or *volks* enemies? Female students at the University of Pretoria, 1920-1970”, *Historia*, 56(1), 2011, pp. 77–100.

47 R van der Merwe, “Molding *volksmoeders* or *volks* enemies?...”, *Historia*, 56(1), 2011, pp. 88–90.

48 R van der Merwe, “Molding *volksmoeders* or *volks* enemies?...”, *Historia*, 56(1), 2011, pp. 84–90.

49 E Brink, “The ‘*volksmoeder*’: a figurine as figurehead”, AM Grundlingh & S Huigen, *Reshaping remembrance: critical essays on Afrikaans places of memory* (Amsterdam, Rozenberg Publishers, 2011), pp. 2–7.

50 L Vincent, “A Cake of Soap’: The *volksmoeder* ideology and Afrikaner Women’s Campaign for the Vote”, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 32(1), 1999, pp. 2–3. <https://doi.org/10.2307/220803>; L Vincent, “A Cake of Soap’: the *volksmoeder* ideology and the Afrikaner Women’s Campaign for the Vote” (Paper, Public Seminar: Institute for Sociological Research, University of the Witwatersrand, 23 March 1998), pp. 1–2.

51 L Vincent, “A Cake of Soap’...”, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 32(1), 1999, pp. 7–14. <https://doi.org/10.2307/220803>

52 LM Kruger, “Gender, community and identity: women and Afrikaner nationalism in the *volksmoeder* discourse of *Die Boerevrou* (1919-1931)” (M.A., UCT, 1991), pp. 239–240.

This imagined community of mothers was tasked with the responsibility of producing a physically and psychologically healthy nation through birth and cultural transmission. As we will argue, it is this ethnically aligned domesticised national service that influenced and shaped the experiences of women students in physical education at the *volksuniversiteit*.

The national expansion of standardised physical education

In outlining the vision for physical education at SU, Ernst Jokl, announced that his aim was to invent SU as the very centre of pioneering scientific physical education in South Africa.⁵³ Renowned for his work as a physical education specialist,⁵⁴ Jokl was specifically recruited for the position at SU.⁵⁵ Apart from designing a programme to train teachers who sought to specialise in physical education, Jokl hosted afternoon fitness classes on the Coetzenburg sports field for the university staff and student body. These *jokkel* sessions proved to be a popular attraction on campus, drawing large crowds of students and staff members.⁵⁶ Jokl's contributions to the institutionalisation of physical education at the university proved to be so noteworthy that a neologism *jokkel*, meaning 'to exercise', was used to refer to physical education, even long after Jokl's departure.⁵⁷

53 E Jokl, "Liggaamlike opvoedkunde aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch", *Die Stellenbossche Oudstudent*, September 1936, p. 17.

54 Anon, "Well-known athlete coach interviews: Dr Jokl's view on S. African track prospects, selecting men according to the required type", *Rand Daily Mail*, 30 November 1934, p. 19; Anon, "Big coaching campaign: local athletic body's decision, Dr Jokl placed in charge of scheme", *Rand Daily Mail*, 13 November 1934, p. 17.

55 E Jokl, *South African reminiscences* (Stellenbosch, SI Jokl, 1988), p. 4.

56 Stellenbosch University Sport Science Department, "Department of Sport Science celebrates 80th birthday", Stellenbosch University, 25 July 2016 (available at <http://www.sun.ac.za/english/Lists/news/DispForm.aspx?ID=4035>, as accessed on 7 May 2020).

57 P du Plooy, "Muurbal-situasie frustrer baie", *Die Matie*, 10 September 1980, p. 16; Anon, Jolige jokkel juffrou, *Die Matie*, 30 July 1976, p. 9; Anon, "Maties-bokke" *Die Matie*, 29 October 1981; L Heyneman, "Perspektiewe en dinge", *Die Matie*, 12 Mei 1978, p. 10; Stellenbosch University Sport Science Department, "Department of Sport Science celebrates 80th birthday", Stellenbosch University, 25 July 2016 (available at <http://www.sun.ac.za/english/Lists/news/DispForm.aspx?ID=4035>, as accessed on 7 May 2020).

Beyond the context of SU,⁵⁸ the mid to late 1930s was a period of national expansion in the field of South African physical education.⁵⁹ Prior to this, physical education had been introduced independently across the country and to varying degrees in accordance with the approach taken in each province.⁶⁰ Mirroring global trends that promoted the cross-institutional implementation of physical education programmes and the national standardisation of the subject, the 1930s bore witness to major advancements in South African physical education that included a rapid increase in the number of formal physical education training programmes across the country,⁶¹ improvements in the conditions of schools and the military,⁶² and the establishment of the National Advisory Council for Physical Education.⁶³ When considering the dispersion of the subject across the country, one finds that the Cape Province was a forerunner in the campaign to formally integrate physical education within South African schools.⁶⁴ In March 1934, a school inspectors' conference was hosted in Cape Town to address the state of health and physical education among school children.⁶⁵ As an outcome of this conference, the Cape Education Department introduced compulsory physical education for secondary schools from July

58 The first institution of higher learning to launch a dedicated physical education training programme was the Cape Training College. See MC Black, "The training of physical education teachers", JW Postma, *Verslag van die eerste Suid-Afrikaanse kongres vir liggaamlike opvoeding* (Stellenbosch, Pro Ecclesia-Drukkery, 1945), pp. 123–126; Anon, "A career of untiring service: an appreciation of the work done by Miss Margaret Black", *Vigor*, 2(1), 1948, p. 28.

59 While the history of standardised physical education in South Africa is embedded in the nation's colonial past and has been adapted to suit various educational settings since the 1780s, this article is interested in exploring the configuration of physical education as a nascent science in a nationalist framework. See FJ Cleophas, "A historical account of physical education in South Africa", F Cleophas, D du Toit et al, *Teaching physical education and sports education* (South Africa, Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 17–20; JC Kelder, "Die historiese ontwikkeling van liggaamsoefeninge in die onderwysdepartemente", JW Postma, *Verslag van die eerste Suid-Afrikaanse kongres vir liggaamlike opvoeding* (Stellenbosch, Pro Ecclesia-Drukkery, 1945), p. 114; R de Klerk, "Die bydrae van enkele liggaamlike opvoedkundiges tot die ontwikkeling van die vak in Suid-Afrika vanaf die begin van die twintigste eeu" (Ph.D., PU vir CHO, 1986), p. 43.

60 JC Kelder, "Die historiese ontwikkeling van liggaamsoefeninge in die onderwysdepartemente", JW Postma, *Verslag van die eerste Suid-Afrikaanse kongres vir liggaamlike opvoeding ...*, p. 114.

61 JC Kelder, "Die historiese ontwikkeling van liggaamsoefeninge in die onderwysdepartemente", JW Postma, *Verslag van die eerste Suid-Afrikaanse kongres vir liggaamlike opvoeding ...*, p. 142.

62 AL Boshoff, "Die geskiedenis van die Departement van Liggaamlike Opvoeding aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch" (M.A., SU, 1981), p. 7.

63 F van der Merwe, *Sport history* (Stellenbosch, FJG Publikasies, 2014), p. 213.

64 F van der Merwe, *Sport history ...*, p. 213.

65 FJ Cleophas, "Physical education and physical culture in the coloured community of the Western Cape, 1837-1966" (Ph.D., SU, 2009), p. 72.

