

## Webrecensie BMGN – LCHR 126:4 (2011)

Kaisiëpo Msn, Viktor, ***Een perspectief voor Papoea. Het verhaal van mijn strijd*** (Opgetekend door Willem Campschreur; Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, 2011, 271 blz., ill., ISBN 978 94 6022 1149).

Strictly speaking, *A Perspective for Papua: The Story of my Struggle* is not an autobiography. It was published in Dutch after the death of its narrator Viktor Kaisiëpo (1948-2010) and is based upon twelve elaborate interviews with editor Willem Campschreur. Campschreur stayed close to Kaisiëpo's texts, including the use of the first person singular. The result is a biography in which Viktor Kaisiëpo presents his own life story, structured, however, by Willem Campschreur. As such it is a hybrid but authentic text.

Kaisiëpo was born in a Manseren family, a clan title on Biak, Dutch New Guinea, which refers to leadership (hence the suffix Msn). His father Markus Kaisiëpo was a political leader and eventually became vice-President of the New Guinea Council. In 1962, the UN, the USA, the Netherlands and Indonesia agreed in New York that the Dutch would give up their political aspirations concerning a future independent state of West Irian. Indonesia (headed by Soekarno at that time) took over control under UN supervision, pending a referendum to be held among the Papua's on independence or integration into Indonesia. This consultation, known as the 'Act of Free Choice', was to take place in 1969. However, Indonesia (by then headed by Suharto ) did not allow for a 'free' choice. The consultation resulted in an enforced agreement on integration into Indonesia. Papuan aspirations for independence were severely repressed.

After the ratification of the 1962 New York Agreement, the Dutch forced the Kaisiëpo family to leave Dutch New Guinea overnight, contrary to Markus Kaisiëpo's wish, who was in New York at the time. After arriving in the Netherlands as political exiles, the Kaisiëpo family decided to remain

stateless. No longer Dutch subjects, they refused to naturalize as Dutch citizens. In this they were not alone; hundreds of Papua's were forced to leave their country, amongst whom compatriot (and at times also rival) Nicolaas Jouwe, and many remained stateless in those first years in exile. The book sketches the ups and downs of the Papuan exile movement, starting with the high expectations concerning the Act of Free Choice, followed by decades of diversified Papuan cultural organization, political mobilization as well as fragmentation due to political disagreement. It ends with the discussions, since the fall of the Suharto regime, on the impact of the Reformasi in Indonesia on the political perspectives for Papua.

This history runs parallel to a more personal 'coming of age' narrative, structured by four turning points in Viktor Kasiëpo's life story. While an uncomplicated syncretism of Papuan Koreri belief systems and Dutch Protestantism characterized his childhood on Biak, his years of early adolescence in the Netherlands were dominated by the orthodox Dutch Reformed Church. He rebelled, however, against his father and the Church, both socially and culturally, and turned to leftwing politics. The 1980 Fourth Russell Tribunal in The Hague where the Kasiëpo's spoke up for the Papua's of West Irian represents a new turn in his life. The wider political, economic, environmental and cultural context of the struggle of indigenous people provided Kasiëpo with a broader perspective and also took him abroad, among other places to New York, many years after his father had been there to plea for independence. As he now needed a passport, he decided to become a Dutch citizen. Finally, a meeting at the Indonesian Embassy with the Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid in 2000 marks the last turn. Allowed to make only a brief statement, Kasiëpo explained that he had left his country in 1962 'through the window' as a result of the New York Agreement and now would like to return 'through that same window'. Wahid answered that he was welcome. This event turns the life story full circle. Indeed, Kasiëpo returned several times to what today is called Papua, in order to participate in its fragile political process, as it developed within the insecure context of contemporary

Indonesia's regional autonomy policies.

Kaisiëpo's political involvement in Papua politics met with criticism from within the Dutch Papuan community. Perhaps this can account for the way in which he presents his life story as a political history in which the idea of an independent nation state – with its own flag, national anthem and passport – gradually lost its importance as the sole possible solution for the future of Papua. The final section of the book argues that despite all problems, the Indonesian 2002 Special Autonomy Law and the 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples might provide West Papua with opportunities for what Indonesian scholars like M.S. Widjojo have called a 'Road Map' to democratization and development. Kaisiëpo argues here that negotiating the past is an inherent part of that road map. With a perspective for Papua he obviously has intended to contribute to such an historical understanding, while aiming to convince an exile community of the importance of redirecting their perspectives to the changed reality overseas. In its elaboration of that message, especially through the vivid accounts of the developments within the Dutch Papuan community, the book offers a valuable personal perspective on Dutch postcolonial history as well.

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## Webrecensie BMGN 126:2 (2011)

Keverling Buisman, Frank, Jacobs, Ingrid (eds.), *Arnhem van 1700 tot 1900* (Utrecht: Matrijs, 2009, 400 blz., ISBN 978 90 5345 390 2); Kemperink, Rob, Jacobs, Ingrid (eds.), *Geschiedenis van Amersfoort. 'Bruit van d'Eem'* (Utrecht: Matrijs, 2009, 987 blz., ISBN 978 90 5345 335 3 (2 delen in foedraal)).

Stadsgeschiedenis is in beweging. Het academisch debat heeft zich de laatste jaren laten inspireren door de *cultural and spatial turn*, waardoor ons denken over de stad ingrijpend is veranderd. Er is echter wel een groot verschil tussen de wetenschappelijke beoefenaren en de stadshistorici die zich toeleggen op het schrijven van integrale stadsgeschiedenissen. Bij de tweede groep historici zien we de nieuwe inzichten nog niet zo vaak terug omdat deze studies graag leunen op een politiek-institutionele benadering.

Ook de stadsgeschiedenissen van Arnhem en Amersfoort zijn in dit opzicht niet vernieuwend. Het zijn vooral degelijke, mooi uitgevoerde en goed geschreven studies waarvan de lezer, die zich niets aantrekt van wetenschappelijke debatten, kan genieten. Mooi kaartenmateriaal, instructieve situatietekeningen en plattegronden die de ruimtelijke ontwikkeling op een aantrekkelijke manier weergeven dragen bij aan de populariteit van deze geschiedenissen.

Het Arnhemse deel is het tweede, maar wel afsluitende deel van een drieluik. Hoofdredacteur F. Keverling Buisman geeft ruiterlijk toe dat het eigenaardig is dat de inleiding pas staat in dit deel – boek twee – dat de geschiedenis van 1700 tot 1900 behandelt. Dit illustreert de moeilijkheden waarmee stadsgeschiedschrijvers tobben. De Arnhemse redactie stelt dat het nauwelijks mogelijk was om de drie delen met elkaar te verbinden. Moderne twintigste-eeuwse maatschappelijke thema's, zoals verkeer en vervoer, demografie, nutsvoorzieningen etc. zouden zich moeilijk laten vergelijken met wat er in de middeleeuwen en de Nieuwe Tijd gebeurde. Dat is op zich zelf geen sterk argument, want het heeft te maken met de thematische invalshoek die zich nu eenmaal niet zo goed leent voor een synthese. Daar komt bij dat de stadsbiograaf graag voor een politiek-institutionele benadering kiest, dikwijls ingegeven door een zoveeljarig bestaan van de stad, zoals Amersfoort 750 jaar. Redacteuren hebben graag houvast aan politieke of gecanoniseerde cesuren, bijvoorbeeld de Reformatie, de Bataafs-Franse tijd en het ontstaan van het Nederlandse Koninkrijk.