

CHAPTER NINE

‘A VILE AND SCANDALOUS DITTY’: POPULAR SONG AND PUBLIC OPINION IN A SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY DUTCH VILLAGE CONFLICT

Joke Spaans

A popular song was heard in the taverns in and around Alphen during the Hazerswoude Fair in October 1686. Carpenters at work at the Gouda Lock, halfway between Alphen and Hazerswoude, sang it as a shanty. Its lyrics, set to a catchy tune, commented upon a local conflict. Indicated by nicknames and oblique references, impossible for us to decode, but undoubtedly easily identifiable to singers and listeners, local worthies were subjected to sharp criticism. According to the song, seventeen couplets long, those responsible for the church, and from whom integrity was most required, had seriously disturbed the peace in Alphen. It purported that one of them, called Oudshoorn, had been infamously banished, that among them was a brewer who had left nearby Leiden in shame after a bankruptcy, and that others were publicly known as fraudulent, quarrelsome, drunk and disorderly. The venom of the text was in the last two couplets. Here a Justice Roosenboom, probably Huybert Roosenboom, a member of the Supreme Court of Holland and Zeeland,¹ was accused of rousing the rabble that had lynched Johan and Cornelis de Witt—the Grand Pensionary of Holland and his brother, a naval hero—at the square called the Green Sward in The Hague, in 1672. These last couplets in particular seriously offended the authorities, and earned our song the epithet ‘a vile and scandalous ditty’.²

The song belongs to a broad and evanescent genre of popular verse that accompanied sensational events in the early modern period. Rhymed couplets adorned pamphlets, prints and commemorative

¹ Hora Siccama, *Aantekeningen en verbeteringen op het [...] register op de journalen van Constantijn Huygens den zoon*, pp. 592–94.

² For the text see the Appendix. It is preserved in manuscript in the Criminal Papers of the Provincial Court of Justice of Holland, NA, Archive *Hof van Holland*, shelf no. 5353.13 (1689).

medals, varying in quality from formal neo-Latin verse to crabbed doggerel. Only the best or the most appreciated were commercially interesting and were gathered in printed albums that were, like pamphlets and medals, kept as souvenirs and collected by posterity. Others, like our ditty, circulated in manuscript or even oral form. Some of these have survived because they ended up in scrapbooks or, as in this case, were copied into official documents, but most have been lost.³ Producing, copying, reading and singing these texts must have been an immensely popular pastime. The scattered remains of this form of cultural expression show that information about current events could be plentiful, and reached all levels of society.

But did this amount to what we call public opinion? If texts critical of the powers that be are produced and circulated, does that always count as public opinion? How did political songs like this one function in early modern society? Before addressing these wider questions, let us first take a look at the context in which our vile and scandalous ditty was made and sung and at the effect it had on the local conflict in Alphen.

ALPHEN AS AN INDUSTRIAL ZONE, AREA OF CONFLICT,
AND THEATRE OF WAR

There is ample evidence that something was very much amiss in Alphen aan den Rijn in the 1680s, and that the church was at the centre of the disturbance. From 1682 to 1687 the local minister was involved in an ugly conflict with his congregation. This in itself was nothing unusual. Controversial ministers abound in the minutes of consistories, classes and synods. This particular local conflict, however, spun wildly out of hand, and eventually led to a standoff between the two highest courts of law in the province of Holland. Stadtholder-King William III himself stepped in to mediate. Apparently, these local troubles in Alphen touched a sensitive nerve in the relations between church and state in seventeenth-century Holland.

Not much is known about the church history of Alphen in the seventeenth century, but what we do know is decidedly lively.⁴ The village

³ Cf. Bellany and McRae (ed.), 'Early Stuart Libels'; Spaans, 'Pen als wapen?'