1934.⁶⁶ The introduction of mandatory physical education not only catered to the physical development of schoolchildren but also created a demand for physical education teachers. By 1936, SU, the Paarl Training College, and Pretoria Technical College were among the first institutions of higher learning to launch physical education courses.⁶⁷ In formulating physical education as a standardised course of study within higher education, physical education was introduced to produce physical education teachers and instructors. As teaching, especially with regard to the education of young children, was perceived as a suitable profession for women,⁶⁸ physical education had a mixed demographic of women and men students by the 1930s. Developed as a discipline that centred on the promotion of health and improvement of the physical condition of the body,⁶⁹ physical education was intended to make a national contribution as a nationalist science of the body. However, as we shall see, physical education was also expected to adhere to the restrictive gendered script of the nation that it sought to serve.⁷⁰

66 FJ Cleophas, "Physical education and physical culture in the coloured community ...", p. 72.

67 The Cape Town Teacher Training College was one of the first institutions in the country to introduce specialist training courses for white women under the leadership of Margaret C Black. See F van der Merwe, *Sport history*..., p. 213; MC Black, "The training of physical education teachers", JW Postma, *Verslag van die eerste Suid-Afrikaanse kongres vir liggaamlike opvoeding*..., pp. 126–127; Anon, "A career of untiring service"..., *Vigor*, 2(1), 1948, pp. 28–29; National Archives of South Africa (Hereafter NASA), Cape Town, PAE-488, EX 27/1, Examination Vacation Course in Physical Education 1934–1938, Extract from the Education Gazette 5 September 1935; NASA, Cape Town, PAE-488, EX 27/1, Examination Vacation Course in Physical Education 1934–1938, Letter addressed to the Superintendent-General of Education from Margaret C. Black 14 August 1935.

68 E Katzenellenbogen (Retired professor from the Stellenbosch University Physical Education Department), interview, AS Daries (Researcher, SU), 11 August 2021.

69 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XI, 9/12/1935–19/3/1937, Rapport van die uitvoerende komitee, B. Die komitee rapporteer, p. 89.

70 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XI, 9/12/1935–19/3/1937, Rapport van die uitvoerende komitee..., p. 89.

Joki, jokkel, and the establishment of physical education at the *volksuniversiteit*

During a Senate⁷¹ meeting on 24 June 1935, the university Council⁷² announced its decision to appoint a new full-time lecturer in physical education. As a means to finance the appointment, the university approached the Carnegie Corporation of New York to sponsor a grant of £650 per annum for a period of two years.⁷³ Established in 1911, the Carnegie Corporation was founded by Scottish steel magnate Andrew Carnegie.⁷⁴ Dedicated to promoting the development and dissemination of knowledge for the public,⁷⁵ the corporation “supported numerous segregationist philanthropic projects [and] was interested in propping up Afrikaner nationalism ...”⁷⁶ Post World War I, the organisation played a significant part in increasing the South African government’s research capacity in education and the social sciences. Apart from providing essential funding for the construction of museums and libraries including the SU library,⁷⁷ one of the most prominent initiatives funded by the Carnegie Corporation was the expansive interdisciplinary study on so-called ‘poor whiteism’ in South Africa.⁷⁸ In the political climate of the 1930s, fears

71 According to the 1918 SU yearbook, Senate appoints professors as members of Council and operates as a regulatory body for all faculties, departments, lecturers and classes. The Senate body determines, in collaboration with Council, the requirements for obtaining a qualification from the university. In overseeing the academic matters of the university, Senate controls all examinations and makes recommendations to Council regarding the appointment of examiners and the conferment of professorships and lectureships. SUA, *Jaarboek van het Victoria-Kollege en van die Universiteit van Stellenbosch*, 1918, pp. 325–326.

72 As detailed in the 1918 SU yearbook, Council operates as the governing and executive authority of the university. As an operational body, Council decides on the establishment of faculties and departments, the appointment of professors, lecturers and other teaching staff, and the appointment of examiners. Moreover, Council decides, in collaboration with Senate, on matters related to graduation and the conferment of degrees. Additionally, Council administers the property of the university. SUA, *Jaarboek van het Victoria-Kollege en van die Universiteit van Stellenbosch*, 1918, pp. 330–331.

73 SUA, *Senaat-Notule*, Vol. II, 2/7/1934-15/11/1935, *Notule van gewone vergadering van die Raad gehou in die Raadkamer op Saterdag, 22 Junie 1935*, p. 208.

74 E Condliffe-Lagemann, *The politics of knowledge: The Carnegie Corporation, philanthropy, and public policy* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 3–4.

75 E Condliffe-Lagemann, *The politics of knowledge...*, pp. 3–4.

76 T Willoughby-Herard, *Waste of a white skin: The Carnegie Corporation and the racial logic of white vulnerability* (California, University of California Press, 2015), p. 24.

77 J Botha, “Academic work at Stellenbosch University 1918–2028”, AM Grundlingh, H Oosthuizen & M Delpont, *Stellenbosch University 100: 1918–2018* (Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch University, 2018), p. 205. See also T Willoughby-Herard, *Waste of a white skin...*, pp. 24–28.

78 See JFW Grosskopf, *The poor white problem in South Africa: report of the Carnegie Commission. Part I. economic report...*; RW Wilcocks, *The poor white problem in South Africa: report of the Carnegie Commission. Part II. psychological report...*; EG Malherbe, *The poor white problem in South Africa: report of the Carnegie Commission. Part III. educational report...*; WA Murray, *The poor white problem in South Africa: report of the Carnegie Commission. Part IV. health report...*; JR Albertyn & ME Rothmann, *The poor white problem in South Africa: report of the Carnegie Commission. Part V. sociological report...*

of miscegenation, *agteruitgang* (regression), and the depiction of Africans as a threat to the survival of the white race had become widespread in the wake of the 1932 Carnegie Commission report on *The poor white problem in South Africa*⁷⁹ and cultural cornerstone events such as the 1938 Great Trek Centenary.⁸⁰ In considering this contextual backdrop, the establishment of physical education at SU was deeply racialised as the discipline was intended to be deployed to improve the condition of the white population in South Africa.⁸¹ Imbued with the impetus to uplift the white population, the introduction of physical education at Stellenbosch aligned with the broader shifts and transitions within Afrikaner nationalism.⁸² Furthermore, in considering this as a vantage point for the Carnegie Corporation's interest in South Africa, the organisation's financial backing supported the appointment of a German-trained physical educationist and subsidised SU's need for a subject specialist. Beyond the institutional focus, Jokl's recruitment and subsequent appointment formed part of the white nationalist government's plan to draw on specialist academic fields as a means to determine and address the root of the social ills plaguing the white Afrikaner population.⁸³ As noted earlier, Rector Wilcocks and Professor Stegmann were instrumental in securing Jokl's appointment.⁸⁴ Born in 1907 in Breslau, Germany (now Wrocław, Poland),⁸⁵ Jokl was an experienced athlete.⁸⁶ Prior to arriving in South Africa in May 1933,⁸⁷ Jokl had attained a medical degree from the University of Breslau and a specialist

79 See JFW Grosskopf, *The poor white problem in South Africa: report of the Carnegie Commission. Part I. economic report...*; RW Wilcocks, *The poor white problem in South Africa: report of the Carnegie Commission. Part II. psychological report...*; EG Malherbe, *The poor white problem in South Africa: report of the Carnegie Commission. Part III. educational report...*; WA Murray, *The poor white problem in South Africa: report of the Carnegie Commission. Part IV. health report...*; JR Albertyn & ME Rothmann, *The poor white problem in South Africa: report of the Carnegie Commission. Part V. sociological report...*

80 L. Koorts, "'The Black Peril would not exist if it were not for a White Peril that is a hundred times greater': D.F. Malan's fluidity on poor whiteism and race in the pre-apartheid era, 1912-1939", *South African Historical Journal*, 65(4), 2013, pp. 569–576. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02582473.2013.858764>; S Swart, "'The 'Five Shilling Rebellion'..."", *South African Historical Journal*, 56(1), 2006, pp. 88–102. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02582470609464966>

81 C Smith, "What is your aim ...", *Liggaamsopvoeding/Physical Education*, 1(2), 1939, p. 35.

82 ET Stegmann, "Liggaamsopvoeding aan h universiteit", *Liggaamsopvoeding/Physical Education*, 1(1), 1939, p. 15; C Smith, "What is your aim ...", *Liggaamsopvoeding/Physical Education*, 1(2), 1939, p. 35.

