

God wil het! - XII - Reizen in het spoor van de kruisvaarder

Libanon: Land van ruïnes



Crusaderstates

Tot 1941 was Libanon een deel van Syrië. Na de ondergang van het Turkse Ottomaanse rijk tijdens de Eerste Wereldoorlog ontstond onder Frans beheer Groot-Syrië dat na een aantal opstanden in 1925 door de Fransen om strategische redenen in vieren werd opgedeeld. Een van de delen werd Libanon dat uiteindelijk, kort na Syrië, in december 1941 een autonome staat werd. De Fransen verdwenen in 1946 definitief uit dit gebied.

Parel van de Levant



Kaart Libanon-Syrië

In het douanekantoor bij de rommelige grensovergang tussen Syrië en Libanon is het een drukte van belang. Voor één balie verdringen zich tientallen mensen met in de uitgestoken handen hun paspoort waarin een kostbare stempel moet komen om toegang te krijgen tot Libanon. Sommigen steken bankbiljetten tussen de

pagina's. Anderen bieden het overheidspersoneel fruit, sigaretten of een stropdas aan om zo snel mogelijk geholpen te worden. Zwijgend nemen de douanebeambten de producten aan. Buiten staat een lange rij Libanezen geduldig bij lage stenen tafels waarop tassen, koffers en plunjebalen opengeritst liggen te wachten op de onderzoekende blikken van het douanepersoneel. Vooralsnog maken ze geen aanstalten om de bagage te controleren. De rij auto's, veelal van Amerikaanse makelij, groeit zienderogen aan en overvolle autobussen met half uit de ramen hangende passagiers, banen zich claxonnerend een weg door de mensenmassa. De bagage van de westerse toeristen wordt niet of nauwelijks doorzocht en mits in bezit van een geldig visum kunnen ze snel doorlopen. Het verlangen naar westerse deviezen is groot in Libanon, dat door de bloedige burgeroorlog die het land sinds 1972 teisterde is geruïneerd. Na het vredesakkoord in 1989 heeft Libanon de wederopbouw ter hand genomen. Langs de kust verrijzen gloednieuwe hotels, pensions en restaurants die geduldig wachten op de komst van de toeristen want ook vijf jaar na het einde van de oorlog bezoeken westerlingen nog maar mondjesmaat de voormalige parel van de Levant.

Het kruisleger volgde de route langs de kust van de Middellandse Zee.

'Vaandeldragers gingen de pelgrims vooruit; daarna volgden de verschillende legerkorpsen. In hun midden bevond zich de bagage. De ongewapende menigte, waaronder de geestelijkheid, sloten de rijen. Voortdurend schalden de trompetten en de voorste gelederen trokken langzaam voort, zodat ook de zwakste pelgrims in staat waren het leger te volgen.'

Op 13 januari 1099 bestormde het leger van Raymond het fort Arca dat aan de voet van de berg Libanon ligt, op enkele kilometers afstand van de noordelijke havenplaats Tripoli, de hoofdstad van een Seltsjoeks vorstendom. Maar de vesting bleek onneembaar. De bewoners van Arca hadden gruwelijke verhalen gehoord over de slag bij Antiochië en zij wilden onder geen beding het zelfde lot ondergaan. Ze waren ervan overtuigd dat ze het geen van allen zouden overleven als er ook maar een bres in de verdedigingsmuur zou worden geslagen. De belegeraars wilden de inwoners van Arca uithongeren maar al spoedig leden zij zelf honger.

'De armsten onder de pelgrims waren genoodzaakt zich met wortels en planten te voeden en met de dieren te twisten over de wilde kruiden. Zij die een zwaard konden hanteren, stroopten het omliggende land af; maar zij die door leeftijd,

geslacht of ziekte daar niet toe in staat waren, moesten hun enige hoop vestigen op de liefdadigheid van de christensoldaten. Het leger kwam hen te hulp en stond een tiende van de buit af die op de vijand was behaald.'

Na een vruchteloos beleg van verschillende weken staakten de kruisvaarders hun strijd tegen de onwankelbare inwoners van Arca. Godfried en zijn manschappen vielen daarna de buitenwijken van Tripoli binnen en roofden allerlei goederen en dieren waaronder kamelen, die zij in de Bekaa-vallei verzamelden en voor de verdere reis naar Jeruzalem gebruikten.

Suikerstad



Tripoli

Tripoli gold in de kruisvaarders tijd als het juweel van het Arabische Oosten en werd bestuurd door verstandige vorsten die de stad en de omliggende gebieden van generatie op generatie steeds welvarender hadden gemaakt: akkers vol met olijf - en fruitbomen strekten zich uit zover het oog reikte en de verkoop van suikerriet vormde een aardige bron van inkomsten voor de Seltsjoeken. Tripoli herbergde een magnifieke bibliotheek die aangelegd was door de voorgangers van de Seltsjoekse emir Djalal el Moelk die ten tijde van de komst van de kruisridders de stad bestuurde. Deze emir, bevreesd voor de ravage die de soldaten van Christus konen aanrichten, kocht zichzelf immuniteit in ruil voor de vrijlating van driehonderd christelijke gevangenen, vijftienduizend bezanten en vijftien mooie paarden. Daarbij schonk hij nog voedsel en gidsen die de kruisvaarders de smalle kustweg naar Beiroet moesten wijzen. Ook was deze Arabische emir bereid christen te worden als de kruisvaarders kans zagen de Fatimiden te verslaan.

'Bij de Tripolitaanse verkenners voegden zich al spoedig maronitische christen uit het Libanese berggebied die, in navolging van de moslimse prinses, de westerse soldaten hulp aanboden.'



Citadel Tripoli

Enkele jaren later, in 1103, bouwden de kruisvaarders onder leiding van Raymond van Toulouse een enorm kasteel dat negen eeuwen later nog steeds hoog boven Tripoli uitsteekt. In de 18^e eeuw werd de citadel geheel verwoest door een aardbeving, maar de Libanezen bouwden het fort steen voor steen weer op. De recente religieuze burgeroorlog tussen christelijke maronieten (oosterse katholieken) en moslims veroorzaakte geen noemenswaardige schade aan de citadel zelf. Alhoewel de stad niet zo zwaar werd getroffen als Beiroet, zijn in Tripoli de gevolgen van de burgeroorlog nog overal zichtbaar: bomkraters, ingestorte gebouwen, immense puinhopen en stenen skeletten. Provisorisch aan elkaar geknoopte telefoondraden hangen als spinnenwebben over de straten, de elektriciteitsvoorziening valt regelmatig uit en ook de riolering spuwt met regelmaat haar inhoud over straat. 'We will repaint Lebanon' staat te lezen op manshoge borden voor verfreclame die langs het trottoir van vernielde en opengebroken straten staan. En inderdaad, de Libanezen werken gestaag aan de wederopbouw van wat eens het Zwitserland van het Oosten werd genoemd. De kogelgaten in de muren worden dichtgemetseld en de vriendelijke Tripolitanen snakken naar de goede oude tijden toen de dagjesmensen en de toeristen flanerend onder wuivende palmbomen over de boulevard trokken en de religieuze burgeroorlog nog ver weg was. Toch ademt Tripoli met haar geel gekleurde, ronde gebouwen en haar gietijzeren balkons hier en daar nog de sfeer uit van vergane Franse glorie. In de nauwe straatjes van de oosterse binnenstad bevinden zich overal winkeltjes waar op grote, platte metalen blikken het mierzoete Arabische suikergoed ligt uitgesteld, waar Tripoli zo beroemd om is.

Maronieten en Druzen

De historicus Kamal Salibi doceerde geschiedenis aan de American University in Beiroet. Inmiddels is hij emeritus hoogleraar en werkzaam als directeur van het Koninklijk instituut voor interreligieuze studies aan de Jordaanse universiteit in Amman. Hij heeft tal van publicaties op zijn naam staan, veelal met bijbelse

thema's als onderwerp. Zijn bekendste werk is ongetwijfeld het in het Nederlands vertaalde boek *Het ware land van Abraham*, een zoektocht naar de oorsprong van het Heilige Boek dat volgens Salibi niet in Palestina werd geschreven maar in West-Arabië. Salibi geldt als een groot kenner van de religieuze cultuur in het Midden-Oosten. *'Tijdens de eerste kruistocht woonden in het noorden van Libanon van oudsher de maronieten,'* zegt hij. *'De maronieten onderscheiden zich van andere Arabische christenen omdat ze - evenals de Latijnse christenen - Jezus twee naturen toekennen: een menselijke en een goddelijke. Door de komst van de kruisvaarders erkenden ze de Latijnse kerk en het gezag van de paus.'*



Al-Hakim bi-
Amr Allah
(996-1021)

De sjiiitische moslims hadden zich in het centrale gedeelte van het land en in Beiroet gevestigd. De Druzen woonden voornamelijk in het zuiden van het land en vormden een volksstam in Libanon, Syrië en Palestina. De oorsprong van deze groep moet gezocht worden aan het begin van de elfde eeuw toen Hakim, de Fatimiden-bestuurder van Jeruzalem, zichzelf na tien jaar wrede vervolgingen van de christenen plotseling als heilige beschouwde en de christenen en de joden boven de moslims stelde. Zijn Perzisch-Turkse vriend Darazi verklaarde hem in 1016 officieel heilig en Hakim's naam verving die van Allah tijdens de diensten in de moskee. Het gevolg was een opstand onder de moslims, die in 1021 heeft geleid tot de dood van Hakim en de vlucht van Darazi naar Libanon. Hier stichtte hij de sekte van de Druzen, die tot de dag van vandaag wachten op de terugkeer van Hakim, die zij beschouwen als de laatste incarnatie van God. De Druzen in Libanon spreken Arabisch en hebben een eigen, streng monotheïstische leer met islamitische, christelijke en neoplatonische elementen. Het geloof in een zielsverhuizing speelt binnen hun geloof een belangrijke rol. Hun jaartelling begint in 1017. Vanaf hun ontstaan bestaan er controverses met de maronieten, die in 1845 en 1860 tot een slachting leidden. In de oorlog tussen Israël en de Arabieren kozen ze de Israëliëse zijde.

'De christelijke maronieten waren door de Byzantijnen uit de valleien van de Orontes verdreven in de richting van de berg Libanon en toen de kruisvaarders door dit gebied trokken, kregen zij dan ook een warm onthaal van de maronieten die hen vergezelden op hun tocht door Libanon,' zegt de Libanese historicus.

Salibi wijst op het feit dat pas in de 16^e eeuw de benaming kruisvaarders voor het eerst opdook in Europa. *'In het Midden-Oosten gebeurde dat pas in de 19^e eeuw toen de term kruisvaarders vertaald werd in het Arabisch,'* zegt hij. *'Daarvoor heetten de christenen gewoon Franken. Tijdens de eerste kruistocht liet het westerse christendom voor het eerst in de geschiedenis haar militaire spierballen zien en niet alleen om de oude pelgrimsroute naar Jeruzalem te beschermen maar ook om de internationale handel veilig te stellen.'* Salibi ziet dan ook overeenkomsten tussen de komst van de kruisvaarders en de Eerste Golfoorlog in 1991: *'Ten tijde van de Golfoorlog dacht ik dat de legers van de westerse kruisvaarders weer op de vlakten de oorlogstrommels roffelden. President George Bush en de Europese en Amerikaanse pers getuigden van zo'n vijandigheid tegenover de islam dat ik als christen in Libanon zelfs de zijde koos van de moslims.'*



Kamal Salibi (2009)

Voor de burgeroorlog was meer dan de helft van de Libanese bevolking christen. Salibi schat het huidige percentage christenen in Libanon op *'nog maar twintig, dertig procent want veel maronieten zijn tijdens de burgeroorlog naar het buitenland gevlucht. Momenteel worden de christelijke Libanezen politiek gediscrimineerd en omdat zij nauwelijks een rol spelen in het bestuur en de regering overwegen ook zij om naar het buitenland te vertrekken.'* De Libanese historicus denkt dat zijn land in de toekomst meer en meer onder de invloed komt van de sjiieten, de moslims met in hun kielzog radicale fundamentalistische

splintergroeperingen die de sharia, de rechtsleer van de islam op wil leggen aan de bevolking.

De kruisvaarders trokken in een rustig tempo langs de kust van Noord-Libanon in de richting van Beiroet, in die tijd een onopvallend vissersplaatsje dat zich later onder het bewind van de Europeanen meer en meer ontwikkelde tot een belangrijke havenplaats. Ze passeerden het oude Byblos en staken vervolgens de Hondsrivier over, die de grens vormde tussen het Seltsjoekse rijk en het Fatimidenkalifaat. De komst van de kruisridders veranderde niet zo veel aan de opstelling van de Fatimiden die al hun aandacht nodig hadden voor de versterking van Jeruzalem en niet bijster geïnteresseerd waren in de Libanese kustplaatsen waar de emirs weldra vrede sloten met de christelijke indringers. De laatste pleisterplaats was het vissersdorp Sur (Tyre) waar de kruisvaarders twee dagen bivakkeerden alvorens hun blik te richten op Palestina.



steegje saida
oude stad

Ten zuiden van Beiroet liggen grote tentenkampen waar arme Libanezen en gevluchte Palestijnen onder zeer armoedige omstandigheden door elkaar wonen. Levensgrote portretten van Assad, die Libanon met zijn leger permanent bezet houdt, sieren het straatbeeld. De kustweg naar het zuiden wordt voortdurend onderbroken door wegversperringen met controles van Syrische soldaten die verscholen achter zandzakken het verkeer nauwlettend in de gaten houden. Naarmate het zuiden van Libanon dichterbij komt neemt het aantal soldaten toe. De derde generatie kruisvaarders bouwde in Saida (Sidon) een versterkt zeekeel waar nu - zevenhonderd jaar later - verveelde Libanese en Syrische soldaten hun tijd verdoen met het observeren van over de pier wandelende verliefde stelletjes.

Libanon's smalle kustweg naar Israël is sinds 1978 een doodlopende gang in een vervallen huis. Het gebied tussen het Libanese Tyre en de Israëlische havenplaats Akko is momenteel een militaire demarcatielijn en afgesloten voor alle verkeer.

Hier vecht de door Iran gesteunde islamitisch-fundamentalistische Hezbollah-beweging al jarenlang een felle strijd uit met de gehate Israëliërs, die vasthouden aan deze door hen ingestelde 'veiligheidszone'. De strook is hemelsbreed maar twintig kilometer lang en vanaf Tyre is bij helder weer de Israëlische kustlijn goed te zien. Gewapende patrouilles doen dag en nacht de ronde door de straten van Tyre. 's Nachts dreunt onophoudelijk het geluid van mortiergranaten, raketten en mitrailleursalvo's, terwijl overdag Israëlische gevechtsvliegtuigen en helikopters als bromvliegen boven de kust zwermen. Sinds de val van het Oost-Europese communisme, de open grenzen van Syrië en het einde van de Libanese burgeroorlog, ligt de eeuwenoude pelgrimsroute van het noorden van Europa naar Jeruzalem - op een kleine twintig kilometer na - eindelijk weer volledig open. Wellicht kunnen de vredesprocessen in het Midden-Oosten er toe leiden dat ook dit laatste obstakel op de weg naar het Heilige Graf in Jeruzalem in de nabije toekomst kan worden opgeruimd.

Robert Mulder & Lejo Siepe - [God wil het! Reizen in het spoor van de kruisvaarders](#)

Rozenberg Publishers 2005 ISBN 978 90 5170 168 5

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Israël: het land van belofte



Abraham met nomaden

Ongeveer 1800 jaar v. Chr. leidde Abraham een groep nomaden, van Mesopotamië naar de bergen van Kanaän in Palestina. Tijdens een hongersnood trokken ze verder naar Egypte, van waar ze rond 1250 v. Chr. onder leiding van Mozes de weg terug aflegden en opnieuw de bergstreken van Kanaän bevolkten. De Israëlieten stichtten een koninkrijk en kozen als eerste koning Saul (1023-1004 v. Chr.), die door zijn geadopteerde zoon David werd opgevolgd. David veroverde in 997 v. Chr. Jeruzalem en maakte daar de hoofdstad van zijn koninkrijk van. David werd opgevolgd door zijn zoon Salomon (965-928 v. Chr.). Tijdens zijn regering werd de eerste tempel gebouwd. Na Salomons dood werd het koninkrijk in twee delen opgesplitst: Israël en Juda. Rond 721 v. Chr. werd Israël door de Assyriërs veroverd. De Israëliërs verstrooiden zich en dit was het begin van de joodse diaspora, de wereldwijde verspreiding van joodse gemeenschappen. Juda werd in 587 v. Chr. Veroverd door de Babyloniërs (586-538), die Jeruzalem en de tempel verwoestten. Van 538-332 v. Chr. behoorde Palestina tot het Perzische wereldrijk. Jeruzalem en de verwoeste tempel werden herbouwd. Hierna volgde een periode van drie eeuwen Griekse overheersing. In het jaar 63 v. Chr. werd Palestina een Romeinse provincie. Tijdens joodse opstanden werd de tempel in Jeruzalem voor de tweede keer verwoest (70 n. Chr.). Veel joden werden als slaven verkocht of ontvluchtten het land. Het werd hun verboden in Jeruzalem te wonen. In de Byzantijnse periode (324-640) verspreidde het christendom zich en werd Palestina - het Heilige Land - een belangrijk doel voor pelgrims. Omstreeks 638 werden Palestina en Jeruzalem veroverd door de binnenvallende Arabieren. Vanaf het eind van de tiende eeuw beheersten de Egyptische Fatimiden grote delen van Syrië en Palestina, waaronder Jeruzalem. Met uitzondering van de periode onder het bewind van kalief Hakim (begin elfde eeuw), was de positie van de christenen en joden

redelijk goed. De Fatimiden boden hen tegen betaling protectie, maar wel verzetten dezen zich meer en meer tegen de constante, toenemende stroom van christelijke pelgrims.

Palestijnen, joden en toeristen



El-Jazzar moskee

De Noord-Israëliëse havenstad Akko is een populaire toeristische attractie met een labyrint aan steegjes en straatjes waar joodse en arabische handelaren in hun souvenirwinkeltjes broederlijk de eindeloze rijen voorbijtrekkende dagjesmensen bedienen. Akko wordt met haar overwegend Palestijnse bevolking en karakteristieke Arabische binnenstad vaak als voorbeeld gesteld van hoe joden en Palestijnen vreedzaam kunnen samenleven. De moskee van Achmed El-Jazzar, een groot gebouw afgezet met witte koepeltjes en een minaret, steekt boven de metersdikke vestingmuren uit. Het gebedshuis werd aan het eind van de achttiende eeuw gebouwd en naar voorbeeld van de grote moskeeën van Istanbul rijkelijk gedecoreerd met rood, wit en zwart marmer ter ere van de overwinning die emir El Jazzar boekte op Napoleon die in die tijd met zijn leger het Midden-Oosten binnendrong. Een groepje Palestijnse jongens van een jaar of achttien staat bij de ingang van de belangrijkste toeristische attractie: de ondergrondse kruisvaarderstad. Ze zijn op zoek naar een klusje en willen om de tijd te doden graag een praatje maken over hun dagelijkse beslommingen. Geen werk, geen

school, een beetje muziek maken, een beetje verveeld rondhangen. *'Nee, met de joden hier hebben ze geen problemen.'* Op verzoek zingen ze begeleid door ritmisch handgeklap à capella een lied over de heldendaden van Sultan Saladin.

Akko veranderde in de tijd van de kruisvaarders van een relatief eenvoudig vissersplaatsje in een machtig fort dat als bevoorradingshaven diende voor het koninkrijk Jeruzalem. Schepen uit geheel Europa, maar vooral Italië, voeren af en aan om de kruisvaarders in de elfde en twaalfde eeuw te voorzien van wapens, voedsel en goederen. In zee ligt nog de Vliegertoren en in de middeleeuwen konden de inwoners van Akko in geval van nood de haven afsluiten met een zware ketting die aan de toren was bevestigd. Akko kent een eeuwenlange geschiedenis onder vreemde overheersers die voor langere of kortere tijd hier hun macht uitoefenden. De Babyloniërs, de Assyriërs, de Egyptenaren, de Perzen, de Feniciërs, de Filistijnen, de Grieken, de Turken en de kruisvaarders lieten hier hun architectonische sporen na. Eeuwenlang werd de Middellandse Zeekust beheert door de Feniciërs, die hun uit stadsstaatjes bestaande rijk in stand hielden door intensieve handel te voeren met de Middellandse Zee landen. Tyre was hun belangrijkste haven, maar ook Akko was in die tijd al een machtige vesting.

In de vierde eeuw v. Chr. lukte het Alexander de Grote om Akko te veroveren. Na zijn dood werd de stad achtereenvolgens bestuurd door Egyptenaren, Syriërs en Romeinen, die de havenplaats in 636 na Christus moesten afstaan aan de Arabieren. Door het dichtslippen en het verval van de vijftig kilometer zuidelijker gelegen haven van Caesarea werd Akko de grootste haven van Palestina en tussen 1104 en 1291 vormde Akko de belangrijkste schakel tussen het Koninkrijk Jeruzalem en Europa. Aanvankelijk hielden de door de eeuwen heen versterkte stadsmuren zelfs de eerste kruisvaarders buiten de poorten en pas vijf jaar na de verovering van Jeruzalem kwam ook Akko in handen van de Franken. Onder het bewind van de westerlingen groeide Akko expansief; duizenden immigranten uit Europa bevolkten de nauwe straatjes, bouwden ziekenhuizen, winkels en kazernes alsmede hospiesen voor de toenemende schare pelgrims die na de verovering van Jeruzalem door Palestina trokken. Mede dankzij deze krachtige havenstad konden de kruisridders aan hun nieuwe staat bouwen: het koninkrijk Jeruzalem.