⁴ Local church histories in Regt, *Gedenkboek ter gelegenheid van het 350-jarig bestaan der Nederlands Hervormde gemeente te Alphen aan den Rijn*, and Baudet, "In beweging bewogen."

was strategically located in the heart of South Holland, at the intersection of the Old Rhine with the Gouwe from the south and the Heimans canal to the north. These waterways form a crossroads between Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Leiden, The Hague and Utrecht, and were plied by regular towboat services. Here too the routes of stagecoaches to and from these centres converged, and postal couriers, serving the Holland cities and connecting them to their European-wide hinterlands, had their distribution centre here. Its location made Alphen a flourishing market town, especially for meat, fish and dairy produce. Sawmills, shipbuilding, tile and brickworks, and the production of clay pipes, profiting from the river traffic and an abundant supply of energy from the ever-present wind and the extensive peat-producing bogs to the south and east, added industrial bustle. It boasted a French school and an orphanage. Alphen thus fell into a middle category between mere village and city. All this made it a pleasant place to live, for the rural gentry in the three manor houses within Alphen's boundaries and for the local notables in their comfortable homes along its well-laid out main streets and waterfronts. Alphen has even been graced by a local history extolling its beauty, wealth and ancestry, of a kind usually reserved for cities.⁵

The church of Alphen appointed only young, but learned and well-connected ministers with some previous pastoral experience. Usually they left after a few years for cities, the end-stations of successful ecclesiastical careers. Only small towns and the larger and more prosperous villages could afford this class of ministers.⁶ The first half of the seventeenth century saw Alphen and its church flourish. A fire that destroyed most of the village and the church in 1619 could not hamper its growth. Everything was quickly rebuilt. The Reformed congregation grew from 276 full members in 1619 to over 500 around the middle of the century.⁷ Whether these numbers reflect demographic growth of the community as a whole or rather protestantization is unclear.

⁵ Plemper, *Beschryving van de heerlykheid en het dorp Alphen aan den Ryn*. A more concise near-contemporary description of Rijnland and Alphen in Wagenaar, *Hedendaagsche historie, of tegenwoordige staat van alle volkeren* (= *Tegenwoordige staat*), vol. 16 (1746). More recent: Dinkelaar, De Wilde, and Van Zwieten, *Volk op vier-sprong*.

⁶ Van Rooden, 'Van geestelijke stand naar beroepsgroep'.

⁷ Regt, *Gedenkboek*, pp. 41–48; Streekarchief Rijnlands Midden (SARM), Archive Nederlands Hervormde Gemeente (= NHG), shelf nos. 9, and 156.

The original parish comprised both Alphen proper and the nearby village of Oudshoorn, but these villages belonged to two different *ambachtsheren*.⁸ These either had to concur or take turns in the appointment of ministers to the shared parish church of Alphen. Apparently the two gentlemen did not see eye to eye, and in 1661 the *ambachtsheren* of Oudshoorn, Cornelis de Vlaminck, made Oudshoorn an independent parish. In this venture De Vlaminck gave full rein to personal vanity, and the church he built, mainly from his own purse, had a reputation of extraordinary beauty. Of course he appointed its ministers. Simple rivalry may have been an important factor in this dispute. De Vlaminck was rich and, as former burgomaster of Amsterdam, extremely well connected. He appears to have been more successful in stimulating prosperity and obtaining privileges for his village than his neighbour in Alphen. Oudshoorn was only half the size of Alphen, yet it had almost as many mills, wharves and factories.⁹ The towbarges and mail-couriers stopped in Oudshoorn, not in Alphen. The fact that the *ambachtsheren* of Alphen were Catholic, and thus subject to restrictions in the execution of public office, compounded these economic and ecclesiastical rivalries.

The secession of Oudshoorn in turn seems to have aroused local pride in the Reformed congregation of Alphen. As if to hold their own against the showy new church of Oudshoorn, newly admitted members to the Alphen congregation started to donate gifts to their own house of worship. In 1662 the church received a panel painted with the calligraphed text of the Reformed Confession of Faith, in 1666 a set of copper candlesticks, in 1689 an ornamental copper arch to adorn the entrance to the enclosed space around the pulpit and the baptismal font, in 1722 silver plates and cups for the celebration of the Lord's Supper and in 1744 an ornament for the pulpit.¹⁰

⁸ An *ambachtsheren* was the highest authority in a village with its outlying hamlets. In the seventeenth century the office, originally a noble fief, could be inherited or bought, and its main attraction was in the rights of patronage it brought the bearer. Appointments to local public office had to be approved by the *ambachtsheren*. *Ambachtsheren* came from the gentry or urban patriciate. Some, like Cornelis de Vlaminck, added the name of 'their' village to their family name in imitation of noble titles.