83 ET Stegmann, "Liggaamsopvoeding aan h universiteit", *Liggaamsopvoeding/Physical Education*, 1(1), 1939, p. 27.

84 Anon, "n Fundamentele sportaanstelling aan die universiteit", *Die Stellenbosse Oudstudent*, September 1936, pp. 24–25.

85 F Litsky, "Dr Ernst F. Jokl, a pioneer in sports medicine, dies at 90", *The New York Times*, 21 December 1997 (available at <https://www.nytimes.com/1997/12/21/sports/dr-ernst-f-jokl-a-pioneer-in-sports-medicine-dies-at-90.html>, as accessed 12 June 2020).

86 F Litsky, "Dr Ernst F. Jokl, a pioneer in sports medicine, dies at 90", *The New York Times*, 21 December 1997 (available at <https://www.nytimes.com/1997/12/21/sports/dr-ernst-f-jokl-a-pioneer-in-sports-medicine-dies-at-90.html>, as accessed 12 June 2020). See also J Bale, "Chapter one: Ernst Jokl and the layers of truth", *Playing Pasts*, 6 May 2021 (available at <https://www.playingpasts.co.uk/articles/athletics/ernst-jokl-and-layers-of-truth-2/>, as accessed on 28 June 2021).

87 E Jokl, *South African reminiscences...*, pp. 1–2.

certificate, *Sportarzt*,⁸⁸ that qualified him as an “expert in medical aspects of physical education ...”⁸⁹ The origins of the German term *Sportarzt*, meaning “doctor of or for sport”,⁹⁰ have been traced back to 1900. This field of sports medicine encompassed focus areas related to coaching, rehabilitation, health education, and scientific research with the intention of improving the physical condition of the human body specifically related to sports performance.⁹¹ Working within the field of sports medicine during his studies in Germany, Jokl assisted in conducting anthropometric⁹² medical assessments on German Olympic athletes participating in the 1928 Olympic Games.⁹³ From there on, Jokl’s research interest bounced from exercise physiology to the functioning of the brain to physical education to the medicine of aviation to the field of anthropology.⁹⁴ In 1931, Jokl was appointed as Director of the Institute of Sport Medicine at the University of Breslau. However, by 1933, when the Nazi Party rose to power, his career prospects had been stifled.⁹⁵ Due to his Jewish heritage, Jokl was dismissed from his position, just two years following his appointment as Director of the Institute of Sport Medicine.⁹⁶ With anti-Semitism on the rise in Germany, Jokl and his wife, Erica Jokl, emigrated to South Africa.⁹⁷

In his autobiography, Jokl stated that upon arrival in South Africa, he had been informed that the German medical degree that had once been valid in South Africa was

88 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Voorlopige rapport van komitee i/s mediese ondersoek van studente van liggaamsopvoeding, p. 18.; SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Brief van Dr E Jokl, 16 April 1937, pp. 24–25.

89 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Voorlopige rapport van komitee i/s mediese ondersoek van studente van liggaamsopvoeding, p. 18.; SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Brief van Dr E Jokl, 16 April 1937, pp. 24–25.; J Bale, “Geography and the Olympics: an evaluation of the work of Ernst Jokl”, *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*, 3(3), 2000, p. 223–229.

90 M Krüger, “History of sports medicine in Germany: some preliminary reflections on a complex research project”, *Historical Social Research*, 40 (4), 2015, p. 332.

91 M Krüger, “History of sports medicine in Germany...”, *Historical Social Research*, 40(4), 2015, pp. 332–333.

92 An anthropometric study measures the proportions of the human body. As a scientific practice, anthropometric practices not only subjected the human body to measurement and analysis; the practice itself became a widespread methodological framework in scientific circles, including the field of physical anthropology. Moreover, as anthropometry was considered to be an objective scientific practice used to determine racial differences, the practice was centralised for human classification. See RM Malina, “Anthropometry in physical education and sport sciences”, F Spencer, *History of physical anthropology* (London, Garland, 1996), pp. 90–94; H Walters, “Tracing objects of measurement: locating intersections of race, science and politics” (Ph.D., SU, 2018), pp. 35–36.

93 J Bale, “Chapter one: Ernst Jokl and the layers of truth”, *Playing Pasts*, 6 May 2021 (available at <https://www.playingpasts.co.uk/articles/athletics/ernst-jokl-and-layers-of-truth-2/>, as accessed on 28 June 2021).

94 J Bale, “Chapter one: Ernst Jokl and the layers ...”.

95 E Jokl, *South African reminiscences...*, pp. 1–2.; F Litsky, “Dr Ernst F. Jokl, a pioneer in sports medicine, dies at 90”, *The New York Times*, 21 December 1997 (available at <https://www.nytimes.com/1997/12/21/sports/dr-ernst-f-jokl-a-pioneer-in-sports-medicine-dies-at-90.html>, as accessed on 12 June 2020).

96 CJ Roux & JM Wassermann, “Jokkel’ - Ernst Franz Jokl’s contributions to physical education in South Africa circa 1933-1950”, M Bobrik, B Antala & R Pélucha, *Physical education in universities...*, p. 151.

97 E Jokl, *South African reminiscences...*, pp. 1–2.; F Litsky, “Dr Ernst F. Jokl, a pioneer in sports medicine, dies at 90”, *The New York Times*, 21 December 1997 (available at <https://www.nytimes.com/1997/12/21/sports/dr-ernst-f-jokl-a-pioneer-in-sports-medicine-dies-at-90.html>, as accessed on 12 June 2020).

no longer recognised and could not be used to attain a medical licence.⁹⁸ Considering the social climate of the 1930s and 1940s, Jokl noted that the situation in Germany had led to “engendered fear[s] among local physicians that they would be swamped with immigrant competitors”.⁹⁹ Jokl’s reference to “immigrant competitors” flooding the South African market applied to both the political climate in Germany that had forced many Jewish citizens to flee the country and local challenges pertaining to mounting anti-Semitism toward Jewish immigrants, which predated the widespread Nazi propaganda of the 1930s and 1940s.¹⁰⁰ To obviate these local anxieties,¹⁰¹ Jokl enrolled in the Medical School of the University of the Witwatersrand where he attained an MBBCh degree in 1936.¹⁰² While at the University of the Witwatersrand, Jokl was asked to direct the training of the university’s track and field team in preparation for the National University Championship that was to be hosted in Durban in 1935.¹⁰³ Following his team’s successful performance, Jokl received two offers. One was to direct the training of the South African national track and field team in preparation for the British Empire Games, and the second, proposed by Professor Stegmann, was to establish a Physical Education Department at SU.¹⁰⁴ For Stegmann, the main objectives for the new department were not only to prioritise the training of physical education teachers but also to produce physical education researchers.¹⁰⁵ According to him, this would be beneficial not only to the individual student but also to their future households and society at large.¹⁰⁶ Thus, Stegmann’s vision for the new academic discipline was both nationally and domestically aligned. Subsequently, in operationalising this concept for the department, Jokl’s employment meant that physical education could be expanded beyond a teacher training course.

98 E Jokl, *South African reminiscences...*, pp. 1–2.

99 E Jokl, *South African reminiscences...*, pp. 1–2.

100 See M Shain, *A perfect storm: antisemitism in South Africa 1930-1948* (Jonathan Ball Publishers, Cape Town, 2015), pp. 108–110; M Shain, “The foundations of antisemitism in South Africa: images of the Jew c. 1870-1930” (Ph.D., UCT, 1990), p. 7; M Shain, “Jewish cultures, identities and contingencies: reflections from the South African experience”, *European Review of History/Revue européenne d’histoire*, 18(1), 2011, pp. 89–100. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13507486.2011.543584>; M Shain, “Paradoxical ambiguity – DF Malan and the ‘Jewish Question’”, *Transactions of the Royal Society of South Africa*, 72(1), 2017, pp. 63–74. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0035919X.2016.1258016>

101 E Jokl, *South African reminiscences...*, pp. 1–4.

102 E Jokl is listed as part of the graduating class of 1936 for clinical disciplines at the University of the Witwatersrand. See R Keene, *Our graduates 1924-2012: Faculty of Health Sciences* (University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 2013) p. 78; E Jokl, *South African reminiscences...*, pp. 1–4.