Kruisvaarders hospitaal Akko

Akko's belangrijkste attractie is de ondergrondse kruisvaarderstad die op acht meter diepte onder het straatoppervlakte ligt. Een trap leidt naar een onderaards gewelf, dat aansluit op de kamers van het 'Domus Informorum', het kruisvaarders ziekenhuis van de hospitaalridders, de Johannieters. De ondergrondse stad bestaat nu nog uit verschillende zalen: ridderzalen, vergaderzalen, regeringszalen en de meest imposante ontvangsthallen van de stad; de crypte heeft een oppervlakte van 450 vierkante meter en is twaalf meter hoog. In tijden van nood konden de kruisvaarders via een nauwe tunnel die naar de zuidelijke en noordelijke poort leidde de stad ontvluchten. De ondergrondse citadel is nog grotendeels intact, maar archeologen en bouwkundigen moeten er alles aan doen om dit symbool van een korte maar heftige geschiedenis in het bestaan van de stad goed te conserveren want de ziltige zeelucht tast de muren van het middeleeuwse fort voortdurend aan.

Voorbij Akko trokken de kruisvaarders in mei 1099 over de velden van Ptolomais langs de berg Karmel en sloegen aan het meer van Caesarea voor enige dagen hun tent op. *'Terwijl de kruisvaarders hier verwijsden viel een duif - aan de klauwen van een roofvogel ontsnapt - levenloos in het kamp neer. De bisschop van Apt, die de vogel opnam, vond onder de vleugels een brief, die van de emir van Ptolomais aan de emir van Caesarea was gericht. De brief luidde als volgt: "het vervloekte ras van de christenen is over mijn grondgebied getrokken; zij betreden thans het uwe. Zorg dat alle bevelhebbers van de muselmanse steden van hun tocht verwittigd worden, zodat zij maatregelen kunnen nemen om onze*

vijanden te verpletteren.”

De kruisvaarders waren zeer verrukt over deze brief. Zij zagen hierin een teken dat God hen beschermde omdat Hij vogels stuurde die de geheimen van de ongelovigen verraadden. Eind mei kwamen de christenen in Caesarea aan. Zij verbleven hier vier volle dagen om op waardige wijze het pinksterfeest te vieren. Twee jaar later, in 1101, keerden ze nog eens terug, veroverden de stad en vermoordden alle bewoners die zich in paniek in de moskee hadden teruggetrokken. *‘De muren waren destijds dertig voet breed toen de kruisvaarders hier voor de poorten lagen, maar op zich vormde dat geen belemmering om de stad te overvallen en de zaak hier te plunderen,’* zegt de Amerikaanse archeoloog Kenneth G. Holum van de Universiteit van Maryland. Holum werkt sinds 1992 als teamleider van een groep archeologen die onafgebroken onderzoek doen naar de kruisvaarders geschiedenis in Caesarea. *‘Tijdens de plunderingen door de kruisvaarders werd volgens de kronieken de Heilige Graal, de Sacro Cantino, gevonden en dat is de heiligste relikwie die het christendom heeft nagelaten. Er lagen hier in die tijd veel Italiaanse schepen voor de kust, die voor de proviandering van de kruisvaarders zorgden. De kapitein van een Genuaans schip zou de Heilige Graal mee naar Europa hebben genomen.’*



Kruisvaarders tunnel - verbinding
tussen fort en haven

In de oude, blootgelegde kruisvaarderstad zijn nog straatbogen te zien en overblijfselen van huizen waar de kruisvaarders in woonden. Ook zijn de contouren van een kerk nog duidelijk te zien. *‘Die is gebouwd op het fundament van een moskee. En daar,’* wijst Holum in de richting van de Middellandse Zee, *‘verrees vroeger de citadel die nu gebruikt wordt als een restaurant waar wij onze*

maaltijden gebruiken.'

In 1992 ontdekten de Amerikaanse archeologen enkele begraafplaatsen uit de twaalfde eeuw. *'Binnen de stadsmuren werden de aristocraten onder de kruisvaarders naast de kerk begraven in stenen tombes terwijl het gewone volk begraven werd in massagraven die zij buiten de stadsmuren dolven. Af en toe graven wij nog wel eens kleine zilveren kruisen op. En aan de manier waarop wij de skeletten aantreffen kunnen we opmaken dat we te maken hebben met christenen want de meesten lagen met hun armen gekruist in het graf,'* aldus Holum.

De kruisvaarders trokken vanaf Caesarea landinwaarts richting Ramla (Ramleh), de locatie van het huidige vliegveld Ben Goerion, Ramleh, in 716 v. Chr. gesticht, was een Arabische stad en op de middeleeuwse pelgrimroute de belangrijkste stopplaats tussen Caesarea en Jeruzalem. Door de komst van de kruisvaarders raakte de moslimbevolking van Ramleh in paniek omdat het garnizoen soldaten te klein in aantal was om de stad te verdedigen en hulp van de Fatimiden uitbleef. Ze ontvluchtten de stad die op 3 juni 1099 door de christenen werd ingenomen. Ze begonnen direct met het herstel van de Sint-Georgekerk die de moslims voor hun vlucht hadden verwoest. De kruisvaarders waren opgetogen dat zij een moslimstad in het hart van het Heilige Land hadden veroverd. Tijdens hun verblijf in Ramleh ontstonden er verhitte discussies over het vervolg van de route. Sommigen vonden het niet verstandig om Jeruzalem in de hete zomer aan te vallen en stelden voor de Fatimiden eerst uit het gebied te verdrijven. Uiteindelijk werd dit voorstel verworpen en werd de mars naar Jeruzalem op 6 juni voortgezet.

Robert Mulder & Lejo Siepe - [God wil het! Reizen in het spoor van de kruisvaarders](#)

Rozenberg Publishers 2005

ISBN 978 90 5170 168 5

God wil het! - XIV - Reizen in het spoor van de kruisvaarder

Jeruzalem: God wil het!

*'Jeruzalem sla uw ogen op en zie de bevrijder,
die uw boeien komt verbreken' (Jesaja)*



De Olijfberg

Vanuit de richting van Bethlehem trok het kruisleger door de heuvels van Judea naar Jeruzalem. Vanaf de Olijfberg keken ze neer op de muren en de heiligdommen van de oude stad, die net als in onze tijd verdeeld was in vier wijken: voor moslims, joden, Armeense christenen en Latijnse en orthodoxe christenen. De ongeveer vijfduizend christenen wonen tegenwoordig in de nabije omgeving van de Heilige-Grafkerk, de plaats waar Jezus zou zijn begraven na zijn kruisiging. Hier bevinden zich ook hun kerken, kloosters en pelgrimshuizen. De Franciscanen zijn de belangrijkste vertegenwoordigers van de Latijnse christenen en regelen hun zaken vanuit hun hoofdkwartier in het klooster van de Heilige Verlosser in de omgeving van de Jaffa poort. Met de Latijnen zijn de Grieks-Orthodoxen de meest dominant aanwezige christenen in het straatbeeld en in de wijk rond de Nieuwe poort bewoont hun kerkelijke elite de fraaiste huizen van de oude stad. Kleinere gemeenschappen zoals de Kopten, de Protestanten en de Ethiopiërs leven meer teruggetrokken in gebouwen die soms nog dateren uit de tijd van het vroegste christendom. De Ethiopische monniken wonen tussen de ruïnes van een door de kruisvaarders gebouwd klooster dat tegen de Heilige Grafkerk is aangebouwd. De Armenen namen aan het begin van de vierde eeuw als eersten het christendom aan en bewonen een van de grootste en ruimst

opgezette wijken van de oude stad.



De Klaagmuur

Na de massamoorden door de Turken in 1915 werd het een belangrijk toevluchtsoord voor de overlevende Armenen. Door voortdurende emigratie naar Amerika en West-Europa is het aantal christelijke Armeniërs in deze mini-stad met haar grote pleinen, scholen, bibliotheken en woonhuizen teruggelopen tot een kleine duizend. In het zuidoostelijk deel van Jeruzalem bevindt zich de joodse wijk met de belangrijke westelijke muur, ook wel de Klaagmuur genoemd. Nadat Oud-Jeruzalem in 1948 door de Jordaniërs werd ingenomen, vertrokken de oorspronkelijke bewoners naar het moderne West-Jeruzalem. De Klaagmuur kon alleen met toestemming van de bezetter worden bezocht. 1967 kwam de stad weer in Israëlische handen en werd in het joodse gedeelte onmiddellijk begonnen met de aanleg van nieuwe woonwijken bestaande uit moderne, witte terrasgewijze gebouwde huizen. Toch bleven de joden hier een kleine minderheid en ook de joodse bewoners van het nieuwe West-Jeruzalem leggen niet vaak een bezoek af aan de oude stad.

Veruit het grootste deel van de bevolking van Oud-Jeruzalem bestaat uit moslims en dan voornamelijk Palestijnen. In hun woonwijk in het noordoostelijk stadsdeel bevinden zich nog her en der verspreid historische gebouwen uit de vroegchristelijke en kruisvaarders periode. De door christelijke pelgrims druk bezochte Via Dolorosa kronkelt dwars door hun woongebied en de smalle, donkere met zonwerende doeken overspannen straatjes van de Arabische markt met haar kleurrijke en geurige winkeltjes. Het is de enige plaats in Jeruzalem waar nog een echte oosterse sfeer hangt.

Het volgend jaar in Jeruzalem

Buiten de muren van de oude stad, in het stadsdeel voor de Damascuspoort, wonen joden en Palestijnen naast elkaar. Het is een soort overgangsgebied met het uitsluitend door joden bewoonde nieuwe West-Jeruzalem, dat zich na de stichting van de staat Israël en de komst van honderdduizenden emigranten in alle richtingen uitbreidde. Een grote snelweg richting Bethlehem dient onder meer als uitvalsweg voor de nieuwe zuidelijke stadsdelen waar de ene na de andere wijk met voornamelijk luxe woningen uit de grond wordt gestampt. Ze staan in schril contrast met de slechts een paar honderd meter verderop gelegen armoedige Palestijnse nederzettingen in de vlakte van Silwan, maar in Jeruzalem liggen sociale-, culturele- en religieuze ontwikkelingen letterlijk en figuurlijk naast en over elkaar heen gestapeld.

Zo werd op het Tempelplein de Rotskoepel, vanwaar Mohammed op een wit gevleugeld paard ten hemel steeg, over de ruïnes van de tempel van Salomo heen gebouwd. Aan de andere kant van de westelijke muur van het Tempelplein beklagen de joden nog dagelijks het verlies van hun tempel en het noodlot dat hen dwong bijna tweeduizend jaar in de diaspora tussen de ongelovigen te leven. De begroeting 'Het volgend jaar in Jeruzalem', waarmee de verbannen joden het verlangen naar de verloren stad uitdrukten, wordt niet meer gehoord, maar de geschiedenis laat zich niet wegdrücken. Vreedzaam samenleven was in het verleden niet altijd mogelijk en het straatbeeld nu, met vele zwaar bewapende in legergroen geklede jongens en meisjes, toont dat de nieuwe heerser zich heeft voorgenomen zijn terugveroverde heiligdommen zo duur mogelijk te verkopen.



Gouden poort in Jeruzalem

Buiten de westelijke muur, in de vallei van Kidron en aan de voet van de Olijfberg

ligt 's werelds grootste en oudste joodse begraafplaats. Het is een voorrecht hier begraven te worden, want dit is de plaats van de wederopstanding waar de doden op de dag des oordeels als eersten door God in hun graven worden gewekt en onder leiding van de Messias door de twee ingangen van de Gouden poort de oude stad binnentreden. Maar deze poort geeft toegang tot het voor moslims heilige Tempelplein. Voor de zekerheid hebben ze daarom de poort in de zevende eeuw dichtgemetseld, en - wetende dat joodse geestelijken en dus ook de Messias - geen dodenakker mogen betreden - aan de voet van de muur voor de ingang van de poort een islamitische begraafplaats aangelegd. Religieuze gevoeligheden, die door de eeuwen heen tot de dag van vandaag vaak in kinderachtig getreiter ontaardden. Vanaf de Gouden poort zijn in de vallei de graven van Absalom en Zacharias duidelijk zichtbaar. Een man uit het nabijgelegen Palestijnse stadje Silwan onderneemt een lange klimtocht om zijn diensten als gids aan te bieden. Er zijn bijna net zoveel net zoveel Palestijnse gidsen als toeristen. De werkloosheid onder de Palestijnen is enorm hoog en om een paar centen te verdienen zijn deze gidsen - met bloedend hart - bereid enthousiast uitleg te geven over de joodse en christelijke heiligdommen. Ibrahim is zo'n gids. Hij wijst naar de gigantische joodse begraafplaats, waar een groep orthodoxe joden 'knipmessend' staat te bidden bij een graf: lange baarden, pijpenkrullen (peies) langs de slapen, een paar maten te kleine zwarte hoeden of grote bontmutsen (shtreimels) op het hoofd en gekleed in lange, zwarte kaftans en kousen. *'Daar ligt een belangrijke rabbijn,'* zegt Ibrahim en vervolgt op smalende toon: *'Ze stoppen briefjes in het graf en denken dat hij hun wensen verhoord. Dat helpt natuurlijk niet, want de man is dood.'* *'En Mohammed dan?, die is ook dood en hoort en ziet toch ook alles?'* Er komt geen antwoord. Dit Jeruzalem, waarin de politieke en religieuze omstandigheden de mensen in hoge mate hebben gefrustreerd, is niet de plaats voor relativerende gesprekken.

Een staat binnen de staat



de wijk Mea She'arim

Vanaf de begraafplaats keren de joden terug naar hun eigen wijk, Mea She'arim. Het is een enclave in het centrum van de nieuwe stad, die zich laat vergelijken met een vooroorlogse Oost-Europese sjtetl: een stadsdeel vol traditionele Asjkenazische en ultra-orthodoxe Chassidische joden die alleen het koninkrijk Gods erkennen en daarom de staat Israëel afwijzen. Er heerst een sfeer van eeuwen geleden. Vrouwen en meisjes met enkellange rokken, lange mouwen en het haar boven de bleke gezichten afgedekt met pruiken en hoedjes, schuifelen met krakkemikkige kinderwagens langs de huizen. De kleine straatjes zijn gevuld met Judaïcawinkeltjes, streng kosjere eethuisjes, tientallen synagogen en thora-scholen. Een groepje ongeveer twaalf jaar oude jongetjes wacht onder toezicht van de vaders hun beurt af bij een kapper, die volgens het voorgeschreven regime voorzichtig met zijn schaar om de lange haarlokken heen manoeuvreert. Aan de straatmuren hangen pamfletten waarop de bewoners de - buitenlandse - bezoekers oproepen zich decent te kleden en de Thora (de vijf boeken van Mozes) en de lokale vrouwen en meisjes te eerbiedigen.

Even verderop, in het wat vrijere uitgaanscentrum rond Yehudastraat swingt de stad een beetje met haar gezellige terrassen, straatmuziek en flanerende uitdagende tieners. Het is vrijdagavond om een uur of zeven en de zon neigt naar de kim. Plotseling worden de terrassen afgebroken. Winkeliers vergrendelen de deuren en ramen. Bussen houden op met rijden. Binnen enkele minuten zijn de straten leeg. Met snelle pas spoeden enkele in het zwart geklede mannen zich richting synagoge. In de anders zo levendige Jaffastraat hangt een sinistere sfeer. Een felle wind steekt op en waait een wolk van stofzand omhoog. De macht van Het Woord laat zich gelden: het is Sabbat.

Het laatste hoofdstuk

“Toen zijn de laatste berg beklommen hadden, vertoonde zich Jeruzalem plotseling aan hun ogen. De eersten die de stad zagen riepen in vervoering uit: “Jeruzalem! Jeruzalem!” De naam vliegt van mond tot mond, van gelid tot gelid en weergalmt in de dalen, waar zich nog de achterhoede der kruisvaarders bevond. “O goed Jezus,” zegt de monnik Robertus, die ooggetuige was, “welk een vloed van tranen welde op uit de ogen der christenen, toen zij uwe heilige stad aanschouwden.””

Het allerheiligste was bereikt. Het doel van de reis waarvoor de tienduizenden drie lange jaren hadden geleden en gebeden lag beneden in het dal te wachten op de redders van het enige ware geloof. Alleen de muren stonden nog in de weg van het leger dat op het punt stond de geschiedenis te veranderen. Maar om hoeveel strijders en verdedigers ging het helemaal? Als we de realistische schattingen van Sir Steven Runciman, onze leidsman in de kruisvaartgeschiedenis, blijven volgen dan vertrok het kruisleger op volle sterkte met zo'n 3500 geharnaste ridders en 30.000 man voetvolk uit Constantinopel en kwamen hiervan niet meer dan 1300 ridders en 12.000 infanteristen in Jeruzalem aan. Het merendeel van de niet strijdende achterhoede was onderweg door geweld, honger en ellende omgekomen of had zich ergens langs de route als emigrant tussen de autochtone christelijke bevolking gevestigd. Het waren bijna uitsluitend nog getrainde strijders die de stad, waar naar schatting slechts enkele duizenden mensen woonden, belegerden.

Door de lengte en de ligging van de muren op geaccidenteerd terrein was het onmogelijk voor de kruisvaarders om de hele stad te omsingelen. Daarom concentreerden de in groepen opgesplitste manschappen zich op plaatsen waar de muur het gemakkelijkst bereikt kon worden. Godfried sloeg zijn kampement op voor de huidige Jaffapoort, waar twee standbeelden herinneringen oproepen aan de gebeurtenissen. Een kruisridder met schild en banier staat met zijn merrie neus aan neus met de volbloedhengst van zijn zwaar bewapende islamitische tegenstander. Staan hier Godfried en de Fatimiden stadsbestuurder Iftikhar tegenover elkaar? Waarschijnlijk zijn het twee anonieme strijders, want noch Godfried, noch van zijn opponent is het uiterlijk bekend. Iftikhar ad-Dawla had de christenen, die in Jeruzalem een meerderheid vormden, gedwongen om de stad te verlaten. Daarmee raakte hij een potentiële vijand binnen de muren kwijt en kon hij de voedselproblemen beter het hoofd bieden.

Alleen de joodse gemeenschap kon blijven. De joden woonden destijds in het

noordelijk deel van de stad vlak achter de plaats waar Godfried uiteindelijk de muur bestormde, waardoor mag worden aangenomen dat ze hebben deelgenomen aan de zwaarste gevechten. *'De komst van de eerste kruistocht betekende een keerpunt in de geschiedenis van de joden in dit land,'* zegt de Israëliische kruisvaartdeskundige Benjamin Kedar, hoogleraar aan de Hebreeuwse Universiteit. *'Voor de kruisvaarders,'* vervolgt Kedar, *'was hier een stevig gewortelde joodse gemeenschap met eigen instituties en een behoorlijke invloed op het economische en intellectuele leven. Met de komst van de Fatimiden ging de positie van de joden geleidelijk achteruit, alhoewel er tijdens het moslim bestuur geen sprake is geweest van ernstige vervolgingen. Net al de christenen konden ze hun geloof in vrijheid belijden, maar ze waren geen volwaardige burgers en moesten belasting betalen voor de bescherming die ze ontvingen.'*



Historische poel Siloam
(lager gedeelte)

Na het verdrijven van de christenen liet Iftikhar de kudden wegvoeren en de bronnen rond de stad vergiftigen, waardoor de op enkele kilometers van de stad gelegen historische poel van Siloam de enige watervoorziening werd. Maar deze plaats was kwetsbaar voor beschietingen vanuit de stad. *'Tijdens de belegering werden we zo gekweld door dorst, dat we de huiden van ossen en buffels aan elkaar naaiden, waarmee we over een afstand van tien kilometer water droegen. Vanwege dit smerig ruikende water en het gerstebrood hadden we dagelijks problemen. De muzelmannen lagen in de buurt van de bronnen en overvielen en doodden onze mannen, waarna ze ze in stukken sneden.'* Met de dagelijkse

problemen wordt de diarree bedoeld, waar iedereen in die tijd aan leed. Dat ze hier nog eens apart vermeld wordt, duidt er op dat de problemen zelfs naar de onhygiënische maatstaven van de middeleeuwen ernstiger waren dan normaal.

Voor de bouw van de aanvalstorens was er groot gebrek aan bouw materiaal en met name hout. Tijdens een inspectietocht naar verborgen plaatsen, waar eventueel hout kon worden was ridder Tancred nauwelijks in staat om op zijn paard zitten vanwege een ernstige buikloop. Keer op keer steeg hij af om - wanneer de problemen weer toesloegen - een schuilplaats te zoeken. *'Door van zijn paard te klimmen hoopte hij de aandacht van de anderen af te leiden, maar toen dit niet zo bleek te zijn trok hij zich steeds verder terug tot hij een holle rots ontdekte en tussen de bomen en de struiken even rust vond. (-) Terwijl Tancred zijn behoefte deed ontdekte hij in een grot er tegenover 400 grote stukken hout. Hij kon zijn ogen niet geloven en zijn vreugde was zo groot dat hij opsprong en met kloppend hart riep: "Hier makkers! Kom vlug hier! Kijk, God heeft ons meer gegeven dan we zochten."*

In de haven van Haifa waren Engelse schepen en Genuaanse galeien aangeland met wapens, touw en spijkers, waarmee de oorlogsmachines in elkaar konden worden gezet. De aanvalstorens moesten tot boven aan de meer dan tien meter hoge muur reiken. Daarnaast werd gebruik gemaakt van katapulten en mangonellen, enorme lepels die grote zware stenen over de stadsmuur naar binnen wierpen. De verdedigers op hun beurt probeerden voortdurend de belegeringswerkzaamheden te hinderen. Ze belaagden de aanvallers met pijlen, stenen en allerlei brandende voorwerpen, waarvan het vloeibare vuur in de vorm van kokende pek nog het meest werd gevreesd. Met natte huiden en afdakjes probeerden de kruisvaarders het vege lijf te redden.

