



# THE KUYPER NEWSLETTER

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## KUYPER AND PIERRE VAN PAASEN

Pierre Van Paasen (d. 1968) gained fame during the 30's and 40's as a journalist, reporter and writer, distinguished by his tenacious opposition to all forms of Fascism. One of the first to warn against Hitler (1928!), he was later expelled from both Germany and Italy. He reported on the Nazi rise to power, the invasion of Ethiopia, Franco's victory in Spain, and warned constantly against the growing power of Fascism in the 30's. Not surprised by World War II, he wrote extensively on his hopes for a new era after the War; "we must make the Gospel our ideal." He was an early and ardent supporter of the new state of Israel. Religiously, he belonged to the Dutch Reformed Church, but later became Unitarian. His best-known books are That Day Alone (1941) and Days of Our Years (1939), which tells much of his early life. Often seen as a "radical" journalist, he was much attracted by religious socialism. Van Paasen was born in the Netherlands, at Gorcum in 1895, and grew up there, emigrating at 19 to Canada. In Days of Our Years, he recalls his early orthodox upbringing, and remembers with pleasure an occasion in school when Kuyper himself intervened in an incident involving student freedom of speech. Elsewhere (TDA, 1941, pp. 351-4) he refers to "one of the last great Calvinists" in connection with K's 1907 visit to the Holy Land, where "he wept over the poverty and the godforsaken loneliness of the landscape".

The following extracts from a letter (to me, DWJ) of 5/29/53 hence may be of some interest. Note that "Liberal" meant anti-clerical, and frequently conservative in social thought, while the "Antirevolutionary Party" claimed to be Christian Democratic and "progressive." "Het Sociale Vraagstuk etc" refers to K's 1891 rousing address at the Christian Social Congress (see also Notes and Queries below), as well as K's other "radical" Christian Democratic proclamations in the 90's. F. Domela Nieuwenhuis was a socialist-anarchist leader, standing to the left of the Dutch Marxists; he valued Kuyper's championship of the "Kleine luyden", the common people.

.....Domela Nieuwenhuis and "our God-given leader" (that is, for us Antirevolutionaries) may well have thought a lot of each other. They were both great men, Kuyper the greatest unquestionably, but parted company after the railway strike of 1903. I was a youngster when that happened, but I remember well what a tremendous candle was lit in Calvinist circles in Holland with the publication of Het Sociale Vraagstuk etc. I remained loyal to him until I left for Canada, and if I may say so, I suffered (a little) for the cause he represented, when the Liberal Youth Group in Gorcum, under the leadership of the present Mayor of Rotterdam, Mr. Oudt, gave me a beating when they caught me walking alone one day. I even wore, in imitation of the Prime Minister, a Kuyperian vest in those

days.... Kuyperian Calvinism -- that was a fighting Calvinism, brother! The same Calvinism that carried on a war against Spain for eighty years to gain independence. A handful of heroes -- but they were certain of their cause, and were victorious in the end.....

Met vriendelijke groeten,  
Uw

Pieter van Paassen



Een betooging tegen ongeloof en revolutie. Schim van Groen van Prinsterer:  
„Zijn dat mijn jongeren?”

Zondagblad „Het Volk”, 1904

The Socialists, led by the redoubtable Frisian poet-politician P.J. Troelstra, strove for respectability, and also coveted the Calvinist workingman's vote which normally went for Kuyper. Both aims were served by picturing Kuyper as an irresponsible power-hungry demagogue, rather than as a man of Calvinist principle. Hence this cartoon; it is 1904, and a bitter election is coming up; Kuyper must be ousted. This is by the able Socialist cartoonist Albert Hahn. Kuyper's mentor had been Groen Van Prinsterer, whose chief work was against "unbelief and revolution" (Ongeloof en revolutie, 1848), and who remained a major Calvinist hero. Here the aristocratic ghost of Groen looks on at a demagogic Kuyperian rally against "unbelief and revolution," and asks in dismay, "are these my sons?" Moral: to truly follow Groen is to vote against Kuyper, even if you won't vote Socialist.

