

The Dutch Patriotic Revolution: Prussians, Patriots, Orangists and Frogs

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Abstract

*Often overshadowed, and sometimes forgotten, the Dutch Patriot Revolution in 1787 is seen by modern historians today as an influential and important step towards democracy in Europe. The United Dutch Provinces, a rare republic in eighteenth-century Europe, began a slow revolution in 1781 after a pamphlet was published and distributed – *Aan het Volk van Nederlands (An Address to the People of the Netherlands)* – which lit the (already built) fire of revolution. The revolution climaxed in 1787 after a 10-day siege of Amsterdam and the invasion of a 26,000-strong Prussian army. This paper examines how the attitudes and concerns of the Dutch people allowed the Address to mobilise the Republic into action. This work also surveys the major developments of the revolution during its six-year span with a focus on two specific issues identified in the Address – repeated alliances with England and a dysfunctional military. By examining a set of four contemporary prints, this paper attempts to determine whether or not the revolutionaries were successful in meeting the goals diagnosed in the Address.*

Eighteenth-century Europe experienced a dizzying bombardment of change. Nothing epitomises this change like the French Revolution in 1789. Who has not heard the stories of the French citizens rising and storming the Bastille? Or how King Louis XVI and his wife Marie-Antoinette were beheaded? The complete upending of society caused by the French Revolution has overshadowed and completely sidelined other revolutionary movements of the age, including the revolution in the United Dutch Provinces (the Dutch Republic) in the 1780s. Like Switzerland, the Dutch Republic was an anomaly in eighteenth-century Europe. Since the Union of Utrecht in 1579, the United Provinces were separate – but not independent – from the Spanish Crown.⁴⁹³ The Republic was a group of seven provinces: Holland, Gelderland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Friesland, Overijssel and Groningen. Each province technically functioned similarly to Canadian provinces today; they all had their own representative assemblies and also sent provincial representatives to the Estates-General (the federal assembly). The caveat with this system was that the provinces' Estates and the Estates-General were firmly controlled by oligarchies. The aristocrats who controlled the governments were known as “regents;” everyone else were “burghers,” or “inhabitants.”⁴⁹⁴ The provinces also nominated a Stadholder who was the “chief executive” in charge of the armed forces.⁴⁹⁵

On 26 September 1781, a pamphlet appeared overnight in all the major towns of the Dutch Republic called *Aan het Volk van Nederlands* (An Address to the People of the Netherlands).⁴⁹⁶ Within its pages, the (anonymous) author provides a brief history of the Dutch Republic, calls for a new alliance with France and the new United States of America (cutting ties with England) and reforms to the army.⁴⁹⁷ After reading the Address, the question that immediately springs to mind is “were these goals realised?” Or, “were they successful?” To answer these questions, an examination needs to be made of the political context that motivated the publication of the *Address*, an exploration of whose goals were expressed in the *Address*, and what happened to actualize these goals. Using contemporary, non-Dutch sources, this essay examines the popular perception of the results that show that, while the goals were met, they did not achieve what the author of the address had hoped.

The Dutch Republic in the 1700s and a Brief Survey of the Patriot Revolution

The 1770s were a decade of shifting attitudes in the Dutch Republic. Still a major player in the financial world, in 1777 the Republic held 40 percent of the British national debt, equalling £65 million; and in 1796, all of the United States' foreign national debt was owed to the Republic.⁴⁹⁸ The international relations of England and the Dutch Republic had been interwoven since the stadholdership of William III, which became a major reason for the demands for governmental change after the events of the American Revolution.⁴⁹⁹ By 1770 the establishment of political journals and the acknowledgment of political discourse, outside of high-class political circles, became apparent.⁵⁰⁰ It is at this time that citizens like J. D. van der Capellen tot de Pol started to “openly favour” the American rebels.⁵⁰¹ First making himself known

⁴⁹³ Maarten Prak, “Citizen Radicalism and Democracy in the Dutch Republic: The Patriot Movement of the 1780s,” *Theory and society* 20, no.1 (1991), 77.

