

= Francis William Reitz =

Francis William Reitz , Jr . ( Swellendam , 5 October 1844 ? Cape Town , 27 March 1934 ) was a South African lawyer , politician , statesman , publicist , and poet who was a member of parliament of the Cape Colony , Chief Justice and fifth State President of the Orange Free State , State Secretary of the South African Republic at the time of the Second Boer War , and the first president of the Senate of the Union of South Africa .

Reitz had an extremely varied political and judicial career that lasted for over forty @-@ five years and spanned four separate political entities : the Cape Colony , the Orange Free State , the South African Republic , and the Union of South Africa . Trained as a lawyer in Cape Town and London , Reitz started off in law practice and diamond prospecting before being appointed Chief Justice of the Orange Free State . In the Orange Free State Reitz played an important role in the modernisation of the legal system and the state 's administrative organisation . At the same time he was also prominent in public life , getting involved in the Afrikaner language and culture movement , and cultural life in general .

Reitz was a popular personality , both for his politics and his openness . When State President Brand suddenly died in 1888 , Reitz won the presidential elections unopposed . After being re @-@ elected in 1895 , subsequently making a trip to Europe , Reitz fell seriously ill , and had to retire . In 1898 , now recovered , he was appointed State Secretary of the South African Republic , and became a leading Afrikaner political figure during the Second Boer War . Reluctant to shift allegiance to the British , Reitz went into voluntary exile after the war ended . Several years later he returned to South Africa and set up a law practice again , in Pretoria . In the late 1900s he became involved in politics once more , and upon the declaration of the Union of South Africa in 1910 , Reitz was chosen the first president of the Senate .

Reitz was an important figure in Afrikaner cultural life during most of his life , especially through his poems and other publications .

= = Biography = =

= = = Family = = =

Francis William Reitz , Jr . , was born in Swellendam on 5 October 1844 , as the son of Francis William Reitz , Sr. MLC , model farmer , agriculturalist and politician , and Cornelia Magdalena Deneys . He was the seventh child in a family of twelve . He grew up at Rhenosterfontein , the model farm ( Afrikaans : plaas ) of his father , situated on the borders of the Breederivier ( Broad River ) in the Cape Colony .

Reitz married twice . His first marriage ( Cape Town 24 June 1874 ) was to Blanka Thesen ( Stavanger , Norway , 15 October 1854 ? Bloemfontein , 5 October 1887 ) . She was the sister of Charles Wilhelm Thesen , and the daughter of Arnt Leonard Thesen , tradesman , and Anne Cathrine Margarethe Brandt . The Thesen family had settled in Knysna , Cape Colony , from Norway in 1869 . The couple had seven sons and one daughter . After the death of his first wife Reitz remarried ( Bloemfontein , 11 December 1889 ) with Cornelia Maria Theresia Mulder ( Delft , Netherlands , 25 December 1863 ? Cape Town 2 January 1935 ) , daughter of Johannes Adrianus Mulder , typesetter , and Engelina Johanna van Hamme . At the time of her marriage Mulder was acting director of the Eunice Ladies ' Institute at Bloemfontein . With his second wife he had six sons and one daughter .

Deneys , his son , fought against the British in the Second Boer War , commanded the First Battalion , Royal Scots Fusiliers during World War I and served as a Member of the Union Parliament , Cabinet Minister , Deputy Prime Minister ( 1939 ? 1943 ) , and South African High Commissioner ( 1944 ) to the Court of St. James 's . His book , Commando : A Boer Journal Of The Boer War , has for many years been regarded as one of the best narratives of war and adventure in the English language .

### === Education ===

Reitz received his earliest schooling at home , from a governess , and at a neighbouring farm . When he was nine years old , he went to the Rouwkoop Boarding School in Rondebosch ( Cape Town ) . Here he stood out for his academic achievements and was subsequently elected Queen 's Scholar by the Senate of the South African College in Cape Town . In the six years he spent at the College , after arriving in 1857 , he received a broad education in arts and sciences , and developed himself into a well @-@ balanced young man with obvious leadership qualities . He graduated from South African College in September 1863 with the equivalent of a modern bachelor 's degree in arts and sciences .

By then , Reitz had developed a keen interest in law , and he continued his studies at South African College , reading law with professor F.S. Watermeyer . The latter 's death only months after Reitz started working with him , made Reitz decide to continue his studies in London , at the Inner Temple . It was a decision that needed deliberation , as his father was hoping for his son to return to the farm in due time , and the financial situation of the family was not strong . However , Reitz did go to London , and finished his studies successfully . He was called to the bar at Westminster on 11 June 1867 . During his time in England Reitz became interested in politics , and regularly attended sessions of the House of Commons . Before returning to South Africa he made a tour of Europe . Back in South Africa , Reitz established himself as a barrister in Cape Town , where he was called to the bar on 23 January 1868 .