103 E Jokl, *South African reminiscences...*, pp. 1–4.

104 Stellenbosch University Sport Science Department, “Department of Sport Science celebrates 80th birthday”, Stellenbosch University, 25 July 2016 (available at <http://www.sun.ac.za/english/Lists/news/DispForm.aspx?ID=4035>, as accessed on 7 May 2020).

105 ET Stegmann, “Liggaamsopvoeding aan h universiteit”, *Liggaamsopvoeding/Physical Education*, 1(1), 1939, p. 15.

106 ET Stegmann, “Liggaamsopvoeding aan h universiteit”, *Liggaamsopvoeding/Physical Education*, 1(1), 1939, p. 27.

Physical education as a science of the body

Following Senate approval of Jokl's appointment, the university Council and the university Appointments Committee requested that the Faculty Board of Education (FBE) identify the duties that Jokl would be expected to perform once appointed as lecturer in physical education.¹⁰⁷ In September 1935, the FBE posed four recommendations. The first two suggestions pertained to the physical training of women and men students, namely that male students participate in two to three physical training sessions per week and female students in three to four per week. Further, the FBE suggested that a woman instructor should train women students. Lastly, it stipulated that Jokl was not expected to teach physiology and school health as these subjects were taught by other lecturers in the faculty.¹⁰⁸ In this initial stage, however, Stegmann, and indeed most of the university decision makers, considered the proposed courses as steppingstones toward the establishment of a distinct department or separate institute for physical education. Despite these bigger ambitions, physical education continued to operate under the auspices of the Education Faculty long after attaining its coveted departmental status.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, as they related to the university's proposed operational framework for the new courses, three out of the four recommendations were guidelines pertaining to the physical training of men and women students. These guidelines not only emphasised a distinction between men and women; they also specified what the faculty, and by extension the university, expected from Jokl. Despite the fact that Jokl was appointed as the only lecturer of physical education in this introductory phase, the guidelines specified that a woman instructor was to teach women students. In view of these specifications, the recommendations encapsulated the gendered lens through which powerful groups within the university conceptualised the budding discipline.¹¹⁰

In the September 1936 edition of *Die Stellenbosse Oudstudent*, Jokl provided insight into his vision for the proposed certificate and diploma courses that were to launch in 1937.¹¹¹ Largely rooted in a medicalised framework bent on improving the condition of the human body, Jokl focused on developing what he deemed to be a scientifically based curriculum structure.¹¹² In considering Jokl's German background and training, Germany

107 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. III, 2/7/1934-15/11/1935, Insaake 13 September 1935, p. 285.

108 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. III, 2/7/1934-15/11/1935, Insaake 13 September 1935, p. 285.

109 Physical education received departmental status in 1940. See HB Thom, *Stellenbosch 1866-1966...*, pp. 112-117; Anon, "Die Nasionale Skema vir Liggaamlike Opvoeding", *Die Stellenbosse Oudstudent*, April 1943, p. 20; Anon, "Moderne gimnasium vir Stellenbosch", *Die Burger*, 26 August 1938, p. 3.

110 ET Stegmann, "Liggaamsopvoeding aan 'n universiteit", *Liggaamsopvoeding/Physical Education*, 1(1), 1939, p. 15.

111 E Jokl, "Liggaamlike opvoedkunde aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch", *Die Stellenbosse Oudstudent*, September 1936, p. 18.

112 E Jokl, "Liggaamlike opvoedkunde aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch", *Die Stellenbosse Oudstudent*, September 1936, pp. 17-18. See also Anon, "n Fundamentele sportaanstelling aan die universiteit", *Die Stellenbosse Oudstudent*, pp. 24-25.

has one of the oldest traditions of sports medicine globally. In 1920, the world's first sports college which offered a sports medicine curriculum, was established in Berlin. Within five years, the German Association of Physicians for the Promotion of Physical Culture had founded the first sports medical journal in 1924.¹¹³ As it related to the proposed curriculum structure for the two courses, the certificate course was more closely aligned with the SU Education Faculty's conceptualisation of physical education as a postgraduate course for qualified teachers who were interested in specialising in physical education.¹¹⁴ The certificate course was intended to consist of lectures, physical training sessions, and exercises in teaching on the sports field.¹¹⁵ While teacher training was foregrounded, the combination of pedagogical training, emerging physical education theory, physical exercise and sport aligned with Jokl's intentions to formulate a scientific physical education programme. In formulating the structure of the certificate course, Jokl incorporated subjects such as anatomy, physiology, and hygiene studies, which were subjects that foregrounded the improvement, examination, and analysis of the human body. By drawing on these established scientific disciplines, Jokl's outline not only illustrated the construction of physical education as an academic discipline but also demonstrated the forging of physical education into a science of the body.¹¹⁶ Similar to the certificate course the diploma course focused on theory and compulsory physical training such as athletics, games, sport, and gymnastics.¹¹⁷ As it was anticipated that the diploma course would be more physically demanding, Jokl recommended that only students who had previously excelled on the sports field should apply.¹¹⁸ This focus on physical dexterity and sporting prowess was of particular importance in the context of the SU where once imperial sports,¹¹⁹ such as rugby, were "Afrikanerised"¹²⁰ as bastions of Afrikaner national identity, social practice, and culture. In considering the university's contribution to the standardisation of physical education, the combination of indigenised sport and systemised theory supported the institutionalisation of physical education. Furthermore, as it pertained to the proposed outcome of this programme, the three-year diploma course was intended to yield physical

113 I Waddington, "The development of sports medicine", *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 13(2), 1996, p. 177.

114 SUA, Stellenbosch University Calendar, 1937, pp. 275–279.

115 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XI, 9/12/1935-19/3/1937, Minutes of Senate meeting: courses in physical education for education students, 9 September 1936, p. 129.

116 E Jokl, "Liggaamlike opvoedkunde aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch", *Die Stellenbossche Oudstudent*, September 1936, p. 18.

117 E Jokl, "Liggaamlike opvoedkunde aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch", *Die Stellenbossche Oudstudent*, September 1936, p. 18.

118 E Jokl, "Liggaamlike opvoedkunde aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch", *Die Stellenbossche Oudstudent*, September 1936, p. 18.

119 L Koenig-Visagie, "Active, adventurous and heroic: visual constructions of masculinity in the Afrikaans church", *Gender Questions*, 10(1), 2022, pp. 7–11. <https://doi.org/10.25159/2412-8457/10304>; AM Grundlingh, "Playing for power? Rugby, Afrikaner nationalism and masculinity in South Africa, c. 1900-70", *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 11(3), 1994, p. 40–412. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09523369408713871>

120 AM Grundlingh, "Playing for power?...", *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 11(3), 1994, p. 418.

education researchers and professional physical educationists.¹²¹ Moreover, in expanding beyond the established sciences included in the certificate course, the diploma course included subjects such as biology, anatomy, physiology, hygiene studies, psychology, education, sociology, medicine, physics of aviation for men and women students who were interested, and home economics for women students.¹²² While the gendered component of the programmes remained central, there were striking additions. Jokl conceptualised the course in such a way that it gave women students the opportunity to attend classes on aviation in lieu of home economics classes that would have prepared them for a more domestic role.¹²³ The exciting addition of aviation that provided women students with an alternative to home economics classes was significant as it signified both Jokl's ambitions to expand the scope of the course and his lack of adherence to local social norms. At this embryonic stage, the inclusion of the aforementioned established disciplines alongside pedagogical and physical training not only buttressed the theoretical foundation of physical education but also demonstrated the cultivation of physical education as a science and as an academic discipline.

