

## Chapter 30

# Hidden in the Bushes: The Teutonic Order of the Bailiwick of Utrecht in the 1780–1806 Revolutionary Period

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Twice a year, the members of the Knightly Teutonic Order of the Bailiwick of Utrecht meet in the house that was built for them over 650 years ago. They come together to discuss their centuries-old possessions and the charities they finance with the proceeds. The fact that the Teutonic Order still exists in Utrecht is more a miracle than the logical outcome of events. The Bailiwick of Utrecht barely managed to survive the period of the Reformation and the Dutch Revolt against Spain, but it did become separated from the central organization. Hans Mol reported on this in the proceedings of the 2004 conference on the military orders and the Reformation,<sup>1</sup> and the problem has been studied in further detail by Daniela Gröger-Schiemann in her 2009 dissertation.<sup>2</sup>

Slightly less than two centuries after surviving the Reformation, the Bailiwick was affected by the new storms that swept the European continent. The revolution that had started in North America brought fundamental social change to much of Europe. 'Freedom, equality and fraternity' became a rallying cry against privilege that was transmitted by birth, privilege that had hitherto been self-evident. Institutions that were based on such privilege, including the military orders, were under threat. The revolutionary leader who meted out the harshest treatment on such institutions was Napoleon Bonaparte: in February 1811, having already dispersed the Knights of Malta and dissolved the Teutonic Order in Germany, he disbanded the Bailiwick of Utrecht, a decision that was to be reversed by the Dutch king, William I, four-and-a-half years later. This article focuses on one of the key aspects of this period: the approach to revolutionary developments taken by the Bailiwick of Utrecht in the years before 1806 when Napoleon's brother Louis was crowned king of Holland. After briefly outlining the history of the Bailiwick until

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<sup>1</sup> J.A. Mol, 'Trying to Survive: The Military Orders in Utrecht, 1580–1620', in J.A. Mol, K. Millitzer and H.J. Nicholson (eds), *The Military Orders and the Reformation. Choices, State Building and the Weight of Tradition* (Hilversum, 2006), pp. 181–207.

<sup>2</sup> D. Gröger-Schiemann, 'Die Deutschordensballei Utrecht während der Reformationszeit', diss., Ruhr-Universität Bochum, 2009.

the revolutionary period, I shall examine successive phases of these developments, and describe how the Bailiwick responded to them.

### The Bailiwick of Utrecht until the Revolutionary Period

The Teutonic Order had gained property in the northern Netherlands within only a few decades of its foundation at the end of the twelfth century. Initially the Utrecht commandery was under the authority of the land commander of Alden Biesen; later it became an independent bailiwick. In 1346, the Utrecht land commandery received new quarters inside the city walls. There it remained down the centuries, and there it returned in 1995.

In the late Middle Ages, the Bailiwick was not fundamentally different from the Holy Roman Empire's eleven other bailiwicks. But the sixteenth century was to bring significant changes. Between 1516 and 1543 – the period in which the secularization of Prussia by Grand Master Albrecht of Brandenburg plunged the Teutonic Order into an unprecedented crisis – the emperor Charles V's territorial expansion in the Netherlands brought all the possessions of the Bailiwick of Utrecht under direct Habsburg control.

The rising that broke out some decades later against Charles's son Philip II isolated the Utrecht knights from the monarch, the Bailiwick's sovereign, increasing its separation from any central authority. After Philip had been abjured as sovereign in 1581, the States of Utrecht appointed themselves in his stead, and, following the example of the other rebellious provinces, forbade Catholic worship. Very much against this current, the Bailiwick of Utrecht strove to retain its Catholic identity, and also its links with the grand master of the Teutonic Order. This brought it into conflict with the new Dutch Republic in its struggle against the Habsburgs, and by 1620 the States of Utrecht had imposed a Protestant land commander.<sup>3</sup>

There were, however, still Catholic members, and ties with the grand master in Mergentheim had not yet been broken. Although the knights were still bound by the vow of celibacy, the situation changed in 1640 when the States of Utrecht granted them permission to marry.<sup>4</sup> This brought rupture with Mergentheim – permanently, as it proved; attempts to heal the rift continued until 1805, but were in vain.<sup>5</sup> Within the Dutch Republic, the Bailiwick of Utrecht thus developed into an organization of lay nobles. Its loyalty to the political order was guaranteed by the land commanders, who occupied central positions in the Dutch Republic. As

<sup>3</sup> Mol, p. 202.