Ondanks het verzet uit de stad en voortdurende onderlinge twisten verliepen de voorbereidingen voorspoedig. Van harmonieuze samenwerking was absoluut geen sprake en nog voordat ze de stad in handen hadden was er voortdurend sprake van gekift over de toekomstige status van de stad en de verdeling van de te verwachten buit. Zo had Tancred in Bethlehem tot grote woede van de geestelijken en rivaliserende ridders zijn vaandel geplaatst op de geboortekerk van Christus. Een dergelijke heilige plaats kan niet aan één man toebehoren, was de eensluidende mening en mokkend had de ridder zijn banier weer gestreken. Naar aanleiding van dit incident deelde de meerderheid van de kruisvaarders de opvatting van de geestelijkheid dat er na de verovering van de stad geen sprake

kon zijn van een koning van Jeruzalem. Alleen Christus kon koning zijn over de heiligste der heilige steden. Ook werden er al afspraken gemaakt over de verdeling van de buit na de verovering van de stad en een van de regels was, dat wie als eerste een huis betrad, dit als zijn eigendom mocht beschouwen. Om een eind te maken aan al dit onderlinge gekrakeel, dat de vijand alleen maar in de kaart speelde, kwam een priester met de mededeling dat de in Antiochië overleden Bisschop Adhémar aan hem was verschenen. Hij had opdracht gegeven om de onderlinge ruzies te beëindigen en in processie blootsvoets rond de stad te gaan. Als dit met voldoende geloof zou gebeuren, dan zou de stad binnen negen dagen vallen.

De verovering



De verovering van Jeruzalem

De bovenzijde van de muur is voor toeristische wandelingen rond de oude stad opengesteld. Aan de kant van de oude stad kijkt ze uit op de vele meters lager gelegen krioelende bazar en de achtertuintjes van Palestijnse families. Aan de andere kant bevindt zich het chaotische verkeer rond het Arabische busstation bij de drukke ingang van de Damascuspoort, waar drommen toeristen na het passeren van allerlei kleine sjacheraartjes de oude stad induiken. Op dezelfde manier waarop de Palestijnen tegenwoordig met enige minachting naar het christelijke gedoe van de toeristen rond de heilige plaatsen in de oude stad kijken, scholden de moslims op vrijdag 8 juli 1099 vanaf de muren naar de zonderlinge processie, die blootsvoets en voorafgegaan door priesters en bisschoppen met

relikwieën en kruisen langs de muren trok. Na de rondgang werd de Olijfberg beklommen, waar de onvermoeibare Peter de Hermiet zijn toespraak tot de menigte eindigde met de woorden: *'Gij ziet het erfdeel van Jezus Christus vertreden door de goddelozen. Ziet daar eindelijk het waardig loon van al uw inspanning. Ziet daar de plaatsen waar God al uw zonden vergeeft en al uw overwinningen zegenen zal.'*

Na deze woorden werden de veten even begraven en de handen enthousiast ineengeslagen voor de laatste grote krachtinspanning. Godfried verplaatste zijn troepen gedurende de nacht van de Jaffapoort naar de Heroduspoort, waar een koperen muurplaat in drie talen aan de belangrijke gebeurtenissen herinnert: Op deze plaats brak het kruisvaarders leger onder leiding van Godfried van Bouillon op 15 juli 1099 door de muren. Aan de voet van de muur ligt een plantsoen en net als in de tijd van Godfried bevond zich vlak voor de muur een sloot, die de kruisvaarders met man en macht onder een voortdurend bombardement van stenen en vuur met hout en aarde moesten dempen om de aanvalstorens tot voor de muur te kunnen rollen. Pas vele uren later zagen ze in de middag kans om vanaf de houten toren van Godfried een loopbrug te slaan tot boven op de muur. Twee Vlaamse ridders, Lethold en Engelbert van Doornik genoten de eer om met Godfried van Bouillon en zijn broer Eustachius in hun kielzog als eersten het puik van het Lotharingse leger over de muur te leiden. *'Te midden van de strijd verschenen twee tovenaressen op de wallen van de stad om de elementen en de machten van de hel te bezweren. Zij vonden de dood, die ze over de christenen afriepen en bezweken onder een hagelbui van pijlen en stenen. Twee Egyptische boodschappers, die gekomen waren om de belegerden aan te sporen omdat er hulp voor hen opdaagde, werden door de kruisvaarders verrast, terwijl ze binnen de stad trachten te geraken. Een hunner werd terstond gedood en na het geheim van zijn zending te hebben geopenbaard werd de ander met behulp van een werktuig tussen de strijdende muzelmannen op de wallen geslingerd.'*

Toen de bescherming van de muur wegviel, wisten de moslims dat alles verloren was en een overweldigende meerderheid op het punt stond de stad binnen te dringen. In paniek vluchtten ze naar het tempelgebied, achtervolgd door de kruisvaarders, die als wilden tekeer gingen. Het was een culminatie van drie jaar strijden en lijden en er zijn de meest vreselijke dingen gebeurd. Iedereen die ze op hun weg tegenkwamen werd over de kling gejaagd en de laatste moslims die het overleefd hadden, vluchtten de El-Aqsa moskee binnen of klommen op het

dak. Het mocht niet baten. Onder leiding van Tancred ontheiligden de christenen de moskee en werd iedereen ter plaatse vermoord. De joden werden in de hoofdsynagoge gedreven, die daarna in brand werd gestoken. Mannen, vrouwen, kinderen, iedereen die de moordpartij in de kleine straatjes had overleefd, werd hier leven verbrand...

'Het was zo'n slachtpartij, dat we tot onze enkels in het bloed stonden. Toen alle heidenen waren verslagen, pakten onze mannen een groot aantal mannen en vrouwen in de tempel (Al-Aqsa); ze doodden wie ze wilden en lieten naar keuze anderen leven. Spoedig had ons leger de hele stad ingenomen en goud, zilver, paarden, ezels en huizen met allerlei rijkdommen in bezit genomen. Daarna verzamelden onze manschappen zich om schreeuwend en wenend van vreugde te gaan bidden in de Kerk van het Heilige Graf. De volgende ochtend klommen onze mannen onbevreesd op het dak van de tempel en vielen de overgebleven mannen en vrouwen aan en onthoofdden ze met het blanke zwaard. (-) Daarna kregen we opdracht om alle dode muzelmannen de stad uit te brengen vanwege de vreselijke stank, want de hele stad lag vol met hun lichamen. De Turken die nog leefden moesten de doden tot voor de poorten slepen en maakten er stapels van zo hoog als huizen. Zo'n slachtpartij van heidenen had nog nooit iemand gezien of van gehoord. De stapels lijken waren gelijk pyramiden.'

Stad zonder joden

De massamoord in Jeruzalem schokte de wereld. De stad was op slag beroofd van al haar moslims en joden. 'Na de inname van Jeruzalem door de kruisvaarders was er in de stad geen jood meer te vinden,' zegt Benjamin Kedar. 'Om het met een moderne term te zeggen: Jeruzalem was judenrein.'

Ook vele christenen waren diep geschokt toen de berichten in het Westen doordrongen en de komst van de kruisvaarders heeft de verhoudingen tussen de verschillende religieuze groeperingen in het Midden-Oosten eeuwenlang beïnvloed. In het begin hadden de moslims de Franken als een politieke factor beschouwd. Invallen van vreemde legers waren aan de orde van de dag en steden en landstreken waren er aan gewend geraakt regelmatig van machthebber te wisselen, maar het bloeddorstige fanatisme waarmee de christenen tegen de moslims tekeer gingen, deed het besef ontstaan dat deze indringers veel verder gingen en een Heilige Oorlog voerden die het wezen van de islamitische identiteit bedreigde.

Jihad



Yasser
Arafat
voormalig
PLO leider

‘Jeruzalem is de derde heilige plaats van de islam,’ zegt Kamel Abdel Fattah, die voormalig adviseur is van de - inmiddels overleden - PLO leider Yasser Arafat. Fattah is als historicus verbonden aan de Palestijnse Bir Zeit Universiteit in Ramallah op de Westbank. ‘De val van Jeruzalem werd beweend door iedere moslim. Er ontstond zelf een speciale literatuur, die bestond uit verzen en geschriften waarin de gebeurtenissen in Jeruzalem werden beschreven en waarin de tendens om te treuren in de loop der jaren omsloeg in een roep om wraak, een jihad tegen de kruisvaarders. (* Het principe van de jihad werd al door Mohammed beschreven tijdens de eerste jaren van de islam. Niet in de eerste plaats om andersdenkenden te bestrijden, maar als middel om de islam te verdedigen tegen de ongelovigen.)

Na het bloedbad in Jeruzalem en de stichting van het Koninkrijk Jeruzalem duurde het nog enkele tientallen jaren voordat er sprake was van georganiseerd verzet tegen de kruisvaarders. De Koerdische leider Zengi, heerser van Mosul (in het tegenwoordige Noord-Irak), riep een Heilige Oorlog uit tegen de kruisvaarders en maakte zich als een der eerste moedjahediens onsterfelijk in de islamitische wereld door het graafschap Edessa van de christenen terug te veroveren. Maar er zouden nog vele jaren overheen gaan, voordat Saladin zijn jihad voerde waardoor de kruisvaarders in 1187 uit Jeruzalem werden verdreven en hun macht in het Midden-Oosten verloren. Hierna volgde een periode van meer dan zeven eeuwen Turks bestuur onder de Mamelukken en de Ottomanen, waarin de invloed van de christenen in het Midden-Oosten steeds verder terugliep. Er ontstond een soort status quo, die - met de beperkingen die de joden en christenen opgelegd kregen - een redelijke vorm van samenleven inhield

tussen de verschillende geloofsgroepen. Pas toen de 'Frank' Napoleon tijdens zijn Egyptische campagne doordrong in het Midden-Oosten en in 1799 een bloedbad aanrichtte in de stad Jaffa werd de herinnering aan de feranga's (zoals de vreemden uit het Westen sinds de eerste kruistocht werden genoemd) als moordenaars opnieuw in de geheugens gegrift. En na de definitieve val van het Turkse Ottomaanse rijk na de eerste wereldoorlog waren de van de Turken bevrijde nieuwe naties in het Midden-Oosten nog volop bezig een eigen identiteit te ontwikkelen, toen ze geconfronteerd werden met wat velen in de Arabische wereld als een nieuwe kruisvaardersstaat zien: het zwaar tegen de christelijke westerse wereld aanleunende Israël.

De nieuwe kruisvaarders

'Israël wordt gezien als een door het Westen gecreëerde voorpost' zegt de Amerikaanse professor Roger Heacock. Hij doceert Europese geschiedenis aan de Palestijnse Bir Zeit Universiteit en publiceerde recentelijk een studie over de invloed die de kruisvaarders hebben gehad op Palestina. Heacock ziet een duidelijk verband tussen de komst van de kruisvaarders en de vestiging van de staat Israël in Palestina. *'De kruisvaarders kwamen onder de vlag van religie terwijl de meesten van hen andere motieven hadden; ze wilden betere levensomstandigheden omdat Europa in een economische crisis verkeerde. De paus had de kruisvaarders tenslotte welvaart beloofd en wees hij tijdens zijn toespraak in Clermont niet fijntjes op Palestina als het land van 'melk en honing'? Tegenwoordig zijn we getuige van hetzelfde fenomeen met de komst van honderdduizenden emigranten uit Rusland en andere delen van de wereld naar Israël. Zij komen hier ook om een beter leven te vinden terwijl de oorspronkelijke Palestijnse bevolking van hun land wordt verdreven.'* Volgens Heacock zien de Palestijnen de joden als een nieuwe golf kruisvaarders en de gangbare theorie hier is dat Israël net als het Koninkrijk Jeruzalem van de kruisvaarders vroeg of laat weer zal verdwijnen: *'Een interessant facet in de geschiedenis van de kruisvaarders is dat zij niet in staat waren voldoende emigranten uit Europa aan te trekken om de staat of het koninkrijk verder op te bouwen.'*

Na 88 jaar aanwezigheid van de christenen in dit gebied waren de Europeanen zo in aantal verzwakt dat zij een makkelijke prooi vormden voor Sultan Saladin. Bovendien hadden de christenen alleen de steden veroverd en niet het achterland. De joodse kolonisten veroverden onder aanvoering van Ben Goerion direct het achterland, vestigden kibboetsen en bekommerden zich aanvankelijk

nauwelijks om de steden. De joden leerden van de fouten van de kruisvaarders en voerden een stringente kolonistenpolitiek om zoveel mogelijk land in bezit te krijgen.

Ook Kamel Abdel Fattah beschouwt de staat Israël als een incident in de imperialistische geschiedenis van de laatste eeuwen, *'maar voor ons is het een big fact of life,'* zegt hij. *'We zijn al bijna toe aan de derde generatie die onder het zionisme zucht.'* Hij acht het niet uitgesloten dat historische veranderingen sneller gaan dan men verwacht en hij verwijst naar de situatie in de voormalige Sovjet-Unie. Maar ook in het Midden-Oosten ziet hij kenteringen. *'De vredesprocessen die nu op gang zijn gekomen bieden wellicht hoop voor de toekomst ofschoon de kruisvaarders destijds ook voortdurend vredesverdragen sloten met de vijandelijke moslims. Als Israël echt wil overleven in het Midden-Oosten, dan zal zij zich binnen onze wereld moeten integreren. Nu gedragen ze zich als westerlingen, onder de hoede van de Amerikanen en de Europeanen. Maar ze horen niet bij Europa of Amerika en Israël isoleert zich cultureel van haar omgeving. Net als de Hollanders destijds in Zuid-Afrika. Israël met zich op dit punt bezinnen op de toekomst als ze wil overleven.'*

Een Israëliër die mede aan de wieg stond van de Vrede Nu-beweging in Israël en al zijn hele leven toenadering zoekt tussen joden en Arabieren is de schrijver Amos Oz. Hij won met zijn boeken onder meer de Duitse vredesprijs en zijn geschriften zijn in vele talen vertaald. In zijn novelle *Tot de dood* beschrijft hij het leven van een jood die deelneemt aan de kruistocht. Oz breekt in Israël voortdurend een lans voor de Arabische wereld en wil een permanente dialoog met de Palestijnen. Oz realiseert zich dat hij het tij tegen heeft. *'Sinds de val van het communisme is het of het Westen weer een nieuwe vijand nodig heeft en dat lijkt de moslim te worden. Maar het lijkt me gevaarlijk om iedere Arabier de schuld te geven van het islam-fundamentalisme. Niet iedere moslim is een fanaat of extremist en een vijand van het Westen.'* Oz, die in een kibboets in Arad woont, vindt de joden en Arabieren slachtoffer van dezelfde westerse christelijke onderdrukking. *'De Arabieren zijn jarenlang geknecht en uitgebuit door onder meer de kruisvaarders, de Fransen, de Engelsen, de imperialisten. Veel joden hebben in Europa van oudsher te maken gehad met pogroms en uitroeiing. Twee kinderen die te lijden hebben gehad van een sadistische vader kunnen vaak moeilijk met elkaar overweg. Zij zien niet in elkaars ogen een gezamenlijk slachtoffer maar het beeld van de wrede ouder. Vele joden kijken naar de*

Arabieren en zien nieuwe nazi's. Veel Arabieren kijken naar de joden en zien blanke onderdrukkers die teruggekeerd zijn naar Palestina.'

Oude en nieuwe fundamentalisten

Zal de toenemende vlucht in het fundamentalisme een nieuwe, mondiale crisis veroorzaken? Het joodse fundamentalisme neemt gevaarlijke proporties aan en probeert met geweld tegen moslims en de moord op Rabin de vredes activiteiten in het Midden-Oosten in diskrediet te brengen. Het Gewapende Islamitische Leger in Algerije doodt uit naam van de islam christelijke nonnen en geestelijken omdat zij 'namens de kruisvaarders verderfelijk werk verrichten.' In de Verenigde Staten leven inmiddels twintig miljoen christenfundamentalisten die de islam als bedreigend ervaren. De Amerikaanse activist Louis Farrakhan beroept zich op een toenemende populariteit onder de zwarte bevolking door de radicale verbreiding van de islam. Voormalig president Bush sr. liet aan de vooravond van de Eerste Golfoorlog tijdens een gebedsdienst in het Witte Huis de evangelist Billy Graham 'de kanonnen zegenen'. President Clinton keek samen met zijn Europese collega's toe hoe christenen op de Balkan de moslims afslachten. Voormalig president Jeltsin heeft zich in het toenemend orthodox-christelijk wordende Rusland persoonlijk sterk gemaakt voor de moordpartijen op de moslims in Tsjetsjenië. Het zijn de grote wapenfeiten in onze recente geschiedenis die een uitvloeisel zijn van een eeuwigdurende, aanhoudende culturele kruistocht tegen alles wat moslim is.



Amin Maalouf

'De kruistochten', zegt de Libanese schrijver Amin Maalouf, 'lijken levend omdat we niet in staat zijn haar te begraven.' Maalouf kreeg in het Westen grote bekendheid met zijn boek *Rovers, Christenhonden, Vrouwenschenners* de

kruistochten in Arabische kronieken. Hij woont sinds 1976 in Parijs waar hij als journalist en schrijver meewerkt aan talloze tijdschriften en inmiddels vier boeken publiceerde. Maalouf: *'Het godsdienstig radicalisme waarin Derde Wereldlanden en dus ook de Arabische landen vluchten, komt in de plaats van het vroegere marxisme of nationalisme. Dat is het gevolg van de impasse waarin de derde wereld zich op dit moment economisch, intellectueel en moreel bevindt. Essentieel in de huidige crisis is globaal gezien het feit dat perifere beschavingen hun plaats niet kunnen vinden in de huidige wereld die gedomineerd wordt door een westers model. Daarom proberen deze groepen en landen door middel van religie, zoals het islam-fundamentalisme, hun eigen identiteit te versterken.'* Maalouf verbaast zich over de superieure opstelling van met name de Verenigde Staten. *'In plaats van hun macht te etaleren zouden ze tijd moeten nemen voor bezinning om na te denken over de verhoudingen tussen het Westen en andere culturen. Deze grootste wereldmacht die het communisme heeft verslagen en de grootste culturele invloed heeft op deze planeet, is niet in staat om zwarten en blanken in dezelfde kerk te laten bidden.'*

Een lange lijdensweg



Via Dolorosa Jeruzalem

Het is dringen geblazen in de Via Dolorosa, het smalle straatje in de oude stad van Jeruzalem waar Jezus, onderweg van het huis van Pontius Pilatus naar Golgotha, zijn kruisweg met de veertien statiën even zovele keren onderbrak. Reisleiders van allerlei nationaliteiten brengen de Babylonische spraakverwarring

tot nieuw leven, maar wat betreft de inhoud van hun op de bijbel gebaseerde berichtgeving onderscheiden ze zich nauwelijks van elkaar. De groepen toehoorders, die hier hun droomreis komen maken, zijn herkenbaar aan de in hun landskleuren bedrukte Heilige Land pelgrimstochtpetjes. In de Franciscaner kapel aan het begin van de Via Dolorosa verhuren de monniken grote houten kruisen die bij elke stopplaats, waar de pelgrims in gebed verzonken het lijden van hun Messias memoreren, van eigenaar verwisselen. Bij de Ecco Homo boog bieden Palestijnse handelaren voor vijf shekel hun zelfgevlochten doornenkroontjes aan...

Ongeveer een uur later. Op het plein voor de ingang van de over Golgotha en het tijdelijke graf van Jezus gebouwde Heilige Grafkerk poseert een grote groep Japanners mét kruis voor de groepsfoto. Na minutenlang geharrewar met de opstelling brengt de gids zijn toeter naar de mond om de fotograaf het verlossende ja te geven. 'No megaphone,' bast een Grieks-orthodoxe priester. Alleen het klikje van de camera is nog hoorbaar. In de kerk mengen nieuwsgierige toeristen zich met de diepgelovigen, die geknield en vaak met betraande ogen voorzichtig het graf aanraken en de steen kussen waarop het lichaam van Jezus werd afgelegd.

De belangstelling voor de oudste bedevaartstad is enorm en de christelijke pelgrimshuizen zijn het jaar rond tot in de wijde omtrek volgeboekt. De pelgrimsweg door het Midden-Oosten is met al die moderne fundamentalisten langs de route nog steeds onveilig, maar de hedendaagse pelgrims laten zich 'op arendsvleugelen' (Exodus 19:4) over alle politieke en religieuze problemen heen naar Gods land dragen. Omdat alle christenen onmogelijk door één deur konden is de Heilige Grafkerk in 1852 door de Ottomaanse heersers verdeeld over de Latijnen, de Grieks-orthodoxen en de Armenen. Alleen een paar kapelletjes behoren toe aan de Kopten, Syriërs en Ethiopiërs. Allemaal zijn ze de godganse dag bezig hun eigen hoekjes af te stoffen. En bleef het daar maar bij. Tot op de dag van vandaag wordt er voortdurend op zo kleinzielige wijze gekibbeld, ruzie gemaakt en zelfs fysiek geweld gebruikt, dat de sleutel van de zware toegangsdeur tot de Heilige Grafkerk al vele generaties lang in beheer is gegeven aan de islamitische familie Nusseibeh. Om half vijf in de ochtend doet een moslim de deur voor de christenen open en om acht uur 's avonds weer op slot.

Abraham Kuyper and his South African Brethren



Abraham Kuyper

A smile of satisfaction must have appeared on Abraham Kuyper's broad face while reading the letter that he had just received. It came from distant South Africa, and communicated congratulations from the governors of the Paarl Gymnasium on the opening of the Vrije Universiteit three months previously.

'Devoted as we are to pure Reformed doctrine', wrote chairman S.J. du Toit, 'even at this southern outpost of the world, it gives us reason to glorify God's holy name for placing this doctrine on the lamp stand through your work'.