⁴⁹⁴ R. R. Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution Book: A Political History of Europe and America, 1760-1800*, (Princeton University Press, 2014), 45.

⁴⁹⁵ Graeme Callister, *War, Public Opinion and Policy in Britain, France and the Netherlands, 1785-1815*, (Cham: Springer International Publishing AG, 2017), 41.

⁴⁹⁶ Simon Schama, *Patriots and Liberators: Revolution in the Netherlands, 1780-1813*, (London: Collins, 1977), 64.

⁴⁹⁷ Joann van der Capellen, *An Address to the People of the Netherlands*, (London: Printed for J. Stockdale, 1782), 129, 136,

⁴⁹⁸ Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution Book*, 243; Stefan E Oppers, “The Interest Rate Effect of Dutch Money in Eighteenth-Century Britain,” *The Journal of Economic History* 53, no.1 (1993): 27.

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 243, 244.

⁵⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 244.

⁵⁰¹ Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution Book: A Political History of Europe and America, 1760-1800*, 244.

in 1775, he stopped the dispatch of the Scotch Brigade to help the English fight in the Americas and personally lent thousands of *livres* to the Americans.⁵⁰² Van der Capellen was not the only pro-American Dutchman. Around him gathered others, mainly burghers, who were dissatisfied with the current Dutch conditions.⁵⁰³ Although William V –the Stadholder at the time– remained a strong supporter of the English, the growing pro-rebellion and anti-British sentiment were seen in unsanctioned trade between the Dutch and rebel colonists and in the general unwillingness to help Britain.⁵⁰⁴ These actions, along with the possibility of the Dutch joining the Russian League of Armed Neutrality, caused concern within Britain and led to the English starting the Fourth Anglo-Dutch war in 1780.⁵⁰⁵ The Dutch did poorly in the war, emphasising the decline in the Dutch Empire, and the blame fell on William V, who as Stadholder, was commander-in-chief.⁵⁰⁶ It was these circumstances that prompted the writing and publishing of the *Address*, which was taken up as the catalyst for the Dutch Revolt by the so-called Patriots.

There were two main opposing groups in the Dutch Revolt. On the revolutionary side were the Patriots; hence, the revolt was also called the Patriotic Revolution. The Patriots were not centrally organised or unitary but were “a coalescence of people who followed a broadly similar discourse in demanding political and social reform.”⁵⁰⁷ Although most rebels were urban workers, some regents were supportive of the Patriots and formed the Assembly of Patriot Regents in 1786.⁵⁰⁸ Because the Patriots were not one organised group, they did not have agreement across the provinces for their goals, but they were mainly anti-Prince of Orange and the “inefficiency of the Stadholder government.”⁵⁰⁹ This included wanting to “remove or restrain the arbitrary powers of the Stadholder.”⁵¹⁰ Simon Schama has noted that Patriot ideology “looked forward to the *rebirth* of a primitive democracy,” and to be successful the Old Republic needed “to be rescued from its infirmity and rejuvenated in the image of its heroic beginnings.”⁵¹¹ For Patriots, these general goals were turned into action by the publication of the *Address*, which offered readers

a single, plausible explanation - the megalomania of the Prince of Orange - for a host of domestic problems that might otherwise have seemed completely unrelated to the War, but more importantly, [the author] offered his readers a plan of action - the election of citizens' committees and the formation of free militias - designed to reduce the overarching influence of the Prince and his "fawning lot of grandees."⁵¹²

On the other side of the Revolution were the Orangists, taking their name from their support of the Princes of Orange. The Orangists were a varied group, ranging from Regents to farmers. Ironically, although the Orangists were supportive of the Stadholder and rejected Patriotism, Graeme Callister has noted that “the Orangists were not simply conservatives or anti-reformers. Orangism as much as Patriotism sought to restore the old glory and prosperity of the Dutch Republic, but the two philosophies fundamentally disagreed only on how to do this.”⁵¹³

The actual progression of the Patriot Revolution was slow. Officially beginning in 1781 with the publication of the *Address*, the revolt could be “understood as, at bottom, a series of municipal revolutions,

⁵⁰²Ibid.