### === Early career ===

In the beginning Reitz found it hard to make a living , as competition among lawyers in Cape Town was quite severe at this time . Nevertheless , he succeeded in making a name for himself , due to his sharp legal mind and his social intelligence . Being part of the western Circuit Court of the Cape Colony gave him a lot of experience in a very short time . At the same time , Reitz nurtured his political interests by writing lead articles for the Cape Argus newspaper , for which he also reported on the proceedings of the Cape Parliament and acted as deputy editor . In 1870 Reitz moved his legal practice to Bloemfontein in the Orange Free State . The discovery of diamonds on the banks of the Vaal River , Reitz thought , would lead to a growth of legal work and enable him to set up a thriving practice . This was not to be , however , and after a few months Reitz left Bloemfontein to set up as a diamond prospector in Griqualand West , where he bought a small claim near Pniel from the Berlin Missionary Society . This enterprise also proved unsuccessful , and again after only a few months Reitz returned to Cape Town . This time , his Cape Town law practice was successful , ironically because of the British annexation of the Orange Free State diamondfields ( 1871 ) and the economic prosperity this emanated for the Cape Colony .

In 1873 Reitz was asked to represent the district of Beaufort West in the Cape Parliament . The day he took his seat , 30 May , his father , who was the representative for Swellendam , announced his retirement from the Assembly . As so many of Reitz 's activities up to that point , his parliamentary career was short @-@ lived . Only two months later , President Johannes Brand of the Orange Free State offered Reitz the position of chairman of the newly formed Appellate Court of the Orange Free State , despite the fact that Reitz was not fully qualified ( inter alia too young ) . Reitz refused the offer for this reason , but when another candidate also refused , Brand insisted on the nomination of Reitz , and convinced the Volksraad to appoint him .

### === Judge and State official in the Orange Free State ===

With his appointment to the judiciary of the Orange Free State , Reitz came into his own . His arrival ? now almost thirty years old and just married ? in Bloemfontein in August 1874 was the start of a residency of twenty @-@ one years , as well as the start of a glowing career , to be crowned with his election as State President .

Before the mid 1870s , the judicial system of the Orange Free State was rather amateurish and haphazard in character , particularly because most of the judges were legally unqualified . Most of the judicial procedures were in the hands of district magistrates , the so called Landdrosts , whose main task was administrative . Reitz 's first task was to ameliorate this situation , which he did with much vigour . Well within his first year of tenure the Volksraad passed an Ordinance , in which both a professional Circuit Court and a Supreme Court were called into being . Reitz became the first president of the Supreme Court and consequently also the first Chief Justice of the Orange Free State . Right from the beginning Reitz showed himself to be a fighter , opposing the Volksraad on more than one occasion , tackling deeply ingrained political traditions that stood in the way of the modernisation of the judicial system , but also fighting hard to get the salaries and pensions of state officials improved . As a colonial ? he was born in the Cape Colony after all ? he had to win the confidence of the Boer population to have his ideas accepted . This he did by travelling with the Circuit Court through the country for over ten years , acquiring insight into and empathy for their way of life and their often conservative and always God fearing beliefs . It helped that Reitz himself was a religious person and that he had started out in life in the Afrikaans speaking countryside of the Cape Colony . Eventually he became the symbol of Afrikanerdom for many Orange Free Staters .

Institutionally , Reitz did much for the codification and review of the laws of the Orange Free State . With his colleagues C.J. Vels , O.J. Truter , and J.G. Fraser Reitz published the first *Ordonnantie boek van den Oranje Vrijstaat* ( Ordinance Book of the Orange Free State ) in 1877 , making the acts and ordinances of the republic available to the larger public . He also played a role in the revision of the constitution of the Orange Free State , with regard to articles on citizenship and the right to vote , was chairman of the examination committee for aspirant practitioners , and contributed to the improvement of the prison system and the district administration .