⁹ Alphen boasted 136 houses in 1632 and 315 in 1732, Oudshoorn 64 and 183 respectively, but both were almost equally 'industrialized', *Tegenwoordige staat*, pp. 251–52, 260.

¹⁰ Regt, *Gedenkboek*, pp. 24–26, *Tegenwoordige staat*, p. 254.

Even after the secession of 1661, De Vlaminck kept meddling in the church affairs of Alphen. In 1656 Alphen had been allowed a second minister, as an assistant and designated successor to the incumbent. At the death of the senior minister and the succession of the assistant in 1670, the consistory of Alphen tried to get a new assistant minister, arguing that the workload was too heavy for one man alone. De Vlaminck protested before the States of Holland that Alphen could very well be served by one man, especially now that the congregation had been split. The States of Holland agreed. The consistory of Alphen, with the full support of its own *ambachtsheer* and burgomasters, then decided to raise the salary of their pastor with an extra allowance from the village funds, as if to emphasize the standing of Alphen, economically and socially a notch above that of the surrounding villages, and especially its obnoxious neighbour Oudshoorn. The standing of the local church was very much an expression of local pride.

An epidemic in 1669 and the war of 1672–1678 dealt Alphen and its church two further blows. Nothing specific is known about the epidemic.¹¹ In 1672 Alphen found itself just behind the weakest spot in the so-called Water Line, the belt of land that could be inundated on the approach of enemies from the east and which, in combination with the natural obstacles of the great rivers and strategically placed man-made fortifications, made up the defensive ring around the core of the powerful province of Holland. French armies breached that weak spot, pillaging and burning nearby Bodegraven and Zwammerdam and Oudewater further to the south,¹² ravaging the surrounding countryside and causing considerable loss of life. The French armies were stopped at the Gouda Lock, at the confluence of Gouwe and Oude Rijn, a little east of Alphen.

Alphen itself was spared. In fact, William III, just elevated to the stadtholdership to beat back the invaders, made it his base of operations. The delegates of the States of Holland who used to follow the army in its campaigns as a War Council, advising the stadtholder in his capacity as Captain-General, stayed here. A captain of the States army, who had prematurely abandoned the fort he commanded before the approach of the enemy, was publicly executed in Alphen. Many of

¹¹ No mention of an epidemic in this year in the 'Lijst van 585 publicaties [...] over of n.a.v. epidemieën en plagen, gesorteerd op jaar' <<http://www.rampenpublicaties.nl>>.

¹² Cf. Haks, 'De Franse tirannie'.

its residents, however, fled the threat of war. Despite a rousing speech from the stadtholder on New Year's Day 1673, in which he called upon these fugitives to return and offered them his protection, life was seriously disrupted. In 1675 the congregation had fallen to 300 members, a loss of around 200 from only five years earlier.¹³ Alphen was anything but the rural idyll its lush surroundings and prosperity might suggest.

A CHURCH DIVIDED

The turbulent period following the Year of Disaster 1672 apparently left Alphen deeply divided. The precise nature of the division is hard to determine. These years were, however, marked by intense polarization between adherents of the House of Orange and those regents who preferred True Liberty: a stadtholderless regime that allowed them to divide political power and the more lucrative offices among themselves.¹⁴ The local notables of Alphen had ties to the regents of the larger cities, and this made the prosperous village vulnerable to urban-style factionalism. The Catholic *ambachtsheren* of Alphen were traditionally Orangists. Most prominent Catholics considered the House of Orange the protector of their interests against the privileged Reformed elite. The former *ambachtsheer* of Alphen, the Catholic Hendrik Stevin, had even been a close associate of Prince Maurits. His successor Jacob van der Meer was again a Catholic. The local sheriff, Adriaan Roosenboom, was a member of a family that provided many high-ranking legal professionals, one of whom, Frederick Roosenboom, married a granddaughter of Simon Stevin. Both he and his elder brother, Justice Huybert Roosenboom, were close confidants of William III. All over the Republic, Orangists jostled to gain the upper hand over the previously dominant adherents of True Liberty, and this seems also to have been the case in Alphen.