<sup>4</sup> J.J. de Geer tot Oudegein, *Archieven der Ridderlijke Duitse Orde, Balie van Utrecht sedert 1581* ('s-Gravenhage, 1871), 1, cxiii; H. Biesma, *Ridders in een klooster. Het Duitse Huis in Utrecht* (Utrecht, 1999), p. 32; J.H. de Vey Mestdagh, *De Utrechtse Balije der Duitse Orde. Ruim 750 jaar geschiedenis van de Orde in de Nederlanden* (Utrecht-Alden Biesen, 1988), p. 44.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.; U. Arnold, *Deutscher Orden 1190–2000* (Bad Mergentheim, 2004), p. 79.

members of the Provincial States or as army officers, the commanders – who now had to belong to the official Dutch Reformed Church – were also part of this order.

The procedures for admission to the Bailiwick showed that the earlier traditions had been adapted to the new reality. Candidates were put forward as children by the incumbent commanders. Upon reaching adulthood, they could, provided they fulfilled a number of conditions, be raised to the rank of *jonkheer* (esquire). One such condition was to have four noble quarters (i.e. four noble grandparents); another was to be a member of the Dutch Reformed Church. Whenever the death of a commander caused a shift in the chapter, the oldest *jonkheer* could accede. First, however, this move had to be affirmed in a meeting of the chapter. The assent of the States of Utrecht was also required.

Although a commander was supposed to live at his commandery, this requirement tended to happen less and less, and management of the commanderies was left to local officials. The buildings fell into disrepair, and many of them were eventually disposed of. In the absence of clear control, the Order's finances descended into chaos. The admission of new members also left much to be desired. Eventually the procedures for arranging a commander's succession were so poor that interregnums became inevitable. By the middle of the eighteenth century, the bastions of nobility were at risk.

A first move towards turning the tide came in 1740 with the adoption of rules for admission that stressed the conditions requiring that a candidate should have four legal noble quarters and be of the Dutch Reformed faith. Some ten years later the rules were tightened further in a thorough overhaul inspired by the coadjutor, Count Unico Wilhelm van Wassenaer van Twickel (1692–1766), who, during the meeting of the chapter in 1753, had analysed the problems facing the Order. He was charged with the search for solutions. His plan included far-reaching changes to the Order's administration, bookkeeping and property management. The latter would be put into the hands of a steward-general. According to their rank, which was to be determined on the basis of seniority, the commanders would henceforth receive an annual stipend, and, if there was any surplus, also a bonus. The count's committee also proposed how duties should be divided between the steward and the secretary, who would also be paid a stipend. To avoid interregnums, the land commander would automatically be succeeded by the coadjutor. At the following meeting of the chapter, the committee's proposals were accepted. They then had to be submitted to the sovereign, the States of Utrecht, which, after lengthy deliberations, eventually agreed.

The new structure was quick to deliver results. While the first annual accounts – for 1762 – showed a deficit of 1,396 guilders, those from 1763 onwards showed a surplus.<sup>6</sup> In the years that followed, this surplus increased rapidly, so much so that in 1783 the stipends could be raised. The growing surpluses were due primarily to rising incomes from leased land. The steward, Gijsbert Dirk Cazijs (1722–1804),

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<sup>6</sup> Archief Ridderlijke Duitse Orde Balije van Utrecht (ARDOU-OA) 337 dl. 2 (1763) en dl. 3 (1764).

not only ensured that these were actually collected, but also that the rent rose when a lease was renewed.

The times were favourable. Grain and dairy prices rose in the years after 1765, and there was also a fall in the frequency of flooding, livestock epidemics and other disasters that had plagued the earlier part of the century.<sup>7</sup> Farmers thus had less difficulty in paying for higher leases. Cazius's proactive approach to rent collection and his careful administration of income and expenditure began to bear fruit. While the commanders' stipends were the greatest cost item, increasing sums could also be spent on the maintenance of buildings, thereby putting an end to their deterioration.