= = = State President of the Orange Free State = = =

Already in 1878 , voices sounded for Reitz to run for the presidency , but President Brand 's position was still very strong and Reitz openly praised his qualities and refused to stand against him . In the late 1870s and early 1880s the political temperature ran high in the Orange Free State . The annexation of the South African Republic ( Transvaal ) by the British in 1877 and the First Anglo Boer War of 1880 ? 1881 in which that republic regained its autonomy impacted deeply on political sentiments in the Orange Free State . On the one hand there were those who propagated caution in the relationship with the British , on the other there developed a political movement that strongly propagated a ( reawakened ) Afrikaner national consciousness . Reitz was part of the latter , and together with C.L.F. Borckenhagen , editor of the Bloemfontein Express newspaper , he wrote a constitution for the Afrikaner Bond ( Afrikaner Union ) , a political party originally set up by leading Afrikaner politicians in the Cape Colony , like Rev S.J. du Toit and his *Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners* ( ' Society of True Afrikaners ' ) and Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr and the *Zuidafrikaansche Boeren Beschermings Vereeniging* ( ' South African Boer Protection Association ' ) . Among the supporters of this new Afrikaner nationalism in the Orange Free State was also Reitz 's successor , M.T. Steyn , then still a young lawyer . The constitution was presented in April 1881 , and several months later Reitz became the chairman of the Bond . His overt political activities earned Reitz criticism from those who feared a breakdown of relations with the British . It is obvious , however , that a wind of change was blowing through the Boer republics and among the Afrikaners in the Cape Colony , which was to change Anglo Boer relations drastically .

In the Orange Free State President Brand was one of the politicians who held on to a more cautious and consolidating policy towards the British government at the Cape , maintaining strict neutrality . In this position Brand followed the habit of a lifetime , and it earned him a British knighthood . Despite the changing political climate and the polarisation of political positions , Brand remained hugely popular with the burghers of the Orange Free State . The presidential elections of 1883 could on content have become a political battle between the pan Dutch Afrikaner Bond supporters and followers of the Brand line . However , Reitz , as the ideal pan Dutch

candidate , again refused to stand against Brand . Only when Brand died in office five years later , the time was ripe for change . Reitz stood candidate and won a landslide victory on the ticket of Afrikaner nationalism . He was inaugurated as state president in the Tweekoringkerk ( Two @-@ Towers Church ) in Bloemfontein on 10 January 1889 .

As president Reitz was one of the first Afrikaners to actively develop a so @-@ called Bantu policy , in philosophy and terminology going beyond contemporary ideas on segregation between white and black . Under his government Indian immigrants were by law forbidden to settle in the Orange Free State ( 1890 ) . This led to a confrontation with the British government and an extensive correspondence between Reitz and the British high commissioner in Cape Town , in which internal sovereignty was claimed and established .

In economic terms , the late 1880s were a period of growth in the Orange Free State . Agriculture picked up , and the railway system became an important source of income as well . Reitz was instrumental in the modernisation of farming , propagating new techniques and a scientific approach to the prevention of plagues . Here Reitz showed himself the agriculturalist and model farmer his father had been before him .

Under Reitz 's presidency the new meeting hall for the Volksraad , the so @-@ called Vierde Raadszaal ( Fourth Council Hall ) was opened ( 1893 ) , and the new Government Building received a second floor ( 1895 ) . Outside Bloemfontein the road network received attention .

As could be expected , immediately after he was inaugurated , Reitz contacted the government of the South African Republic with the objective to establish new and closer political ties . Already on 4 March 1889 the Orange Free State and the South African Republic concluded a treaty of common defence at Potchefstroom . Treaties about trade and the railways were to follow . Even earlier , in January 1889 , the Volksraad charged Reitz to negotiate a customs treaty with both the British South African colonies and the South African Republic . On 20 March 1889 a Customs Conference was held in Bloemfontein which led to an agreement between the Orange Free State and the Cape Colony which was hugely beneficial for the former . The economic benefits grew further when new railway lines were opened between the Cape Colony and Bloemfontein ( 1890 ) and between Bloemfontein and Johannesburg ( 1892 ) , directly connecting Cape Town with Johannesburg and turning the Orange Free State into a transit economy . For Reitz the development of a unified South African railway system was also a political goal : the railways as a means to diminish mutual distrust and create unity and mutual understanding between the white population of South Africa .

Reitz 's policies were appreciated by the Volksraad , reflecting the change in the mood of the Afrikaner electorate towards Afrikaner nationalism . Months before the presidential election of 1893 the Volksraad endorsed Reitz 's candidature with a vote of forty @-@ three against eighteen . Reitz accepted the endorsement on the condition that he be allowed three months leave to Europe . On 22 November 1893 he was re @-@ elected , again with a landslide majority .

The trip to Europe was far from just a family holiday . In Britain Reitz made some strong public statements , defending the republican system of government in South Africa and opposing British intervention in ' Bantu affairs ' . On the continent Reitz was received by several heads of state and political leaders . In October 1894 he returned in Bloemfontein . Soon after Reitz was diagnosed with hepatitis , which moreover affected his already strained nerves and led to sleeplessness . The situation was so serious that he eventually had to resign the presidency . The Volksraad accepted his resignation on 11 December 1895 .