Medical mayhem and the scandal of April 1937

While the university was determined to offer both the certificate and diploma courses, the announcement of the diploma course was met with opposition from the Cape Education Department (CED). Early in 1937, the Superintendent General of the CED, Wouter de Vos Malan, wrote a letter to Rector Wilcocks in response to the university's plan to introduce certificate and diploma courses in physical education. Responding to Wilcocks' questions regarding the feasibility of a specialised diploma course, De Vos Malan noted that in its present form, the three-year diploma course could not be considered as a teacher training course or as a degree course.¹²⁴ De Vos Malan contended that the CED would not endorse the diploma course as there was no guarantee of employment for educators who were only

121 E Jokl, "Liggaamlike opvoedkunde aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch", *Die Stellenbossche Oudstudent*, September 1936, p. 18.

122 The inclusion of aviation physics intersected with Jokl's personal interest in aviation medicine. Obtaining his pilot licence in 1936, Jokl would later produce research on the medical aspects of aviation. See SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XI, 9/12/1935-19/3/1937, Minutes of Senate meeting: courses in physical education for education students, 9 September 1936, p. 129. See also E Jokl, *Aviation medicine* (Cape Town, Unievolkspers Beperk, 1942).

123 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XI, 9/12/1935-19/3/1937, Minutes of Senate meeting: courses in physical education for education students, 9 September 1936, p. 129. See also E Jokl, *Aviation medicine...*; E Jokl, "Liggaamlike opvoedkunde aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch", *Die Stellenbossche Oudstudent*, September 1936, p. 18.

124 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XI, 9/12/1935-19/3/1936, Brief van Superintendent Generaal van Onderwys, W. de Vos Malan, p. 337.

trained as physical educationists.¹²⁵ In line with the CED's recommendation, 17 students¹²⁶ who were all in possession of a teaching qualification were enrolled in the university's first physical education certificate course at the beginning of 1937.¹²⁷ The enrolment of qualified teachers was in line with the CED's stipulations. While these students intended on specialising in physical education, they were equipped to teach other school subjects as well.

As the sole lecturer, Jokl was responsible for conducting the theoretical portion of the course.¹²⁸ Moreover, in accordance with the Education Faculty's recommendations, Jokl handled the physical training of men students, whereas his wife, Erica Jokl, an experienced gymnast, instructed women students.¹²⁹ In order to ensure that they were physically fit and able to participate in the physical aspects of the programme, all students were obligated to undergo a medical examination upon admission.¹³⁰ Apart from his duties that were directly related to physical education teaching and training, Jokl offered medical services on campus as a doctor.¹³¹ As we shall see, functioning as a lecturer and medical practitioner would prove to be a conflict of interest when operating within an institution that championed conservative values. While Jokl intended to mould physical education into a science of the body, his work as a medical practitioner complemented this task as it required a comprehensive understanding of the human body. Despite this, from the onset it had been established that physical education was expected to honour the gendered dichotomy upheld by Afrikaner society. As an intellectual leader in Afrikaner nationalist thought throughout the 20th century, the university was dedicated to preserving this society's values at all costs.

In March 1937, the Executive Committee (EC) of the Senate initiated an investigation, scrutinising the methods that Jokl employed while conducting medical examinations of

125 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XI, 9/12/1935-19/3/1936, Brief van Superintendent Generaal van Onderwys, W. de Vos Malan, p. 337.

126 HB Thom, *Stellenbosch 1866-1966...*, p. 117.

127 Anon, "Stellenbosch enrolments higher", *Rand Daily Mail*, 14 March 1938, p. 7.; SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XI, 9/12/1935-19/3/1936, Minutes of Senate meeting 19 March 1937, p. 309.

128 AL Boshoff, "Die geskiedenis van die Departement van Liggaamlike Opvoeding aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch"..., pp. 45-47.

129 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XI, 9/12/1935-19/3/1936, Besluite van die Senaat, p. 92.; AL Boshoff, "Die geskiedenis van die Departement van Liggaamlike Opvoeding aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch"..., pp. 45-47; J Bale, "Chapter one: Ernst Jokl and the layers of truth", *Playing Pasts*, 6 May 2021 (available at <https://www.playingpasts.co.uk/articles/athletics/ernst-jokl-and-layers-of-truth-2/>, as accessed on 28 June 2021).

130 SUA, Stellenbosch University Calendar, 1937, pp. 275-279.

131 AL Boshoff, "Die geskiedenis van die Departement van Liggaamlike Opvoeding aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch"..., pp. 40-55; SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XI, 9/12/1935-19/3/1936, Minutes of Senate meeting, 19 March 1937, p. 24.

physical education students.¹³² In its initial report, the EC emphasised that Jokl was qualified to conduct the examinations, stressing that he had attained two medical degrees (from the University of Breslau and the University of the Witwatersrand) and that he was registered with the Medical Council of South Africa.¹³³ Furthermore, the EC report stressed that Jokl had been instructed to conduct the medical examinations of physical education students. Jokl assessed both men and women students, and during these inspections students were instructed to undress.¹³⁴ The central contestation that led to a major investigation arose because Jokl was examining women students in “various states of undress”.¹³⁵ As discussed, the Education Faculty’s recommendation emphasised that Jokl was not permitted to handle the physical training of women students. Six months after the recommendations had been posed, Jokl was asked to conduct the obligatory medical examinations of physical education students. Considering this, the recommendations served as an indication of what the university regarded as appropriate physical contact with women students. While the instruction of physical activity did not require prolonged physical contact between the instructor and the student, Jokl was not permitted to instruct women students in physical activities. Taking this and the fact that Jokl was qualified to conduct the medical examinations into account, the university’s response to Jokl’s methods was a critique of a lecturer’s physical contact with a student and not of a doctor’s examination of a patient. While Jokl occupied both roles, his examination methods stood in stark contrast with what the university regarded to be acceptable—one pertained to health, one to science.

In response to the initial investigation, Jokl addressed a letter to Wilcocks on 16 April 1937, requesting to be relieved of his duties as lecturer of physical education at the university yet emphasising that the methods that he had employed were scientifically based and that his conduct was professional.¹³⁶ Three days later a committee comprised of Wilcocks, Stegmann, and Alan Harvey¹³⁷ presented a memorandum to the Senate which

132 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XI, 9/12/1935-19/3/1936, Minutes of Senate meeting, 19 March 1937, p. 309.

133 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Voorlopige rapport van komitee i/s mediese ondersoek van studente van liggaamsopvoeding, p. 18.

134 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Voorlopige rapport van komitee i/s mediese ondersoek van studente van liggaamsopvoeding, p. 18.

135 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Voorlopige rapport van komitee i/s mediese ondersoek van studente van liggaamsopvoeding, p. 18.

136 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Brief van Dr E Jokl, 16 April 1937, pp. 24–25.

137 The Senate minutes in which Mr Alan Harvey is mentioned as a committee member do not specify his affiliation to the university.

was to be released to the press at a later stage.¹³⁸ First, the committee briefly described the processes surrounding the introduction of physical education, the reasons behind Jokl's employment, and why the medical examinations were necessary.¹³⁹ In providing details regarding the examinations, the committee claimed that the university was unaware that Jokl was examining women students in a state of "complete undress".¹⁴⁰ The committee further claimed that once the university had become aware of Jokl's methods, immediate steps were taken to prevent this from happening again, and subsequently the university proceeded to investigate the matter.¹⁴¹ Following the launch of the investigation, the university thought it best to form a Commission of Inquiry (COI) as part of its efforts to obtain an independent report from outside the university. The members of the COI were two women and a man: Mrs JH Conradie, the wife of the Cape Province Administrator,¹⁴² Mrs SW Pienaar, the chairperson of the Stellenbosch faction of the *Afrikaanse Christelike Vrouevereniging* (Afrikaner Christian Women's Movement),¹⁴³ and Dr Karl Bremer¹⁴⁴ who would be elected vice-chancellor of the university in 1950 and remained in office until his

138 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Voorlopige rapport van komitee i/s mediese ondersoek van studente van liggaamsopvoeding, p. 18; SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Rapport van Vise-Kanselierskomitee van vergadering gehou op 24 April 1937, p. 203.