Pious and hearty words, to which Kuyper could not but say 'amen'. Besides, S.J. du Toit was not just anybody. Despite his youthfulness - he was not yet 34 years old, ten years younger than Kuyper himself - he was an extremely influential man in South Africa: he was a clergyman and author, founder of the Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners (1875), editor in chief of *Di Patriot* (1876) and founder of the

Afrikaner Bond (1879). Everything pointed to the Afrikaners taking the lead in South Africa in the course of the following years, under the powerful leadership of this front man for the population of *Hollandsch-Afrikanen* at the Cape Colony. Moreover, Du Toit was Reformed, an opponent to liberalism in the NGK and in society in general, and an advocate for Christian schooling. In the letter of congratulation from Du Toit, therefore, Kuyper could read a declaration of support from a brother, a kindred spirit and an ally. The '*Vrije Universiteit te Amsterdam*' was opened on 20 October 1880 with a splendid speech by Dr Abraham Kuyper, who had been newly inaugurated as professor of theology and the first rector of the university. He was then nearly 43 years old, editor-in-chief of the weekly church newspaper *De Heraut* and daily newspaper *De Standaard*, and chairman of the *Anti-Revolutionary Party*. He was the leader and chief ideologist of Calvinist orthodoxy in the Netherlands, both in the church and in politics. Kuyper's speech was entitled '*Souvereiniteit in eigen kring*' (The Principle of Sphere Sovereignty): the *Vrije Universiteit* would practise scholarship free from influence by either the state or the church, but in accordance with Reformed principles. According to Kuyper, this was because society consisted of many 'life spheres' which were not equal but were of equal value, each obeying its own law of life (*levenswet*), each free and independent, sovereign; scholarship was just one of the many spheres - but all were subject to the sovereignty of God. With this principle of sphere-sovereignty, Kuyper check-mated the principle of the all-powerful state, and declared the independence of free civil society, thus allowing the realisation of God's sovereignty in every area of life.

Much as it was a typically Dutch product, Kuyper saw a wider-reaching future for the VU. Because 'just like scholarship, the Reformed faith knows no national borders.' Du Toit's letter seemed to confirm this: '*Believe us, we are following you with our interest, we are supporting you with our prayers, and we trust that many of South Africa's sons will yet continue or complete their studies at the "Vrije Universiteit" and thus also bring over to us some of the fruits of this blessed Institution*'. Du Toit continued by asking more concretely about the possibilities for South Africans to study at the VU, the recognition of their South African diplomas and their in-streaming into the curriculum.



S.J. du Toit

Du Toit also drew Kuyper's attention to South Africa in a much broader sense, however. In the letter (written on 3 January 1881), Du Toit also wrote: *'Please also take note of our affairs. A war has now broken out in Transvaal, for which there is no end in sight. We (the Hollandsche Afrikaners) have from the very beginning prayed for help with our brothers from Transvaal, because they are being oppressed and are being done injustice. [...] Would you be so kind as to use your influence to stimulate the Brothers in Holland to hold a day of prayer for Transvaal?'*

Du Toit's request was not even necessary. At the time that Kuyper received his letter, he was, besides being the rector and a professor at his university, at least as active as a journalist and politician, and already very much engaged with events in South Africa.

Kinship

The Netherlands had not really been too concerned about its descendants in South Africa after the Cape Colony was handed over to the British in 1806/1814. What happened there, far from the civilised world, between *Brit*, *Boer* and *Bantu* during the course of the nineteenth century was little known. Very little was known about the Great Trek and the Boer states of Natal, the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. People's perceptions were largely shaped by the tales of missionaries, who were critical of the Afrikaners and their patriarchal attitude to the indigenous population. The latest news, of strong differences of opinion between the Transvaal Boers, also strengthened this negative perception. The progressive state president, Thomas Francois Burgers (a liberal and former minister who had studied in Utrecht) got nothing but uphill from his own people. No wonder that, out of desperation, he could do no more than protest verbally when England annexed the Transvaal in 1877.

This annexation was unavoidable, many Dutch thought at the time; and it was for the best for the Transvaal. After all, '*a country that gave no rights to its non-white inhabitants [could] not possibly flourish*', was the harsh pronouncement by the Missions lecturer from Rotterdam, J.C. Neurdenburg. The annexation was '*unfortunate and unfair, although not entirely undeserved*', in the opinion of Professor C.M. Kan, a geographer from Amsterdam. The protestation against the annexation published in 1877 by the professor of international law at Utrecht, G.W. Vreede, thus received little support or attention.

It was quite another matter, however, when, in the final weeks of 1880 and the first of the new year, the papers reported that the Transvaalers had rejected British rule and had reassumed their independence - and, having done so, had furthermore successfully defended it. Unanimously, the Dutch came out in support of that '*little tribe, that the mighty Great Britain could purge out and chase away, but never overwhelm*'. The news that '*the Boers have stood up*' (as a local newspaper worded the general opinion) had barely arrived, when the history books were re-opened, and old memories rekindled. The enthusiasm amongst the Dutch for their kin in Africa grew by the day. Regardless of what may or may not have been true about earlier criticism, national sentiment and a sense of justice required the Dutch to firmly back their kin in the Transvaal.

The little country of the Netherlands, surrounded by the great powers of France, England and Germany, all competing with one another, had long doubted its own future. In Asia it was reminded daily that its colonies were entirely dependent on England: '*perfidious Albion*', as school history books, full of Dutch-English sea battles from past centuries, called it. The uprising of the Transvaalers and their fearless actions caused a wave of enthusiasm in the Netherlands for these descendants of the *Sea Beggars* ('*Geuzen*') of the 16th century. The victories of the Boers - descendants of *Oud Nederland* and therefore kin - gave the Dutch self-confidence: faith in themselves and in the future. A clear nationalistic feeling arose across the full spectrum of the population. Excited dock workers in Amsterdam even spoke of boycotting English goods.

Abraham Kuyper shared the traditional, not very positive view held by the Dutch of the Boers in South Africa, and he was not motivated by any particular sympathy for the Transvaalers either, when in 1877 he wrote in *De Standaard* that the Netherlands should protest against the British annexation of the Transvaal, and that the *Tweede Kamer* (Lower House of parliament) should assume a motion

'condemning every act of illegal occupation'. To him it was about the independence of the Netherlands, that, after all, found its highest guarantee in treaties and international law. When it comes to the Transvaal case, he wrote, *'the other states will remember this cautiousness to our detriment'*. Kuyper no longer believed in an independent Transvaal. He therefore barely paid attention to the delegations from the Transvaal that travelled to London in 1877 and 1878, and who also called at the Netherlands. South Africa would not leave Kuyper alone, however, and various articles in *De Standaard* testify to the fact that he was only provisionally finished with the country yet. The annexation meant a difficult dilemma for the Dutch, wrote *De Standaard* at the end of May 1877. *'A sense of honour and national pride require the Netherlands to take steps in London on behalf of our Afrikaner brothers; but cautiousness and self-interest force the Dutch to resign themselves to the Boers' fate'*. Kuyper advised the Transvaalers not to carry out an armed revolt. Given the circumstances, this stood no chance of succeeding, and would certainly have resulted in much suffering. Simultaneously, he begged the British government to recognize that there were no valid legal grounds for the annexation. He also placed much emphasis on the rights of the Transvaalers to speak their own language, namely Dutch. Kuyper's position clearly reflected his admiration for the liberal British opposition leader William Gladstone, who was expected to follow a more pro-Boer policy once he won the elections in 1880. The central role played by the Dutch language in all the articles further indicated that Kuyper was freely giving vent to the nationalistic sentiment that was current at the time.

During the course of 1880, Kuyper became more and more interested in South Africa. He came into contact with like-minded experts such as Frans Lion Cachet, who that year returned to the Netherlands after years of serving as a minister in South Africa and with G.J.T. Beelaerts van Blokland, who had old family ties with South Africa. He also had two meetings with S.J. du Toit.

In the second half of 1880, *De Standaard* followed developments in South Africa very closely. Already on 2 December 1880, it reported that the people of the Transvaal were going to give up on patient resistance. Indeed, from 8 December, a people's congress gathered at Paardekraal, which was to solemnly declare the Transvaal's independence on 16 December 1880. Kuyper was standing ready to support these kinsmen.

The leading article of *De Standaard* on New Year's Eve of 1880 reported that

Kuyper had since overcome all doubt. These kinsmen in the Transvaal had been unjustly *'robbed of their independent national existence by the English's lust for power and conquest'*. Now they were following *'the brave example of the heroes of '13 [the trio that freed the Netherlands from French rule in 1813] and, under Kruger's rule, revolted against the invading pseudo-government'*. This was no revolutionary act, wrote the anti-revolutionary leader, it was their inalienable right; they had simply done their duty. The English, after all, had *'broken in as tyrants, and only stopped for a moment before the might of carbines and artillery'*. Further, the Transvaalers had not resigned themselves to being annexed for one minute after 1876, unlike *'the non-Transvaaler, who came from elsewhere, that modern preacher Burgers, Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Dutch Lion'*.

Kuyper thus placed himself firmly behind the Transvaalers, and quickly became one of the leaders of the pro-Boer movement in the Netherlands. He became co-founder and an influential committee member of the *Nederlands Zuid-Afrikaanse Vereniging* (NZAV, Dutch-South-African Society), which was founded on 11 May 1881.

Shortly after the founding of the NZAV, Kuyper hinted here and there that he wished to pay a visit to South Africa. A personal acquaintance with the country and the people was attractive for a number of reasons. His theological and church-political views were also much discussed in the churches of Dutch origin in South Africa. They even seemed to be gaining in support and influence. Liberal opponents sneered that Kuyper was planning to *'make the Transvaal into a theocratic state'*. Others - and not only those who were like-minded - actually asked for Kuyper's help:

You and your [orthodox-Protestant] friends can help here. A new nation is being born here, that will resist the insufferable monotony of English civilisation, and will anyhow deliver South Africa from the Yankee type that appears to be about to flood the world; a nation that speaks Dutch, albeit with an African pronunciation.

The man who wrote this was certainly no admirer or follower of Kuyper. Dr E.J.P. Jorissen was a liberal minister who had abandoned his faith and office and had sought to build up a new existence in the Transvaal; in 1879/80, he had served as secretary to the triumvirate who led the rebellion. *'Your Vrije Universiteit'*, wrote Jorissen, *'can become the theological seminary of Afrikaans theologians and*

jurists'.

Given the means of travel of the day, a visit to the Transvaal could easily require four or five months. Evidently Kuyper thought that *De Standaard* and the Vrije Universiteit could miss him for that long. Naturally he could regularly send copy, and in those days the academic year included a lecture-free period of several months, and began very late in the year. The daily routine as editor-in-chief and rector could be taken over by others while he was away.

Kuyper may have been the founder of the VU, its standard bearer and most important professor, but he was not the one in charge there. The Board of Governors of the VU met on 10 June 1881. The minutes noted:

The chairman wishes to inform the rector that an absence of at least four months, as such a journey would require, would be detrimental to the welfare of the university in its present state.

Kuyper was not permitted to travel to the Transvaal; and he acquiesced to the governors' wishes, and did not travel to South Africa.

Principles

On 5 April 1882, Rev. Frans Lion Cachet wrote to Kuyper, *'Have you read Du Toit's programme thoroughly? [...] England will lose South Africa or the Afrikaners perish for good'*. Indeed there was every reason to study the *'Program van Beginselen van den Afrikaner Bond'* (Programme of Principles for the Afrikaner Bond) very carefully.

Du Toit had recently started becoming an increasingly interesting contact to Kuyper. In a letter dated 3 August 1881, Du Toit reported to him that the Transvaal government had asked him to become superintendent of education there. He had hesitated for a long time before accepting the appointment. After all, it would imply giving up his ministry, the editorial of *Di Patriot* and his role in Cape society. It was only at the end of September 1881 that he finally accepted the post, because he had *'in fact been entrusted with the youth and thus with the future of the Transvaal'*, as he wrote to Kuyper. He was a convicted proponent of Christian education, and here he was being given the chance to develop an educational system in this mould. Besides, as he wrote to Kuyper at the end of November 1881, *'Dr Jorissen was standing ready to push through a modern one'*.

This selfsame Jorissen had (incidentally along with the president of the Orange Free State, J.H. Brand) also botched the negotiations at the Pretoria Convention, Du Toit told Kuyper in the same letter. With wise policy, however, he added, there was still hope of a better outcome (after all, the convention was provisional, a final treaty on the Transvaal's independence would have to be drawn up later). It is quite clear that Du Toit had himself in mind for the role of minister of that wise policy, in full confidence that he would become the most important adviser to the *Driemanschap* and the intellectual leader of the young Republic of the Transvaal.

As a kind of advance on his future position (he only stepped into office on 13 March 1882), Du Toit asked for Kuyper's cooperation in obtaining suitable school books (which Kuyper promptly sent through the NZAV). Du Toit also promised to '*rather address our negotiations with Holland to you, than officially to the Committee [i.e. the executive committee of the NZAV]*'. This was in response to a request by Kuyper, who was attempting to channel all contact between the NZAV and the Transvaal via himself and a few like-minded Reformed associates - to prevent the Netherlands from exporting 'liberal civilisation' and 'modern' emigrants to the Transvaal. S.J. Du Toit had also warned against this danger: *the country needed good immigrants, 'but please no modern ones. The Boers are still real Reformed folk'*. Du Toit held his farewell sermon on 22 January 1882 before the Northern-Paarl congregation, and while still on his way from the Cape to the Transvaal (and to his new job as superintendent of education for the South African Republic), he sent a political programme to *Di Patriot*, with a request for its publication. On 1 March, representatives of various Afrikaner organisations would meet to talk about unification and to establish a new political organisation under the banner of the Afrikaner Bond, which had been founded by Du Toit in 1879. According to Du Toit, the Afrikaner party needed to have '*a clearly stated Programme of political principles, so that friend and foe may find out what they want to know*'.

In his cover letter to *Di Patriot*, Du Toit freely conceded that his programme was not original. He had '*used the Programme of the anti-revolutionary or Christian-historical party in the Netherlands, adapted to our circumstances, because it is drawn-up in such a competent manner, and the essence of our national character has much in common with the Dutch people*'. In mid-1882, he also wrote to Kuyper himself, '*I have adapted your "Ons Program" for South Africa, made it "Ours"*'. To this he added, in reference to the debate within the NZAV about the

relationship between the Netherlands and South Africa: *'My main objective is: connection between the greater part of the Dutch and the South African populations'*. Also the commentary on the programme that *Di Patriot* requested (and that was only completed in February 1884), would be written *'making use of [Kuyper's] commentary, naturally'*.

Historians have drawn far-reaching conclusions about this acknowledged fidelity of Du Toit's *Program* to Abraham Kuyper. Du Toit is said to have introduced the Afrikaners to neo-Calvinism, and that this then also became the ideological basis for Afrikaner nationalism, because *'this neo-Calvinism was clearly tailored to fit Nationalist Afrikaner prejudices'*. Also supporters of the policy of separate development later called it a result of neo-Calvinist thought, and in particular of Kuyper's notion of sphere sovereignty. However, the decisiveness with which these conclusions were drawn was not proportional to the attention that was given to studying Kuyper and Du Toit's political programmes. Did they actually have the same message and function? Was Du Toit actually a slavish follower of Kuyper?

Approximately half of Du Toit's *Program van Beginselen* (Programme of Principles) was indeed copied word-for-word from Kuyper; firstly concerning the articles on the characteristics and foundation of Christian politics, i.e. the authority of God and His ordinances with regard to politics and obedience by the government to these ordinances; and secondly, those articles that dealt with the task and functioning of a Christian government (including how it is to be distinct from the church). Further, there were also a few articles on a number of important derived principles: on education (neutral, public education as a supplement to confession-based education), on jurisdiction, the maintaining of public decency, public health, financial policy and taxation.

More succinctly worded than in Kuyper's *Program*, but identical with regard to content, were the articles explicitly forbidding the state from interfering in internal church affairs, and on the autonomy of the party. All these articles expressed the main ideas of anti-revolutionary politics, a strongly normative political philosophy. As Davenport indicates in his standard work on the history of the Afrikaner Bond, this made Du Toit's *Program* unprecedented in South Africa. With regard to contents, however, Davenport shows little appreciation for Du Toit's 'flights of fancy': *his Program 'disclose[d] a theocratic view of the relations between Church and State, and a doctrine of divine sovereignty which left no*

room for a sovereign legislature or even a sovereign people and regarded existing political authorities as divinely ordained'. Davenport clearly read the Du Toit/Kuyper text without taking Kuyper's actual political development into account. Kuyper did indeed recognise God's sovereignty in the political sphere, but principles such as sphere sovereignty and 'the church as an organism' did not imply a 'theocratic view of the relations between Church and State'; on the contrary, Kuyper would have understood nothing of a sentence such as that cited above. You cannot have politics without transcendence, he stated repeatedly, but this does not mean that people have no responsibility as citizens. Kuyper was a democrat.

What actually made Du Toit's *Program* really startling and challenging, was that he linked this anti-revolutionary political vision to his deepest political ideal, namely the Afrikaner identity and its destiny, 'a united South Africa, under its own flag'. From the very first article, Du Toit made clear what kind of changes his programme had in mind for South Africa:

The national party represents the essence of our national character in South Africa, as it was formed by the transplantation and development of a colonisation by Europeans, mainly Dutch and Huguenots, on African soil; and desires to develop this in accordance with the needs of our times.

This would not be by means of 'the principle of a lawless people's sovereignty' - this was rejected by Du Toit as well as Kuyper, since God is the only source of sovereign authority - but, he also added, '[we also reject] all unlawful foreign rule', words that did not lose their threatening tone when in the second half of the article Du Toit calls the existing division of South Africa, including 'the British sovereignty [in the Cape Colony and Natal] that has become an historical way through divine providence'. Because

... the Republican Form of Government [too] [is] rooted in history as being under God's guidance, developed by the Emigrant Boers, recognised by British Treaties, and confirmed as such by the Constitution of both Republics [the Orange Free State and Transvaal].

However, to all these forms of government the basic rule from article VI applied:

The national party, disapproving of the idea that only one form of state can be the only right one, and obedient to the present one, believes that the final purpose of

our national development is a united South Africa, under its own flag.

The truth was out: South Africa was to be for the Afrikaners. The words are Kuyper's, virtually article by article, but their contextual meaning and application are Du Toit's.

Like most people in the nineteenth century, Kuyper was a nationalist. As an organic thinker, he contrasted the concepts of 'nation' and 'state'. *A nation was an organism, but the state was just a construction*, said Kuyper. Nations were not immutable, they did not exist in and of themselves, and did not even appear to be the highest form of social development: *'Out of the family, the extended family naturally develops, and out of this again the tribe; and there is no imaginable reason not to believe that out of these a nation and the world [of nations] could have developed'*. The United States of America showed that a new nation could arise from very different groups of people. In that context, not even 'physical origins' (race) formed a significant obstacle. Kuyper's worldview was based on a multitude of independent national identities, all of equal value; his political philosophy claimed universality.

Kuyper was therefore a moderate nationalist. He always accepted the small Dutch state to be the given context in which he acted. The nation was therefore not central to his thinking. *'Sovereign authority flows from God Almighty to all parts of His creation'*, he wrote in *Ons Program*. In naming the various organic spheres, he skips the nation and jumps straight from societies in villages and cities to the state. The state meant far more to Kuyper than the nation - but then as a necessary evil, a makeshift measure. The state was *'a surgical dressing made necessary by sin'*, Kuyper postulated as the rebellious leader of a minority in the liberal Dutch state, thereby recognizing his greatest opponent. His principle of sphere sovereignty implied a fundamental attack on state power. In opposition to the state, he placed not the nation, but the freedom of the various sectors of the population. Central to his thought was the *'re-Christening'* of Dutch society. Yet not the nation, but the church (the church as an organism, so the Christian organisations), i.e. the Christian sector of the population, was to bring healing.

Kuyper thus also accepted the differentiation and the pillarisation of the Netherlands. He openly acknowledged that *'three national tendencies wrestle in the bosom of the Dutch nation'*. Against the Catholic and the revolutionary (liberal), his *Program* represented the anti-revolutionary side. In comparison to

the other two basic types, it was *'the most richly developed, the one that has broken out the most dazzlingly, ripened into nationhood in every sense'*, and thus the essence of the nation.

However, when Du Toit used these same words (*'The national party represents the essence of our national character'*), they came to mean something completely different. They form the opening sentence of his programme, and they preach revolution and rebellion; in 1880, there was no such thing as an Afrikaner people, never mind an Afrikaner state. Du Toit proclaimed a new creation. It was about *'the forming of a unique South African national identity'*. After all, Afrikaners were not Dutch, French, German or English; it was not England that was their 'home', nor was Holland, France or Germany their native country - it was South Africa. It was simply the restatement of a line from a song from a few years previously: *'Ider nasi het zijn land'* ('Every nation has its country') - the same political desire that was considered to be a universal law and a reality yet to be realised.

Naturally, there were people with a different view in South Africa too, Du Toit acknowledged. They were for instance followers of the *'Jingo Party, that only wants to use South Africa as a conquered territory or milch cow to England, and want nothing better than the oppression and destruction of our nationhood'*. Or they were in agreement with the party in the centre, *'that does desire some political freedoms, but still head-shakingly rejects the idea of forming an own nationality as an unachievable ideal, or place it in the distant future'*. All this was unacceptable to Du Toit, however. They were neither Dutch nor English, but Afrikaners, as history had proven - and history was written by God's hand, as even the most liberal mind knew.

'We do not allow foreign morals to be forced on us, we want to grow and develop, but then only on our own land; we want progress and we want to complete our state-building, but only in accordance with our national character.' Hence, in Du Toit's view, a true Afrikaner Bond would seek strengthening of national independence *'in the recognition, preservation and use of our national language; in the education of our neglected farming population; in the promotion of knowledge of our history; in the nurturing of a sense of freedom and patriotism in our population, especially amongst the youth'*.