⁵⁰³ Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution Book*, 244.

⁵⁰⁴ Callister, *War, Public Opinion and Policy*, 45.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid., 45.

⁵⁰⁶ Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution Book*, 45.

⁵⁰⁷ Callister, *War, Public Opinion and Policy, 1785-1815*, 45.

⁵⁰⁸ Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution Book*, 252.

⁵⁰⁹ Callister, *War, Public Opinion and Policy*, 45.

⁵¹⁰ Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution Book*, 46.

⁵¹¹ Schama, *Patriots and Liberators: Revolution in the Netherlands, 1780-1813*, 67, 68.

⁵¹² Wayne P. Te. Brake, “Popular Politics and the Dutch Patriot Revolution,” *Theory and Society* 14, no.2 (1985): 204.

⁵¹³ Callister, *War, Public Opinion and Policy*, 46.

which were an essential precondition to structural changes at the provincial and national levels.”⁵¹⁴ Over the next six years towns and cities in each province were forced into fairer elections; or, in rare cases, were overthrown with new council members elected to serve.⁵¹⁵ By 1784 the Patriots “represented a force to be reckoned with...Patriot petitions signed by...thousands...[represented] an effective means of communicating the ‘will of the People,’...the movement must have seemed invincible, at least to the local governments to whom the petitions were most often addressed.”⁵¹⁶ The other significant event at this time was the formation of the Free Corps (*Vrijcorps*). Two core features of the Free Corps were that they were open to anyone – including Catholics who were excluded from government office – and would be independent and self-governing.⁵¹⁷ These militia groups started forming around the country and “adopted uniforms, drilled, listened to speeches, and sent delegates to national meetings.”⁵¹⁸ The Corps was guarding against dangers inside and outside the Republic such as a threat from the ancient militia commanded by the Orangists and aristocrats, as well as the British, Austrians and Belgians.⁵¹⁹ The Corps never fought any of these three countries, although the British were involved behind the scenes. Neither France nor Britain wanted to get directly involved with the Dutch Revolution. They both saw the Dutch Republic as a useful ally; most importantly, they were concerned that the Republic did not ally with their long-standing enemy.⁵²⁰ Because of this, both countries did eventually get involved, but on opposing sides.

By 1787, the United Provinces were completely split: Groningen, Overijssel and Holland were controlled by the Patriots, Zeeland and Gelderland by the Organists and Utrecht and Friesland were divided.⁵²¹ The Orangists were receiving English support in the sum of 90,000 pounds; the Patriots were receiving money from the French.⁵²² In the end, it was the capture of Princess Wilhelmina in June – she was the sister of the new Prussian King Frederick William II – by the Patriots that set into motion the final stages of the Revolution.⁵²³ On 13 September 1787, Frederick William II sent 26,000 troops to the Dutch border and invaded the Republic.⁵²⁴

Calls to Action in the Address

It is important to contextualise the *Address* before looking at its goal because the problems and solutions identified by the author relate to a particular person/group. The author, while unknown at the time, was Baron Joann van der Capellen; he was discussed earlier in reference to his support of the American colonies during their Revolution.⁵²⁵ It is then important to bear in mind that, while his solutions were not applicable for everybody, they were acknowledged as part of the Patriot movement.

The first problem and solution of the *Address* was the disenchantment with the consistent alliance with England that had been in place since William III became the English king. Van der Capellen complains that

our Republic...was in a continual war with France, in which we spent our blood and money, for the sole advantage of the perfidious England...That William, by keeping us

⁵¹⁴ Brake, “Popular Politics and the Dutch Patriot Revolution,” 212.

⁵¹⁵ Wayne P. te Brake, “Provincial Histories and National Revolution in the Dutch Republic,” In *The Dutch Republic in the Eighteenth-Century*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2020), 87.

