

Martin Laube/Hans-Georg Ulrichs (Hg.)

FORSCHUNGEN ZUR
REFORMIERTEN
THEOLOGIE

12

Weltgestaltender Calvinismus

STUDIEN ZUR REZEPTION
ABRAHAM KUYPERS

V&R



Forschungen zur Reformierten Theologie

Herausgegeben von
Marco Hofheinz, Michael Weinrich und Georg Plasger

Band 12

Martin Laube/Hans-Georg Ulrichs (Hg.): Weltgestaltender Calvinismus

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Abraham Kuyper, 1916
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Vorwort

Obwohl das Denken Abraham Kuypers im internationalen Horizont durchaus präsent und wirksam ist, wird es im deutschsprachigen Raum nur wenig wahrgenommen und rezipiert. Das mag vor allem darin begründet sein, dass Kuypers Weise der Fortschreibung der calvinistischen Tradition, seine Ideen zur Auseinandersetzung mit der Moderne und seine Verhältnisbestimmungen von Kirche und Welt, Theologie und Kultur im von Karl Barth geprägten Reformiertentum überwiegend kritisch gesehen worden sind.

Der vorliegende Band gibt die acht Beiträge eines Studientages am 25. September 2020 in Göttingen wieder, der im Vorfeld des 100. Todestages Kuypers am 8. Dezember 2020 stattfand. Er wurde gemeinsam vom Lehrstuhl für Systematische/Reformierte Theologie der Theologischen Fakultät der Universität Göttingen und von der Gesellschaft für die Geschichte des reformierten Protestantismus e.V. veranstaltet. Wir danken der Ecclesia Versicherungsdienste GmbH für die freundliche Förderung des Studientages und der Evangelisch-reformierten Gemeinde Göttingen, dass wir zwischen den Lockdowns des zurückliegenden Jahres in deren Gemeindehaus zu Gast sein durften. Mitarbeitende des Lehrstuhls haben dankenswerterweise die Organisation, Logistik und Technik des Studientages übernommen.

Die Beiträge dieses Bandes könnten kaum unterschiedlicher sein: Neben vier deutschen Referent/inn/en waren drei Referenten aus den Niederlanden und eine Referentin aus der Schweiz am Studientag beteiligt; sie setzten sich mit Kuyper vor dem Hintergrund ihrer je spezifischen Kontexte und Traditionen auseinander. Profanhistorische, kirchengeschichtliche und systematisch-theologische Perspektiven waren vertreten. Unter den Teilnehmenden waren ausgewiesene Kuyper-Kenner und solche, die von ihrer Erstbegegnung mit Kuyper berichteten, neben erklärten „Kuyperianern“ gab es freundlich-distanzierte Beobachter und durchaus auch dezidierte Kritiker. Es hat sich gezeigt, dass eine Rezeption Kuypers in deutschsprachigen Kontexten nicht leichthin und ohne intensive Auseinandersetzung möglich erscheint. So unternimmt dieser Band nicht den Versuch, das *eine* Kuyper-Erbe zu begründen, sondern bietet in seiner vielstimmigen Beschäftigung mit Kuyper vor allem Anstöße, Anregungen und Perspektiven.

Wir danken den Herausgebern der „Forschungen zur Reformierten Theologie“ für die Aufnahme des Bandes in die Reihe und den Mitarbeiter/inne/n des Verlages Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht für die gute Betreuung. Die

studentischen Hilfskräfte Simone Hankel und Merle Klischka haben uns bei den Korrekturen unterstützt. Ohne namhafte finanzielle Unterstützung hätten diese Beiträge nicht publiziert werden können: Wir danken der Evangelisch-reformierten Kirche, der Union Evangelischer Kirchen in der EKD und der EKD sowie der Stichting Dr. Abraham Kuyperfonds für ihre Großzügigkeit.

Göttingen/Karlsruhe,
im Februar 2021

Martin Laube und Hans-Georg Ulrichs

Inhalt

| | |
|---|-----|
| Vorwort | 7 |
| <i>Hans-Georg Ulrichs</i> | |
| Einleitung | 11 |
| <i>George Harinck</i> | |
| Transition and Translation The International Kuypers Research | 15 |
| <i>Jeroen Koch</i> | |
| Calvinismus mit einem Auftrag in dieser Welt Abraham Kuypers Neo-Calvinismus als Ideologie | 41 |
| <i>Hans-Georg Ulrichs</i> | |
| „Die Angst vor Ihnen [war] fast ergötzlich“: Kuypers und Deutschland Korrespondenzen, Wahrnehmungen und Rezeptionen | 53 |
| <i>Christine Lienemann-Perrin</i> | |
| Rezeptionen Abraham Kuypers in Südafrika am Beginn und am Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts | 83 |
| <i>Marco Hofheinz</i> | |
| „Just a minor thinker“? Zur Größenordnung in der Formation von Abraham Kuypers politisch-theologischem Denken. Versuch einer dialektischen Würdigung | 105 |
| <i>Martin Laube</i> | |
| Abraham Kuypers als Theologe der Moderne | 133 |
| <i>Margit Ernst-Habib</i> | |
| Begegnungen im liminalen Raum Betrachtungen zu Abraham Kuypers Diskurs über den Islam | 147 |

Dirk van Keulen

Gutta cavat lapidem?

Abraham Kuyper und die Liturgie in der Protestantischen Kirche in
den Niederlanden 171

Autoren und Autorinnen 187

Namensregister 189

Hans-Georg Ulrichs

Einleitung

1.

Abraham Kuypers (1837–1920) ist im deutschsprachigen Raum weithin unbekannt. Obgleich er als Begründer des „Neocalvinismus“ gilt, spielt sein Name im reformierten Bewusstsein nahezu keine Rolle. Die Erinnerung an Kuypers Wirken ist verblasst; eine Auseinandersetzung mit seinem Denken findet nicht statt. Die international bekannten und einflussreichen *Stone Lectures* über den Calvinismus aus dem Jahr 1898 werden – 1904 erstmals auf Deutsch erschienen – nur wenig gelesen.