National independence was a cherished ideal in the nineteenth century. Ensuring

good care for *'de doode en levende strijdkrachten'* (dead and living war resources – Kuyper's way of describing material and manpower in the army) received an adequate local translation by Du Toit with the demand for an efficient civil guard. Du Toit followed Kuyper wholeheartedly, in the knowledge that at the end of the day, independence was not dependent on the material, but on the moral strength of a nation.

Comparing this with the corresponding article in Kuyper's *Program* shows how differently Du Toit and Kuyper worked this out. Kuyper sought strength for the preservation of national independence *'in the strengthening of awareness of the law; in the promotion of knowledge of our history; in the confirmation of our people's freedoms, in an experienced diplomacy'*. Kuyper wanted the christening, the moral arming of the nation – hence also his plea for its instruction in an epic version of the country's history that could inspire the people, offer a sense of unity and teach dependence on God.

For Du Toit it was all about the forming of an Afrikaner nation, its own language, its identity, patriotism, and sense of freedom. Promoting the history of the people was to him a question of nurturing *'knowledge of the battle of their fathers against oppression and violence, and for justice and freedom'*. Du Toit repeated here what he had written in *Die geskiedenis van Ons Land in die Taal van Ons Volk* (The History of Our Country in the Language of Our People). This book, published in 1877, was the first to give *'a common background to the Afrikaners in the Republics and the Colonies'*, wrote F.A. van Jaarsveld; and further:

In the 'national' history, Afrikaans speakers throughout South Africa are intrinsically united. The contents boils down to the battle between Boer and Brit, [...] an exposure of the British way of behaving [...] emotionally charged, [...] nationalistic, with the aim 'to acquaint our children from an early age with what their forefathers have already endured and suffered in this land where foreigners now wish to trample us'.

In his *Program van beginselen*, Du Toit continued in a similar vein. *'A genuine national, patriotic "A History of South Africa, for use in schools" is thus also urgently needed'*.

At one point in his commentary on his *Program van de Nationale Partij*, Du Toit conceded that *'we are making an opposite choice to our Dutch anti-revolutionary*

friends':

For the improvement of conditions and for the tempering of the existing injustice, over there they are asking (in contrast to the liberals), for a *reduction in the census*; and we over here, in contrast to the Phillippians and equality crowd, for a *raising of the census*.

Du Toit's commitment with his proposal to limit suffrage was once again the independence of the (Afrikaner) nation, which was under threat due to social differences and discrepancies. The English, the '*Jingoes*', were, after all, in the habit during election time of stirring up the non-white voters against the national party. The constitution of the population in the Cape voting legislature would unavoidably lead to dominance by the non-white majority, according to Du Toit. The best would be, he thought, to end equality at the ballot box completely, but in the meantime increasing suffrage could exclude '*the lowest riff-raff and kantienvolk*' - as well as the poor whites and immigrants ('*foreign fortune-seekers*').

It does not take much imagination to see that Du Toit shared the social and racial prejudices of his time and his environment. The second-last article in his *Program* also demonstrates this. Here, mention is made of '*native tribes under their own chiefs*', incidentally to be distinguished from '*the single [i.e. not living in tribal context] coloured workers, living dispersed among us*'. In this regard Du Toit called for a consistent policy to be developed and implemented throughout South Africa, without interference from London. The point of departure was to be that: '*For the development and prosperity of South Africa, it is essential that the more civilized and developed minority not be dominated by the greater majority of full-blooded or half-blooded barbarian natives*'. No voting rights for 'natives' and 'coloureds', therefore, '*at least due to the present immature condition in which they find themselves*'.

It is clear that with this article, Du Toit was attempting to remove a very concrete stumbling block that - given the political differences in South Africa in 1882 - prevented any kind of unity. Frans Lion Cachet, who had lived in Southern Africa for many years, immediately saw it, and told Kuyper: '*The article on equality is very carefully formulated*'.

By this he would first and foremost have meant the common denominator that Du

Toit had found for action concerning the whole of South Africa, both colonial and republican: rejection of the imperial factor. However, that same judgement also applied to the subordinate clause in the stipulation, which withdrew the right to vote from non-whites, i.e. '*at least due to the present immature condition in which they find themselves*'. After all, this subordinate clause expressed both sides, ideal and reality, in terms of which the West experienced its superiority at the time.

Kuyper was at least as much a product of his times and his environment as Du Toit was, and he too considered European colonialism to be a beneficial development. Much can be said about Kuyper's prescription of a colonial policy bound to a moral obligation, and it is clear that he did not rise above the colonial mentality of his time. Yet he did mention a political and moral obligation towards those colonised and free preaching of the Gospel, while there were no such idealistic terms in Du Toit's writings. He expected the development of black Africa, but nowhere in his *Program* is there a call to stimulate this development.

At its founding congress in Graaff-Reinet on the first of March 1882, the Afrikaner Bond had neither the time nor the desire to discuss Du Toit's *Program*. It was distributed for private study, and nobody ever came back to it, notes Davenport in his history of the Afrikaner Bond. Kuyper's anti-revolutionary politico-social programme never found expression within the Afrikaner Bond.

Continued cooperation

In a letter dated 6 Augustus 1883, Du Toit asked Kuyper to come to London, as the Transvaal delegation (President Kruger, General N.J. Smit and Du Toit himself) would be conducting negotiations with the British government there from the end of October. '*Your presence, if at all possible (a week would be sufficient) would be most pleasant and a great support to us*', he wrote.

Kuyper accepted the invitation, despite all the differences in opinion that had arisen in the interim. His contribution was to consist mainly of the publication of news and commentary in *De Standaard*. Kuyper was only in London for two weeks at the start of the discussions, at the beginning of November 1883; he could not honour repeated calls by Du Toit to once again cross the North Sea, as he had too much work and was also ill for a time.

A part of his stay in London was spent writing an Address to the Members of the

Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Societies, which was to form an important part of the delegation's publicity campaign.

This was prompted by the refusal by the Lord Mayor of London (also a member of parliament), to receive the Transvaal delegation. When addressed on this refusal by the Transvaal Independence Committee, he wrote - on stationery of the Aborigines Protection Society! - that he did not wish to shake hands with representatives of a republic to which the words applied, '*Its infant lips were stained with blood; its whole existence has been a series of rapacity, cruelty, and murder*'. This image of the Boers as slave owners and cruel masters was widespread in England, and the '*negrophiles*', as Du Toit called them, had considerable influence on public opinion and the Colonial Office. With regard to the Transvaal question, England's imperial ambitions happened to correspond well with the philanthropic factor. Warnings were then also received from organisations such as the London Missionary Society and the Aborigines Protection Society not to forget England's role as a protector of black Africans from the racist Boers. It is therefore quite understandable that the delegation wanted to counter this influence as much as possible. Kuyper's Address, written on behalf of the members of the delegation and dated 12 November 1883, appeared in *The Times* on 13 November, as well as in the form of a separate publication.

The Address demonstrates Kuyper's qualities as a writer and propagandist. It also shows that he had fully assimilated the new image of the Boers as pioneers of civilisation in black Africa, an image that had originated less than two years previously with the Transvaal uprising of December 1880 (at least in the Netherlands). According to this perception of the Boers, they were victims of a radical liberal theology of equality, and of British colonial hubris. Kuyper proved to be unmistakably influenced by the argumentation of the Dutch pro-Boer authors P.J. Veth, R. Fruin and in particular Lion Cachet's *Worstelstrijd der Transvalers* (The Struggle of the Transvaalers). After all, no nation, wrote Lion Cachet, has in the last few years been 'so incorrectly judged as the Boers from the Transvaal. No heart was shown for their suffering, no eye for their future, no comprehension for their meaning [...]. *In religious circles they were abused as oppressors of Kaffirs and Hottentots; in the world they were mocked as some kind of white Kaffirs*'- and yet they were '*the pioneers of civilisation in South Africa*', pioneers 'so that Africa [may be] civilised and the heathen nations won for Christendom'.

In the Address, aimed at an international public, Kuyper thus continued the dispute with the missionary friends and their prejudice in favour of the blacks and against the Boers which he had already been conducting in *De Standaard* for a number of years, based on Lion Cachet's information and writings. Without for a moment abandoning the view that all men are equal, Kuyper wanted simultaneously to do justice to the differences in development between nations and races; to him, the superiority of Christendom and civilisation were unquestionable benchmarks in this connection. Kuyper's high moral argument hinges on the sentence in which he launches into his political attack: the organisations who were being attacked - alas! - did not always succeed in realising their salutary influence in Africa either. That could make them humble and oblige them to acknowledge the undeniable fact that '*various methods exist for civilising the natives*'.

The Address began by aiming over the heads of the members of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Societies to '*the Christian public of Great Britain in general*'. After all, some people in England believed that '*the Transvaal Christians [understood] less thoroughly than Christians in [that] country the duty which they owe[d] towards Indians, Negroes, Kaffirs, or any other coloured race or nation*'.

'*We are sometimes even accused*', the members of the Boer delegation continued (in Kuyper's words), '*not only [of] keep[ing] the natives in a degrading position, but also [of] encroach[ing] upon their personal liberty and oppos[ing] their conversion to Christianity, yea, even that we have made ourselves guilty of the most horrible atrocities against their women and children*'.

But nothing was further from the truth, wrote Kuyper in their defence, as a number of examples proved: when the Boers arrived in the Transvaal, there were just 20,000 natives, impoverished people who cowered in holes and caves and lived in constant fear of attack by neighbouring tribes, who stole their livestock and murdered their women and children. Now there were 700,000, happy with the Transvaal legislature, which in many respects was 'exemplary'. After all, the Transvaal government had ruled against polygamy, forbidden the trade in slaves, strictly regulated the registering ['inboeking'] of children, and had rescued a considerable number of black children who would otherwise have lived a miserable life. Assault of natives was punished, and female natives were not the victims of fleshly desires, unlike in many other colonies; all soldiers - including native auxiliaries - were to adhere to the rules of engagement as used by civilised

nations; and the government was preparing measures for the extension of mission work to the natives.

At the beginning of January 1884, Du Toit wrote in a letter to Kuyper that he believed that the publication of the Address had had a positive effect. It had '*prevented much writing in the newspapers about the Native question*'. But in the same letter, he asked for Kuyper's help in a sequel: a strong appeal to the Christian public, presented as a plea for the poor Kaffirs and against their errant advocates. Would he not like to come over again for a few days for this purpose?

Du Toit had already brought up the writing of another defence, because, '*The Negrophiles continue to make mischief*' and their influence on the Colonial Office was noticeable. Kuyper could not come over, however, and a second Address never materialised.

Cooled fraternity



The Anti-Slavery Society Convention

On 27 February 1884, the London Convention was signed; on the 28th, the members of the delegation left for a visit to the Netherlands where they received a hero's welcome. A 'vast crowd' welcomed them on arrival in Rotterdam. They made a carriage tour of the city, the mayor gave a welcoming speech, followed by enthusiastic applause. From there, they travelled in a special train to The Hague, where the party continued, with days full of receptions, soirées and dinner engagements. Ministers, MPs, high-ranking officials, diplomats - everyone wanted to pay their respects. Prince Alexander hosted a meal and King William III and Queen Emma gave the Afrikaners a special audience. On 6 March, they left the Hotel des Indes in The Hague to go to Amsterdam. There the now familiar ritual

was repeated. The delegation stayed in the Netherlands until 17 April; and wherever they went, the Dutch people cheered.

It goes without saying that Kuyper played an important role in the reception that the delegation received. He even played a leading role in Amsterdam. He booked their hotel, was on the welcoming committee, his daughter Johanna was one of the four girls who welcomed the delegation with a bouquet of flowers, and his son Herman, who was studying at the VU (and who twenty years later would act as thesis supervisor to Du Toit's son), was appointed as their messenger boy. Kuyper too gave a soirée, followed by a dinner hosted by 'his' VU students.

One of the highlights of the delegation's stay in Amsterdam was the meeting held on 11 March 1884, convened by the labour movement Patrimonium, where Kuyper was the speaker.

The great hall of the [building] Plancius, richly decorated with flags and greenery, with shields and trophies, was filled to the brim with men and women, their faces radiating grateful joy at the fact that they could now see the delegation in their midst: [Paul Kruger] the president of the South African Republic with [general Nicolaas Smit] one of the heroes of Spitskop.

At the end of his glowing speech on behalf of Patrimonium, Kuyper handed General Smit a Transvaal flag embroidered with the words, '*In God zullen wij kloeke daden doen!*' (In God shall we do brave deeds!). With it, Smit had to solemnly swear '*that never, whatever the future may bring, may this flag land in the hands of the British*'.

The fortunes of the kindred Boers gave Kuyper every opportunity to reinforce the self-confidence of the orthodox sector of the population, and to provoke his political opponents, the Dutch liberals. Here in the Netherlands, he cried, '*we testifiers to the Lord Jesus Christ must sometimes endure harsh threats*', because

The ruling coterie does not grant us our rights ... It could very well finally become unbearable for our freeborn Christian hearts and for the future of our children. But even then, have no fear! After all, when we are no longer tolerated as free men here, you could offer us a refuge and a place of rest. If they make it unbearable for our Christian people here, then the core of that people will travel over the sea to Transvaal.

Despite all the rhetoric and good humour, the delegation's stay was not an unqualified success. Actual monetary support for the development of the Transvaal was difficult to realise. No money could be found for a large government loan, intended, amongst other things, for the building of railway lines, and, in short, the general pro-Boer sympathy was not translated into concrete aid projects.

The delegation's stay also meant the end of the cooperation between Du Toit and Kuyper. They were unmistakably kindred spirits, and in many regards were similar in personality, but it was almost inevitable that, after an initial period of close cooperation, they would start getting under each other's skin. They did share a number of convictions and ideals, but they lived under very different circumstances and each had their own agenda.

Their first difference of opinion concerned the reception of the liberal NZAV delegate, Dr H.F. Jonkman, in Pretoria by Kruger and Du Toit in 1883, a clear signal by Kruger that he did not want to limit the contact with the Netherlands to members of the Reformed movement. The next conflict was about the Vrije Universiteit. During the delegation's tour through the Netherlands, interest was shown by a number of universities in training students from South Africa. As superintendent of education, Du Toit responded positively to these comments. He also took up the proposal by the Leiden historian Robert Fruin to set up a South African Academy in the Netherlands. Students from the Transvaal would be free to choose where they wished to study in the Netherlands, but the Academy would examine them, and the Transvaal government would recognise their degrees.

Kuyper immediately understood what this plan meant. Incidentally, Fruin's name alone was enough to raise his hackles. The Leiden historian had for years been a recognised opponent of anti-revolutionary thought, and had quite recently made condescending remarks about the Vrije Universiteit. To Kuyper, the acceptance of Fruin's plan would mean *'the total neglect of independent Christian higher education'*. It led to a personal disagreement between Kuyper and Du Toit, and the two men were never reconciled. With 'a wound in the soul', Kuyper took leave of Du Toit on 12 June 1884, a few days before the final departure of the delegation from the Netherlands. It was the last word he ever addressed to Du Toit. The letter that Du Toit sent from England in which he responded to these words of farewell (*'I remain the same in person, aim and aspiration'*), went unanswered.

Christian-National

Kuyper's objection in 1884 to the Fruin plan was, in essence, that it could only result in a South African Academy that would '*be an institution by the Government*', and therefore just as '*unprincipled*' as the other, neutral universities. In 1891, when President Kruger again requested cooperation, Kuyper again placed all emphasis on the fact that so-called academic neutrality was not neutral, but in fact highly principled: it trained people '*who, unnoticed but firmly, lead country and people away from God and His laws*'.

One of the constant features in accounts of the situation around Kuyper and South Africa is that friend and foe alike credit him with being the spiritual father of Christian National Education in South Africa, and all the problems that this led to in the 20th century, with Du Toit as a kind of sorcerer's apprentice. The reality was, however, in many respects quite different.

To Kuyper, the Dutch and the Afrikaners both belonged to a single Reformed Dutch nation; they were both ancestral and spiritual kin in one, united in a single battle, namely against anti-national liberalism. Thus the mutual unity and support had to take priority. It was precisely on one of the most central points in the common battle, namely on the matter of education, that Du Toit forsook that unity by embracing the Fruin plan. Over time, Kuyper discovered more and more actions by Du Toit that betrayed this unity, like for instance his fervour for Afrikaans and against Dutch. The emphasis on Afrikaans (according to Kuyper '*a crude spoken language, a kind of decayed Dutch*') weakened that solidarity. Further, reports from the Transvaal stated that Du Toit was becoming more and more anti-Dutch, and was on a footing of war with the Dutch faction in Pretoria. Slowly, Kuyper came to the conclusion that Du Toit's main concern was not their common faith, but Afrikaner nationalism. Proof of this to Kuyper was Du Toit's continued involvement with the Afrikaner Bond, even after it had rejected his Programme of Principles. '*The nation has completely taken priority [with Du Toit]*', noted Kuyper. '*The struggle on principles has fallen away. It is now only "[Afrikaans-]Dutch" against the "English" element*'. In Transvaal education too, Kuyper saw the prevalence of the national over the Christian.

Christian education, also higher Christian education, required independent, private education, Kuyper had learned in the schools struggle in the Netherlands. Unlike the views of people who were supporters of public education for theocratic

and nationalistic reasons (it was said that government was to protect the Protestant character of the Dutch nation), Kuyper stated that education was not the job of the government, and that education should be free from the influence of state and church, sovereign in its own sphere. But in the Transvaal another course was being followed. The university that Kruger so wanted to found was to be a state university, just as Pretoria already had a *Staatsmodelschool* (“model state school”), a *Staatsgymnasium* (State Gymnasium) and a *State Girls’ School*: all state institutions, just as Du Toit in 1884 judged a State Academy based on Fruins’s suggestion acceptable. Du Toit’s schools act of 1882 had, incidentally, already determined that higher education would be a matter for the state. In practice, the government of the Transvaal also had tremendous influence on primary school education.

Du Toit is commonly credited with being a convicted supporter of independent, Christian education. He grew up in the circle of Rev. G.W.A. van der Lingen (1804-1869), who was the NGK minister in Paarl for nearly forty years: an animated, somewhat eccentric and charismatic personality. During his studies in Utrecht, he was influenced by the Reveil and he continued to closely follow developments in the Netherlands. Van der Lingen fought against liberalism in the church and society, and, with equal fervour, against Anglicisation. He believed them to be two sides of the same evil, the spirit of the French Revolution. Unlike the education legislation in the Cape, which referred religious education to outside of school hours and prescribed a non-confessional, neutral schooling, he advocated independent schooling that was Christian-national and church-affiliated.

Du Toit was a student at the Paarl Gymnasium, a school that had a special place in Van der Lingen’s heart, and that played a major role in the history of the development of Afrikaner culture, being a clearly Christian, Dutch-language institution that stimulated its pupils to be proud of their identity as Afrikaners. One of Du Toit’s first publications was a little book entitled *De Christelijke school in haar verhouding tot kerk en staat* (The Christian School in its relationship to church and state) (1876). It was a vicious attack on the Cape’s state education system - and not even so much because he called it un-Christian, sectarian, secular and humanistic: Du Toit rejected state education on principle. Christ entrusted the teaching of the youth to the church; the state had hijacked the right to education by revolutionary means - after all, the world power is by its very

nature anti-Christian: just take for instance the building of the Tower of Babel, the image from Daniel 2, and the second beast from the abyss, the false prophet in the end times.

Du Toit's views, strongly influenced by his love of prophetism and chiliasm, were supported by quotes from a whole host of international witnesses, including a number of Dutchmen, such as A.W. Bronsveld, J.J. van Toorenenbergen and J.H. Gunning. Du Toit's solution was short and simple: the church should reassume responsibility for education and training. It should not only baptise the children, but also equip the parents to keep the promise that they are required to keep in accordance with the Baptismal Service formula. Each congregation should have one or more church schools, under supervision and patronage of the Church Council.

In *De Christelijke school in haar verhouding tot kerk en staat*, Kuyper's name is only mentioned once. From this work it would appear that Du Toit was not familiar with his writing. But six years later, Du Toit literally quoted word-for-word the paragraph on education from Kuyper's *Program* in his *Program van Beginselen* for the Afrikaner Bond (as described above). The rejection of all interference in education by the anti-Christian state is thus replaced by the line stating that the state has no entitlement to provide education, and that the state school should at most be an exception. Further influence by Kuyper can be seen in the primary role Du Toit assigned to parents in the education of children, not only instead of the state, but also instead of the church. During the same period, Du Toit also designed an Education Act for the Transvaal. On 11 April 1882, he wrote to Kuyper, '*[A]ny tips concerning the new Schools Act (entirely entrusted to me) would be most welcome*'; but there is no evidence that Kuyper complied with this request. The act was based on '*the principle, that it is the parents' task to ensure the education of their children*'; the government would limit itself to '*the encouragement of private initiatives with the citizens through monetary contributions*'.

Rather inconsistently, the act expresses the desire '*that the various congregations and church councils themselves, as far as possible, take the initiative in the founding of schools and the election of school boards*'. The act also recognises that '*religious education as such is the responsibility of the Church and not the state, thus the government only requires that, in all government-supported schools, civil education be given properly, in a Christian spirit*'. That meant that

the lessons were to be opened with prayer and a Bible reading, and church history was to form part of the curriculum, but dogmatic confessional education was forbidden. That was the churches' responsibility.

Du Toit's vision on education had thus undergone a number of changes since 1876. State-supported free education *'in the Christian spirit'* was also not exactly what the Dopper Paul Kruger had in mind. Faithful to the Afscheiden tradition, he wanted church-run confessional schools - the view held by Du Toit in 1876. Kruger gave in to the will of his superintendent of education, however.

After revision by N. Mansvelt (1892), the Transvaal schools act no longer included the encouragement to church councils to found schools at all: an omission that was a *'significant change in front'*, to quote Dr A.H. Lugtenberg. The act incidentally also strengthened the government's grip on the schools and school boards. In practice, therefore, the Transvaal schools were general Protestant-Christian Afrikaner National schools, with tuition in Dutch and with an emphasis on language and history - Du Toit himself agitated for a good history textbook. The schools were Christian-national, because they were to teach a Christian nation.