The church became the principal battlefield. After 1672 the procedures to elect new ministers for Alphen were heavily contested between candidates who had studied in Leiden and Utrecht respectively. At this time these theological faculties were dominated by rival schools—Leiden by the followers of Johannes Coccejus, who were often con-

¹³ Van Es, *Limes en linie*, pp. 50–62.

¹⁴ Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, pp. 807–15.

nected to regent circles committed to True Liberty, and Utrecht by the followers of Gisbertus Voetius, who tended to be staunch Orangists. After an exceptionally long vacancy, marked by wrangling in the consistory and in the magistracy, one of the many Roosenbooms with ties to Alphen, *ambachtsheer* Van der Meer, and other, unnamed, patrons secured the appointment of the Voetian Adriaan Bouman in Alphen in 1682. Within months the newly elected minister had antagonized a large part of his congregation, among them a number of (supposedly Coccejian and non-Orangist) church wardens, elders and deacons.

Bouman was a quarrelsome man, who spread malicious gossip about church members and fellow ministers. Moreover, he shirked the duties the Alphen congregation expected from its ministers, and for which the village paid him an extra allowance. The most important of these duties was preaching on Wednesdays as well as on Sundays and official holidays—unusual in villages, but customary in cities. In this respect too, Alphen's local pride manifested itself. Offended parishioners appealed to the *classis*,¹⁵ and eventually to the Provincial Court of Justice to investigate whether Bouman had committed fraud in registering his letter of appointment, which specified his workload, in the registers of the Alphen consistory. Bouman and his local patrons, however, did everything they could to obstruct this investigation. In the summer of 1685 adherents of the minister harassed a committee from the *classis*, sent to Alphen to investigate. They gate-crashed the meeting of the committee in the church, forced its secretary to write a report that exonerated the minister, and threatened bodily harm. After the mob had finally released the investigators, it retired to Bouman's house, where the fake 'report' of the meeting was read under raucous merriment and the minister treated everybody to wine.

Despite all this, the *classis* found confirmation of its suspicion of fraud. It was powerless, however, against the injunctions of the Provincial Court of Justice, which denied the *classis* jurisdiction over the case. The *classis* only had the right to adjudicate appeals against decisions of a consistory, and in Alphen the consistory, itself party to the conflict, deliberately left the case undecided. Discontent with the minister smouldered on in Alphen. On 7 October 1686, during the annual

¹⁵ The *classis* held the middle position between the local consistory and the Provincial Synod in the government of the Reformed Church. Classes discussed and decided matters of supralocal importance, oversaw the appointment of ministers and also formed a court of appeal on the decisions of consistories.

fair of nearby Hazerswoude, our 'vile and scandalous ditty' was sung in an Alphen tavern. Among the singers were some of the instigators of the mayhem in the church of Alphen in the summer of the previous year. Early in November four of the singers were arrested, lifted from their beds in the middle of the night. They were put in custody in The Hague, to be released on bail after a month. During their incarceration the Reverend Bouman was also cited before the Provincial Court.

Factionalism now reached dangerous levels in Alphen. Insults flew thick and fast. People exhorted their children to harass those of the other party by following them in the streets and taunting them with satirical songs. By the end of November the Provincial Court issued an order to end all public disturbances, signed by its president, stadtholder William III himself. The case against Bouman dragged on all through the first half of 1687. It proved very difficult to reconstruct exactly what had been agreed between minister and patrons about the Wednesday sermons. All this was meticulously analysed in the final indictment, which contained no less than 1348 articles, and in which Bouman was found guilty of fraud with his letter of appointment, and of incitement to riot and sedition. The Attorney General stated that Bouman's local patrons had boasted that they would 'wash the dirty pig', i.e. keep his reputation clean, despite the fraud he had committed. The metaphor earned the conflict the name of the Alphen Pig War. The Attorney General demanded suspension from office, exclusion from any public office or service in Holland, Zeeland and West-Friesland for life, a heavy fine and payment of all the legal costs incurred in his case. In view of the fact that a minister had committed all these heinous crimes, the Attorney General considered even corporal punishment appropriate.¹⁶