Freilich lässt sich nicht nur in den Niederlanden, sondern insbesondere im US-amerikanischen Raum seit einiger Zeit eine verstärkte, durchaus affirmative und dennoch nicht kritiklose Wahrnehmung dieser niederländischen Jahrhundertgestalt beobachten. Der 100. Todestag Kuypers am 8. November 2020 bot daher die Gelegenheit, dieses neu erwachte Interesse an Kuypers aufzunehmen, sich mit Person, Œuvre und Wirkungen Kuypers zu beschäftigen und eigene Rezeptionen und Fortschreibungen zu erproben. Dies geschah global vor allem an den Kuypers-*hotspots* in Amsterdam und in Nordamerika. Doch auch in Göttingen fand unter dem Titel „Eine eigene Gedankenwelt für das ganze menschliche Leben“ am 25. September 2020 ein Studientag statt. Hier ging es darum, vor dem Hintergrund der aktuellen internationalen Kuypers-Forschung die – überaus schmale – deutsche Rezeption Kuypers aufzuarbeiten, Ansätze für eine neue Beschäftigung mit dem Werk Kuypers zu erproben und kritisch zu diskutieren.

Da Kuypers Biographie nicht als bekannt vorausgesetzt werden kann, wird sie im Folgenden knapp umrissen, um anschließend die in Göttingen gehaltenen Vorträge im Zusammenhang vorzustellen.

2.

Abraham Kuypers wurde am 29. Oktober 1837 in einem reformierten Pfarrhaus in Maassluis geboren.¹ Bereits während seines Studium an der Univer-

¹ Zur Biographie vgl. das ältere Werk von Piet Kasteel, *Abraham Kuypers*, Kampen 1938; eine

sität Leiden von 1855 bis 1862 erwarb er die ersten akademischen Meriten mit Studien und Editionsarbeiten zu Johannes a Lasco (1499–1560).² Im Jahre 1863 übernahm er im ländlichen Beesd die erste Pfarrstelle; er knüpfte Kontakte zu christlich-konservativen Kreisen und machte sich als Kritiker des zeitgenössischen theologischen und kirchlichen Liberalismus einen Namen. 1867 wechselte er nach Utrecht, 1870 nach Amsterdam. Kuyper stieg nun zum Wortführer einer von ihm mitgeprägten Bewegung auf und trat insbesondere für die Selbstständigkeit von Kirche und Schule gegenüber dem Staat ein. Weit über die Grenzen der Kirche hinaus wirkte er als Theologe, Publizist und zunehmend auch Politiker. 1869 wurde er Herausgeber des kirchlichen Wochenblatts *De Heraut*, 1872 gründete er die Tageszeitung *De Standaard*, 1874 wurde er in das niederländische Parlament gewählt. Er übte eine große öffentliche Wirksamkeit aus, nicht nur als politischer Kolumnist, sondern auch als theologischer Schriftsteller. Vor allem mit seinem Namen ist die 1886 erfolgte niederländische Kirchentrennung, die sogenannte *Doleantie*, verbunden. 1892 betrieb er die Vereinigung der *Dolerenden* mit den bereits 1834 *Abgeschiedenen* zu den *Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland*.

Als politischer Fürsprecher für bekennnisgebundene Schulen, als *spiritus rector* der 1880 neu gegründeten Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, als Gründer der ersten modernen demokratischen Partei der Niederlande, der Antirevolutionaire Partij im Jahre 1879, und schließlich als Premierminister der Niederlande von 1901 bis 1905 wirkte er über Jahrzehnte in Gesellschaft und Politik und war weit über die Grenzen der Niederlande hinaus bekannt. Auch nach der gescheiterten Wiederwahl 1905 blieb Kuyper in der Öffentlichkeit präsent und prägte die gesellschaftlichen, politischen und auch kirchlich-theologischen Debatten. Seine Sympathien für Deutschland während des Ersten Weltkrieges, in dem sich die Niederlande für „neutral“ erklärt hatten, blieben nicht unumstritten.³ Kuyper starb am 8. November 1920 in Den Haag.

kritische, nicht unumstrittene Biographie von Jeroen Koch, Abraham Kuyper. Een biografie, Amsterdam 2006; für deutschsprachige Interessierte weiterhin lesenswert Cornelis Augustijn, Abraham Kuyper, in: Martin Greschat (Hg.), Gestalten der Kirchengeschichte, Band 9,2: Die neueste Zeit II, Stuttgart 1985, S. 289–307. – Vgl. auch Adriaan Breukelaar, Art. Kuyper, Abraham, in: BBKL IV (1992), Sp. 846–851; aus den nordamerikanischen Kontexten: James D. Bratt, Abraham Kuyper. Modern Calvinist, Christian Democrat, Grand Rapids/M. 2013. – Wilhelm Kolffhaus, Dr. Abraham Kuyper 1837–1920. Ein Lebensbild, Elberfeld 1924, ²1925. Dieses Werk genügt heutigen Ansprüchen nicht mehr.

- 2 Vgl. Jasper Vree, Abraham Kuyper als Erbe a Lascos, in: Christoph Strohm (Hg.), Johannes a Lasco (1499–1560). Polnischer Baron, Humanist und europäischer Reformator. Beiträge zum internationalen Symposium vom 14.–17. Oktober 1999 in der Johannes a Lasco Bibliothek Emden (Spätmittelalter und Reformation. Neue Reihe 14), Tübingen 2000, S. 357–375.
- 3 Zur Wahrnehmung der Reformierten in den Niederlanden vgl. Hans-Georg Ulrichs, „Das kirchliche Leben Hollands mit herzlicher Sympathie verfolgen“. Die reformierten Niederlande in der Wahrnehmung der deutschen Reformierten im 20. Jahrhundert, in: George Harinck/Hans-Georg Ulrichs (red.), Naaste verwanten/Nahe Verwandte. Het gereformeerde protestantisme in Nederland en Duitsland in de twintigste eeuw. Kenmerken, betrekkingen, verschillen, wissel-

3.