### Revolution and Restoration in the Netherlands

In 1780 the Bailiwick of Utrecht was therefore in much better shape than it had been some decades earlier – and also much better prepared for the difficult times that lay ahead. The Dutch Republic was now afflicted by a revolution born out of dissatisfaction with the regime of Stadtholder William V and his aristocratic and patrician regents. Some of these – men such as Count Johan Walraat van Welderen (1725–1807) and Baron Joost Taets van Amerongen van Natewisch (1726–91) – were members of the Teutonic Order.

The fact that this dissatisfaction came to a head had much to do with the American struggle for independence, for which there was considerable sympathy in the Netherlands.<sup>8</sup> As arms deliveries to America were also a good source of income for Amsterdam's merchants, relations with Great Britain became strained. Despite attempts to avert it by Stadtholder William V and the Dutch envoy in Westminster, the Count van Welderen referred to above, war broke out in late 1780. For the Netherlands, the results were disastrous. The British, with their control of the seas, were able to close off trading routes with catastrophic consequences for an economy that was already sickly. Trade and industry slumped, unemployment rose rapidly, and war boosted food prices, which had been rising already. The result was widespread poverty.

The scapegoat for this misery was soon found: Stadtholder William V, whose position on foreign policy and whose family connections with George III made him appear pro-British, and thus a traitor. Nor could he be trusted in his capacity as Captain-General of the Dutch army, partly because of its many foreign mercenaries

<sup>7</sup> R.J.N. Rommes, 'Werken op het platteland', in C. Dekker *et al.* (eds), *Geschiedenis van de provincie Utrecht* (Utrecht, 1997), 2, p. 186; J. de Vries and A. van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy: Success, Failure and Perseverance of the Dutch Economy, 1500–1800* (New York, 1996), pp. 270–74.

<sup>8</sup> S. Schama, *Patriots and Liberators: Revolution in the Netherlands 1780–1813* (New York, 1977); J. Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall, 1477–1806* (Oxford, 1995), p. 1210.

and officers. For this reason discontented citizens naming themselves Patriots after the American model insisted on being armed. The civic militias, which had fallen into disuse, were re-established. Citizens also drilled in associations known as Free Corps, the key element in this movement being the Free Corps of the city of Utrecht. It was not long before citizens made demands for a greater part in their government. The Utrecht Patriots demanded an elected city council, a demand that was repeated elsewhere.

After the civic militia had assumed power in August 1786, a democratic constitution was adopted in Utrecht. The States of Utrecht split into two: a revolutionary faction in Utrecht and a pro-stadtholder faction in nearby Amersfoort. The result in Utrecht was crucial to the Dutch Republic as a whole. Three provinces – Holland, Overijssel and Groningen – were dedicated to the revolution, while a majority in three others – Gelderland, Friesland and Zeeland – remained loyal to the stadtholder. Utrecht was divided.

Soon after power had been seized, the chapter of the Bailiwick of Utrecht met in the revolutionary city. In the only reference to the revolution contained in their resolutions, Prince Charles Louis of Anhalt-Bernburg-Schaumburg-Hoym (1723–1806), who had recently assumed the position of land commander, noted that, ‘owing to the current situation, seven Lord Commanders were not present’.<sup>9</sup>

Politically, the chapter meeting took no position, although most of its members were inclined towards the stadtholder. As well as the members referred to above – van Welderen and Taets van Amerongen – four other commanders were confidants of the stadtholder: Arend Sloet tot Tweënijenhuisen (1722–86), Count Sigismund Vincent Lodewijk Gustaaf van Heiden-Hompesch (1731–90), Baron Arend van Raesfelt (1725–1807), and Baron Jacob Derk van Heeckeren van Kell (1730–95). Land Commander Van Anhalt even had family connections with William V, although he was no longer active in the Dutch Republic: after a career in the Dutch army, he had returned to Germany to succeed his father as prince of the family’s mini-state. The pro-stadtholder majority in the chapter was not opposed by any real supporters of the revolution, although four members from Gelderland were undecided or, if anything, slightly inclined towards the Patriots.