139 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Voorlopige rapport van komitee i/s mediese ondersoek van studente van liggaamsopvoeding, pp. 18–19.

140 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Voorlopige rapport van komitee i/s mediese ondersoek van studente van liggaamsopvoeding, pp. 18–19.

141 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Voorlopige rapport van komitee i/s mediese ondersoek van studente van liggaamsopvoeding, p. 22.

142 FJ Cleophas, "A political-institutional history of the Stellenbosch University Physical Education Department...", *Sport in Society*, December 2021, p. 623. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2021.2013203>; AL Boshoff, "Die geskiedenis van die Departement van Liggaamlike Opvoeding aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch...", p. 48.

143 Launched in 1904 as a philanthropic organisation, the ACVV fundamentally served to address social concerns regarding the increasing 'poor white problem' in the aftermath of the South African War. M du Toit, "The domesticity of Afrikaner nationalism: *volksmoeder* and the ACVV, 1904-1929", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 29(1), 2003, p. 160; FJ Cleophas, "A political-institutional history of the Stellenbosch University Physical Education Department...", *Sport in Society*, December 2021, pp. 623–644. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2021.2013203>; AL Boshoff, "Die geskiedenis van die Departement van Liggaamlike Opvoeding aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch...", p. 48.

144 Karl Bremer's daughter, Greta Gericke, would go on to become the first student to attain a B.Ed. Ph. degree at Stellenbosch University. See Anon, "Geluk Greta Bremer", *Liggaamsopvoeding/Physical Education*, 2(1), 1941, p. 21; G Bremer, "Ons kleredrag en h wapen", *Liggaamsopvoeding/Physical Education*, 2(2), 1940, p. 61; SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Letter from the Dutch Reformed Church Council, 10 May 1937, p. 284.

death in 1953.¹⁴⁵ The report stated the following:

1. That all the female students voluntarily underwent the investigation knowing
(a) that they could choose their own doctor; and
(b) that they would have to undress completely.
2. That the investigation was of a superficial nature and lasted about five minutes. During this time, the stomach, heart, and lungs were examined, and the blood pressure was measured.
3. That nothing of an indecent nature occurred during the investigation.
4. That none of the women students experienced any shock, fright, or indignation. On the contrary, they were completely satisfied with the examination.
5. That during every examination, another woman student was present.
6. Of the 17 names given to the COI, it appears as though 12 were examined in a complete undressed state and the other 5 were not asked to undress completely.
7. All the women students agreed that Dr Jokl's actions and conduct during the investigation were impeccable.¹⁴⁶

These findings were based on testimonies gathered from physical education students during the COI's investigation. Apart from the university instructing Jokl to conduct the medical examinations, the fact that he already provided medical services on campus might have contributed to students' being more comfortable with his conducting their medical examinations. Furthermore, Jokl made sure that all the students were aware of the basic procedures that would be undertaken in the examinations. Based on the student testimonies, Jokl's conduct was professional. Additionally, Jokl had conducted similar medical examinations on athletes at earlier stages of his career. During his studies, Jokl had

145 Across his medical and political career, Bremer advocated for racial segregation as a means to ensure the preservation and advancement of the white population in South Africa. Born in 1885 (in the former Cape Colony), Bremer served as Stellenbosch University's Vice-Chancellor between 1950 and 1953. Bremer studied medicine at Cornell, St Bartholomew's Hospital in London, and the University of Berlin. Bremer became the Medical Inspector for Schools in the Cape Province. Between the 1920s and 1940s, Bremer was active involvement in politics, serving as deputy for the Graaff-Reinet constituency and Parliamentary Member for Stellenbosch. From 1949 to 1951, Bremer served on the Stellenbosch University Senate and was elected Minister of Health and Social Welfare in Daniël Francois Malan's cabinet. See SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Voorlopige rapport van komitee i/s mediese ondersoek van studente van liggaamsopvoeding, p. 22. See also JK de Kock, "Doctors in parliament", *South African Medical Journal*, 38(12), 1964, pp. 237-241; Stellenbosch University, "Dr Karl Bremer", Stellenbosch University (available at <https://www0.sun.ac.za/100/en/team/dr-k-bremer/>, as accessed on 29 July 2022); S Klausen, *Race, maternity, and the politics of birth control in South Africa, 1910-39* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 74; A Digby, "Black doctors and discrimination under South Africa's apartheid regime", *Medical History*, 57(2), 2013, p. 280.

146 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Voorlopige rapport van komitee i/s mediese ondersoek van studente van liggaamsopvoeding, p. 22.

conducted anthropometric medical assessments on German Olympic athletes participating in the 1928 Olympic Games.¹⁴⁷ In light of these details, it is apparent that the university's criticism rested on the fact that Jokl's conduct transgressed the university's regulations pertaining to interactions with women students.

In his testimony, Jokl stated that according to his training, patients were required to undress when undergoing a medical examination of this sort.¹⁴⁸ He noted that the examinations lasted for about 20 minutes and that the rest of the procedure took place on the sports field and focused on other body parts such as the joints.¹⁴⁹ According to Jokl, the investigation was more thorough than the students realised.¹⁵⁰ He also claimed that he had not expected that his methods would lead to public outrage in South Africa and that he had ceased all examinations following the backlash.¹⁵¹ In response, the committee consisting of Wilcocks, Stegmann, and Harvey stressed that although permissible in other countries and contexts, Jokl's methods could have been implemented without the students' having to undress.¹⁵² This further emphasised that while Jokl was informed by his training, his methods transgressed the deep-seated dogma of decorum, rooted in conservative and patriarchal values that permeated the university.¹⁵³

As an outcome of the inquiry, the committee decided to accept the COI's findings and concluded that the methods that Jokl had employed, although "customary in some other countries", were neither necessary nor acceptable in this case.¹⁵⁴ Jokl's actions proved, the committee maintained, that he was out of touch with the norms of white South Africa.¹⁵⁵ The committee expressed that the university deeply regretted the events and felt that it

147 J Bale, "Chapter one: Ernst Jokl and the layers of truth", *Playing Pasts*, 6 May 2021 (available at <https://www.playingpasts.co.uk/articles/athletics/ernst-jokl-and-layers-of-truth-2/>, as accessed on 28 June 2021).

148 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Voorlopige rapport van komitee i/s mediese ondersoek van studente van liggaamsopvoeding, p. 22.

149 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Voorlopige rapport van komitee i/s mediese ondersoek van studente van liggaamsopvoeding, p. 22.

150 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Voorlopige rapport van komitee i/s mediese ondersoek van studente van liggaamsopvoeding, p. 22.

151 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Voorlopige rapport van komitee i/s mediese ondersoek van studente van liggaamsopvoeding, p. 22.

152 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Voorlopige rapport van komitee i/s mediese ondersoek van studente van liggaamsopvoeding, p. 22.

153 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Voorlopige rapport van komitee i/s mediese ondersoek van studente van liggaamsopvoeding, pp. 22–23.

154 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Voorlopige rapport van komitee i/s mediese ondersoek van studente van liggaamsopvoeding, pp. 22–23.

155 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Voorlopige rapport van komitee i/s mediese ondersoek van studente van liggaamsopvoeding, pp. 22–23.

would not be honouring the institution's traditions if it did not accept Jokl's resignation.¹⁵⁶ Despite receiving majority support from the committee members, this was not a unanimous decision. Stegmann voted in the minority against accepting Jokl's resignation and requested that his opposition be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.¹⁵⁷ In being largely responsible for Jokl's appointment, Stegmann regarded Jokl's tenure as the initial steps toward making "Stellenbosch the recognized centre for scientific physical education in South Africa."¹⁵⁸ Stegmann's vocal opposition to the committee's decision underlined the fact that he remained invested in keeping Jokl at the university.