Der vorliegende Band beginnt mit niederländischer Expertise. *George Harinck*, seit Jahrzehnten mit dem Neocalvinismus und Abraham Kuyper beschäftigt, bietet einen Überblick über den Stand der internationalen Kuyper-Forschung. Anhand der Stichworte „transition“ und „translation“ zeigt er die Wege und Probleme der globalen Beschäftigung mit Kuyper auf. Beginnend mit der Fortwirkung Kuypers in den Niederlanden skizziert er die verschiedenen Rezeptionsphasen in der Beschäftigung mit dessen Œuvre. Auf dieser Grundlage benennt er schließlich aktuelle Aufgaben und Herausforderungen. Ihm folgt mit *Jeroen Koch* ein ausgewiesener kritischer Betrachter, der aus politikwissenschaftlicher und ideologiekritischer Perspektive den Anspruch Kuypers untersucht, aus religiösen Wurzeln eine allgemeine Weltanschauung abzuleiten.

Die beiden folgenden Beiträge nehmen die Kuyper-Rezeption außerhalb der Niederlande in den Blick. *Hans-Georg Ulrichs* zeichnet zum einen nach, welche Verbindungslinien sich zwischen Kuyper und deutschen Theologen und Kirchenfunktionären aufweisen lassen. Zum anderen untersucht er die schmalen Spuren der deutschsprachigen Rezeption Kuypers nach 1920. Auch wenn von einer durchgängigen Kuyper-Rezeption kaum die Rede sein kann und zudem zahlreiche Missverständnisse die Wahrnehmung erschweren, fördert Ulrichs doch überraschende Befunde zutage. *Christine Lienemann-Perrin* wendet sich einem besonderen Strang der Wirkungsgeschichte zu, indem sie den Blick nach Südafrika richtet, wo die Buren zahlreiche Kontakte in die Niederlande unterhielten. Lienemann-Perrin profiliert die südafrikanische englischsprachige Kuyper-Adaption zu Beginn und zum Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts, erläutert, wo – berechtigt oder unberechtigt – Berührungspunkte mit dem Apartheidsdenken vorhanden waren und welche verschiedenen Wege im letzten Vierteljahrhundert südafrikanische Befreiungstheologen mit oder gegen Kuyper gegangen sind.

Drei systematisch-theologische Beiträge fragen anschließend nach möglichen Gegenwartspotentialen der Theologie Kuypers. Während *Marco Hofheinz* aus sozialetischer Perspektive das politisch-theologische Denken Kuypers untersucht und dabei auf klassisch-reformierte Positionen rekurriert, überprüft *Martin Laube* die Modernitätsfähigkeit der Theologie Kuypers, wobei er nicht zuletzt Ernst Troeltsch als Referenz zu Grunde legt. Beide sind sich durchaus einig in einer kritischen Wahrnehmung Kuypers. Gleichwohl stellt Laube die problematischen Konsequenzen von Kuypers programmatischem ‚Antimodernismus‘ heraus, während Hofheinz die produk-

tiven Anschlussmöglichkeiten seines partizipativ gedachten gesellschaftlichen Pluralismus betont. Einen *fresh look* auf Kuyper wagt *Margit Ernst-Habib*, indem sie mit postkolonialer Perspektive Kuypers Begegnung mit dem Islam – vor allem während seiner großen Reise um das Mittelmeer in den Jahren 1905/06 – in den Fokus nimmt. Auf den ersten Blick hätte man wohl eine islamkritische Haltung erwartet; doch trotz der Verwurzelung im niederländischen Kolonialismus mit seinem inhärenten Rassismus öffnet sich Kuyper einer wirklichen Begegnung mit dem Islam und kann trotz aller Vorurteile und Überlegenheitsgewissheiten auch Vorbildliches im Islam entdecken und selbstkritisch reflektieren.

Schließlich fragt *Dirk van Keulen* in seinem Beitrag nach dem Einfluss Kuypers auf die liturgische und agendarische Entwicklung im niederländischen Protestantismus. Er lenkt damit den Blick auf einen gewichtigen, aber zumeist übersehenen Aspekt der Wirkungsgeschichte Kuypers. Kuyper prägte nicht zuletzt auch die Frömmigkeitspraxis seiner Anhänger – zum einen durch seine vielfach gedruckten biblischen Meditationen, zum anderen durch seine liturgischen Überlegungen und Vorschläge, auch wenn sein Einfluss hier auf die niederländische Entwicklung insgesamt bezogen wohl überschaubar geblieben ist.

4.

Die acht Beiträge dieses Bandes beschäftigen sich mit dem Denken und dem Erbe Kuypers. Sie tun dies weder einheitlich noch umfassend. Doch während es in anderen Ländern eine durchaus lebendige und auch kontroverse Beschäftigung mit Kuyper gibt, muss er in Deutschland anlässlich seines 100. Todestages weder auf einen Sockel gestellt noch als Denkmal gestürzt werden. Stattdessen lautet die gemeinsame Frage, ob ein neuer Blick auf „eine der bemerkenswertesten Persönlichkeiten in der christlichen Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts“⁴ vielleicht unabgeholte Einsichten und überraschende Perspektiven für die gegenwärtigen Herausforderungen in Kirche, Theologie und Gesellschaft zutage zu fördern vermag.

4 Hugh McLeod, Die Revolutionen und die Kirche: Die neue Ära der Moderne, in: Geschichte des globalen Christentums, Teil 2: 19. Jahrhundert (Religionen der Menschheit 33), Stuttgart 2017, S. 58–158, hier: S. 126.

George Harinck
Transition and Translation
The International Kuyper Research

1. Introduction

Abraham Kuyper's death on 8 November 1920 was a moment the Dutch nation had been expecting for some time. From the beginning of 1920 short notes on the regressing health of the former prime minister and the journalist who had put his stamp on the nation in the past four decades more than anyone else, continued to appear in the Catholic, Liberal, Socialist and Protestant national and regional newspapers, and with increasing intensity. It was news when he early 1920 fell on the street and hurt his head, and later on in the year it was even news when he had a quiet night. His 83rd birthday on 29 October had been commemorated in the press on tiptoes, knowing that his decease was imminent.