Dutch politics were in stalemate. The irresolute stadtholder was unable to restore order. After consultations with the British ambassador, the stadtholder’s wife, Wilhelmina of Prussia, wanted to lead a popular uprising in The Hague, but her way there was barred by a Free Corps. She was sent back to Nijmegen where the stadtholder’s family was residing. She asked her brother, Frederick William II of Prussia, to avenge this disgrace. His ultimatum to the States of Holland was followed by feverish diplomacy. When it became apparent that Prussia and the Dutch stadtholder had the unconditional support of Great Britain, and that France was unable to come to the aid of the Patriots, Frederick William decided on

<sup>9</sup> ‘door de omstandigheden des tijds zeven Heren Commanders niet present geweest zijn’: ARDOU-OA 11, Resolutiën van de landcommanderij van Utrecht (1561–1827), deel 3, fol. 212v.

armed action. In September 1787, he brought the revolution to an end. Thousands of Patriots fled abroad. Among them were two sons of a commander who had belonged to the group of doubters identified above and who, unlike their father, had declared their support for the revolution.

### The Shadow of the Bastille

Most of the refugees eventually ended up in France, where, not long afterwards, the next phase of the transatlantic democratic revolution was to begin. After financial problems had caused Louis XVI to convoke the States General, the pace of events accelerated until they reached their dramatic climax in the storming of the Bastille on 14 July 1789.

The decisions to abolish feudal rights and to confiscate church property were of enormous importance. The latter was to prove a mortal threat to the military orders. First to be affected was the property of the Teutonic Order on French soil, in Alsace. Next came the Order of the Knights of St John in France. Then, when war was declared on Austria and Prussia, and the radicalizing revolution thus began to be exported, the property of the Teutonic Order in the Rhineland and the Austrian Netherlands was threatened. The definitive conquest of these regions in the second half of 1794 led to the confiscation of property of five bailiwicks: Alden Biesen, Alsace-Burgundy, Lorraine, Coblenz and Franconia. Grand Master Maximilian Francis, who was also archbishop of Cologne, had to flee.<sup>10</sup>

In the meantime, the French had declared war on the British king and the Dutch stadtholder, whose troops in the Austrian Netherlands initially stood firm. In the autumn of 1794, however, the French moved into the territory of the Dutch Republic. At first the region's great rivers seemed to present a barrier, but heavy frosts soon enabled the French troops to advance unhindered. Resistance collapsed quickly. On 18 January 1795, William V fled to England, followed by a small number of his supporters, including Johan Walraat van Welderen. Another member of the Utrecht chapter, Jan Carel van der Borch, was William's envoy in Sweden, where he sought asylum. Robespierre's reign of terror had ended only six months earlier, and the refugees feared they would suffer the fate of their French counterparts.

Some of those proclaiming the Batavian Revolution did indeed advocate severe measures against former rulers. But while the latter lost their positions in government, more moderate revolutionaries, supported by the French authorities, ensured that they lost neither their lives nor their freedom. In fact, the sole focus of revolutionary fury was the dead: in Utrecht, Leeuwarden and elsewhere, the graves

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<sup>10</sup> K. Oldenhagen, *Kurfürst-Erzherzog Maximilian Franz als Hoch- und Deutschmeister (1780–1801)* (Bad Godesberg, 1969).

of aristocrats were despoiled.<sup>11</sup> Among the bones that rolled through the churches were those of earlier land commanders of the Teutonic Order and their kin.

The authorities responded to plunderers with severity. The primary concerns of the French were to receive contributions to the cost of the war and to the care of their troops; the primary concern of the Batavian rulers was to build a new democratic government based on the principles of the revolution.<sup>12</sup> The remaining nobles and patricians kept a low profile; if those of them who were sympathetic to the revolution participated in the elected bodies, they did so only as individuals. As a class, the aristocracy was finished: governing bodies composed on the basis of class – such as the States of Utrecht, the sovereign of the Teutonic Order – were replaced by elected revolutionary bodies such as the Representatives of the Land of Utrecht.<sup>13</sup>

The Teutonic Order, too, lay low. The chapter no longer met; everything was left to the secretary and the steward-general. But at the end of the first year of the revolution, Utrecht's provincial government started to take an interest in it. On 19 December 1795, the government discussed a request by the province of Gelderland to 'examine the affairs of the so-called Teutonic Order'.<sup>14</sup>

Overall Utrecht's administration had little desire for the consultation requested by their counterparts in Gelderland. In this particular case, however, they took action. On 2 February 1796 they summoned the Order's secretary, Willem Jacob van Nes, and presented him with an order forbidding him to make further payments without authorization. Van Nes stated that, as it was not permitted to send letters abroad, where the majority of the chapter's most important members resided, he had been unable to consult the commanders. He was also of the opinion that this ban 'in no way applied to the Teutonic Order'.<sup>15</sup> He asked respectfully how he was to proceed, and was ordered to halt payments until a committee had advised on the matter.

