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Foreign influences on Dutch mathematics teaching.

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Summary: During the nineteenth century, mathematics was gradually established as a major topic within the Dutch secondary school system. In this period, French and German influences are easily ascertained within the program and schoolbooks, and also with leading personalities of the time, like Jacob de Gelder (1765–1848) and Jan Versluys (1845–1920). But, once holding a strong position within the school system, Dutch school mathematics became more rigid, less open to influences from abroad. The prolific and influential schoolbook writer and didactician Pieter Wijdenes (1872–1972) openly declared he never read any schoolbook from abroad. Another key figure in the first half of the twentieth century, Eduard Jan Dijksterhuis (1892–1965), was as historian of mathematics much more internationally orientated, but as a math didactician he was not. Modern ideas were propagated by Tatiana Ehrenfest-Afanassjewa (1876–1964), born in Kiev and educated in St. Petersburg, who had studied math and physics in Göttingen with Klein and Hilbert. In 1912 she came to Leiden where she lived until her death. When finally in the sixties of the last century Dutch school mathematics underwent a thorough reform, a decisive role was played again by someone originally from another country: Hans Freudenthal, (1905–1990) from Germany. Freudenthal came in 1930 as an assistant to L.E.J. Brouwer to Amsterdam, and also remained in The Netherlands until his death. He attended for many years a didactical working group organised by Tatiana Ehrenfest-Afanassjewa, and there can be no doubt that this working group played an important role in arousing his interest in and developing his ideas about mathematics education. In the conclusions some explanations are formulated why in the first half of the twentieth century Dutch math teaching entered such a period of stagnation.

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