In other countries Kuyper's final months did not attract attention and upon his death short obituaries were published in the international press, mainly about his political role. In Germany his statesmanship was compared with Bismarck's national stature, and his sympathy for the German cause in World War I was highlighted.¹ In Belgium his „germanophilia“ was deplored.² In Hungary he was compared with Count Tisza,³ in South-Africa with president Steyn,⁴ in England they counted him as a liberal, like Gladstone.⁵ But in some places in the world and among certain groups Kuyper's death resonated more deeply, and there his theological and spiritual influence was a key theme. In those circles, like in South Africa and in the United States, it was not the politician in the first place that was commemorated, but the Christian, the preacher, the systematic theologian and the author of thousands of devotionals. „They say he is dead“, the American Reformed weekly *The Banner* wrote on 2 December 1920 in a rather denying mood, „but such a man is *immortal* in the highest and best sense of the world, because to die for such a man simply means transition, translation to a higher and better world.“

1 Gedenkboek ter herinnering aan het overlijden van dr. A. Kuyper en de sprake die daarbij uit de pers voortkwam, Amsterdam 1921, pp. 255.257.258.266.275.290.

2 Kuyper gedenkboek 1921, p. 268; cf. p. 272.

3 Kuyper gedenkboek 1921, p. 263.

4 Kuyper gedenkboek 1921, p. 286.

5 Kuyper gedenkboek 1921, p. 271.

Transition and translation, these words belong together when we reflect on the international research on Abraham Kuyper. In the humanities there is an awareness of the fact that ideas have legs. This means that ideas move from one place to another, and from one culture to another. And that in a different location, in a different cultural atmosphere, those ideas take on a different position, they start to function differently and they get a new impact and relevance, maybe larger, maybe smaller, but changed in such a way that you have to conclude that the original idea in the original context has changed in something else. The words are still the same, the author is still the same, but the content has taken on a different meaning. That is what happens in a cultural transfer of ideas.⁶

This change has not only to do with a different cultural and ideological context. As said, ideas have legs. They don't move autonomously, they are moved by people. Ideas travel in a network of persons, they are cargo, baggage of people. People with different temperaments, different ideas, different ambitions and careers, but who in one way or another move ideas and hand them over to other people. So, when we talk about the international Kuyper research, we talk both about ideas and people on the move, we talk about transitions and about translations.

In this article an overview of the international Kuyper research is presented. The international Kuyper research was preceded by the national, Dutch Kuyper research. The article starts with a short overview of this national research, for this initially molded the international research. After this section attention is paid to Kuyper as an international figure and to the translation of his works, especially his meditations and his Stone lectures on Calvinism. The different approaches in recent research are mentioned, especially the historical approach in the Netherlands, and the worldview-approach in the United States. Then the infrastructure of the Kuyper research is observed, especially the role of the 1998 Stone lectures centennial conferences and the role of Princeton Theological Seminary in enhancing Kuyper research. After an overview of the wider infrastructure of the Kuyper research and some recent challenges, especially the claiming of Kuyper by „dominionist“ spokesman, the article ends with some desiderata.

2. Kuyper in the Netherlands

2.1 Before the Second World War

Overlooking the development and trends in Dutch Kuyper research, it is helpful to take the years he was commemorated as an orientation. Two

⁶ See Michael Werner and Michel Espagne, *Transferts. Les relations interculturelles dans l'espace franco-allemand (XVIIIe et XIXe siècle)*, Paris 1988.

moments are particularly relevant in this respect: 1937, the centennial of Kuyper's birth, and 1987, 150 years after he was born in Maassluis. Up till this final year Kuyper research was dominantly Dutch. At the end of this article we will see how this insular situation has changed in 2020, the centennial of Kuyper's decease.

In 1937 Kuyper was mainly commemorated within the Reformed world. Though he was a national figure and honored as such in 1920, the Dutch nation was not very occupied with him anymore in 1937. His legacy though was dominant in public life, most apparent in the prominent position of the Antirevolutionary Party and in the person of his successor as party leader, Hendrikus Colijn (1869–1944). In 1937 he was prime minister of the Netherlands for the fourth time, and was the *primus inter pares* among the Dutch politicians of this decade. Kuyper's legacy was also present in the self-confident Reformed Churches and in the *Vrije Universiteit*, which by 1930 had developed in a full-grown university with four departments: theology, law, humanities and science.⁷ Kuyper's legacy was there, but compared to his life time and struggle the situation had changed considerably. Economically the Netherlands were coping with an unprecedented economic crisis, politically the country was focused on the rise of new totalitarian ideologies, and culturally orthodox Christianity played a major role in society. It was a situation he had not known, and the memory of *Abraham the Great* had been faded away in the nation within two decades.

But within the Reformed world he was still a towering figure. His omnipresence there seemed to have erased the memory of Herman Bavinck (1854–1921). In politics it was no problem that the political program of the ARP had been updated, for Colijn was trusted as a loyal kuyperian. Kuyper's social views were hardly referred to in the days of massive unemployment, his journalism was forgotten, and the school struggle was outdated now that Christian schools sprawled the country. Kuyper's name was very much respected, but his opinions were not translated and applied to the present conditions, or reexamined, but mainly confirmed and petrified. He was commemorated at Reformed mass meetings in large venues like the *Apollohal* in Amsterdam. There were some national aspects to this Reformed commemoration, like a Kuyper-exhibition in the Rijksmuseum, and prime minister Colijn lecturing on Kuyper as a national figure, but the widely read newspaper *De Telegraaf* reported about his lecture in the *Concertgebouw* under the apt header: „Vrije Universiteit honors Dr. Kuyper.“⁸

The kuyperian world navigated between inheriting Kuyper or borrowing from others, as historian Arie van Deursen put it.⁹ Kuyper was the property of

7 Arie Theodorus van Deursen, *The Distinctive Character of the Free University in Amsterdam, 1880–2005. A Commemorative History*, Grand Rapids 2008, pp. 114–190.

8 *De Telegraaf*, 28 October 1937.