It is therefore not that simple to assign to Abraham Kuyper the role of spiritual father to this Christian-national education. On certain points it differed unmistakably from what Kuyper envisioned, looking more like the Christian-national ideal of people like Beets and Gunning, Bronsveld and Van Toorenenbergen - conservative champions of a national, Protestant, public education in the Netherlands - with whom Kuyper increasingly clashed.

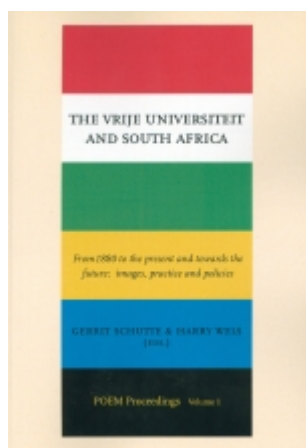
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From: [Gerrit Schutte - Afrikaner Nationalism and Dutch Neo-Calvinism](#)

Rozenberg Publishers 2010 - ISBN 978 90 3610 168 4

A Family Feud is a revised and abridged translation of *De Vrije Universiteit en Zuid-Afrika 1880-2005*. Prof. Em. Schutte received the 2006 Stals History Award of the Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns for the original book.

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POEM: The Vrije Universiteit And South Africa: 125 Years Of Sentiments And Good Faith



This academic year (2005), the *Vrije Universiteit* enjoys its 125th anniversary.^[1] In 1879, a handful of orthodox reformed Dutch gentlemen founded an Association for the advancement of Christian Higher Education, and on 20 October 1880, Abraham Kuyper inaugurated the *Vrije Universiteit*, *Academia libera reformatata*, by delivering his famous lecture on Sphere Sovereignty, *Soevereiniteit in eigen kring*.

Kuyper was never a very modest man, and he certainly was not inclined to be modest at that moment. The credits of the university he opened, were three faculties, five professors and five students. As an accomplished rhetorician he described it as *onze kleine School, met den Universiteitsnaam zelve tot blozens toe verlegen* (our small school, blushing to be called a university). This was not meant as an apology, but rather to make a Hegelian turn: the real credits of the VU were written in the Synod of Dordt, its claim to nobility was the courage and moral dedication of its supporters, and its worldwide value and importance (Kuyper 1880). In the Kuyperian world panorama, his University would become the intellectual centre of the international Calvinist world – the academic power-house for all the reformed churches, nations and societies in Europe, America, and the Dutch colonies in the East. And for South Africa, of course.

October 1880: this is also the month in which Piet Cronjé, on behalf of 127 Transvaler *burghers*, declared to the Landdrost of Potchefstroom that they would no longer pay any taxes to the British government, as that government had illegally annexed and stolen their country (Van Oordt 1898). His language was quite akin to what Abraham Kuyper had written as a commentary on Shepstone's annexation of the Transvaal in 1877, when he stated in his daily *De Standaard*: rob-

bery is a sin to the eyes of the Lord, even by a crowned robber.

As a journalist and politician, Kuyper followed the South African developments on a daily basis. He was well-informed about the South African situation. He had met personally with the rising star of the Afrikaner Movement, editor of *Die Patriot*, chairman of the *Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners* and founder of the *Afrikaner Bond*, the Revd. S.J. du Toit. And he was regularly informed by the Revd. Frans Lion Cachet, back in the Netherlands after a stay in South Africa for more than thirty years. Kuyper welcomed Paardekraal and the declaration of independence of the Transvaal *Volk*. He was very active in the Amsterdam Transvaal Committee and, in May 1881, became one of the founders of a countrywide, lasting pro-Boer organisation, the *Nederlands-Zuid-Afrikaanse Vereniging* (NZAV). The members of the NZAV consisted mainly of liberals and conservatives and some radicals, such as social-democrats and antirevolutionaries. In close cooperation with S.J. du Toit, now Superintendent of Education in the Transvaal, Kuyper tried to dominate the cooperation with the Transvaal (material aid, advice on the development of the new Afrikaner Republic, emigration), to protect the good orthodoxy of the Transvaalers against the ungodly Dutch liberals - as had happened in the 1870s, when President Burgers - a defrocked liberal DRC (NGK) *dominee!* - with the help of his liberal Dutch friends had tried to modernise the education and had - made a mess of the Transvaal, only to prepare it for annexation by Shepstone!

Kuyper had a real interest in South Africa, both as a Dutch nationalist and as a Calvinist. According to him - and to every Dutchman at that time! - the Afrikaners were fellow descendants of the *Geuzen*, stock of the pious heroes from the Golden Age of the Netherlands, kinsmen (*stamverwanten*) and co-believers; brethren (*geestverwanten*). In early 1882 Kuyper seriously planned a trip to the Transvaal. Formally as a tourist and journalist, a member of the Board of the NZAV, a friend and admirer - but of course also as a consultant, giving advice on how to organise a Christian-national, antirevolutionary, reformed South African Republic. The Board of the VU would not permit its Rector Magnificus a leave for half a year - and thereby decidedly denied South Africa a chance to turn its history!

In 1883-84 Kuyper was active as an advisor and PR-man to the Deputation of S.J.P. Kruger, Genl. N.J. Smit and S.J. du Toit, negotiating the Convention of London. Kuyper also organised the welcome reception of the Deputation in the Netherlands afterwards, in 1884. And in 1900 he wrote *La crise sud-africaine*, the most influential pro-Boer pamphlet of the Anglo-Boer War next to Smuts' *A Cen-*

tury of Wrong. The role of Kuyper, by then Prime Minister of the Netherlands (1901-1905), in ending the Anglo-Boer War is well-known, as well as his fine 1904 farewell tribute to the deceased President Kruger: 'This Moyse ... that fighter for his nation, united, in its language and its free fatherland ... in God's time to be we will see him succeeded by a Joshua'.

The Dutch view of South Africa was dominated for much more than half a century by these pro-Boer sympathies, the feelings of kinship and national pride, fostered by the British atrocities during the Anglo-Boer War. South African history and Afrikaans literature were part of the curriculum of the Dutch High Schools and the Government stimulated public attention for Afrikaner events, for example in 1925 (100th anniversary of Paul Kruger), 1938 and 1949 (Great Trek, *Voortrekker* monument), and 1952 (Van Riebeeck Festival).

At the Vrije Universiteit, the general Dutch pro-Boer sympathies were enlarged by a strong consciousness of the common religion between Afrikaner and Protestant Dutchmen. They shared the same religious and ecclesiastical tradition, read the same *Statenbijbel* and sang the same 18th century Dutch edition of the Psalms. Both were part of the international Calvinist movement, *burghers* of the worldwide Calvinist Empire. In this virtual Calvinist realm, the VU was considered as its intellectual capital, the first and only Calvinist university in the world. Its professors, therefore, taught in Germany, Hungary, Scotland, Huguenot France, the United States, and from 1924 onwards even in South Africa (H.H. Kuyper, C. van Gelderen, V. Hepp, A.A. van Schelven). And, of course, the 1935 publication *Koers in die Krisis* did contain not only chapters written by VU professors, but also a welcome by the leader of the Dutch Reformed movement, and the Prime Minister of the Netherlands (1925-1926, 1933-1939), Hendrikus Colijn.

The contacts of the VU with South Africa date from its earliest days. In his congratulatory letter from 1880, S.J. du Toit solemnly promised Kuyper to send Afrikaner students. Du Toit was impressed by Kuyper and was glad to cooperate. But in time, Du Toit estranged himself from the Kuyperian dominance and extended his Dutch contacts, supported by Paul Kruger. Their friendship broke down. Finding funds and cooperation at all Dutch universities, Du Toit opted in 1884 for a South African Academy in the Netherlands (proposed by the Leiden liberal historian Fruin), thereby denying the unique role of the VU as sole destination for Transvaal students in the Netherlands. By doing this, Du Toit chose to cooperate with liberals, heathens and Jews, according to Kuyper.

So in the first twenty years, 1880-1900, the Vrije Universiteit had much to do with South Africa, but not by means of educating young South Africans. As a fine example of the irony of history, the first South African student at the VU - except for a Van der Spuy who, in 1882, read theology there for only a couple of months - was, between 1900 and 1903, Japie du Toit, the Cape rebel and beloved son of the loyalist S.J. du Toit. Japie du Toit was sent to the VU by *Gereformeerde* admirers and followers of Kuyper in Pretoria, more or less against the wishes of his father. He was accompanied by two other Burgersdorp students, the law student Koos Pretorius and Japie's friend and lifelong colleague, Ferdinand Postma.

J.D. du Toit and F. Postma were *Doppers*; both got their doctorate from the VU, in 1903 and 1917 respectively, and both became well-known academics, leaders of their church and the Afrikaner nation. Within 50 years, they transformed the Burgersdorp Theological School into the *Potchefstroomse Universiteitskollege* and then the *Potchefstroomse Universiteit vir Christelike Hoër Onderwys*: the South African 'Vrije Universiteit' and the second Calvinist university in the entire world.

The history of the long relationship between the VU and Potchefstroom is well-known. According to many people and even some historians - in our countries and elsewhere - this relation bore fruit in the ideology of Christian-national Apartheid. For them, Kuyper was the father of *Soevereiniteit in eigen kring* and therefore of Apartheid, and Herman Dooyeweerd, with his *Wetskringen* and *scheppingsordianties*, was his prophet. All of this is more or less pitiable nonsense, the result of much misunderstanding or at best of poor scholarship (Schutte 1987).

After the Peace of Vereeniging, South Africa embarked into the Age of the Generals and, even more important, the Age of the Ethnic Mobilisation of the Afrikaner *volk*. It was sympathetically supported by the Netherlands, which lavishly funded the movement for CNO (*Christelijk-Nationaal Onderwijs*), the first Afrikaner resistance movement, and welcomed Afrikaner students at the Dutch universities.

In 1905 a young Stellenbosch theologian, W.A. (Willie) Joubert, arrived to study theology at Utrecht, as Stellenbosch alumni did for half a century. Within a couple of months he changed Utrecht for the VU. Kuyper and his *Gereformeerde kerken* had not been very popular in the DRC (NGK) in South Africa, to say the least. But by now, the NGK was tired of theological liberalism and was also turning away

from Scottish theology and English Methodism; it was looking for its continental roots and theological scholarship. It is obvious that awakening Afrikaner nationalism had much to do with this: a stay in the Netherlands could and would strengthen one's Afrikaner identity and culture. According to Joubert, the Utrecht *Hervormde* theology was outdated. The real answers to today's questions were given by Kuyper and Herman Bavinck. Their theology was orthodox as well as modern, radical even. And it was also very successful; it activated church and society, the emancipation of the orthodox protestants and even facilitated Kuyper's career up to Prime Minister. Moreover: the VU was a haven of Humboldtian scholarship - Japie du Toit and Ferdinand Postma unsuccessfully opposed the strict rules of the VU, that since 1880 requested a *propaedeuse*, whereas at the same time the Dutch government dismissed the *propaedeuse* for the state universities. A thorough knowledge of the Bible, Latin, Greek and Hebrew was required, which was an indication of the fundamentals of the VU-theology: the Bible and the 16th/17th century theology. At the same time, the VU was the university of the *kleine luyden*, the poor and the non-privileged people, for whose emancipation it had been founded. A *propaedeuse*, therefore, had to be strict, to be able to win the competition with the liberal theologians. But at the time, the VU accommodated for those without a high school classicist training, aspiring to real scholarship.

From 1906 to 1940, some 80 South Africans studied at the VU. Theologians, mostly: 64 out of 80. Over time they put their stamp on their church and their country, as *predikant*, professor, *kultuur-* and *volksleier*. Let me give you some examples.

Willie Joubert got a VU-doctorate in theology (1910), and afterwards worked at Stellenbosch University; at first as a professor in Dutch language and literature, later as a PR-officer and administrator. He was a fiery Nationalist and became a member of the *Ossewa Brandwag* in the 1940s.

B.B. (Bennie) Keet also got a VU doctorate (in 1913), to become a well-known professor in theology at Stellenbosch. There he introduced the teachings of his VU masters: the ethics of W. Geesink, and the ecclesiastical law of F.L. Rutgers and H.H. Kuyper; and over time he became a well-known opponent of apartheid. Keet did not join in the attack by another VU alumnus and colleague, Prof. E.E. van Rooyen, against their Stellenbosch colleague J. du Plessis, in the late 1920s. Traditionally, this conflict is said to have been inspired by American fundamentalism against the theological liberalism of Du Plessis, who tried to reconcile the

Bible and modern science and taught evolution. According to me, the historiography certainly underrates the role of VU theology and theologians in this conflict. Opposition to the philosophy of evolution was one of the pillars of Kuyperian theology, with the Bible as its authority; the conflict, moreover, was as much about Dutch confessional piety as opposed to Scottish-British Methodism.

Even more underestimated is the influence of the Dutch Christian social movement on these South African students. The concept of a church that is not only spiritually but also socially relevant, tackling the daily socio-political problems, had a strong impact on them. Not less than three of the early Afrikaner theology students at the VU went into politics: N.J. van der Merwe, H.A. Lamprecht and W.P. Steenkamp, as well as L.J. (Wikus) du Plessis, classicist, philosopher, economist, and what more. All of them, appalled by the pitiable plight of the poor whites (in the first place: poor Afrikaners) rejected the *laissez faire* of Botha and Smuts and requested active action and Christian-social policies. N.J. van der Merwe, a son-in-law to the former Free State President M.T. Steyn, and H.A. Lamprecht were Nationalists, followers of Hertzog - but Van der Merwe was no *Smelter*: no fusion with the rand bosses and capitalists for him!

W.P. Steenkamp was an Afrikaner as good as one could want one. His 1910 VU-doctorate could be called a global scoop: his theological dissertation *Die agnosticisme van Herbert Spencer* was the first one worldwide that was written in Afrikaans! (By the way: much against the will of the majority of the VU Senate: 'Afrikaans is no language, VU dissertations have to be written in Standard Dutch, *Algemeen Beschaafd Nederlands* - Afrikaans is at best a degenerated Dutch' - with the next VU-dissertation in Afrikaans being Van der Merwe's of 1921!) Steenkamp also entered the South African Parliament, as the representative of his Namaqualand parish and constituency; in later years he became a medical doctor, founder and representative of a Christian Farmers' and Workers' Party, and Senator for the United Party.

According to the international historiography, the VU also taught these South African students Kuyper's Christian national worldview. That is to say: apartheid. It is a pity to say, but reality was different. Race was not a real problem in that time. The European superiority and colonial domination were not questioned, neither in the Netherlands, nor in South Africa. A liberal and a professor in missiology such as J. du Plessis welcomed the segregation of the church, due to the vast difference in evolution of the white and black races (Du Plessis 1921; 1926).

Dr. Wm. Nicol, later on an influential DRC *predikant* at the Witwatersrand, an Afrikaner nationalist and in 1948 appointed as Provincial Administrator of the Transvaal, tells an interesting story in his memoirs, *Met toga en troffel* (Nicol n.d.). Around 1912, he and his South African friends were impressed by Herman Bavinck, his personality, his theology and psychology. But they did not give a dime for his sociology, writes Nicol. Once they confronted Bavinck with a racially mixed couple (a Dutch woman married to a Javanese man), whom they had spotted walking in Amsterdam. If that Javanese man is an educated Christian, I would allow him to marry my own daughter, was Bavinck's answer, puzzling his South African audience. Bavinck's view of the brotherhood of all mankind - also the starting point of A.W.F. Idenburg, former Minister of the Colonies and Governor General of the Dutch East Indies, Member of the Board of the VU - did not really change their opinion. In 1939, one South African tried in his VU doctorate to base the Apartheid on the Creation and Common Grace, referring to Kuyper's beloved themes of pluriformity, diversity and hierarchy, saying that white supremacy is the gift and therefore the wish of the Creator (Badenhorst 1939). A very biased reading of Kuyper!

In the first half of the 20th century, therefore, the Dutch and Afrikaners shared the idea of *stamverwantschap*, as a common myth or dream. This dream was strong enough to survive World War II. The Dutch and the South Africans experienced that dark period in a rather different way. The Dutch were shocked by the stories about Pirow's New Order, the Greyshirts and the semi-fascist *Ossewa Brandwag*; they did not understand the anti-British, neutralist position of the National Party. Pro-Boer friends at the VU could not understand the participation of Calvinists such as H.G. Stoker, L.J. du Plessis and others in the *Ossewa Brandwag*. But in time, by correspondence and personal discussions, they learned these situations to interpret, not as pro-fascist but as anti-British; as examples of radical Calvinist nationalism, not as signs of nazi-sympathies, and the apartheid as a serious endeavour to stimulate the culture of both white and black, separate but equivalent. Berkouwer, Waterink, Dooyeweerd, J.H. Bavinck: all of them made post-war visits to South Africa (1949-1952) and all of them gave the Afrikaners the benefit of the doubt. Notwithstanding serious questions about his past and views, the VU Senate in 1952 unanimously voted in favour of a honorary doctorate for the Potchefstroom *Rektor* Prof. dr. Joon van Rooy, and for the Cape DRC moderator Dr. A.J. van der Merwe. And the same traditional pro-Boer sympathies led the Senate to vote in favour of the formal exchange programme between the VU and its sister

university at Potchefstroom in 1958. In the meantime, increasing amounts of South African students had arrived at the VU: 69 in the years 1945-1960, and some 50 in the 1960s, many of them accompanied by their partners, staying and studying at the VU for a couple of years.

For many of them, it was an eye-opening experience. 'My years of studying in the Netherlands made me conscious of the moral problems of apartheid', wrote VU alumnus Willie Jonker (Jonker 1998). Discussions with South Africans in exile in the Netherlands taught me to reject apartheid, wrote another former VU student, Lina Spies. [2] Regularly Potchefstroom professors and others, invited within the framework of the Cultural Agreement, came and lectured at the VU, as VU professors did in South Africa.

Gradually, however, more and more people got doubts about the academic connections with South Africa. Weren't these legitimising apartheid? Already in the late 1950s the VU-students had said good-bye to the 'Penning myth', as their magazine *Pharetra* had called the traditional pro-Boer sentiments. [3] Many students and staff members were active members of anti-apartheid movements. The exchange with Potchefstroom was subject of debate at staff meetings from 1969 onwards. In April 1971, Rector Magnificus De Gaay Fortman signed a formal letter to his Potchefstroom colleague, expressing the 'serious problem we have with the race relationships in your country' and thereby starting a discussion about the position of Potchefstroom, which would dominate and in the end terminate their relationship. [4] At the same time, the VU was clearly stating its own position: on 20 October 1972 the Revd. C.F. Beyers Naudé was given an honorary degree.

Joon van Rooy, A.J. van der Merwe and Beyers Naudé: three VU *doctores honoris causa*. Only twenty years had passed since 1952, but they had been revolutionary ones. The Netherlands had changed fundamentally, due to developments and processes such as industrialisation and urbanisation, the decolonisation of the Dutch Indies, the impact of the feminist movement and democratisation, the broad secularisation and the depillarisation, the breaking down of the traditional religious and socio-political barriers; an immensely popular a-historical trend, progressive and optimistic at the same time, of which people were convinced it could build a New Babylon (Kennedy 1995).

The VU had changed even more, whereas South Africa was in a paralysing state, rigidly trying to stifle the motion of history, deaf to the ever stronger winds of change. The Netherlands and South Africa were drifting away from each other at

high speed. 1972 was a turning point in the relationship of the VU with South Africa, the end of an era and the beginning of a new one, connected by the continuation of its Kuyperian background and character.

Around 1950 the VU was a small, traditional, conservative, even narrow-minded institution; somewhat conceited and intensely Reformed. It denied Totius, poet and Bible translator, a former student, a fellow Calvinist and influential ecclesiastical figure in South Africa, an Honorary Doctorate, for rhyming the Psalms of David is no work of scholarship and therefore could not earn a degree of *doctor litterae* - not even *honoris causa*, as the VU professor in Dutch Linguistics and Literature wrote in 1951. The VU still functioned only as academy for the Reformed people. It protected the students against undesirable ideas: when in 1950 the liberal N.P. van Wyk Louw was nominated Professor in Afrikaans Language and Culture at the University of Amsterdam, the VU seriously considered establishing its own chair with a Reformed nominee (Schutte 2004). But by then the Dutch Reformed world was in the process of a revolutionary evolution. Internal cohesion diminished and boundaries were opened. In 1961, staff members of the VU were still seriously lectured by *Curatoren* about socialist leanings; but in 1964, the Synod of the *Gereformeerde Kerken* accepted membership of the social-democrat party (PvdA) for its *predikants*. Kuyperian theology was declared outdated and the traditional *Gereformeerde* way of life disappeared. Not theological orthodoxy but solidarity with the poor and oppressed qualifies a church; today's Christianity has to be ecumenical and socially relevant, politically progressive and an ally of all those who fight for a better world - a *verantwoorde revolutie* ('a just revolution'), as two VU professors called it in 1968 (Verkuyl and Schulte Nordholt 1968). In 1972, the VU got a new, democratic administration and a new objective, replacing the Kuyperian Calvinist Principled Basis (*Gereformeerde Beginselen*). At the VU, as explained by a *Memorandum*, published by the *College van Bestuur* in 1975, there was a 'growing awareness of the relevance of Christian faith and action for situations of inequality and social injustice, especially in connection with the so called 'Third World' [and a new consciousness of] the responsibility of universities and members of academic communities with regard to the national and internationally society in which they function'. [5]

The sociologist of religion Gerard Dekker has labelled the period between 1960 and 1990 in the history of the *Gereformeerde Kerken* as a silent revolution. A contemporary critic and opponent called it 'a silent death' (Dekker 1992; Jongeling

n.d.). Orthodox South African Calvinists, bewildered by the headlines of the news from the Netherlands and the stories of the revolutionary students, irritated by the constant '*parmantige*' and '*betweterige*' *Hollanders*, concluded: the VU is lost and no place for god-fearing, orthodox Afrikaner students (INEG 1964).

