

GOUBAU, René

Born: December 30, 1886 (Mesen/Messines, nowadays the smallest city of Belgium)

Died: June 27, 1976 (Ghent)

Biography

He studies Greek and Latin at the College of Saint Barbara in Ghent. At the University of Ghent he graduates as a doctor in chemistry, obtains a degree of pharmacist and a BA of medicine. He remains at the university as an assistant professor and completes his further formation at the universities of Lausanne, Paris, Aachen and Lille.

In 1914 Goubau is appointed lecturer of analytical chemistry and in 1923 he is responsible for teaching general chemistry in Dutch (At the time, a large number of classes are still taught in French)

He also teaches toxicology till his retirement. In 1920 he is appointed associate professor and three years later full professor. On September 30, 1926 Goubau is entrusted with the chair of general chemistry for the MA of chemistry and also teaches chemistry at the Faculty of Medicine.

His administrative functions include those of secretary (1923-1926) and of dean (1926) of the Faculty of Medicine. He is rector (vice-chancellor) of the University of Ghent from 1939 till January 1941, when he is dismissed from this function by the German occupier on grounds of having signed, together with other professors in France, a motion against the capitulation of Belgium by king Leopold III. In 1944, after the war he takes up his task as rector again but has to justify himself before a committee for having abandoned his academic function and for his political viewpoints. At his own request he obtains a few months later an honorable discharge as vice-chancellor.

From 1934 on he is corresponding member of the “Académie royale de médecine en Belgique” and since 1939 an active member of the Flemish Academy of Medicine, becoming its chairman in 1954. In 1940 he is a member of the committee of the Belgian Pharmacopoeia, becoming its chairman from 1951 till 1971 and ending up as an honorary chairman. During this period the Belgian Pharmacopoeia is published. Goubau was chairman of the High Commission of the Order of the Pharmacists since 1949 and a member of the Belgian Chemical Society, of the Royal Flemish Society of Chemistry, past-chairman of the 3rd Committee of the NFWO and chairman of the administrative committee of the “*Vrije Vakschool voor Jongelingen of Ghent*”.

Scientific Contributions

Goubau is mainly concerned with teaching on all academic levels. He publishes a number of study-books.

Concerning academic research, he contributes to the knowledge of physico-chemical properties of arsenic, organic bases and the quantitative analysis of carboxyhemoglobin and oxyhemoglobin.

In 1911 he obtains the prize of the inter-university competition and in 1911 he becomes laureate of the competition for travel grants.

Writings

His study-book of general chemistry (“*Cursus in de Algemene Chemie*”) is the guide book for generations of students of chemistry at the University of Ghent.

He contributes to the “Belgian Pharmacopoeia”