9 Van Deursen, *The Distinctive Character*, pp. 135–136.

the Reformed community only, and they tried to keep his legacy intact and applicable. This attitude was mainly defensive, which meant they protested against outsiders like national-socialists, who tried to turn Kuyper into a Christian nationalist, and against followers of Karl Barth, who tried to blame him for conflating Christianity and culture, and against insiders like the theologian Klaas Schilder (1890–1952) who proposed amendments to some of Kuyper's notions in reaction to rising secularism and the totalitarian temptation.¹⁰ This defensive take regarding Kuyper's legacy in theology and society lacked creativity, and forecasted petrification.

Apart from appreciative assessments of Kuyper by Dutch historians Johan Huizinga and Jan and Annie Romein,¹¹ the best the 1930's commemoration had to offer was a Kuyper biography by Piet A. Kasteel (1901–2003), a Roman-Catholic parliamentary journalist.¹² His biography was a dissertation defended in 1938 at the Catholic University of Louvain, and published by Kuyper's publisher J.H. Kok in Kampen. Kasteel did not pay attention to Kuyper's scholarly work or the founding of the Vrije Universiteit, but focused mainly on his political life and ideas. Pieter A. Diepenhorst (1879–1953), professor of Economics at the Vrije Universiteit, published a character sketch of Kuyper in 1931. He qualified him as a warrior. At the end of his book Diepenhorst did something that was not very usual in those days: he listed Kuyper's weaknesses, from using facts as illustration to his opinions, and hurting friends and foes alike in his combat mode, to his tendency to reduce every viewpoint to one principle and build a consequent system on such a principle.

2.2 After the Second World War

Till the Second World War this kuyperian community of church, party and university was kept more or less intact, but in the war this world started to fall apart. Though the kuyperians stayed united in the resistance movement, a church split in 1944 on Kuyper's theological themes and church polity could not be avoided, and after the war the dominant role of the Antirevolutionary Party in politics was over, and the Vrije Universiteit started more to borrow from others than to inherit from Kuyper.

In the decades between the 1940 and the 1980s, nationally and internationally about 25 scholarly books were written on Kuyper, mainly in the

10 Klaas Schilder, *The Essential Theological Writings*, edited by George Harinck, Marinus de Jong and Richard Mouw, Bellingham WA 2021 (in print).

11 Willem Otterspeer (ed.), *De hand van Huizinga*, Amsterdam 2009, pp. 56–63; Jan en Annie Romein, *Abraham Kuyper. De klokkenist der kleine luyden*, in: Idem, *Erflaters van onze beschaving. Nederlandse gestalten uit zes eeuwen*, twelfth edition, Amsterdam 1977, pp. 747–770.

12 George Harinck, „Een merkwaardige en zeer belangrijke dissertatie over dr. A. Kuyper“, in: Gijsbert Nicolaas (Gijs) Westerouen van Meeteren (ed.), *Dr. Petrus Albertus Kasteel honderd jaar. Album amicorum*, Den Haag 2002, pp. 46–60.

domain of theology, but also in philosophy, sociology and politics. The Kuyper research did not get momentum yet in this period. Till the 1970s only a handful of dissertations that explicitly dealt with Kuyper were defended at the Vrije Universiteit.¹³ Sometimes studies were done independent of the Vrije Universiteit, of which Arnold A. van Ruler's book on Kuyper's notion of a Christian culture, and Jochem Douma's dissertation on common grace, defended at the Theological University Kampen, are prominent.¹⁴ Since the orientation of the Vrije Universiteit was mainly westward and American dissertations were the expected consequence, two dissertations defended in Germany deserve special mention.¹⁵

The main difference with the years before the Second World War is that about half of the books were defended as dissertation, and the international range of authors. Memorable is also that in 1960 the first American biography of Kuyper was published by Frank VandenBerg. From an academic point of view it was quite an unsatisfactory book, „too laudatory in its style“, burying „Kuyper and his friends under sheer goodness and orthodoxy“, but even so it is interesting that this publication stayed unnoticed in the Netherlands.¹⁶

The reason for this neglect may have been reservations about the kuyperian tradition. On the one hand he was still appreciated in socio-political issues, but also the notion that Kuyper was a conservative with fascist overtones won influence.¹⁷ From the 1970s on the Reformed in the Netherlands were occupied with liberating themselves from this tradition, especially with one of the weaknesses Diepenhorst mentioned in 1931, Kuyper's tendency to derive

13 Louis Praamsma, *Abraham Kuyper als kerkhistoricus*, Kampen 1945; Simon Jan Ridderbos, *De theologische cultuurbeschouwing van Abraham Kuyper*, Kampen 1947; Jan Dirk Dengerink, *Critisch-historisch onderzoek naar de sociologische ontwikkeling van het beginsel der „sovereiniteit in eigen kring“*, Kampen 1948; Cornelis de Ru, *De strijd over het hoger onderwijs tijdens het ministerie-Kuyper*, Kampen 1953; Willem H. Velema, *De leer van de Heilige Geest bij Abraham Kuyper, 's-Gravenhage* 1957; Sutarno [Boedisoesetya, Soetarno], *Het kuyperiaanse model van een christelijke politieke organisatie*, Baarn 1970.

14 Arnold A. van Ruler, *Kuyper's idee eener christelijke cultuur*, Nijkerk 1940; Petrus Antonius van Leeuwen, *Het kerkbegrip in de theologie van Abraham*, Franeker 1946; Harm Jan Langman, *Kuyper en de volkskerk. Een dogmatisch-ecclesiologische studie*, Kampen 1950; Jan Voerman, *Het conflict Kuyper-Heemskerk*, Utrecht 1954; Jochem Douma, *Algemene genade. Uiteenzetting, vergelijking en beoordeling van de opvattingen van A. Kuyper*, K. Schilder en Joh. Calvijn over algemene genade, Goes 1966.

15 Leroy Vogel, *Die politischen Ideen Abraham Kuypers und seine Entwicklung als Staatsmann*, Würzburg 1937; Enno Edzard Rosenboom, *Die Idee einer christlichen Universität im theologischen Denken von Abraham Kuyper*, Göttingen 1950. An American PhD, defended in 1944, is: William Young, *Toward a Reformed Philosophy. The Development of a Protestant Philosophy in Dutch Calvinistic Thought since the Time of Abraham Kuyper*, Franeker 1952.