A final verdict was never struck, however. Pending this trial before the Provincial Court, the plaintiffs against Bouman appealed to the *classis* to have him suspended from office. Bouman and the Alphen magistrate again successfully mounted a counter-offensive. Now they managed to get the Supreme Court of Holland and Zeeland to proscribe any action of the *classis* in the case of Alphen, again denying church members the right to appeal to the *classis* in a case that had

¹⁶ Spaans, 'The Alphen Pig War', pp. 333–41, for the indictment see Criminal Papers of the Provincial Court of Justice of Holland, NA, Archive *Hof van Holland*, shelf nr. 5349.24 (1688).

not first been decided by the consistory. The Provincial Court of Justice denied the Supreme Court jurisdiction in this case, which was taken by the Supreme Court as a challenge to its authority. The two Justices of the Supreme Court who had been assigned to this case, both from Amsterdam, invoked the support of the Amsterdam magistrate, which in turn accused the Attorney General and the Provincial Court of Justice of obstruction. This led to an unprecedented clash between the two Courts. On 17 June 1687 the States of Holland formulated a resolution, which in fact was an order of the Prince of Orange, pronouncing a mistrial and demanding the destruction of all files pertaining to the case.¹⁷

Despite the strong language of the Attorney General, Adriaan Bouman would remain in office in Alphen until his death. As the charges had been dropped and the entire affair had been hushed up at the command of the stadtholder, his position in Alphen was safe. Both the malcontent parishioners, who had tried so hard to have him removed, and his patrons, for whom he must have become something of a liability, had to accept his continuation in office—and moreover all parties were forbidden to divulge the heart of the matter: the fraud committed by the minister under the protection of local patrons. Life went on as if nothing had happened. In the classis Bouman retained the honour due to his rank as minister of Alphen. He also held a doctorate in medicine, which entitled him to loftier honorific titles than the other village ministers, and these were duly used. The South-Holland synod made him correspondent for the Synod of Groningen, an honourable commission that was only entrusted to capable men.¹⁸ He was, however, never called to a more prestigious pulpit. For Bouman Alphen was not the stepping stone from village to city it had been for many of his predecessors and successors.

¹⁷ *Hollandsche Mercurius* (1687), pp. 162–71, *Copie Missive en Resolutien van de Ed. Groot Moog. de Heere Staten van Holland ende West-Vriesland, aen den President en Raden van den Hoogen Raed, in Holland afgesonden, Anno 1687*, Knuttel 12646, orig. in NA, Archives Hof van Holland, inv. nr 394, f. 224^r–226^r.

¹⁸ NA, Archive Classis Woerden and Overrijnland, inv. nr 10, p. 235 (June 24, 1687; SARM, Archives Notaries Alphen, inv. nr 176, unpaginated (May 3, 1688)). Bouman was formally addressed as '*Eerwaarde godzalige en Hooggeleerde Heer*'.

OUR VILE AND SCANDALOUS DITTY AS AN EXPRESSION
OF PUBLIC OPINION?

The ditty that was sung in Alphen at the time of the Hazerswoude Fair in October 1686 pilloried the Orangist patrons of the Voetian minister. Those patrons were located not only in the local Voetian-dominated consistory, but also in wider networks of power. In the infamously banished Oudshoorn, mentioned in the fourth stanza, we can discern the meddlesome *ambachtsheer* of the rival neighbouring village, Cornelis de Vlaminck van Oudshoorn. In 1682 he had been excluded from the select company of those eligible for the office of burgomaster in Amsterdam, as part of the political power struggles in that city—a situation that might well be compared to banishment.¹⁹ By 1686 De Vlaminck was safely dead. The other persons indicated in the ditty are all disguised by nicknames, except for Justice Roosenboom of the Supreme Court, close to the stadtholder himself, who was alive—and not amused. The Orangist political network that had come to power in Alphen after the restoration of the stadtholdership extended all the way to the Court.