⁵¹⁶ Brake, “Popular Politics and the Dutch Patriot Revolution,” 209.

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 209.

⁵¹⁸ Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution Book*, 249.

⁵¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 249.

⁵²⁰ Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution Book*, 254.

⁵²¹ Brake, “Popular Politics and the Dutch Patriot Revolution,” 214.

⁵²² Callister, *War, Public Opinion and Policy*, 51.

⁵²³ Schama, *Patriots and Liberators: Revolution in the Netherlands, 1780-1813*, 127.

⁵²⁴ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁵²⁵ *Ibid.*, 64.

constantly at war with France, gave irreparable blows to our commerce and welfare, and at the same time oppressed us with innumerable debts.⁵²⁶

He sees this alliance as specifically detrimental in the Austrian War of Succession in 1742 when “we again entered into a close alliance with the perfidious English...who were highly pleased, that we were again foolish enough to exhaust ourselves for their advantage...and bring us again under their influence and command.”⁵²⁷ The author continues to blame William for neglecting Dutch interests in favour of the English in a possible Russian alliance situation. The *Address* claims that

the Empress of Russia offered us a defensive alliance. She sent her ships in order to join ours. Are not *you* alone the cause that we did not directly enter into the alliance? Have not you, by your shameful delay, given time to your friends the English, to try their briberies and other arts, and thus to make that well-planned alliance vanish into smoke?⁵²⁸

The fear of this Russian alliance was one of the reasons that the British started the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War.⁵²⁹ Van der Capellen’s solution to the England problem was to cut ties with the English and “form an alliance with France and America.”⁵³⁰ This first goal of ending the alliance with England leads directly into another of the author’s complaints: the Stadholder’s management of the army and the lack of troops.

The second problem and solution identified by van der Capellen was the need for an overhaul of the current military system. Generally, he discusses the need to have a standing army because the other European powers possessed them.⁵³¹ Following suit with his previous remarks, van der Capellen attacks William’s apparent disregard for the current military because of the lack of salary increases, invoking emotional appeals when asking if

you ever pitied the hard fat of 36,000 men, who for the miserable pittance of 28d had sold their liberties and lives, and are literally slaves? Have you ensured to us the affection of these men, by a permanent augmentation of pay, in consequence of Baron *Van der Capellen’s* [referring to himself] proposal in Overijssel, in 1773, or by the liberal grant of 700,000 florins, which the city of Amsterdam assigned you for that purpose?⁵³²

Van der Capellen continues to complain about how William has replaced officers with “young adventurers” rendering the army “useless for publick service.”⁵³³ Van der Capellen forges ahead in his attack claiming that William is personally responsible for driving men away from military service, thus forcing the ranks to be filled with mercenaries.⁵³⁴ Luckily, Van der Capellen has a solution to how to maintain a standing army and to rid the army of foreign soldiers which comes from Article VIII of the Union of Utrecht. The passage that is quoted in the *Address* is as follows:

⁵²⁶ Van der Capellen, *An Address to the People of the Netherlands*, 64.

⁵²⁷ Van der Capellen, *An Address to the People of the Netherlands*, 69.

⁵²⁸ *Ibid.*, 109.

⁵²⁹ Callister, *War, Public Opinion and Policy*, 45.

⁵³⁰ Van der Capellen, *An Address to the People of the Netherlands*, 37.

⁵³¹ Van der Capellen, *An Address to the People of the Netherlands*, 35.

⁵³² *Ibid.*, 102.

⁵³³ *Ibid.*, 102.

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*, 104.

in order to have at all times a public defense, the inhabitants of every one of these United Provinces, cities and places in the country, shall be reviewed and registered, at farthest within a month after the date hereof, viz. all those that are between eighteen and sixty years of age; that their dwellings and numbers being thus known, they may, at the next meeting of this Union, be further ordered and commanded, as shall be found most proper for the protection and security of these United Provinces.⁵³⁵

Thus, van der Capellen's solution was a universal citizens' militia.⁵³⁶ To maintain the integrity of this militia, the *Address* suggests that all troops should have quality firelocks, bayonets and swords and let each regiment choose its own officers which would "prevent [citizens'] oppression and subjugation by the commander of their own troops, by their own captain-general."⁵³⁷ In short, everyone should be part of the militia, be able to choose their commanders and have the resources required to ensure that said commanders would not become too powerful.