16 Frank VandenBerg, *Abraham Kuyper*, Grand Rapids 1960. Critical review by Gerrit J. Ten Zijthoff in: *Church History* 30 (1961), p. 373.

17 Positive on Kuyper: Wilhelm Friedrich de Gaay Fortman, *Architectonische critiek. Fragmenten uit de sociaal-politieke geschriften van dr. A. Kuyper*, Amsterdam 1956; George Puchinger/Nicolaas Scheps, *Gesprek over de onbekende Kuyper*, Kampen 1971. Critical on Kuyper: Jacobus van Weringh, *Het maatschappijbeeld van Abraham Kuyper*, Assen 1967.

everything from one idea and trace this back to one system. Kuyperian principles had resulted in a fixed system. Church historian Cornelis Augustijn referred to it as „reinforced concrete”.¹⁸ In theology Kuyper’s view of Scripture and the resulting isolation from the current theological debate was severely criticized, while in society he was blamed for the rigidity of a pillarized society in which worldviews were the organizational principle. Kuyper’s view of an organic society and of sphere sovereignty was challenged by the difficulty to apply these structures in an individualizing society. His view of the dominant role of religion in personal life and in society was challenged by secularization, and his view of the organic church that would permeate society was challenged by the estrangement of church and society and by doubt about the meaning of the church in society.¹⁹

2.3 After the 1960s

In the 1970s and 1980s the Reformed world distanced itself radically from about every kuyperian viewpoint, not only in theology, but for example also the influence of the kuyperian tradition on apartheid ideology in South-Africa. Internationally this influence was criticized and rejected by North-American scholars T. Dunbar Moodie (1975) and Irving Hexham (1981), who argued that Afrikaner nationalism and apartheid are fruits of the neo-Calvinist tradition.²⁰ Although this critique by John W. de Gruchy has been criticized as a distorted view on Kuyper’s influence,²¹ and black theologian and Kampen alumnus Allan Boesak made a liberative claim for Kuyper instead,²² the unilateral relation between Kuyper and apartheid is persistent in the international context.

This critical development was welcomed in Reformed circles in the Netherlands as a liberation. Kuyperian became a negative qualification. Especially the theological department at the Vrije Universiteit was distancing

18 M.E.H.Nicolette Mout, *Levensbericht Cornelis Augustijn, 18 juni 1928–1 januari 2008*, in: *Levensberichten en herdenkingen 2009*. Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, Amsterdam 2009, p. 11.

19 Gerard Dekker, *Is Kuypers gedachtegoed nog bruikbaar?*, in: Cornelis Augustijn et al. (eds.), *Abraham Kuyper. Zijn volksdeel, zijn invloed*, Delft 1987, pp. 200–202.

20 T. Dunbar Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom. Power, apartheid and the Afrikaner civil religion*, Berkeley 1975; Irving Hexham, *The Irony of Apartheid. the struggle for National Independence of Afrikaner Calvinism against British Imperialism*, New York 1981.

21 John W. de Gruchy, *Bonhoeffer and South Africa. Theology in Dialogue*, Grand Rapids 1984, pp. 107.110. See also Gerrit Schutte, *A Family Feud. Afrikaner Nationalism and Dutch Neo-Calvinism*, Amsterdam 2010; George Harinck, „Wipe out Lines of Division (Not Distinctions)“. Bennie Keet, *Neo-Calvinism and the Struggle against Apartheid*, *Journal of Reformed Theology* 11/2017, pp. 81–98.

22 Allan Boesak, *Black and Reformed. Apartheid, Liberation, and the Calvinist Tradition*, New York 1984, p. 87.

itself from Kuyper,²³ to the effect that theological Kuyper study has been reduced considerably. This development was mainly a national feature. The international scholarly interest in Kuyper and the Kuyper research were not really hampered by it.

A more nuanced view was put forward by scholars with a historical approach. In 1987 Kuyper was not commemorated at mass meetings any more. His Antirevolutionary Party had merged with other Christian parties, his newspaper *De Standaard* did not exist anymore, his Reformed Churches were timid about Kuyper. Reformed people did not call themselves kuyperians anymore, they did not have the feeling they still lived in Kuyper's shadow. They felt free to view him with a more distanced and in a less ideological way. I think this has been the moment the historians assumed the Kuyper research.

In 1987, 150 years after Kuyper's birth, one of the kuyperian institutions still existing was the Vrije Universiteit (the other was the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands). At this university, alongside the neo-Calvinist philosophical tradition, that was in the Vollenhoven/Dooyeweerd tradition almost exclusively till the 1980s,²⁴ a new critical and source-based historical approach was initiated by the librarian of the Vrije Universiteit Johan Stellingwerff with two books on the relation between the Vrije Universiteit and Kuyper in the years 1880–1955,²⁵ and above all by two church historians of this university, Cornelis Augustijn and Jasper Vree. They – together with some historians at the Vrije Universiteit – introduced a source-based historical approach of Kuyper, especially of his theological ideas and development. The result was that kuyperian slogans like antithesis, sphere sovereignty, common grace, and others, were contextualized in Kuyper's life and also historically. Just to offer two examples: it turned out that Kuyper hardly ever used the notion of antithesis, and that he introduced it in politics as late as 1904.²⁶ And till 1874 Kuyper cannot be labeled as a Calvinist, and the vast influence of Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher on Kuyper has to be acknowledged.²⁷ This historical approach resulted in a more precise analysis of Kuyper's life and ideas, and liberated him from an overwhelming ideological approach and appraisal. This historical take also made room for research of other aspects of Kuyper's life, like his travel accounts,²⁸ the start of his political downfall,²⁹ his

23 Cornelis Augustijn, In rapport met de tijd. 100 jaar theologie aan de Vrije Universiteit, Kampen 1980.

24 Henk E.S. Woldring, Een handvol filosofen. Geschiedenis van de filosofiebeoefening aan de Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam van 1880 tot 2012, Hilversum 2013, pp. 198.329–333.