--DWJ

#### KUYPER'S ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SACRED THEOLOGY

A. Kuyper, Principles of Sacred Theology: Grand Rapids (Baker Book House), 1980. 683 pp. \$12.95.

Kuyper's Encyclopaedia der Heilige Godgeleerdheid (1894) was translated by J. Hendrick De Vries, omitting only the lengthy historical sections, and published as Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology: Its Principles (with an introduction by Benjamin Warfield) by Scribner's in 1898. This has now been reprinted, with a slightly altered title, by Baker Book House.

Growing out of Kuyper's lectures at the Free University he helped found in 1880, the Encyclopedia (reflecting the term's theological usage at the time) actually constitutes an effort to determine the nature of theological science. Thus, it includes an effort to ascertain its relationship to other sciences, and to set forth systematically the several divisions of the science of theology.

And Kuyper does spend a good deal of time setting forth the unique nature of theology and its designation as a science. Unlike other sciences, whose object of inquiry is the external world in its various manifestations, the object of theological science is primarily the inspired and authoritative Scripture. What the theologian studies is that knowledge of God which God Himself has made available to us. Moreover, man must develop this science with a flawed mind--a mind sullied and distorted by sin. Hence, he needs all the resources of grace available to him, including tradition and the wisdom of the Church, to set forth accurately and comprehensively the truth about God.

By any standards, this work is a magnificent achievement. Several qualities of this effort strike a reader even after a time span of eighty-five years. There is first the quality of thought and mind operative in his analysis--the fastidiousness of his definitions, the thoroughness of his explanations, the careful distinctions he makes in setting forth the various topics, and the depth of his probing and thought.

Also noteworthy is Kuyper's awareness of the various thought-currents of his day--not only a general familiarity, but an intimate knowledge of, for example, Schleiermacher, Hegel, Kant, and so on, together with a sense of the far-flung implications of their thought. As a matter of fact, he finds little help in the theologians and philosophers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Instead, he finds priceless treasures in the work of Calvin and the Calvinistic theologians of the early post-Reformation era. All in all, Kuyper developed theology beyond the level these theologians had done--especially in



respect to the doctrine of Common Grace.

Kuyper's aims appear to have been as follows: (1) to furnish the contemporary theological enterprise with a comprehensive theology based on the confessions of the Church; (2) by reaping the harvest of the thought of the Church's best theologians, especially Calvin, to equip the Church of his day with an apologia, a structure of thought to withstand the heterodoxy of his day; (3) to challenge the Church to inform itself of the rich mine of truth available for believers as they struggle to grow, through the grace of God, into seasoned and mature saints; (4) to relate theology to the ecclesiastical and political life of contemporary Europe and especially The Netherlands in its various phases of Christian development.

Baker's is to be commended for reprinting a work which has served several generations so well and which can contribute still to our perception of the grandeur of theism as it comes to expression in the historic Christian faith.

Steve J. Vander Weele, Calvin College

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Using the Encyclopedia to bolster his conclusions, N. Wolterstorff in a recent Reformed Journal (Feb. 1981) has a brief comparison of Kuyper with Freud and Marx. All three were suspicious of the "obvious" idea that science (Wissenschaft) could be fully objective and "neutral." Freud stressed the likelihood of "rationalizations" imposed by the subconscious, Marx the distorting influence of economic class. Kuyper, though somewhat aware of such elements, stressed the effects of sin on all, the loss of original organic unity with nature under God, and the basic impact of differing religious presuppositions. A provocative short essay.

--DWJ

#### KUYPER AND SOUTH AFRICA

In the first issue of The Kuyper Newsletter (Jan., 1980), Richard Mouw reported on the growing body of literature which discusses the influence of Kuyperian ideas in South Africa, especially how his theological and political views were applied or missapplied by Afrikaners to justify apartheid. Arthur Keppel-Jones', "History, Calvinism and the Dilemma of Afrikaner Nationalism", (Winnipeg University Press, 1979) is a popular paper that examines in part this question. He contends that an Afrikaner "civil religion" is intrinsically linked to an understanding of "sphere-sovereignty" as applied to ethnic groups. But he also argues that such an understanding of sphere-sovereignty is not the same as that of Kuyper. According to Keppel-Jones it was H.G. Stoker of Potchefstroom and others who gave a special twist to sphere-sovereignty when they applied it to ethnic groups as well as different human associations. "By 1935, when a symposium called Koers in die Krisis appeared under the editorship of Stoker and F.J.M. Potgieter, the idea of ethnic groups sovereign in their own sphere had become conventional Calvinist wisdom in South Africa." Keppel-Jones goes on to point out other ways Kuyper's ideas were used by Afrikaners and how individuals easily justified the use of force to protect a way of life they believed testified to a Calvinist world and life view.