The ditty undeniably expresses opinion, and it was sung in public. But does that make it an expression of public opinion? Scholarly views on public opinion in the early modern period diverge. It is obvious that, from the invention of the printing press, political and religious crises were often accompanied by the production of popular literature and print. Production of these texts peaked during crises. This feeds the conviction, fostered over the last few decades, that these changes were the subject of lively debate that merits the designation ‘public opinion’—not only in the eighteenth century, as Habermas argued, but also in previous centuries. Public opinion is not always clearly defined. Generally it is taken to be the reflection of current affairs in popular literature, aimed at a wide audience—wider than those with reading skills. After all, pamphlets and broadsides were also read out to illiterates, and songs, sermons, theatre and popular prints needed no such skills. Through the attention given to current affairs in popular media, this general public is held to have exerted pressure on

¹⁹ Elias, *Geschiedenis van het Amsterdamse regentenpatriciaat*, pp. 173–87; *idem*, *De vroedschap van Amsterdam*, pp. 505–07.

governments that could not ignore public opinion. Public opinion was thus a catalyst of change.²⁰

This may be an anachronistic interpretation of the media coverage of early modern crises and controversies. It is especially hard to measure its impact and influence. The authorities of state and church regulated the printing press, the theatre and the pulpits. Popular street songs and pasquinades not disseminated in print escaped regulation, being too elusive, but little of that kind of popular expression has been preserved or studied, and its impact is therefore hard to measure.²¹ Much published topical material was anecdotal, spreading tales about remarkable incidents, without interpreting them as part of wider political or social developments. This made them entertainment rather than argumentation intended to form opinions. Much was propaganda, produced by authors close to the authorities and reflecting their views. It has been argued that in France, until the second phase of the Jansenist controversies after 1713, the public sphere was in fact the Court; all else was irrelevant.²² In England, where the satirical press was well developed in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, pamphlets and prints critical of the authorities were often tolerated—because nobody took them seriously. They were considered popular entertainment, lacking the authority that was precisely the monopoly of state and church, and often ill-informed and biased as well.²³ 'Opinion' was a word with strongly negative connotations.

The commentaries on current events in early modern popular media do reflect attitudes and aspirations that were—sometimes passionately—embraced by parts of the population, but most are hypes or otherwise marginal. Systematic research into Dutch pamphlet literature, political prints and songs has only recently commenced, but several studies draw attention to the fact that publications often appeared at the point when the problem had already been resolved, so that they

²⁰ Van Dixhoorn, *Lustige geesten*; Duccini, *Faire voir, faire croire*; Harline, *Pamphlets, Printing, and Political Culture*; Pollmann and Spicer, *Public Opinion and Changing Identities*, 'Introduction'.

²¹ Weekhout, *Boekencensuur in de Noordelijke Nederlanden*. Cf. also the cautions expressed in Bloemendal, 'Receptions and Impact' and Cust, 'News and Politics', pp. 66–69.

²² Farge, *Dire et mal dire*, pp. 25–41; Arblaster, 'Private Profit, Public Utility and Secrets of State'.

²³ Atherton, *Political Prints in the Age of Hogarth*, pp. 68–82; De Bruin, *Geheimhouding en verraad*, pp. 402–35.

only confirm, and often justify, the outcome.²⁴ Real discussion of current issues, therefore, was often lacking in substance.²⁵ The delay in publications on current issues may be due to the opportunism of publishers, or to the effects of censorship. Serious criticism of the officers of state or church was considered an infraction of their personal honour and authority, and incurred heavy penalties for slander or even sedition. Opinions voiced by whatever public were thus divided into a large majority of either harmlessly superficial or conformist ones that could safely be tolerated, and a few harmful, slanderous ones that should be silenced, and often were. Either way opinion did not discuss issues of public interest, and did not have much impact on governmental policy or society at large.