25 Johan Stellingwerff, Dr. Abraham Kuyper en de Vrije Universiteit, Kampen 1987; Johan Stellingwerff, De Vrije Universiteit na Kuyper. De Vrije Universiteit van 1905 tot 1955. Een halve eeuw geestesgeschiedenis van een civitas academica, Kampen 1987.

26 Cornelis Augustijn, Kuypers theologie van de samenleving, in: Augustijn et al., Kuyper, zijn volksdeel, p. 56.

27 Jasper Vree, Kuyper in de kiem. De precalvinistische periode van Abraham Kuyper, 1848–1874, Hilversum 2006.

28 George Harinck, Mijn reis was geboden. Abraham Kuypers Amerikaanse tournee, Hilversum

alpinism and journalism.³⁰ The historical turn, a turn as well from ideology to archival information, now has become dominant, especially among researchers that read Dutch.

One aspect has to be added to this historical turn, and that is the editing and publication of Kuyper's correspondence. In 1937, the centennial of Kuyper's birth, the correspondence of Kuyper and his intellectual guide Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer (1801–1876) was published, 500 letters written from 1864 to 1876.³¹ In the early stage of Kuyper's career, Groen was his main correspondent. In 1985, the correspondence of Kuyper and the politician and Alexander W.F. Idenburg (1861–1935) was published, Kuyper's friend at his old age.³² These were 150 letters, added with a lot of correspondence of related politicians and of family. The main correspondent of Kuyper's middle years was Alexander F. de Savornin Lohman (1837–1924). Their correspondence awaits publication, like the correspondence of Kuyper and Bavinck. A smaller set of letters, written to his wife on his American journey, was published in Dutch and English.³³ And George Puchinger's (1921–1999) biography of 1987 on the young Kuyper was based on the correspondence between Kuyper and his fiancée Jo Schaay (1842–1899).³⁴ Most of Kuyper's correspondence is unpublished, though some sets of letters from his archive have been published.³⁵

The historical turn was hallmarked in 1987 by an iconographic book with pictures from Kuyper's life. Many caricatures have been made of Kuyper,³⁶ way

2009; George Harinck, *Aan het roer staat het hart. Reis om de oude wereldzee in het voetspoor van Abraham Kuyper*, Amsterdam 2015; George Harinck, *Varia Americana. In het spoor van Abraham Kuyper door de Verenigde Staten*, Amsterdam 2016.

29 Jan de Bruijn, *Het boetekleed ontsiert de man niet. Abraham Kuyper en de Lintjesaffaire (1909–1910)*, Amsterdam 2005.

30 Johan Snel, *De zeven levens van Abraham Kuyper. Portret van een ongrijpbaar staatsman*, Amsterdam 2020.

31 Adriaan Goslinga (ed.), *Briefwisseling van mr. G. Groen van Prinsterer met Dr. A. Kuyper, 1864–1876*, Kampen 1937.

32 Jan de Bruijn/George Puchinger (eds.), *Briefwisseling Kuyper-Idenburg*, Franeker 1985.

33 George Harinck/Margriet Urbanus (eds.), *Ik voel steeds meer dat ik hier zijn moest. Amerikaanse brieven van Abraham Kuyper aan zijn vrouw en kinderen (1898)*, Amsterdam 2004; also in Harinck, *Mijn reis was geboden*, pp. 33–75; english translation of the letters: George Harinck (ed.), *Kuyper in America. „This is where I was meant to be“*, Sioux Center 2012.

34 George Puchinger, *Abraham Kuyper. De jonge Kuyper (1837–1867)*, Franeker 1987. This was the first part of a planned multi-volume biography.

35 Fifteen letters and postcards from the German-American theologian Nicolaus M. Steffens to Kuyper, in: George Harinck, *„We live presently under a waning moon“. Nicolaus Martin Steffens as leader of the Reformed Church in America in the West in years of transition (1878–1895)*, Holland 2013, pp. 119–183; german translation: George Harinck, *„Wir leben gegenwärtig unter dem abnehmenden Mond“. Nicolaus Martin Steffens als Leiter in den Übergangsjahren (1878–1895) der Reformed Church im Westen Michigans*, Münster 2021 (in print).

36 Dr. Kuyper in de caricatuur. Platen van Johan Braakensiek, Albert Hahn, Louis Raemaekers, Orion, Patrick Kroon, J. Linse, Toon van Tast, Chris Kras Kzn., enz. *Met een brief aan de uitgevers van Dr. A. Kuyper*, Amsterdam 1909.

more than of any other Dutch politician in his days, and he also belonged to the first generation whose life has been documented in photos.³⁷ As a sign of the starting international orientation of Dutch Kuyper researchers, an English edition of this pictorial biography was published in 2014.³⁸

3. The international Kuyper

Kuyper himself was oriented internationally. From the student days of his A Lasco research his outlook was not restricted by national boundaries, and he experienced in his historical research how ideas travel. One example of international orientation out of many more are the opening paragraphs of Kuyper's famous 1891 lecture on the social question and Christian religion. He started with an international overview of the social action of Christians in countries like Germany, Great Britain, Switzerland, France, Belgium and Italy, and drew the conclusion that Dutch Christians were rather late in addressing this issue. He often dealt with political topics in this way, by providing the Dutch state of affairs an international context. Explaining his policy in the railway strike of 1903, he referred to the effects of the way in which the American federal government had dealt with railway strikes in previous decades.³⁹

And he liked to be abroad. He mountaineered for weeks annually, mainly in Switzerland, Austria and Italy, spent the time during his longer mental breakdowns largely in Southern Europe, and made trips of several months around the Mediterranean and in the United States. As a prime minister from 1901 till 1905, he visited many foreign capitals and courts. He traveled so often, that the minister of Foreign Affairs in his cabinet felt obsolete, and in the Dutch press Kuyper was nicknamed „minister of Foreign Travels“.⁴⁰ Everywhere he came he frankly gave his own opinion, and though he had a cosmopolitan trait, he was always keen to promote and defend the Dutch cause. Many people who heard him had the same impression the Oxford professor Albert Venn Dicey got, when he heard Kuyper speaking in Princeton in 1898: this was

„the most remarkable speech I have heard for a long time. Kuyper spoke. He looked like a Dutchman of the 17th century. He spoke slowly and solemnly. His English was

37 Jan de Bruijn, Abraham Kuyper, leven en werk in beeld. Een beeldbiografie, Amsterdam 1987; reprinted as Abraham Kuyper. Een beeldbiografie, Amsterdam 2008.