Indeed, the rapidly growing numbers of students at the VU were no longer god-fearing Calvinists (*Rector Magnificus* I.A. Diepenhorst once publicly warned for the Marxist undermining of the VU via the student population). And their professors denied the historicity of Adam and Eve, the whale of Jona and the donkey of Bileam. This deep gap between Amsterdam and South Africa also can be demonstrated by the honorary degree, conferred on Martin Luther King by the VU in 1965. King is a fighter for justice, walking in the steps of Jesus, according to his promotor Gijs Kuijpers (who, only two years before, had warned the *Kongres teen Kommuniste* at Pretoria against the irresistible revolt against apartheid and had applauded Mandela for his speech at the Rivonia Trial [6]). But the South African reaction was rather sceptic: we have never heard that King is a Calvinist, by honouring him, the VU has sided for his Marxist revolutionary ideology.

That same year 1965, Prof. dr. W.F. de Gaay Fortman (1911-1997) became *Rector Magnificus* (1965-1972) of the Vrije Universiteit as well as chairman of the official Dutch Committee for the Cultural Agreement between the Netherlands and South Africa, as successor to VU *President-Curator* dr. J. Donner (1891-1981). De Gaay Fortman, a soft-spoken typical Dutch *regent* and influential anti-revolutionary politician, was born in a pro-Boer family, and he was not ashamed of these sympathies and sentiments (Bak 2004). At the same time, he detested the South African racial policy. For some years, he had - as the spokesman of a group of influential Dutch Members of Parliament - tried to organise a visit to South Africa, in order to start an official dialogue. But Verwoerd had not given permission for a meeting with Albert Luthulu (1963-1965).

De Gaay Fortman was aware of the fact that a cultural agreement, and academic and cultural relations in general, were no direct political instruments. Nevertheless, De Gaay Fortman used them as instruments to start a critical dialogue with South Africa. His South African counterparts and Potchefstroom colleagues soon discovered that De Gaay Fortman had indeed drawn the agenda for that critical dialogue, in order to demonstrate to them the un-Christian, inhumane and dangerous character of apartheid. Doing so, De Gaay Fortman asked his South African counterparts to accept a broad, general concept of culture, in order to send,

under the Cultural Agreement, more black, academically inexperienced South Africans to the Netherlands to enrol in the more general, technical, professional types of education in the Netherlands. And he gave them a pragmatic lesson: the VU solidarity with the chairman of the Christian Institute, the Revd. C.F. Beyers Naudé.

In the years 1973-1977, De Gaay Fortman functioned as Secretary of Home Affairs in the Cabinet of the social-democrat Joop den Uyl. He stipulated, that the Dutch Government continued a critical dialogue with the South African government, at the same giving priority to black South African students. But his policy of dialogue was made out of date by the Soweto uprisings (1976), and so the Government ended the Cultural Agreement.

In that same period, the VU strengthened its contacts with the Christian Institute and built up assistance programme's for academic institutions for black people in southern Africa. And the debate on the Exchange Programme between the VU and the Potchefstroom University was intensified. Anti-apartheid elements at the VU wanted a boycott. The Board and the University Council wanted to discuss with Potchefstroom the role of Christianity in modern society and the contribution of Christian higher education: to strengthen the human rights, democracy, emancipation. There was too much politics and misunderstanding in their discussions, with participants clinging to unbridgeable paradigms, in spite of *stamverwantschap* and *geestverwantschap*. By the end of 1976, the VU formally ended the Potchefstroom cooperation. The old sentiments had faded away, a new good faith was required.

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Notes

1 This essay summarises the chapters 1-6 of my *De Vrije Universiteit en Zuid-Afrika, 1880-2005* (Schutte 2005). I have published on the history of Dutch-South African relationships earlier in Schutte 1986 and Schutte 1993.

2 Lina Spies to the author, 2004.

3 Pharetra 20.6.1957 en 27.1.1960. The Dutch pro-Boer Louwrens Penning (1854-1927) was the author of many novels on the Boer War.

4 Archives VU: Senate VU to Registrateur Potchefstroomse Universiteit vir CHO, Amsterdam 5.4.1971.

5 [College van Bestuur Vrije Universiteit] Memorandum [Amsterdam, August 1975], pp. i-ii. The Memorandum was written to inform the participants of the

Internal Conference of Reformed Institutions for Higher Education, Potchefstroom, 1975.

6. Prof.dr. G. Kuijpers to the author, 3.3.2003; see also Kuijpers n.d.: 141-66.

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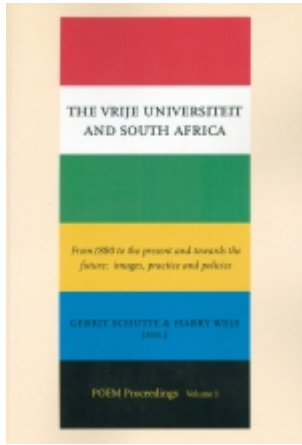
5 [College van Bestuur Vrije Universiteit] Memorandum [Amsterdam, August 1975], pp. i-ii. The Memorandum was written to inform the participants of the Internal Conference of Reformed Institutions for Higher Education, Potchefstroom, 1975.

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POEM: ‘New’ Scientific Practice In South Africa With Special Reference To Land Reform



..training new generations of scientists and technologists oriented towards the solving of real problems (White Paper on Science and Technology 1996).

The SandT capacity of the country is running as fast as it can, but is still losing ground (National Research and Development Strategy 2000).

Introduction

(2005) The landscape of scientific practice and higher education in South Africa has changed drastically since 2 February 1990. The changes that occurred in these fields during the last decade of the 20th century were probably the most incisive in the history of science and higher education in South Africa.

When the democratically elected government came into power in 1994, science was confronted with two main challenges, namely to transform the system so that the welfare of all the inhabitants could be promoted and to make South Africa competitive in a globalising world.

The new government inherited a sound science infrastructure. It was a widely dispersed and uncoordinated system in which scientists enjoyed international recognition for transplanting hearts and for enabling the deepest exploitation of mines in the world. However, the system was mainly directed at the promotion of the welfare of the white community and was strongly focussed on military defence; the provision of energy and food; and the combating of diseases. **[1]**

In this transformation process, South Africa was very receptive to theories, models and schools of thought. Expertise from abroad was not provided in all instances without direct or subtle influence. There are already indications that certain models, that were applied successfully elsewhere, cannot be transferred without adaptations to the South African situation, where complex issues have to be addressed. The question that arises is whether the government implements the policy documents that were designed by intellectuals who are not part of the bureaucracy.

Two examples are applicable to the aims of this paper. Firstly, the work by Gibbons et al. (1994) entitled *The new production of knowledge: The dynamics of science and research in contemporary societies* and also Scott et al.'s (1995) *The*

meaning of mass higher education have had a strong influence on policy formulation regarding science and regarding higher education (Kraak 2000). Secondly, the World Bank has made significant inputs to the establishment of the policy on land reform. There is at present a widespread debate on whether a shift of emphasis from Gibbons' Mode 1 (basic) to Mode 2 (interdisciplinary or applied research) has had a beneficial effect on teaching and research in higher education in particular and on science in general. Older academics and researchers find it difficult to switch from Mode 1 to Mode 2. Younger researchers and some faculties at universities have probably embraced this new paradigm and the pursuit of relevance so strongly that it now threatens to smother them. In this regard there appears to be a great deal of validity in Sheila Slaughter's statement, as quoted by Kraak (2000: 33): ... *that the commercialization of the academy will lead to a decline of the canonical tradition itself, the weakening of the professorate and scholarly research and the triumph of a managerial mode of control in the university not unlike that of corporate capitalism.*

The new way of creating and disseminating knowledge is an indisputable feature across the world and a new social organisation of knowledge and learning is emerging. In South Africa it has occurred very rapidly and with strong government interference, and therefore it is inevitable that there will be some distortion. *Part I* of this paper summarises the strengths and weaknesses of science and of higher education over the past ten years. *Part II* focuses on the complexity of land reform, which is one of the most important political and socio-economic issues that faces the country en route to ensuring that its society is fair and peaceful to a greater extent than before. This issue can only be resolved by *new generation* researchers who use a combination of basic and interdisciplinary applied research.

Part I

Strengths and weaknesses of science and higher education

Throughout the struggle years, the ANC accorded a high priority to the role that science and technology should fulfil in the reconstruction of the country. After coming to power in 1994, they maintained the science infrastructure to a large extent and approached it with circumspection. The expenditure on military research [2] and on energy independence was reduced. This reduction partly explains why the expenditure on RandD declined from 1,19 per cent of the GDP in 1990 to 0,79 per cent in 2002 (National Research and Development Strategy 2002). It is probable that more expertise could have been retained to convert

'swords into ploughshares'. Some knowledge used in the production of weapons has been applied in industry, while some of the expertise of the former Atomic Energy Corporation is currently being used in amongst other things the new Pebble Bed Modular Reactor at Koeberg in the Western Cape. The establishment of a new ministry for science and technology in 2004 underlines the importance that the government attributes to science and technology

Some building blocks in the establishment of a new framework for science and higher education

Large-scale restructuring of the science system was required to achieve the main goals of transformation, a better quality of life for all inhabitants and international competitiveness. This discussion is limited to only some of the important building blocks of the process.

The Green Paper and the White Paper on science and technology: Preparing for the 21st century (1996) provided a new framework for scientific practice. It evaluated the existing system and created structures to develop, implement and monitor the policy framework (Bawa and Mouton 2003: 300). The aim was to make South Africa more responsive to restructuring and development needs. Of particular importance was the establishment of a National System of Innovation (NSI). A National System of Innovation can be thought of as a set of functioning institutions, organisations and politics that interact constructively in the pursuit of a common set of social and economic goals or objectives.

The funding of research and postgraduate training in the human and the natural sciences, [3] which was previously managed by two institutions, was integrated upon the establishment of the National Research Foundation (Act 23 of 1998). It benefited the human sciences, because more funds became available and a system of peer evaluation now identifies top researchers and funds them as generously as in the natural sciences. The total amount of funding has been increased, especially for high-level human resources development. In 2003, '*...a total of 5442 students received bursaries, of which 3309 were awarded to black students. It was also the first year in which the NRF supported more than 1000 PhD students...*' (Von Gruenewaldt 2004).

The National Advisory Council on Innovation (NACI) was founded and began functioning in November 1998. The institution, which in essence replaced the former Science Advisory Council, advises the Minister of Science and Technology on science and technology, innovation and competitiveness. It is an important guiding mechanism in the establishment of the NSI.

An innovation fund was established in 1998 to promote technological innovation and competitiveness. Up to 2004 the fund has spend R665 million on 106 projects (Von Gruenewaldt 2004). In order to direct the research of the science councils, government grants were pruned so that income has to be augmented by means of contract research. These councils can also apply to the Innovation Fund for funds to do directed research. Thus far the science councils have benefited more from the fund than the universities have. The greater teaching load that lecturers have as a result of a larger number of ill-prepared students is one of the reasons why the universities have been poorer competitors for the funds.

Technological innovation and competitiveness have been strongly promoted by the establishment of the Technology for Human Resources for Industry Programme (THRIP). This programme is the result of a joint initiative undertaken by industry, the Department of Trade and Industry, research and education institutions, the Innovation Fund, and the Department of Science and Technology. From 1992 to September 2004, the fund spent R1,8 billion on research and development projects (Von Gruenewaldt 2004). This is one of the success stories of the past number of years.

An important milestone in the development of the research system was the National Research and Technology Audit (NRTA), which was undertaken in 1997/98. All research councils and national institutes were evaluated. Important weaknesses and strengths were identified. Science councils are evaluated annually to determine whether stated objectives have been achieved.

The National Research and Technology Foresight Exercise (1998/2000) did planning for long-term research on the technological needs of South Africa (Bawa and Mouton 2002: 302). Thirteen focal areas were identified. To a large extent, the NRF's nine focal areas accommodate the focal areas identified by the National Research and Technology Foresight Exercise. **[4]** The establishment of Centres of Excellence (COE) rewards excellent researchers and enables them to co-operate across disciplinary boundaries and institutions in respect of projects that are locally relevant and internationally competitive. Some examples are: biomedical TB research; excellence in strong materials; invasion biology etc.

The research system in higher education, which is an important part of the national research system, was even more unequal and uncoordinated than the science system. In many respects, the higher education system experienced a revolution since 1994. Only some relevant aspects are identified in this context.

The *Report of the National Commission on Higher Education* (1996) and the *White Paper* (1997) emphasised the importance of research and the development of high-level human resources. The restructuring of curricula, to convert courses into programmes that have clear outcomes, has had a far-reaching impact on higher education. Many of the consequences of this process will only be felt after a number of years. The experience in many countries has revealed that the transformation of higher education always has some unexpected consequences. A number of universities went overboard by instituting programmes that are mainly directed at occupational training and the needs of the market. It was particularly the universities at which student numbers were increasing slowly and which were experiencing financial crises that saw these courses as a means to attract more students. For example, technikons began to offer MBA programmes without having the required human resources, experience and infrastructure. A recent evaluation of the programmes did not accord full accreditation to a number of these programmes.

In my opinion, it was especially the human sciences that considered this programme approach to be an opportunity to stop and reverse the decline in student numbers. The decline in student numbers had a particularly severe effect on the black universities and Cloete (2003: 422) justifiably remarks that '*for historically black universities the new South Africa was a disaster*'. In the fields of the human sciences and education, the universities and technikons produce more than 50 per cent of all graduates. Just above one-quarter of all graduates qualify in the fields of the natural sciences and engineering.

The conversion of courses to programmes caused a large number of departments to close, while other departments were consolidated and new faculties were established. In many cases, imaginative new programmes were instituted, but it is clear that the traditional formative courses have lost ground. The pursuit of relevance eroded the traditional disciplinary boundaries. Outcome became more important than content. The energy that was put into these exercises, together with an increased teaching load, caused many academics to become disheartened and it has had negative consequences for teaching and especially for research. It is also doubtful whether students are better prepared for the workplace. The number of unemployed graduates, especially blacks, continues to increase.

The student numbers at universities and technikons increased at a relatively fast pace. The percentage of black students at universities increased from 32 per cent

in 1990 to 60 per cent in 2000. In the same period, the increase at technikons was from 32 per cent to 72 per cent. However, the number of white students at Universities declined (Cloete 2003: 415). The high growth projections of the National Commission for Higher Education did not materialise. At the historically disadvantaged institutions in particular there were relatively small increases and even decreases in the student numbers. This phenomenon, together with maladministration at a number of institutions, led to financial crises.

Graduation trends were not reflected in the rapid increase in the number of students. [5] Therefore the Treasury was no longer prepared to fund ineffectiveness. Mass higher education (that is, the model of mass higher education as advocated by Scott) did not materialise. The consequence was that it was announced in 2004 that student numbers would be restricted. Preliminary indications are that students at several of the larger universities will be restricted and that a quota system will be introduced. Some experts are of the opinion that the universities have been deprived of their autonomy. Programmes dictate what may be taught and now quotas are being introduced that dictate who may be taught. [6]

The merger of the 21 universities and 15 technikons into 22 institutions of higher education is a far-reaching intervention. In 2000, the Minister of Education requested the Council on Higher Education to make concrete proposals on the size and shape of the higher education system. When he received the report, the Minister indicated that the government would respond to it with a national plan. The National Plan for Higher Education was released in 2001.

Although there is general consensus that there are too many universities and technikons and that a number of the institutions can probably not continue to exist independently, there are serious debates on the way in which institutions are being compelled to merge. There are large inequalities between the various universities as well as between the technikons. Many of the historically disadvantaged universities are no more than teaching institutions that have almost no research output or research culture. In this regard, two universities, namely the University of the Western Cape and the University of Durban-Westville are exceptions as they have made great strides in respect of their research output.

The merging of universities and technikons will require much energy and an enormous amount of money. Only R3,2 billion has been set aside for the purpose,

but a large portion of these funds will be used to cover the current debt of the institutions. It is quite clear that the cost has been underestimated. It is nevertheless heartening that many academic leaders, who initially raised objections to the process of merging, are now dedicated in their endeavours to make a success of the mergers.

A further drastic step was taken when technikons were granted the status of being a technological university. The important place and role that the technikons fulfil cannot be denied. However, several of these institutions still have a long way to go in terms of performance and the pursuit of excellence before they are worthy of the status of a technical university. Being appointed to a chair has traditionally been associated with postgraduate qualifications, experience in the training of students up to the doctoral level and specialised research that is published in recognised science journals. A great deal of erosion has taken place in the application of these criteria.

Right-minded South Africans agree that it was necessary to restructure higher education for the purposes of fairness and accessibility, and to direct it to a greater extent at the need for high-level human resources. The tempo at which the restructuring is occurring, could be debated, and there are real dangers that incalculable harm is being done. The fact that the goalposts are often shifted has a demoralising effect on the staff concerned. The new Minister of Education has a record of success and pragmatism and is prepared to consult widely.

The *National Research and Development Strategy*, which was published in 2002, provides, in some respects, a new direction for the implementation of the science policy. It sets out a strategy in terms of which science and technology should achieve the objectives of increasing the quality of life of all inhabitants and of increasing the country's competitiveness with the rest of the world. The strategy presupposes amongst other things '*...doubling government investment in Science and Technology over the next three years...*' (p. 17).

Have the stated objectives been achieved?

The policy documents that have been produced to establish a framework for science and technology have generally been acclaimed in the national and international arenas. In answering the question whether the stated objectives have been achieved, two provisions should be applied. Firstly, it is probably too soon to evaluate the results critically. Secondly, the statistical basis available for an analysis has serious shortcomings.

There can be no doubt that a new science landscape is developing, both nationally and within institutions (Bawa and Mouton 2002: 323). However, at this stage, some of the contours are still too faint or too vague.

Although a great deal has been achieved, many of the objectives have not been achieved. When the effectiveness of higher education is assessed in terms of the number of graduates and research outputs, it appears that it has not increased. The *National Research and Development Strategy* (2002: 73) states that '*the system is working hard ... but is going backwards*'. And furthermore, '*... the total capacity of the system is about one-third to one-half the size that it should be to form the basis of a competitive knowledge-based economy for South Africa in the medium and long term*'. There is serious concern that basic research and teaching, which are preconditions for interdisciplinary teaching and research, are being weakened by policy and market forces.

The expenditure on RandD, which represents 0,79 per cent of the GDP, is low in comparison with the 2,15 per cent of GDP of the OECD countries. It should be doubled in the next three to four years. The fact that the universities in South Africa are not adequately equipped and that some equipment is obsolete was stated as far back as 1992 and again highlighted in the National Research and Technology Audit in 1998. The audit emphasised that '*... only 10 per cent of the country's equipment base at the time could be considered as state-of-the-art, i.e. less than five years old*' (A *National Key Research and Technology Infrastructure Strategy* July 2004). The replacement value of the equipment is R3.7 billion. According to some experts, the new subsidy formula for 2004 provides even less funds for the purchase of research equipment.

The number of subsidised research outputs is diminishing. Large inequalities exist between ethnic groups and institutions in higher education. There are indications that the differences between universities are increasing rather than decreasing. By the year 2000, whites still produced 91,9 per cent of all outputs, Africans 2,6 per cent, coloureds 1,19 per cent, and Asians 4,4 per cent. (Boshoff and Mouton 2003: 220). Five universities produce 60 per cent of the total research output in the sector. Contract research has increased rapidly. However, the quality of the contract work is often suspect. Some historically disadvantaged universities produce hardly any output at all. The new subsidy formula will encourage all universities, including the new universities of technology, to strive to become research universities. An investigation undertaken in 1997 indicated that '*... academic science in South Africa ... was conducted within rather confined*

disciplinary and institutional enclaves' (Mouton 2004).

The ageing of the science population and the fact that there is an inadequate inflow to the system are probably the greatest threats. The research output in the age group above 50 years is increasing, while the output of the age group below 50 years is decreasing (Boshoff and Mouton 2003: 221). Affirmative action is having the effect that some white academics do not see a future for themselves in academia. The composition of the staff has not changed dramatically over a decade. From 1988 to 1998 the percentage of Africans increased from 30 per cent to 38 per cent and that of whites decreased from 55 per cent to 47 per cent (Cloete *et al.* 2003: 200). Salaries in the higher education sector have fallen significantly behind that of the public and private sectors. It will be indicated in a later section that there is a strong mobility of blacks in the academic sector as a result of shortages and promotions. It is difficult to calculate the extent of the effect of HIV/AIDS, but statistics indicate that it could be extensive.

There is an ongoing debate on the extent and influence of the so-called brain drain. The reason is that statistics on emigration are unreliable and that many highly trained individuals do not leave the country permanently. A recent (2004) investigation, which was undertaken for the National Council on Innovation and entitled *Flight of the Flamingos*, found that 'South Africa is faced with a strong resource constraint surrounding highly skilled individuals', but that there is no proof of a brain drain crisis (p. xvii). [7] It is also not certain how many of the highly trained individuals will return. An important statement that is made is that if there is a perception that the research system is weak or that it erodes because there are few posts or sources available, an even larger number of individuals will attempt to find opportunities in other countries. As already indicated, there is a large measure of mobility of black scientists between sectors before they make a significant contribution in certain posts. It is especially disconcerting that top scientists leave the higher education and research institutions for managerial posts in the public and private sectors. Research funding from abroad has increased rapidly since 1994. One research university already receives 20 per cent of its research expenditure from abroad.

In summary it can be said that South Africa may eventually have sufficient financial resources for its scientific practice and higher education, but that the human resources may be insufficient.

There is a marked decline in RandD in the private sector. In the four years to

2002, the number of researchers declined by 16 per cent (National Research and Development Strategy 2002: 54).