In June 1896 Reitz travelled to Europe once more on a five @-@ month trip to recover from his debilitating illness . On his return to South Africa he established himself in Pretoria in the South African Republic in July 1897 , where he set up a new law practice .

= = = State Secretary of the South African Republic = = =

Reitz did not stay a private person for long . A conflict between the South African Republic legislature and judiciary resulted in the dismissal of the Chief Justice . Reitz then took up an appointment as judge in early 1898 and quickly became part of the inner circle of the Transvaal administration . At the time the relationship with the British was already rapidly deteriorating and the

government of the South African Republic was taking action to reinforce its national and international position . One of the measures taken was to replace State Secretary W.J. Leyds , who had the Dutch nationality , with a South African . Leyds was appointed Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in Europe to represent the Republic abroad . Reitz took his place as State Secretary in June 1898 , after Abraham Fischer had declined .

As State Secretary Reitz had a complicated and hefty job . After the State President he was the most important member of the Executive Council ( Uitvoerende Raad ) . As the most senior civil servant he was responsible for the oversight over the implementation of the laws and regulations , as well as for all the correspondence of the President , official government reports , etc . He was also an intermediary between the Executive Council and parliament , the First and Second Volksraad , and a key figure in the foreign affairs of the State . Experienced and well organised as he himself was Reitz managed to quickly modernise the structure of the state apparatus , by implementing regulations for the running of the government departments , appointing an archivist for his own , and by prescribing that all correspondence with the government should be in Dutch .

The State President of the South African Republic , Paul Kruger , was not an easy man to work with , and in some circles it was predicted that Reitz would quickly find himself subordinated to Kruger . This was not the case , however . On occasion the two men clashed on matters of policy , but Reitz remained true to his own convictions , gaining some influence over Kruger in the process . Originally praised by the British for his diplomatic courtesy , their attitude quickly changed when they understood that Reitz was a protagonist of Transvaal independence . Reitz was sometimes rather brazen in his political statements , so when he ? incorrectly ? claimed the South African Republic to be a fully sovereign state , the British jumped on him .

In view of rapidly mounting British pressure and an ensuing armed conflict over the position of the Uitlanders and economic control over the Witwatersrand gold fields , foreign policy in the South African Republic was eventually determined by a triumvirate : State President Kruger , State Secretary Reitz , and State Attorney General J.C. Smuts . During 1899 they decided that an offensive attitude towards British demands was the only way forward , despite the risks this entailed . Reitz sought and received the support of the Orange Free State for this approach . On 9 October 1899 the South African Republic and the Orange Free State issued a joint ultimatum to the British government to retract their demands .

The British government did not give in to the ultimatum , and two days later , on 11 October 1899 , the Second Anglo @-@ Boer War ( South African War ) broke out . When the British army marched on Pretoria in May 1900 , the government was forced to flee the capital . From that moment on , Reitz was responsible for the continuous relocation of its seat throughout the Transvaal , which occurred sixty @-@ two times until March 1902 . In May of that year , Reitz took an active part in the peace negotiations with the British , and he was one of the signatories of the Treaty of Vereeniging , signed in Pretoria on 31 May 1902 .

= = = Self @-@ chosen exile and return to politics = = =

Although instrumental in drafting the Treaty of Vereeniging , Reitz personally did not want to swear allegiance to the British government , and he chose to go into exile . On 4 July 1902 he left South Africa and joined his wife and children in the Netherlands . To alleviate his financial troubles , Reitz set out on a lecture tour in the United States . Due to a waning interest in the Boer cause now that the war was over , the tour failed , forcing Reitz to return to the Netherlands . Here his health failed him again , leading to hospitalisation and an extensive period of convalescing . During this time he was supported by his friends W.J. Leyds and H.P.N. Muller and the Nederlandsch Zuid @-@ Afrikaansche Vereeniging ( Dutch South @-@ African Society ) .

In 1907 , after the old Boer republics received self @-@ government , and in the run @-@ up to the formation of the Union of South Africa , leading Afrikaner politicians J.C. Smuts and L. Botha asked Reitz to return to South Africa and play a role in politics again . Together with his wife , he established himself in Sea Point , Cape Town . In 1910 , already sixty @-@ six years old , he was appointed president of the Senate of the newly formed Union of South Africa .