Its answer came within ten days. The committee's members had examined 'whether and to what extent the Representatives can and may concern themselves with the management of private business',<sup>16</sup> and it was decided that the Bailiwick

<sup>11</sup> R.E. de Bruin, *Burgers op het kussen. Volkssoevereiniteit en bestuurssamenstelling in de stad Utrecht 1795–1813* (Zutphen, 1986), p. 46; J. Kuiper, *Een revolutie ontrafeld. Politiek in Friesland 1795–1798* (Franeker, 2002), pp. 78–9.

<sup>12</sup> Schama, *Patriots and Liberators*, p. 199.

<sup>13</sup> R.E. de Bruin, *We and our Successors shall do Justice by All. Provincial Government in Utrecht: A Historical Perspective* (Utrecht, 2003), pp. 102–3.

<sup>14</sup> 'door de omstandigheden des tijds zeven Heren Commanders niet present geweest zijn': Het Utrechts Archief (HUA) 233, Staten van Utrecht 1581–1810, 1071–7, Lappennotulen van Gedeputeerden van de Provisionele Representanten en de Representanten, 19-12-1795, bijlage 2 (brief 16-12-1795).

<sup>15</sup> 'de Duitse Order geenzints specteerde': HUA 233, Staten van Utrecht 1581–1810, 1071–8, 2-2-1796, fol. 1.

<sup>16</sup> 'of en in hoeverre de Representanten zich met de domestieke huyshoudinge derzelve mogen en kunnen inlaten': *ibid.*

of Utrecht was a private organization whose properties had been acquired through purchase and donations, and that the province of Utrecht was not authorized to intervene in its affairs. In the context of the revolution, this was a crucial judgement. Private property was held in deep respect, and the position of the Order had now been considerably strengthened.

The recognition of a body that administered private assets could have several consequences, including fiscal ones. Due especially to the financial demands imposed by the French, the Batavian Republic was perpetually short of funds; to meet its shortfalls, it decided to levy a wealth tax.<sup>17</sup> While individuals were to be assessed for this, organizations such as orphanages and charitable hospitals, and, potentially, the Order were not – a state of affairs that some people thought unjust. In January 1797, a member of the newly elected Provincial Government asked whether such institutions should not also contribute. While no action was taken, the payment by the Bailiwick of Utrecht of a total of 12,000 guilders to the provinces of Utrecht and Gelderland nonetheless resembled some kind of settlement.

The Order would have had little difficulty in paying such a sum. In the years after 1795, steward-general Unico Willem Teutonicus Cazius (1766–1832), who had succeeded his father in 1789, pursued the same policies that had been successful in preceding years. Between 1795 and 1800, annual incomes rose from 45,117 to 48,090 guilders, while expenditure rose from 37,352 to only 38,504 guilders.<sup>18</sup> As well as the stipends, whose payment continued after some hesitation in early 1796, expenditures included land taxes and the maintenance of real estate. These applied not only to the farms under lease, but also to the *Duitse Huis* or ‘Teutonic House’.

Living in the latter was not only the steward-general, but also *jonkheer* (esquire) Volkier Rudolf Bentinck van Schoonheten (1738–1820), who had asked for permission in 1792 to use one of its rooms as a *pied-à-terre*. Protection against any plans for the house’s confiscation was provided by the fact that it was not only well maintained but also in use as a private residence. It is true that the Order had to agree to French troops being quartered there, but that was nothing unusual: the same applied to many other houses in Utrecht.

### Back in the Open

Thanks to its low-profile policy, the Bailiwick of Utrecht did not even come to harm during the radical phase of the Batavian Revolution, which started in January 1798. After a *coup d’état*, the Batavia Republic was converted into a unitary state after the French model in which the historic provinces were replaced with departments

<sup>17</sup> S. Schama, ‘The Exigencies of War and the Politics of Taxation in the Netherlands, 1795–1810’, in J.M. Winter (ed.), *War and Economic Development: Essays in Memory of David Joslin* (Cambridge, 1975), pp. 103–29.