Resulting Actions from the Address

When investigating whether these goals were met, a resulting language barrier occurred as none of the primary sources that are cited in books and articles about the Patriot Revolution have been translated from Dutch to English; however, a set of four satirical prints solved this issue with a contemporary critique on the Patriots and their revolution. Before diving into the content of the prints themselves, more context needs to be explored. All four were drawn by Johan Heinrich Ramberg. Ramberg was a Hanoverian painter, etcher, caricaturist and draughtsman who studied at the Royal Academy in London from 1781-88, supported by King George III.⁵³⁸ They were published by Thomas Harmar, a "publisher of satires," who had a shop in Piccadilly from the 1770s-90s.⁵³⁹ The prints are titled *Rehearsal in Holland* (dated 18 October 1787), *Politics inside out a Farce* (dated 21 October 1787), *Military Recreation in Holland* (dated 24 October 1787) and *Performance in Holland* (undated but captioned September and October 1787). Given the dates of Ramberg's time at the Royal Academy in London, the dates on the prints themselves and the language of the captions on the drawings (English), it is safe to assume they were intended for an English audience. Knowing that England was supportive of the Orangists in the conflict, helps explain why – as will be seen – the prints are unflattering towards the Patriots and their French allies.

After 1781, the Patriots got what they wanted in an alliance with France. This is seen in all four of Ramberg's prints: *Rehearsal*, *Military Recreation*, *Performance* and *Politics*. *Politics* provides a very clear explanation of both the English perspective of the Patriot Revolution and the various parties involved in the revolution in general. The print focuses on four men, three standing and one kneeling in the middle.⁵⁴⁰ The two men standing on the left can be identified as a Prussian soldier and an Englishman from the captions under the figures. Under the Englishman reads "English: confess yourself a French dog!"⁵⁴¹ Under the Prussian reads "Prussian: Orange for ever! and respect to the Ladies..." alluding to Frederick William's reasoning for getting directly involved in the conflict – the capture of his sister the Princess of Orange.⁵⁴²

⁵³⁵ Van der Capellen, *An Address to the People of the Netherlands*, 36.

⁵³⁶ Brake, "Popular Politics and the Dutch Patriot Revolution," 209.

⁵³⁷ Van der Capellen, *An Address to the People of the Netherlands*, 102.

⁵³⁸ The British Museum, "Johann Heinrich Ramberg," Information Page via <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/term/BIOG43056>.

⁵³⁹ The British Museum, "Thomas Harmar," Information Page via <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/term/BIOG146980>.

⁵⁴⁰ Johann Heinrich Ramberg, "Politics inside-out- a farce," Published by Thomas Harmar, 1787, The British Museum.

⁵⁴¹ *Ibid.*,

⁵⁴² *Ibid.*,

The English and Prussian working together symbolise the English and Prussian-backed Orangists. The other two figures represent the failed French-backed Patriot alliance. The kneeling man can be identified as a Patriot by his hat and the caption directly under the figure which reads “Dutch: help me out Monsieur! you brought me in...”⁵⁴³ The final figure is a man standing on the right holding his hat under his arm and presenting an empty bag or netting of sorts.⁵⁴⁴ Under the Frenchman reads “Frenchm: Me beg to be excused. Bygar me have nothing to give; & me remember the Duke of Bronsvic, Pitt, Rosbac & Minden.” Based on the way Ramberg drew the Frenchman in *Politics*, the figure can also be seen in the background of *Performance* and *Military Recreation*.