Back to our ditty: was this an expression of public opinion? At first sight it is. It unmasked those that were responsible for the church, for upholding religious authority, as conceited and greedy. It connects them to political crime at the highest level, first by asserting that they belonged to a network led by Justice Roosenboom, and secondly by insinuating that this man had incited the lynching of the brothers De Witt in 1672. Suspicions about the involvement of William III in the lynching of his political opponents had existed from the beginning, but it was highly unwise to utter them in public. In a tragedy about the murder of the brothers De Witt the poet Joachim Oudaan accused the stadtholder and four or five Justices to have plotted the lynching in a secret conspiracy. He never published the text, and on his deathbed ordered his heirs to destroy it. They did not, but, recognizing the sensitivity of the material, the play was not published until 1712, twenty years after the poet had died, and even then under a false imprint.²⁶ Accusing Justice Roosenboom of playing a part in this conspiracy in the taverns and on the streets of Alphen, in the context of a local conflict, must have aimed at public denunciation of the other members of the Orangist faction, the patrons of the Reverend Bouman, as being unfit for office.

But was the ditty part of a public discussion? Did it address the problem of corruption among officers of church and state in such a

²⁴ Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk*, p. 228; Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, p. 439; De Bruin, *Geheimhouding*, p. 416, Van Rooden, 'De communicatieve ruimtes van de Nijkerkse beroerten', p. 137 and *passim*.

²⁵ Cust, 'News and Politics', p. 61.

²⁶ Van Gemert, 'De Haagsche Broeder-Moord'. Cf. Joachim Oudaan, *Haagsche Broeder-Moord of Dolle Blydschap*, ll. 528, 535.

way that the authorities could not ignore the opinions it expressed? The authorities were certainly stung. They took offence at the vilification of Justice Roosenboom. Four singers were arrested, lifted from their beds in the middle of the night and confined to the Provincial prison in The Hague. However, the singers were not charged—just removed from a volatile situation and released after some time, on bail, as a warning to behave in the future. The accusations made against the local worthies who were already deceased or indicated by nicknames went unanswered. The ditty steered clear of wider political factionalism. As a result, it could be treated simply as slander against persons in authority. The Reverend Bouman, who was in the eye of the storm, is not even mentioned. When he was at last brought to trial before the Provincial Court, his patrons escaped scot-free: he was their whipping boy. The trial dealt with the criminal charges of fraud and incitement to riot against his person only—and even he was allowed to remain in office, his honour intact, after the trial had run out of hand and the accusations had been dropped. The underlying problems went undressed, both in the ditty and in the judicial procedures.

Only one handwritten copy of the lyric has been found in the chaotic but ample documentation on the trial of Adriaan Bouman in the archives of the Provincial Court. The text may have not even actually circulated on paper during the troubles in Alphen itself; such songs were able to exist in oral form alone. This ensured deniability when the authorities objected: one had simply joined the singing company, probably drunk, without really knowing the lyrics, their provenance, or the persons behind the nicknames and enigmatic descriptions given in the text. The caustic criticism the ditty contains of the moral stature of those responsible for the church appears well-informed—whether this be of the truth or of current rumours is hard to say. But the ditty had no noticeable effect on the situation in Alphen, neither on the legal procedures which studiously ignored the role played by Bouman's patrons, nor on the outcome, which left everything as it was. Nor had any of the other poems, pamphlets and the satirical print devoted to the 'Alphen Pig War', all of which piously maintained the silence imposed by the stadtholder about what had happened in Alphen.²⁷ This means that these were simply entertainment. Composers and singers poked fun at a situation that had gone bad. Their song, however, indicated resignation rather than agency.

²⁷ Spaans, 'The Alphen Pig War'.

APPENDIX

Een nieuw lietie op de wijze van Bessie

Het sijne bedroefde dagen
 soo men nu claerlijk siet
 de waerheyt gaat men verjagen
 ogh, ogh, ogh,
 wat is het een groot verdriet.

Geen men nu siet geschieden
 opt dorp dat Alphen hiet
 en dat van sulcke lieden
 die, die, die,
 het vooral en pasten niet.

De genen die hoorden te wesen
 als voesters vande kerk
 die maakt hem nu in desen
 met, met, met,
 alle valsheid sterk,

en dat met sulcke mannen
 die overal bennen infaem
 ja die nu sijn uitgebannen
 out, out, out,
 Outshoorn isser sijn naam.