As far as the science councils are concerned, the Human Sciences Research Council and the Agricultural Research Council should be highlighted. Human sciences research has never figured relatively strongly in the research system. Poor methodology, insufficient statistical grounding, a variety of schools of thought, ideological differences and divides (English, Africans, black, white) together with the academic boycott in the apartheid years had a detrimental effect on the system for several decades. Nevertheless there can be no doubt regarding the important role that research in the human sciences can fulfil by analysing changes in the socio-economic and political fields and by communicating relevant knowledge efficiently through information and communication systems. **[8]**

There has been an ongoing debate on whether the Human Sciences Research Council should continue to exist (Bawa and Mouton 2003: 325). Its personnel complement has been reduced and significant changes have been made to the course that it was taking. Certain research divisions were closed down or transferred to universities. It could be accused of too much direct competition with universities and technikons for research funds. However, the universities do not have the infrastructure to do the national surveys that the Human Sciences Research Council undertakes successfully. My personal observation is that a new generation of human science researchers is emerging who analyse issues fearlessly, objectively and critically.

The Agricultural Research Council (ARC), which was established in 1992, has undergone major changes and crises (Liebenberg *et al.* 2004; Thirtle, Van Zyl and Vink 2000). The focus has been shifted from large commercial agriculture to emerging black farming units; and from highly subsidised agriculture and price protection by marketing councils to competition within world markets. A combination of factors, including the lack of leadership, has had the effect that the number of research personnel at the ARC decreased from 761 in 1996 to 634 fte researchers in 2000. The number decreased further to 400 by April 2003. Large numbers of highly qualified researchers left the ARC precisely during a period when research could have contributed in respect of the structural problems in agriculture and the land reform process.

Finally, some international benchmarks could be considered. Bundlender (2003: 257) says that '*Given its relative wealth, South Africa performs less well in HRD*

indicators, education, health and labour'. According to the World Competitiveness Index (2001), South Africa holds the 42nd position among 49 countries.

It is in the fields of Mathematics and Science that the performance at the school level is especially poor. Of the 440,267 candidates that wrote the school-leavers examination (grade 12) in 2003, only 82,010 (18.7 per cent) passed with exemption to enrol for higher education. The number of candidates that obtain exemption has remained reasonably constant over the past few years. Of the candidates that obtained exemption, only 23,088 (28 per cent) passed Mathematics and 25,972 (31 per cent) passed Science on the higher grade. Many experts are of the opinion that the large increase from 1999 to 2003 in the number of grade 12 candidates that passed, ostensibly without a drop in standards, is simply too good to be true. The pass rate of grade 12 pupils was 48.9 per cent in 1999 and it increased to 73 per cent in 2003. The number of poorly prepared candidates that enter the tertiary institutions is increasing. In 2004 it was announced that 40 per cent of students fail their first year.

Part II

Land reform: a complex issue that requires interdisciplinary, applied research

Few topics in these countries (South Africa and Zimbabwe) have been more widely discussed but less understood than land reform (International Crisis Group 2004)

Introduction

Land reform has been chosen as a focal area because it has far-reaching consequences. These consequences encompass the following crucial areas: Political (race restructuring), economic (alleviation of poverty and job creation in rural areas) and social (change in the communal land ownership system that has a radical effect on the social order of traditional communities, as well as the moving of millions of people, which may be even more extensive than the social engineering of the apartheid years). Furthermore, more than 20.4 million people (46.3 per cent of the total population) live in the rural areas (Strategic Plan for the Department of Agriculture 2004: 11). More than 70 per cent of the rural population is poor and approximately 27 per cent live below the bread line.

In a broader African context, it is said that NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development) '*... believes that agriculture will provide the engine of growth in*

Africa' (Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme 2003). Land reform may have major national and international consequences and it may influence the food security of the poorest of the poor in Southern Africa.

Contextualising the place and role of agriculture

In order to gain a clear understanding of the land reform process, it is necessary to put into perspective the place and role of agriculture in the South African economy. Although agriculture contributes just more than 3.9 per cent to the GDP, it has important backward and forward links with the national economy. As a consequence of low rainfall and relatively poor soil, only 13 per cent of the surface of the country can be used for crop production and of this area only one-fifth is high-potential arable land. A little more than 1.3 million hectare (1.19 per cent) are under irrigation (Strategic Plan for Agriculture). Between 50,000 and 60,000 commercial (mainly white) farmers farm on 87 per cent of the total agricultural land, which is highly developed, and they account for more than 95 per cent of the total agricultural production. As in many countries, agriculture is not very kind to farmers. Since 1965, commercial agricultural production increased slower than the national economy with the result that the 9.129 per cent contribution to the GDP in 1965 decreased to 3.2 per cent in 2002. Various structural changes in agriculture and globalisation have been the cause that many farmers have lost their farms and that the agricultural debt increased by more than 3 per cent per annum from 1991 to reach R31 billion in 2003.

Events preceding the land reform programme

Land occupation by indigenous groups in southern Africa occurred over many centuries. With the arrival of white settlers, the conflict intensified. In 1655 the indigenous people had already built their huts near the Fort at Table Bay and were requested by the colonists '*... to go a little further away*' (Davenport and Hunt 1974: 11). The first division of land occurred in the Western Cape when the Salt River and the Liesbeek River were accepted as the dividing line between the indigenous people and the colonists (Davies 1971: 5). Over a period of 300 years it eventually lead to South Africa having '*... one of the most unequal land distributions in the world*' (Binswanger and Deiniger 1993: 451). The problem of land reform is currently a topical issue in virtually all the countries in Southern Africa.

Both the previous government and the ANC paid a great deal of attention to land reform during the struggle. After 2 February 1990 various national and

international conferences were held on this issue.

The current land reform process commenced with the acceptance of the Interim Constitution in 1993. It was essentially aimed at correcting the wrongs that were brought about by the Natives Land Act of 1913 and the Natives Land and Trust Act of 1936 in terms of which blacks' land rights were limited to approximately 13 per cent [9] of the country. Besides these two acts, a host of other laws were also promulgated over the years, which led to the blacks being dispossessed of their land rights and to population shifts. It is estimated that '*... 3,5 million people were forcibly removed from their land between 1960 and 1982*' (Aliber and Mokoena 2004: 330). The limitation of blacks' land rights and subsidies granted to commercial farmers supplied labour to the mines and led to large-scale distortion in agriculture (Thirtle, Van Zyl and Vink 2000: 6-21).

The intricate legislation passed to set the land reform programmes in motion, such as the Restitution of Land Rights Act No. 22 of 1994, and the Land Claims Court that was established, are not discussed in this context. (In this regard see *The Law of S.A.* Vol. 14 1999). Land reform comprises three basic processes, namely:

- Restitution or return of land that was expropriated and that led to, for example, large-scale removal of people or communities;
- Redistribution of land directed at assisting the poor, farm workers and especially black women to obtain land; and
- Changing the land ownership system, mainly in the former homelands where communal land ownership is the most general form of land ownership.

Land claims could be instituted from 1994 to 31 December 1998. In total, 79,649 claims were registered. It is a comprehensive task to evaluate the validity of the claims, identity documents, title deeds etc. Corruption is also inherent in the process.

Of the more than 55,000 claims that have already been concluded, approximately 80 per cent concerned urban areas. By March 2004, 2.9 per cent of the agricultural land (former homelands excluded) was transferred to blacks at a total cost of R4.6 billion (Hall and Laliff 2004: 1). Thus far restitution has received the greatest attention. Although a great deal of land in urban areas has been returned to former owners, criticism has been expressed that the easy route was taken by giving the claimants cash instead of land (*Business Day* 18 August 2003). Land reform on farms is more complex. Changing the communal land ownership system has vast political and social implications.

Land reform, which is protected by the Constitution, is one of the great achievements of the government. Thus far the process has proceeded very slowly. Research is revealing how complex the issue is. Much criticism has been expressed, especially of the unrealistic expectations that are being created (Walker 2004). Researchers do, however, agree on one matter, namely that those countries that do not undertake land reform successfully, run the risk of paralysing civil unrest and violence.

The land reform process gained new momentum in July 2004 when the Department of Agriculture released a document entitled AgriBEE, Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Framework for Agriculture. The most important aims of the document are summarised below.

The Established Industry (Agriculture) undertakes to:

- Contribute to the realisation of country's objective of ensuring that 30 per cent of agricultural land is owned by Black South Africans by the year 2014;
- Contribute to an additional target to make available (20 per cent) of own existing high potential and unique agricultural land for lease by Black South Africans by year 2014;
- Make available 15 per cent of existing high potential and unique agricultural land for acquisition or lease by 2010;
- Support legislative and development initiatives intended to secure tenure rights to agricultural land in all areas;
- Make available 10 per cent of own agricultural land to farm workers for their own animal and plant production activities.

The Sector undertakes to:

- Eliminate by 75 per cent the rate of illiteracy within farming communities by year 2008;
- Eliminate completely the rate of illiteracy within farming communities by year 2010;
- Ensure that all workers in the secondary and tertiary level of the sector are functionally literate and numerate by year 2010;
- Establish training programmes for farm and enterprise workers in appropriate technical and management skills by July 2005;
- Collaborate in ensuring maximum use of resources of the relevant Sector Education and Training Authorities (PAETA), Food and Beverage Sector and SETAs to achieve the above targets;

- Institute a sector-wide young professionals employment and mentoring programme, which targets 5,000 black unemployed and underemployed graduates per annum for the next five years in all disciplines, starting in 2005 financial year. Mentorship programmes shall be accredited by the relevant SETA or other agreed authority.

The way in which this framework was released, elicited a great deal of criticism. It was said that there had been a breach of trust, because organised agriculture, which had cooperated in the establishment of a new framework, had not been consulted in regard to the final edition of the document. Furthermore, it was pointed out that unrealistic expectations were being created and that there were neither the funds nor the infrastructure to achieve the stated aims. Thereafter the Minister of Agriculture did a great deal to effect damage control and invited institutions to make inputs towards a final framework by the end of 2004. Is it a symbolic policy that is not really intended for implementation? The most important preliminary findings have been indicated. Although this is a critical analysis, an attempt has been made to avoid value judgements. Furthermore the analysis does not question the necessity of land reform.

Schools of thought, models and expectations

As in the case of science and higher education, in many cases policy formulation on land reform has been strongly influenced by experts from abroad. The assistance that has been received has also often been accompanied by particular inputs and conditions. For example, land rights are based on Roman Dutch Law and elements of English Law, with some accommodation of the customary law of Africans, and it is susceptible to differing interpretations.

Hereafter a number of the relevant aspects are highlighted:

- There is a fundamental difference between the value that the most Westerners attach to land and the value that Africans attach to it. This aspect probably underlies the problems that are experienced in respect of land reform. Westerners view land as a means of production that has a market value. The black man has never been a crop farmer and farmed with cattle in a context in which numbers were more important than quality. In many traditional communities the woman was and still is the crop farmer. It is for this very reason that the criticism is expressed that black women are not given sufficient assistance to obtain land.

Davidson and other researchers (London Review of Books 1994b) shed light on the metaphysical considerations in respect of ancestral land that motivated the Mau Mau murders in Kenya. He points out the differences between '*them*' and

'us'. The Kikuyu did not lose a large area of land. *'But what they crucially did lose was all assurance of control over ancestral forest and fields that had been theirs from "time out of mind", they lost, it could be said, their environment'*, and as a result a *'Land and Freedom Army'* was established *'... In line with Kikuyu ancestral concepts of the difference between good and evil, between success and failure, eventually between life and death'*. After many years it now becomes clear what the underlying reason for the murders was. In South Africa, the whites are particularly ignorant about the meaning that land has for blacks, i.e. the homes and graves of their ancestors.

Following from the preceding discussion, there is an open debate on whether blacks, especially the younger generation, are interested in becoming farmers. My research in the 1980s indicated that young black men who do not have a regular job in urban areas, earn more money than their brothers who till the soil in the African sun. The aspirations and expectations of the youth are more prevalent amongst urban blacks than in amongst rural blacks.

Surveys reveal that the majority of blacks have a desire for a relatively small area of land on which they can live and can farm to provide in their own needs. A broad-based attitude survey found that one-third of the respondents indicated *'... no interest in additional farm land, and another third wanted one hectare or less'* (Zimmerman 2000: 16). This is clearly an area in need of further research.

- It is clear what the political objectives of land reform are, namely the correction of inequalities by means of race restructuring. Some researchers believe that politics is the main driving force. It is for this reasons that high expectations are created by urban politicians who do not grasp the complexity of farming. Others believe that economic objectives - alleviation of rural poverty, work creation and general economic growth - should be the main driving forces.

-There are two strongly divergent schools of thoughts on how land should be divided and rural poverty alleviated. A school of thought of the World Bank, which is supported by prominent South Africans, states that *'... our research shows that efficiency and employment in South African agriculture would increase if average farm size were to decrease in the commercial farming sector and increase in the former homelands'* (Thirtle, van Zyl and Vink 2000: 303).

Another school of thought holds the view that the aforementioned opinion is ideologically driven. Only large commercial farms can afford new technology and negotiate prices. There are, however, many examples in the world in which agricultural production has been increased by the subdivision of land, but these

countries do not have the uncertain rainfall and poor soil that South Africa has. Sender and Johnston (2004: 144) say that there is no empirical proof of successful small farming in Africa and that '*... many economists arguments for land reform amount to an ideologically driven search for something that does not exist, namely efficient and egalitarian family-operated small farms that are likely to provide an escape from poverty for millions of the poorest rural Africans*'. Davidson (1994: 275) points out that neither capitalistic nor socialistic systems have been successful in Africa. Africa, like South Africa, requires its own unique solutions.

The school of thought that advocates an enlargement of the land of black households, bases its argument on surplus labour that is available. Empirical research indicates that this surplus does not exist. Productive men are away as migrant labourers. The women, children and elder persons that are left behind, spend most of their time fetching water and gathering firewood.

- Another aspect that still requires a great deal of research is the question whether blacks are willing or able to move to new land. Zimmerman (2000: 1) summarises a number of obstacles as follows: '*... the poor have less inclination to move the distance demanded by the redistribution, have less labour available for farming, are less able to afford the program's upfront costs, have fewer farming-specific skills, and have less capacity to cope with agricultural risk*'. The question is also asked regarding where poor black people will find the funds for transport to a new home where basic infrastructure has to be created. Many are unwilling to exchange their social networks for new homes where they face an uncertain future.

If the objective is achieved of having 30 per cent of agricultural land in black ownership by 2015, it will involve social engineering that will probably exceed that of the apartheid years.

- It is probably too early to make a final judgement on the influence of the alleviation of poverty in rural areas. One group points to the marginal success, the other highlights failure (Neto 2004). There is no proof of job creation on the new land. Statements made by the government have led to approximately 200,000 farm workers losing their jobs on commercial farms. Sender and Johnston (2004: 158) conclude that '*... over the last decade, redistribute land reform in South Africa has had adverse effects on the standard of living of very large numbers of the poorest rural people. They did not require any land and suffer from declines in the rural wage earning opportunities that are crucial for their survival*'. **[12]** Land reform should be part of a wider rural economic restructuring process.

- Changing the communal land ownership system is a complex and a politically highly explosive enterprise. Communal land ownership, in which the power of the traditional leaders is largely vested, is the cornerstone of the social system in many African countries. On this issue, too, there are different schools of thought. One school of thought believes that communal ownership does not permit any individual initiative and does not offer access to credit. Another school of thought stresses the utility value of communal ownership and the safety net that it offers many poor black people (Hall, Jacobs and Lahiff 2003: 22). Research reveals that chiefs' power over land is rejected in some areas and applauded in other areas. The Communal Land Rights Act (2004) is intended to give title deeds to the inhabitants of tribal or trust lands. It will have a far-reaching effect on the lives of more than 7 million people in the former homelands.

- There is a variety of other aspects that should be taken into account and that cannot be discussed in any detail. One such aspect is that the current approach departs from the point of view that black communities are homogeneous, while there are large differences between ethnic groups and between various areas. Research indicates that the demand-driven approach can lead to the establishment of a black elite of owners to the detriment of the poor. Thus far the process has been driven by some (urban) elite with little input from rural communities (Levin and Weiner 1997: 4). Some observers say that the process is being retarded because it has become '*... over-centralised and bureaucratic*' and the state '*... tries to do everything*' (Kirsten *et al.* 2000). Lastly, researchers refer to the fact that land reform could have far-reaching implications for sustained development, biodiversity and the preservation of, amongst other things, national parks (De Villiers 1999).

- Research indicates that the HIV/AIDS pandemic may have a major influence on land reform. One aspect is particularly important, namely that the law of inheritance should give ownership to the women whose husbands die of AIDS.

- A shortage of funding is one of the strongest reasons why only 2.9 per cent of the agricultural land has been transferred to blacks. Funding for land reform has never yet exceeded 0.5 per cent of the national budget (Hall and Lahiff 2004: 1). It is being asked whether the funding is in line with the expectation that has been created that 30 per cent of the agricultural land should be in black hands by 2015.

The Landless Peoples Movement and the South African Communist Party have already made threats. There are no comprehensive estimates of what the total cost will be. The 2004/5 allocations in the budget include R474 million for land

reform, but it is estimated that at least R1 billion will be needed. The implementation of the Communal Land Rights Act will amount to R1 billion per year over the next five years, '*... equivalent to over 70 per cent of its current budget for all aspects of land reform*' (Hall and Lahiff 2004: 3).

The preceding discussion gives rise to the question whether the government can continue with its current policy of 'demand driven and willing buyer, willing seller'. There have already been calls to farmers to reduce the price of land. A committee was appointed by the Minister Agriculture and Land Affairs in 2004 to investigate the purchasing of the land of foreigners and the increase in land prices.

A lack of funds, the inability of the government to conclude land claims speedily and to select and train black farmers, can lead to illegal land invasion. In fact, it has been pointed out that "the history of land reform around the world demonstrates that land invasions, which governments then normalize through legal processes of expropriation and allocation, have been the most common and effective processes of land reform (Van Zyl, Kirsten and Van Binswanger 1996: 10). A legal framework should attempt to reduce the probability of such action being taken. It is being asked whether the current legal framework is advantageous for land reform. Various cases have gone the long route through the high court and the appeal court to the constitutional court.

A possible strategy and the role of research

It is important not to be overwhelmed by the complexity of the problem. International donors have largely failed to form a coherent strategy and the complexity of land reform makes it difficult to justify aid. Research indicates that the process is proceeding too slowly and has failed in certain respects. Various researchers state that the entire programme should be reconsidered and that a new vision should be formulated. In the first instance, land reform should form part of a broad rural development programme. Secondly, experience in other countries indicates that centralised ministries or parastatal institutions do not always implement land reform successfully. The civil society (communities, farmers, organised agriculture, unions, NGOs, commercial banks, research institutions, traditional leaders etc.) should be involved. An information and communication system is a precondition for success. A foundation or forum for land reform is advocated where the best experts, nationally and internationally, can provide inputs, which involves the civil society and the private sector and

which can provide independent advice and assistance.

The aforementioned illustrates the necessity of research. The extent of the interest in land reform in South Africa is astounding. Commendable work has been produced by agronomists, land ownership specialists, economists, sociologists etc, but *'there has been little systematic effort to synthesise their findings and combine them with intensive field research to produce practical policy recommendations for both local actors and the international community'* (International Crisis Group 2004: v). In particular, there is a lack of fieldwork that indicates, among other things, the large spatial differences between heterogeneous groups. There is an urgent need in respect of the following fields: Historical research on the validity of land claims; the attitude of blacks towards land in general and towards farming in particular; the best way of selecting black farmers and providing them with training, mentorship, finance or agricultural extension in respect of crop varieties and the marketing of seed; an effective information and communication system; literacy programmes etc.

Universities in the Netherlands have, over a period of more than 100 years, made huge contributions to the training of South African academics and researchers. The Netherlands has had an immeasurable influence through constructive criticism and even an academic boycott to bring about a just and fair South African society. In the late eighties and nineties, I benefited a great deal from universities and academics in the Netherlands in my endeavour to establish a system of self-evaluation and quality promotion at the University of Pretoria.

In some respects the task of the Netherlands has been made easier by the fact that a democratic government was established in South Africa in 1994. In some other respect the task is more daunting, because the issues that face science and technology and higher education at present are even more challenging than in the past. The new generation of academics and researchers look forward to co-operating closely with the Netherlands in the future in the building of a just and better future for all inhabitants, not only in South Africa, but also in Southern Africa. In the fields of science and technology South and southern Africa cannot afford to fall farther and father behind the industrialised nations.

Notes:

1 Research on infectious diseases was neglected.

2 54,2 per cent of the total expenditure in 1987 to 12,4 per cent in 1997.

3 With the exclusion of the medical sciences.

4 The NRF (8 October 2004) states clearly that it '*...will support research only within these focus areas*'.

5 If reasonable throughput rates of 20 per cent had been achieved 25,000 more graduates would have been produced.

6 '*... that the ministry will be able to plan the country's highly skilled human resource provision efficiently by determining how many students may be admitted to which programmes*' (SAUVCA April 2004).

7 Specific sectors, such as public health, were not investigated and it is precisely in these sectors that many medical doctors are leaving the country.

8 In 2003 the NRF commenced the development of a National Research Agenda for Social Sciences, Law and Humanities.

9 This percentage should be qualified. The western part of South Africa is a semi-desert with a sparse population. The eastern part of the country accommodates the majority of the population on relatively fertile land with a high rainfall. These facts do not, however, mean that the country is not unfairly divided.

10 '*41 per cent of the Africans in the agricultural section had no schooling*' (Strategic Plan for the Department of Agriculture 2004: 42).

11 Sector Education Training Authority.

12 Land claims on the largest tea plantation in South Africa near Tzaneen are the main reasons why production will be terminated. More than 10,000 workers will lose their jobs.

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