Rehearsal and *Performance* show the French unflatteringly mimicking the Patriots. In both prints, there are Dutch Patriots with weapons fighting and fleeing.⁵⁴⁵ On the ground, and crawling up their legs, are a collection of frogs – frogs being a classic allusion to the French.⁵⁴⁶ In *Rehearsal*, three of the frogs standing on the bank of the water can be seen holding sticks.⁵⁴⁷ Two of the frogs are standing at attention with their stick on their shoulder, mimicking how a soldier is at attention, while the third is squatting pointing the stick, similar to how one of the Patriots is holding his gun.⁵⁴⁸ Upon close examination, the frogs have also been drawn in *Performance*; while the Patriots are fleeing from the mounted Prussian soldier, the frogs are on the ground.⁵⁴⁹ One is on its back, perhaps dead, while the others – again copying the Patriots – are crawling over each other trying to escape; the expressions of fear on the Patriots' faces are mirrored on those of the frogs.⁵⁵⁰ In the background of *Performance*, there is a wigged man with his hat under his arm, hands in the air running away; almost identical to the *Politics* drawing of a Frenchman, it can be deduced that this is also a Frenchman retreating.⁵⁵¹ *Military Recreation* shows the same English and French figures from *Politics* but this time standing on a wall looking down at Prussian soldiers throwing a Patriot around on a sheet.⁵⁵² The Englishman is holding the Frenchman's wig, forcing him to look down at the Prussians. The Frenchman's face is terrified, and he has even dropped his snuffbox at the sight.⁵⁵³ The Englishman by contrast is looking a little smug and happy to rub France's nose in losing another conflict to the English.

The prints also provide perspective on the realities of van der Capellen's desire for military reform. As discussed, one of the *Address*' complaints about the military under the current Stadholder regime was the waiving of Article VIII in the original 1579 Union of Utrecht agreement.⁵⁵⁴ The creation of the Free Corps shows that van der Capellen's suggestion of a citizen militia was met. Although most transitions of power were peaceful throughout the provinces, the Free Corps was seemingly feeling confident in themselves which can be seen in *Rehearsal*.⁵⁵⁵ As its name suggests, *Rehearsal in Holland* is a print of Dutch Patriots and French frogs rehearsing for conflict. If the print is divided into vertical thirds, the right third shows a stone wall with a crude drawing of an advancing Prussian soldier.⁵⁵⁶ The middle third shows Patriots shooting their rifles at the advancing Prussian, and the left third shows an abundance of Patriots

⁵⁴³ Ibid.,

⁵⁴⁴ Ramberg, “Politics inside-out- a farce.”

⁵⁴⁵ Johann Heinrich Ramberg, “Performance in Holland in Sept. & Oct. 1787,” Published by Thomas Harmar, 1787, The British Museum; Johann Heinrich Ramberg, “Rehearsal in Holland 1787,” Published by Thomas Harmar, 1787, The British Museum.

⁵⁴⁶ Ramberg, “Performance in Holland in Sept. & Oct. 1787”; Ramberg, “Rehearsal in Holland 1787.”

⁵⁴⁷ Ramberg, “Rehearsal in Holland 1787.”

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁹ Ramberg, “Performance in Holland in Sept. & Oct. 1787.”

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁵¹ Ramberg, “Performance in Holland in Sept. & Oct. 1787”; Ramberg, “Politics inside-out- a farce.”

⁵⁵² Johann Heinrich Ramberg, “Military Recreation in Holland,” Published by Thomas Harmar, 1787, The British Museum.

⁵⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁴ Nicolaas C. F. van de Sas, “The Patriot Revolution: New Perspectives,” In *The Dutch Republic in the Eighteenth-Century*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2020), 110.

⁵⁵⁵ Brake, “Popular Politics and the Dutch Patriot Revolution,” 214.

⁵⁵⁶ Ramberg, “Rehearsal in Holland 1787.”

with assorted weapons, and a trumpet, waiting for their turn.⁵⁵⁷ In the background, behind the stone wall with the Prussian drawing is a windmill – an explicit sign that the soldiers are in the Dutch Republic. The underlying sentiment in this print is the cockiness with which the Patriots are practising and preparing for war. None look too worried; some even appear happy and excited for their turn to shoot at the Prussian. Contrasting the confidence shown in *Rehearsal, Performance* and *Military Recreation*, shows what happened when the Prussians did arrive.