--RMcC

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As of this writing James Michener's novel on South Africa, The Covenant, is at the top of the best-seller lists. Kuyper is mentioned briefly in the novel. The context is the education of Detleef Van Doorn, who eventually becomes the Commissioner of Racial Affairs:

As had been the case for the past hundred years, one of the most influential voices in the Dutch Reformed clergy at Stellenbosch was a Scotsman, a devotee of John Knox named Alexander McKinnon, whose ancestors had been Dutch-speaking Afrikaners since 1813. It was he who introduced Detleef to the persuasive teachings of the conservative prime minister of Holland, Abraham Kuyper, who had promulgated new theories on the relationship between church and state. It was from McKinnon that Detleef first gleaned an appreciation of the fact that South Africa might soon have to evolve new patterns for contacts between the races. (p. 674)

The "new patterns" are those which were soon to be devised and implemented under the influence of the Broederbond.

Once again, then, Kuyper's name is superficially linked with the development of the racist policies of the South African government--and this time in a best-selling American novel! It is unlikely, of course, that this modest reference to Kuyper in Michener's work will do much to affect Kuyper's reputation, or lack of it, in North America. But the mention of his name in this context is one more reminder that scholars who are both sympathetic to Kuyper and hostile to racism should devote themselves to a careful examination of the actual influences of Kuyper on South African ideologies and policies.

--RJM

#### NOTES AND QUERIES

100. Frederick Kuyper. Herb Brinks, Calvin College, repeats a request for any information on what happened to young Kuyper, who emigrated to American in the mid-80's.
101. Kuyper Lectureship Chair at the Free University. This was established last fall, at the centennial celebration of the founding, by Kuyper and others, of the VU. The first holder of the chair will be Nicholas Wolterstorff of Calvin College's Philosophy Department, who will give a series of lectures in the fall of 1981.
102. K, 1891, and Latin America Ninety years ago K delivered his important speech at the First Christian Social Congress in the Netherlands. It was translated as Christianity and the Class Struggle (Grand Rapids, 1950). In De Wachter (Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids), February 17, missionary Arnold Rumph writes from Guatemala; he had just finished reading that analysis of capitalism and socialism and their secular foundation, and praises it as giving a valuable perspective on the problems of Latin America today.

103. K, à Lasco, Turner. K's brilliant student work on John Laski (à Lasco), the Polish Calvinist, was an important influence on his later ideas of the church. Richard Russell (Director of the Christian Studies Unit, Eastmead Lane, Stoke Bishop, Bristol England BS9 1HL) relays a request from David Pott (Vine Cottage, Croft, Skegness, Lincolnshire, English): he is working on the 16th-century English reformer William Turner, a friend of à Lasco, and would value any information on links between the two, and with K.
104. K, Beuker, Ten Hoor, Vos. Included in those who commented on Kuyper's doings in the '80's and '90's were H. Beuker and Foppe Ten Hoor, both active in the 1834 Separatist church which later joined with the Kuyperian Doleantie of 1886. Ten Hoor was an outspoken critic. Both emigrated and taught at Calvin Seminary (Christian Reformed Church). Gerhardus Vos, who also taught there in the late '90's before going to Princeton Seminary, was a follower of, and correspondent with, K. Peter De Klerk (Calvin College Library, Grand Rapids, MI 49506) has completed a lengthy bibliography of the writings of Calvin Seminary professors, including the writings (in the Netherlands and here) of the three noted above.
105. K. and Franz Von Baader. K was interested in, and influenced by, German philosophers; not only Kant, but also Hegel, Fichte, Schelling, etc. This concern extended to the German Romantic movement. Michael M. Morbey (50-3099 Uplands Dr., Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1V 9T6) is working on this general area. (He remarks in passing that K's interest in mysticism was criticised by Benjamin Warfield; C. Van Til, The Defense of the Faith, 1963, p. 260). Von Baader (though Catholic) was a romantic-idealist-mystic-theosophist, much interested in Greek Orthodox mysticism; K later confessed that he had been temporarily "entranced" by Von Baader's thought (G.C. Berkouwer, A Half Century of Theology, 1977, p. 196). Morbey also notes the influence of Julius Stahl on Groen Van Prinsterer, K's mentor; and Stahl's interest in Schelling, who in turn was much taken with the earlier mystic-theosophist Jacob Boehme. Morbey would be interested in correspondence, and in further information on K and Von Baader.
106. Two articles in Pro Rege (Dordt College) 8:4 (1980) should be noted as being somewhat related to K and Christian Democracy. R. McCarthy writes (pp. 4-11) on "Liberal Democracy and the Rights of Institutions," stressing J.N. Figgis (1866-1919) and his ideas on a variant of "sphere sovereignty," developed following Otto Gierke. M.R. Langley, "God and Liberty: The Catholic Quest for Democratic Pluralism from Lamennais to Vatican II," pp. 12-24, concentrates on Lamennais (1782-1854) and his attack on the French Revolution.