In an outraged response, Jokl addressed a letter to Rector Wilcocks on 21 April 1937. According to Jokl, Wilcocks had personally informed him that he would be allowed to submit a memorandum to Senate, detailing why he needed to employ his methods while examining physical education students. According to Jokl, he was not afforded an opportunity to submit the memorandum or to access the COI's final report.¹⁵⁹ In the letter addressed to Wilcocks, Jokl outlined a number of points that he thought to be essential to the investigation. In the memorandum attached to the aforementioned letter, Jokl stated that as the instructor and medical practitioner in charge of training physical education students, he had to be "acquainted with the substrate of his efforts: with the body of his student"¹⁶⁰ and went on to claim that the purpose of his examinations warranted the methods that he had employed.¹⁶¹ For Jokl, the "visual impression"¹⁶² of the body as a whole was vital for assessing students of physical education. Jokl noted that the main aim of such an examination was "...to form a clear picture of the constitutional type of each individual."¹⁶³ This memorandum drew attention to the rift between the university's conceptualisation of physical education and Jokl's self-consciously 'scientific' approach. On

156 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Voorlopige rapport van komitee i/s mediese ondersoek van studente van liggaamsopvoeding, pp. 22–23.

157 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Voorlopige rapport van komitee i/s mediese ondersoek van studente van liggaamsopvoeding, pp. 22–23.

158 E Jokl, "Liggaamlike opvoedkunde aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch", *Die Stellenbossche Oudstudent*, September 1936, p. 17.

159 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Voorlopige rapport van komitee i/s mediese ondersoek van studente van liggaamsopvoeding, pp. 22–26.

160 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Voorlopige rapport van komitee i/s mediese ondersoek van studente van liggaamsopvoeding, pp. 22–26.

161 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Voorlopige rapport van komitee i/s mediese ondersoek van studente van liggaamsopvoeding, p. 26.

162 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Voorlopige rapport van komitee i/s mediese ondersoek van studente van liggaamsopvoeding, p. 26.

163 E Jokl, "Liggaamlike opvoedkunde aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch", *Die Stellenbossche Oudstudent*, September 1936, p. 17.

the side of the university, it had been assumed that within Jokl's capacity as lecturer, the Education Faculty's guidelines which dictated interactions with students, would inform Jokl's methods. While the guidelines were upheld in the context of lectures and practical sessions, the university's reaction to Jokl's approach indicated that the institution did not fathom the extent of Jokl's methods. Standing in opposition to the university's conservative approach, Jokl's methods transgressed the university's unspoken yet tangible boundaries.

As a final attempt to defend himself, Jokl penned a letter on 23 April 1937. In this letter, he objected to the Council's decision to accept his letter of resignation.¹⁶⁴ Although the COI's report revealed that Jokl had acted within his professional capacity, the committee recommended that the university sever its ties with Jokl on grounds of his resignation.¹⁶⁵ In this letter, Jokl disclosed that he had submitted his resignation upon the recommendation of Wilcocks, noting that Wilcocks had even drafted the resignation letter himself.¹⁶⁶ Jokl claimed that he never intended to step down from his position and instead hoped for a fair and thorough investigation into the claims made against him.¹⁶⁷ While Wilcocks had sourced funding from the Carnegie Corporation to finance Jokl's position at the university, his position as rector dictated his allegiance.¹⁶⁸ Wilcocks's alleged involvement in Jokl's resignation further emphasised the extent to which the social standing of the university dictated institutional decision making. In occupying the position of rector, Wilcocks protected the interests of the university by siding with the institution and indeed, at least according to Jokl, orchestrating his resignation.¹⁶⁹ The COI's finding indicated that Jokl had acted within his professional capacity, so the conditions surrounding Jokl's dismissal remain ambiguous. In the archival record, Wilcocks appears to be silent regarding the Jokl affair. Other than the letter submitted to the funding body (the Carnegie Corporation), the archive does not reveal any overt statements from the rector. The silence, however, is broken when analysing the stance that Wilcocks took as a leader within the university. In the same way that Wilcocks was central in Jokl's appointment, he was also a catalyst in Jokl's exit.

164 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Brief van Dr E Jokl, 16 April 1937, pp. 24–28.

165 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Voorlopige rapport van komitee i/s mediese ondersoek van studente van liggaamsopvoeding, p. 23.

166 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Brief van Dr E Jokl, 16 April 1937, p. 30.

167 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Brief van Dr E Jokl, 16 April 1937, p. 30.

168 SUA, Senaat-Notule, Vol. II, 2/7/1934-15/11/1935, Notule van gewone vergadering van die Raad gehou in die Raadkamer op Saterdag, 22 Junie 1935, p. 208.

169 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Brief van Dr E Jokl, 16 April 1937, p. 30.

Upholding the values of the *volksuniversiteit*

Public discourse surrounding the Jokl investigation expressed both condemnation and support. Following an article published in *Die Burger* on 19 April 1937 detailing the investigation, the Stellenbosch faction of the Dutch Reformed Church expressed its indignation regarding Jokl's actions.¹⁷⁰ In a letter addressed to the Senate, the Church Council voiced its disapproval. For the church, not only the moral well-being of the women students but also the good reputation of the university and the community of Stellenbosch were at stake.¹⁷¹ The Church Council pleaded with Senate to immediately stop all physical examinations of women students in which they were instructed to undress, that it would ensure that, if necessary, all examinations of women students be done by a woman doctor and that it would accept the resignation of the individual in question.¹⁷² On 21 April 1937, the *Pro Libertate* student publication attempted to initiate critical discussions among the student body regarding the Jokl investigation.¹⁷³ The publication sought to bring attention to how racial prejudice and antisemitism influenced public perception and the university's stance. In the article, the author addressed the 'crisis' by stating,

*Many rumours are circulating... which cannot but be detrimental to the honour and position of this University and that of the person concerned. It is a lamentable fact that much prejudice exists, and people are prone to base their conclusion on this prejudice rather than on a clear and critical analysis of facts. On the one hand, we may ask ourselves this question; Must this University as a "Volksuniversiteit" (a much-abused term) allow the appointment of a Jew on its staff? ... In regard to Dr Jokl's appointment the Senate had already declared its policy. If the Senate, therefore, accepts the resignation it cannot be on the grounds of race arguments....*¹⁷⁴

170 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Brief van Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, 21April 1937, p. 198.

171 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Brief van Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, 21April 1937, p. 198.

172 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Brief van Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, 21April 1937, p. 198.

173 *Pro Libertate* was produced in response to the conservative student politics of the 1930s. One of the students responsible for the publication was the prominent South African anti-apartheid theologian, Christiaan Frederick Beyers Naudé. See CFB Naudé, *My land van hoop* (Kaapstad, Human & Rousseau, 1995), p. 27. See also FJ Cleophas, "A political-institutional history of the Stellenbosch University Physical Education Department...", *Sport in Society*, December 2021, p. 622. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2021.2013203>

174 Stellenbosch University Special Collections, Anon, *Pro Libertate*, 21 April 1937, p. 1.

The *Pro Libertate* article foregrounded central contestations within the university regarding the Jokl case. Reference to the “many rumours” drew attention to the fact that the Jokl investigation had become a widespread debate on campus. The article showed that Jokl’s Jewish identity was not a secret and that the student body did not share the same sentiments on the Jokl issue. Moreover, in considering the antisemitic rhetoric spread by prominent SU figures,¹⁷⁵ the article brought awareness to the dissident voices within the institution, thus highlighting contestation within the university.