These were no easy years , again , as former Afrikaner compatriots found each other on two sides of the political fence , in a rapidly changing world . As in his earlier life , Reitz remained a man of outspoken convictions , which he aired freely . As such , he came into conflict with the Smuts government , and in 1920 he was not re @-@ appointed as president of the Senate . He did remain a member of that House until 1929 , however .

= = = Honours and death = = =

As an important public figure , Reitz was honoured and remembered in different ways . In 1923 Reitz the University of Stellenbosch bestowed on him an honorary doctorate in law for his public services . Already in 1889 , a village was named after him in the Orange Free State . In 1894 one also named a village after his second wife , Cornelia . A ship named after him , the President Reitz , sank off Port Elizabeth in 1947 . The Jubilee Diamond , found in the Free State village of Jagersfontein in 1895 was originally named the Reitz Diamond , but renamed in honour of the sixtieth anniversary of the coronation of Queen Victoria in 1897 .

When he finally retired from public life , Reitz moved to Gordon 's Bay , but returned to Cape Town several years later , where he had a house in Tamboerskloof and was taken care of by his daughter Bessie , a medical doctor . He remained active to the end with writing and translating . Reitz died at his house Botuin on 27 March 1934 , and received a state funeral three days later , with a funeral service at the Grote Kerk . He was buried at the Woltemade cemetery at Maitland .

= = = Cultural figure = = =

Reitz was an important figure in Afrikaner cultural life . He was a poet , and published many poems in Afrikaans , making him a progenitor of the development of Afrikaans as a cultural language . As such he sympathised with the Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners ( Society of Real Afrikaners ) , established in the Cape Colony in 1875 . Although he never became a member himself , he was an active contributor to the society 's journal , Die Suid @-@ Afrikaansche Patriot . With his literary work , Reitz was solidly anchored in the so @-@ called First Afrikaans Language Movement , although he was less interested in the didactic drive of that movement than in writing in Afrikaans as a purely cultural activity . Much of his work was based on English texts , which he translated , edited , and adapted . In the process he produced completely new works of art .

For Reitz , Afrikaans was predominantly a language of culture , not of government , where he propagated the use of the official language of the Boer republics , Dutch . During his presidency of the Orange Free State , where the use of English was significant among the burghers , he strongly promoted the use of Dutch , against politicians like John G. Fraser and others who were in favour of English .

Institutionally , Reitz promoted the foundation of the Letterkundige en Wetenschappelijke Vereeniging ( Literary and Scientific Society ) of the Orange Free State , of which he was chairman for a while , the library at Bloemfontein , and the National Museum of the Orange Free State .

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#### ===== Translations =====

Reitz , F.W. , translator of Jorissen , E.J.P. , Transvaalsche herinneringen ( Amsterdam 1897 ) as Reminiscences of a Transvaal judge . Never published , due to the outbreak of the South African War ( Second Anglo @-@ Boer War ) .

Reitz , F.W. , translator of Theal , G.M. , Korte geschiedenis van Zuid @-@ Afrika 1486 ? 1835 ( Cape Town 1891 ) .

#### ===== A Century of Wrong =====

At the advent of the South African War ( Second Anglo @-@ Boer War ) , F.W. Reitz , in his capacity of State Secretary of the South African Republic , published an overview of Anglo @-@ Boer relations in the nineteenth century in Dutch , under the title Eene eeuw van onrecht . The book was an important propaganda document in the war .

The actual authorship of the book is unclear . The second Dutch edition of the book carried the text ' Op last van den staatssekretaris der Z.A.R. , F.W. Reitz ' ( ' By order of the State Secretary of the S.A.R. , F.W. Reitz ' ) . J.C. Smuts is indicated as author , but probably only edited the introduction and the end of the book , in co @-@ operation with E. J. P. Jorissen . The rest of the text was probably prepared by J. de Villiers Roos .

In 1900 , translations appeared in German and English . The English translation only carried the name of Reitz , and has a preface by W.T. Stead . The English edition contained more material than the original Dutch edition ( see number of pages ) .

Reitz , F.W. , [ J. de Villiers Roos , J.C. Smuts , E.J.P. Jorissen , ] Eene eeuw van onrecht ( Pretoria [ 1899 ] ) , 49p .

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Reitz , F.W. , [ J. de Villiers Roos , J.C. Smuts , E.J.P. Jorissen , ] Century of Wrong , Issued by F. W. Reitz ... With preface by W. T. Stead ( London : Review of Reviews [ 1900 ] ) , xxiii , 152p .

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Reitz , F.W. , Oorlogs- en andere gedigte ( Potchefstroom 1910 , 1911 )  
[ War and other poems ]