More "Notes and Queries" next time.

--DWJ

#### BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON MATERIALS IN ENGLISH

22. F. VandenBerg, Abraham Kuyper, (1960): St Catherines, Ontario (Paideia Press), 1978. Hero-worshipping but reliable popular account of K's life. Substantial (280 pp.) biography; the only such in English.
23. Christian Political Options, available from ARP-Stichting, Kuyperstraat 3, The Hague: essays in connection with the ARP's 100th anniversary. See previous issue of the Newsletter.

24. G.J. Spykman, "Pluralism: Our Last Best Hope?", Christian Scholar's Review 10:2 (1981), 99-116. Rapid review of Calvin, Althusius, K, and their thoughts on "sphere sovereignty", as profitable for a theory of social pluralism.
25. J. Skillen, "God's Ordinances: Calvinism in Revival," Pro Rege (Dordt College) 8:4 (1980), 25-33. Summary review of Groen, K, Dooyeweerd as major figures in Dutch Calvinist revival.
26. J.B. Rogers, D.F. McKim, The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible, An Historical Approach: San Francisco, Harper and Row, 1979. Includes some material on K, contrasting his views with those of the "Princeton school" of Warfield, Hodge et al.
27. N. Van Til, "Calvinism and Art," Pro Rege (Dordt College): 9:3 (1981), 10-20. Summary of K's Stone Lecture on the subject. K's views seen as too Platonic and Hegelian.
28. B. Landheer, ed. The Netherlands: Berkeley, 1943. Includes essays on post-Napoleonic Dutch political history (Landheer), constitutional aspects (J.W. Alberda), political parties (D. Friedman), labor history (M.M. Lourens). K and the ARP obviously turn up in passing in all of these.
29. J.R. Kennedy, The Reformation of Journalism: Nutley, New Jersey (Craig), 1972. Plea for Christian journalism, and includes much on K as a notable example of what can be accomplished.
30. M.R. Langley, "Pioneers of Christian Politics," Vanguard, April, May 1971. On Groen and K, especially their 1864-76 correspondence, the aging Groen advising his young follower.
31. R.E.M. Irving, The Christian Democratic Parties of Western Europe; London, Allen and Unwin, 1979. Continues the 1957 work of M. Fogarty (see #7 above). Includes a discussion of the K-founded Anti-Revolutionary Party (ARP) in the Netherlands. Sees its merger into the Calvinist--Catholic CDA as an example of noteworthy Christian Democratic growth in the 1970's.
32. E. Hansen, P.A. Prosper, "Religion and the Development of the Dutch Trade Union Movement, 1872-1914," Social History (Ottawa) 9, 1976. Subject studied as an example of the forces leading to a pluralistic society in the Netherlands. K, the ARP, the Calvinist trade unions, treated in sympathetic, if not particularly profound, terms. -- N. Terpstra, McMaster University.
33. N. Wolterstorff, "Freud, Marx and K," Reformed Journal 31:2 (1981), 4-5. See note elsewhere this Newsletter.
34. J.M. VanderKroef, "AK and the Rise of Neo-Calvinism in the Netherlands," Church History 17:4 (1948), 2-20. Sketch of K's career, with a brief treatment of his religious and political ideas.

More bibliography in the next Newsletter. Contributions are welcomed.