Toward the end of the investigation, Jokl was granted the opportunity to defend his actions before the Senate. Speaking on his behalf, Advocate Andries Brink Beyers asserted that at the present stage of the investigation, Jokl wished only to have his name cleared “of the slurs cast upon it by the groundless and malicious rumours circulated about him by ill-informed and hostile people”.¹⁷⁶ Beyers stated that if Jokl’s request was met, he would vacate his post voluntarily. In response to Beyers, Rector Wilcocks and Judge Hendrik Stephanus van Zyl stated that the Council would base its decision not only on Jokl’s resignation but also on the expert knowledge of two respected medical practitioners, Dr Karl Bremer and Dr C Louis Leipoldt.¹⁷⁷ Following Bremer and Leipoldt’s interview with Jokl, they concluded that the methods employed in the medical examinations of women students were not required. This conclusion indicated that Bremer and Leipoldt considered Jokl’s examination to be unnecessarily invasive.¹⁷⁸ The Senate’s final recommendations reiterated that Jokl’s conduct in the examinations was professional and that the COI could attest to it. The Council also acknowledged that Jokl’s methods were based on similar practices employed in other countries, such as Germany. Furthermore, the Council stated that had the university been aware of Jokl’s methods, it would not have allowed his examinations as they were deemed ‘offensive’ in South Africa. The Council concluded by stating that the

175 Stellenbosch University Special Collections, Anon, *Pro Libertate*, 21 April 1937, p. 1.; M Shain, “Anti-Semitism and South African Society: Reappraising the 1930s and 1940s”, *South African Historical Journal*, 27(1), 1992, pp. 186-197. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02582479208671744>

176 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Minutes of meeting of the Senate, 14 May 1937, p. 30.

177 Christiaan Frederick Louis Leipoldt was a medical doctor, poet, reporter and self-styled dietetics expert, penning *The Belly Book, or Diner’s Guide* in 1936. See CL Leipoldt, *Bushveld doctor* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1980); S Swart, “‘Bushveld Magic’ and ‘Miracle Doctors’: an exploration of Eugène Marais and C. Louis Leipoldt’s experience in the Waterberg, South Africa, c 1906-1917”, *Journal of African History*, 45, 2004, pp. 237–255. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021853703008703>

178 There is a measure of irony in this as Leipoldt himself photographed poor white children in the nude. See CFL Leipoldt, *Bushveld doctor*, p. 65.

methods employed by Jokl indicated that he was oblivious to the values of the “*volk*”¹⁷⁹ and the university.

Subsequently, the university decided to accept Jokl’s resignation and terminate his appointment on 24 April 1937.¹⁸⁰ Once the university’s final decision had been made public, Jokl addressed a letter to Wilcocks in which he thanked the rector for his support and “the members of the Senate for the attitude which they ... adopted” throughout the investigation.¹⁸¹ Reflecting upon his time at the university, Jokl stated,

*when, at a later date, I shall think of my work at the University of Stellenbosch, I shall have before my mind the kindness, which so many members of the staff showed towards me, as an entire stranger.... I wish the University of Stellenbosch further success and progress. My loyalty will always be with the University in the same way as it was during the short period when I could actively serve your alma mater.*¹⁸²

As the university had received financial support from the Carnegie Corporation to fund Jokl’s appointment “under the scheme for assisting displaced German Scientists”,¹⁸³ Wilcocks addressed a letter to the President of the Carnegie Corporation, Dr Keppel, in which he explained Jokl’s dismissal. On 10 June 1937, Keppel responded, “We quite understand the circumstance outlined in your letter of May 10 regarding Dr E. Jokl. As to the balance of the grant, we hope that you can find a way at your convenience to use it for some other German scholar.”¹⁸⁴

Jokkel without Jokl

In August 1937, the Appointments Committee of the university recommended that

179 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Voorlopige rapport van komitee i/s mediese ondersoek van studente van liggaamsopvoeding, p. 56.

180 Jokl would continue to receive his salary till 31 December 1937. See SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Insake van die mediese ondersoek van studente wat kursusse in liggaamsopvoeding, p. 31.

181 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Minutes of meeting of the Senate, 14 May 1937, p. 54.

182 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Minutes of meeting of the Senate, 14 May 1937, p. 54.

183 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Letter from Prof. R.W. Wilcocks, 10 May 1937, pp. 275–276.

184 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Letter from Prof. R.W. Wilcocks, 10 May 1937, pp. 275–276.

Austrian-born Dr Anton Max Karl Obholzer be appointed to the position of senior lecturer in physical education,¹⁸⁵ starting on 16 August 1937.¹⁸⁶ Despite efforts to ensure a smooth transition into the next term, tensions were still running high following Jokl's dismissal. In a letter from the Dutch Reformed Church, the Church Council aired its concerns regarding the maintenance of the university's reputation, its students' moral well-being, and the Afrikaner *volk's* values.¹⁸⁷ Lamenting the negative publicity surrounding the Jokl matter, the letter made three recommendations. First, if medical examinations were deemed necessary, a woman doctor should conduct the physical examinations of women students. Second, a woman instructor should conduct the exercise sessions for women students and exercise sessions for women and men should be conducted separately. Third, issues regarding the "*skrale kleredrag*"¹⁸⁸ of women students were also raised. Regarding this matter, the Church Council stated that these morally corruptible behaviours were harmful to both the students and onlookers. The Church Council emphasised that as the white population were the beacon of Christian life in South Africa, the university should remain cognisant of the detrimental impact that the sight of scantily dressed white women could have on the surrounding coloured communities.¹⁸⁹ As a possible solution to the 'crisis', the Church Council urged the university to ensure that women students exercised in modest costumes and that they dressed in private rooms. For the church, physical education was to remain closely connected with the Christian understanding of morality and purity.¹⁹⁰ The voice of the church in this regard is particularly interesting as it outlines the ways in which SU intended to participate in global scientific practice while upholding the staunchly religious and conservative values imposed by Afrikaner strongholds such as the Dutch Reformed Church. Drawing from both global and local influences, SU as *volksuniversiteit* and leader in scientific physical education in the country was determined to inscribe scientific practices with traditionalist ethics.

185 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Minutes of meeting of the Senate, 6 August 1937, pp. 116–117.

186 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Minutes of meeting of the Senate, 17 September 1937, pp. 122–124.

187 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Letter from the Dutch Reformed Church Council, 10 May 1937, p. 284.

188 Translates to 'scant clothing.' See SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Letter from the Dutch Reformed Church Council, 10 May 1937, p. 284.

189 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Letter from the Dutch Reformed Church Council, 10 May 1937, p. 284.

190 SUA, Senaat-Notule Vol. XII, 16/4/1937-1/4/1938, Letter from the Dutch Reformed Church Council, 10 May 1937, p. 284.

Conclusion

In tracing the founding of physical education as an academic discipline and science at SU, this paper examined a historical moment in which scientific method and conservative tradition collided. By crafting and conceptualising a discipline preoccupied with examining, analysing, and improving the human body, we outline the cultural constructs that contoured the scientific boundaries of physical education. In considering the foundations of this field within the South African context, we demonstrate how SU's conservative and ethnically aligned ethos shaped the origins of physical education as an academic discipline and the curtailment of academic freedom at the institution. In doing so, we analysed the extent to which 'Afrikaner ideals' pertaining to gender dictated institutional decision making regarding the boundaries of physical education and the practice of science. We contend that in positioning gender as a key component, the discipline was to cater to the idealised imaginings of a white, largely Afrikaans-speaking student body and the society that it represented. Within this context, the making of physical education into a science was of paramount importance for both Jokl and the university. However, while vying for scientific recognition, physical education's disciplinary practices were expected to uphold SU's conservative traditions. As a physical education expert, the methods that Jokl employed in the medical examinations of women students were seen as a transgression against the university's deeply conservative values. In essence, Jokl failed to adhere to the expectations of the *volksuniversiteit*. In examining the grounds of Jokl's transgression, we demonstrated how science was moulded to suit social expectations. Considering the events that led up to Jokl's rise and fall at Stellenbosch, we illustrated that scientific methodologies are not produced and practised in isolation. An institution's culture dictates its decision making. The institution's traditions and social allegiances not only manifest in the courses and programmes that it has to offer but also dictate the boundaries of scientific inquiry at the institution.