Hier bij soo bennen mede
 noch bankeroetieren hoort
 getrocken uyt Leiden de stede
 een, een, een,
 brouwer soo wasser dat woort.

By die so moet men ook stellen
 mannen dats waer en wis
 die haer reeckening stellen
 dat, dat, dat,
 niet geleverd is.

Dan moet hier nog bij komen
 die hoog in jaren gaat
 het kerkenboek kan hem wel noemen
 hij, hij, hij,
 hier gebrantmerkt staat.

A new song to the tune of Bessie

These are troubled days
 as is readily apparent
 truth is chased away
 oh, oh, oh,
 how grievous.

What is seen to happen
 in the village called Alphen
 and done by people
 such, such, such,
 as it does least become.

Those that should be
 the guardians of the church
 now fortify their positions
 with, with, with,
 all kinds of falsehoods,

in the company of such men
 as are infamous everywhere
 yeah, even banished
 out, out, out,
 Outshoorn is his name.

And among them are also
 bankrupt men, hear,
 who moved out of the city of Leiden
 a, a, a,
 brewer, or so they say.

Moreover one has to count in
 men—it is the honest truth—
 who charge their customers for goods
 that, that that,
 have not been delivered.

Add to that number
 one who is ancient in years
 in the record books of the church
 he, he, he,
 is shamefully marked out.

(cont.)

Den roffelscaef die ook mede
of Hottentot soo ghij hem kent
gaat stadig onrust smeden
is, is, is,
mede een malcontent.

Hier bij soo comen noch mede
mannen van onrust gemoet
die niet dan onrust smeden
al, al, al,
in het kerkengoet.

Hier dient ook niet vergeten
Kees bakermoer wel oplet
hij heeft mee allerwegen
sijn, sijn, sijn,
voeten staag dwers geset.

Hier bij al mee behoren
een backer of twee is wis
d'een loopen de rotten int koorn
denk, denk, denk,
wattet voor volkjen is.

Den mallenboer dient niet vergeten
is mede vant volkje infaam
int Steeckt woont hij, wil weten
ook, ook, ook,
Leckje soo is sijn naam.

Hier moet men ook bij voegen
die altijd opt marckje gaet
met paarden en die laat ploegen
dogh, dogh, dogh,
docktor Olij hier ook bij staat.

Den kapitein wilt het weten
van al dit volkjen hier
Ary Schock is hij geheten
off, off, off,
de buyl drager hier.

Dan nog zijn vroutie mede
sijn suster die scheeluwe kloen
verdienen hier een stede
want, want, want,
zij moeten zijn bef omdoen.

The rough customer, moreover,
or Hottentot, as you may know him,
steadily foments unrest, he
is, is, is,
also a malcontent.

The company also contains
men of unruly character
who foment nothing but unrest
in, in, in,
the affairs of the church.

And let us not forget
Kees baby-nurse, take note
that in each and every way
he, he, he,
has held matters up.

To these also belong
a baker or two, certainly
one has rats in his grain
think, think, think,
what kind of people these are.

We should not forget the daft farmer
who is also among the infamous people
living in the Steeckt neighbourhood, also
know, know, know
his (nick)name is Leaky.

Another one of them
always comes to market
with horses, and lends them for ploughing
but, but, but,
in the company of doctor Oil.

The captain, you should know
of the entire bunch
is called Ary Schock
or, or, or,
the holder of their purse-strings.

Also his wife, as well as
his sister, that cross-eyed fat-ass
deserve mention here
as, as, as,
they arrange his collar for him.

(cont.)

De veltheer van dees allen
 hola ick hout mij in toom
 het sou mij wel ontvallen
 dat, dat, dat,
 heet raatsheer Rosenboom.

Sijn naam is waart te schrijven
 op de Haagse Groene zoo
 om in gedachten te blijven
 want, want, want,
 int oproeijen hij niet is bloo.

The field marshal over all
 wait, I should hold my tongue,
 or else I would disclose
 that, that, that,
 it is Justice Roosenboom.

His name is worthy to be inscribed
 at the Green Sward in The Hague
 to preserve it in memory
 for, for, for,
 he does not shy away from agitation.