Performance shows the domination of the Prussian forces when they invaded the Dutch Republic. Again, dividing the print into vertical thirds, on the right third is a fearsome Prussian soldier mounted on a rearing horse, waving his sword.⁵⁵⁸ In the middle third, there are four distinct figures. In the foreground is a Patriot who has fallen over and is laying on his back.⁵⁵⁹ Behind him are three Patriots falling over each other trying to turn and run away from the Prussian – all with terrified expressions on their faces.⁵⁶⁰ Finally, in the left third is a collection of Patriots kneeling with their hands clasped together in prayer; behind the praying Patriots are the backs of men running away.⁵⁶¹ In front, the French frogs are hopping away as fast as possible. Gone is the cockiness and excitement for battle. In its place, the Free Corps are being shown as unprepared amateurs frightened by conflict. As already explained in *Military Recreation*, there are a group of Prussian soldiers tossing a Dutch Patriot in the air on a sheet.⁵⁶² This shows that instead of training, or fighting, the Prussian army is playing with their supposed opposition. In the print, the Prussian soldiers all have smiles on their faces, emphasising the ease with which they overran the Patriot forces. The title also indicates that the Prussian army had time for recreational activities in Holland – ‘recreational’ being the key word because it means the Prussians did not feel the need to be working (fighting) the entire time. The implication of these two prints is clear: not only did the Patriots lose, but the Prussians completely and totally dominated.

Conclusion

On 10 October 1787, after a 10-day siege of Amsterdam, the last Patriot resistance fell; against the 26,000 Prussians, the 9,000 Patriot soldiers froze and “years of parades, drills, Free Corps manoeuvres, and martial ballyhoo simply disappeared in the general terror at the advancement of the Prussian armies.”⁵⁶³ With this invasion, six years of revolutionary activity ended in one fell swoop because William V was reinstated with all his original powers as Stadholder and the Patriots were driven out of the Republic.⁵⁶⁴ Although commonly overlooked now – and very much overshadowed by the French Revolution that started two years later – the Patriotic Revolution deserves acknowledgement. Wayne Brake has described it as the “most forceful challenge to Europe’s old regime before the French revolution of 1789.”⁵⁶⁵ *Aan het Volk van Nederlands* became the rousing call to action, an instruction manual that deserves recognition as a publication that achieved what it set out to do – in the short term at least.

The Patriots were successful in ending their alliance with England in favour of one with France. It was unfortunate for the Patriots that the English went on to support their enemies, but there is no arguing that the first of van der Capellen’s goals was achieved. The second, a revamping of the military, also happened. There were groups of Free Corps participants in towns and cities across the country. The Corps was filled with everyday citizens, just like Article VIII had stipulated. Johann Heinrich Ramberg’s prints published in the weeks following the fall of Amsterdam articulate, albeit from an unflattering

⁵⁵⁷ Ramberg, “Rehearsal in Holland 1787.”

⁵⁵⁸ Ramberg, “Performance in Holland in Sept. & Oct. 1787.”

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid.

⁵⁶² Ramberg, “Military Recreation in Holland.”

⁵⁶³ Schama, *Patriots and Liberators: Revolution in the Netherlands, 1780-1813*, 129.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid., 131.

⁵⁶⁵ Brake, “Provincial Histories and National Revolution in the Dutch Republic,” 61.

English-Orangist perspective, the successes and failures of the Patriots concerning the *Address's* original goals. The prints show the Patriots' alliance with France and the newly created Free Corps preparing for battle. They also show the completely disastrous ending for the Patriots, signalling the failure of the sought-after alliance with France; this abrupt ending may overshadow the Patriots' achievements up to September 1787, but the revolution from 1781-1787 showed an ardent desire for change which reappeared in the 1790s.

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