38 Jan de Bruijn, Abraham Kuyper. A Pictorial Biography, Grand Rapids 2014.

39 Abraham Kuyper, Parlementaire redevoeringen. Deel II Ministerieele redevoeringen Tweede Kamer, Amsterdam [1909], pp. 543–544.

40 Wilco Julius van Welderen-Rengers, Schets eener parlementaire geschiedenis van Nederland van 1849–1891, 's-Gravenhage 1918, p. 83.

impressive, with here and there a Dutch idiom. He told us he was a Calvinist; that he had been persecuted by the anti-Calvinists (...) One felt as if the 17th century had visibly risen upon us to give the last curse to Spain. After that I spoke, said nothing very remarkable“.⁴¹

The denomination, the political party, and the newspapers he founded were national in nature, but in his inaugural speech on „Souvereiniteit in eigen kring“ (sphere sovereignty) at the opening of the Vrije Universiteit in 1880 Kuyper touched on international aspirations of the new university. The Vrije Universiteit was a Dutch-language university, functioning under Dutch national law. But in his closing remarks Kuyper pointed at the international relevance of the Vrije Universiteit. He referred to congratulations and expressions of support the young university had received from sympathizers in Germany, Italy, Scotland, Switzerland and the United States.⁴² This reminded Kuyper of the international character of the Synod of Dordrecht of 1618/1619, and he made just that comparison, saying that scholarship and the Reformed confession knew no national borders.⁴³

In 1880, the Vrije Universiteit had one German professor in the humanities department, but Kuyper had searched in vain in Germany and Austria for a professor of systematic theology. If he had succeeded in strengthening the international orientation of the university, it might as well have been focused eastward, but over the years it would focus in the opposite direction.

4. International Patterns

In Kuyper's academic life translation of his Dutch-language publications became a vital part of his work. Though the first translation of one of his publications was in German, the vast majority of translations of his publications was in American English, directed at an American audience. He was strongly involved in this translation work, understanding how vital this was to the international outreach of his ideas.⁴⁴ Shortly after his death there was one systematic effort to translate work of him and his fellow neo-Calvinists into Hungarian, but this failed after a good start. Later on, translations of his publications were only made haphazardly, and did not

41 Robert S. Rait (ed.), *Memorials of Albert Venn Dicey, Being Chiefly Letters and Diaries*, London 1925, p. 154.

42 See: *De Heraut*, 24 October 1880.

43 Abraham Kuyper, *Souvereiniteit in eigen kring. Rede ter inwijding van de Vrije Universiteit, den 20sten oktober 1880 gehouden, in het Koor der Nieuwe Kerk te Amsterdam, Amsterdam 1880*, p. 41. There is no full English translation of this publication in print, that includes this remark by Kuyper.

44 George Harinck, *Lost in Translation. The First Text of the Stone Lectures*, in: Jessica and Robert Joustra, *Kuyper's Stone Lectures*, Downers Grove 2021 (in print).

really serve a systematic Kuyper research. The result is that all kinds of single publications have been translated into German or French, and recently also into Russian, Spanish, Korean, and Chinese, without readers having a clue about Kuyper and his life, and how his thought and activities were structured. This lack of knowledge has been solved sometimes by adding a short introduction on Kuyper and his ideas. These introductions are most of the times rather biased and full of mistakes and misunderstandings.

Another handicap of the international Kuyper research is that he wrote in Dutch and international scholars could hardly ever read Dutch. There are only a few exceptions. Given the fact that one of the issues in Kuyper research in the Netherlands is that he had seven lives and published more widely than his contemporaries, it is very hard for a Dutchman to get a balanced view of Kuyper, let alone for someone who is not Dutch. If you didn't read Dutch, for decades only two, five or ten texts by Kuyper are accessible – and for English readers only. This restricted access to his texts has been so hampering that in general the international Kuyper research in the twentieth century has to be qualified as underdeveloped and second rate, and that most of the publications did not contribute to the state of the Kuyper research.

When by the end of the century international publications on Kuyper amounted, especially in English, you see that many who write on Kuyper do not rely on his writings, but on what other non-Dutch readers have written on him. These second-rate sources often result in third rate publications. Also, when these publications are in other languages than English, they are mostly based on English texts. The original Dutch sources stayed out of sight, as well as the Dutch context in which they originate. There are only a few exceptions to this general picture, like the publications by well-versed Dutch readers, like James D. Bratt, James P. Eglinton, Peter S. Heslam, Hans-Georg Ulrichs, and John H. Wood.⁴⁵ So, there is a strong tension between the fame of Kuyper worldwide and the amount of his publications that have been translated and the publications in him and his work. One of the effects is that the results of the Kuyper research in the Netherlands – most of the times written in Dutch – is hardly accessible for foreigners. This is beginning to change, but slowly, and the language gap will stay a problem in the field of Kuyper studies.

45 James D. Bratt, *Abraham Kuyper. Modern Calvinist*, Christian Democrat, Grand Rapids 2013; James Eglinton, *Varia Americana and Race: Kuyper as Antagonist and Protagonist*, *Journal of Reformed Theology* 11 (2017), pp. 65–80; Peter S. Heslam, *Creating a Christian Worldview. Abraham Kuyper's Lectures on Calvinism*, Grand Rapids/Cambridge 1998; Hans-Georg Ulrichs, *Abraham Kuyper als Ideologe des Calvinismus – neu gelesen*, Bielefeld 2019; John Halsey Wood Jr., *Going Dutch in the Modern Age. Abraham Kuyper's Struggle for a Free Church in the Netherlands*, Oxford 2013.