<sup>18</sup> ARDOU-OA 342 (1795–1800).



named after rivers. With this, the political environment in which the Teutonic Order was rooted disappeared. Quietly, the Order's members awaited better times.

These duly arrived. In 1801, after two more *coups d'état*, the revolution was partially reversed. The old provinces were reinstated, officially as 'departments', and supporters of the banished stadtholder were allowed to resume political activities. The Knights of the Teutonic Order also risked a new meeting. Together with the two *jonkheren* who had been appointed during the last meeting in 1791, the four surviving commanders were invited by Land Commander Charles Louis van Anhalt to convene in Utrecht in a meeting of the chapter on 16 August 1802. Two of the commanders did not attend – the coadjutor, Johan Walraat van Welderen, who was living in London, and the 83-year-old commander of Maasland, Wolter Godefried van Neukirchen genaamd Nyvemheim –, but the other two did: Baron Herman Willem Jan van Lynden and Baron Arend van Raesfelt. So, too, did the two *jonkheren* (Baron Volkier Rudolph Bentinck and Baron Gijsbert Jan van Pallandt), as well as the land commander himself.

To fill the vacancies in the chapter that had been created by decease, the two *jonkheren* were raised to commander. Four additional commanders were appointed, as well as two new *jonkheren*. Two of the former had served the Batavian Revolution, Baron Jan Arend de Vos van Steenwijk as a parliamentarian, and Baron Frederik Gijsbert van Dedem van de Gelder as ambassador in Constantinople. In sharp contrast, one other new member, Baron August Robbert van Heeckeren van Suyderas, had fought against the revolution while in exile, and, in 1799, had even led an unsuccessful invasion into the eastern Netherlands, when a British and Russian army threatened the Batavian Republic in the north-west. The nomination of another 'émigré', Baron Frederik Christiaan van Reede van Athlone, a member of the British House of Lords, was barred on the grounds of an appeal based on insufficient proof of ancestry.

With regard to financial matters, the meeting of the chapter in August 1802 had to deal with a considerable backlog of paperwork that had accumulated over the previous years. These were offset by considerable surpluses – good news after such worrying times. The chapter expressed 'the satisfaction of those present' ('het genoegen van dese vergadering') with the steward 'for his conduct, for the lengths to which he went to preserve this Order and to maintain its rights and interests in the recent difficult times, and for his faithful administration of its property'.<sup>19</sup> He was given a fine gift: a solid gold snuffbox worth 400 guilders. The secretary was offered the same, but asked to be given money instead.

As it was Bentinck who had to implement the decisions of the chapter, there can be little doubt that he was its key figure. In this sense it was therefore convenient that he still lived at the Duitse Huis. The building now assumed a certain permanence; Bentinck was even exempted from paying rent for it (which

<sup>19</sup> 'wegens zijn gedrag, en aangewende pogingen, tot conservatie van dese order, en het handhaven van deszelfs rechten en belangen in de laadst verlopen moeilijke tijden, alsmede wegens zijne getrouwe administratie der goederen': *ibid.*, 11-4, fol. 24.

in the past he had not in fact paid anyway). This formal exemption was given in recognition of ‘the many services and wise precautions taken in recent years by the Most Noble Lord V.R. Bentinck for the general preservation of this Order, and particularly for the Duitse Huis; these provided protection against misfortunes whose consequences might have been of the utmost seriousness’.<sup>20</sup> As we have seen, it was Bentinck’s residence of the Duitse Huis that had helped the Bailiwick of Utrecht survive the Batavian Revolution unscathed.

The chapter meeting of August 1802 also resolved a sensitive political problem. Before the revolution there had been intimate links with the House of Orange, which the revolution had then compromised. As part of the Bailiwick’s low-profile policy, no mention had been made of these links. After 1801, a history of sympathy to the royal house was no longer a bar to political office, but, in political terms, the position of the royalty remained problematic: the state could offer no place to an exiled stadtholder. The fact that powers such as Great Britain and the Prussians continued to insist on his return hung like the sword of Damocles over the compromise of 1801.

William V freed his supporters from this predicament by granting them permission to participate in the new establishment. In this way he also benefited the Bailiwick of Utrecht. Land Commander van Anhalt announced that the Prince of Orange ‘had requested him that no further cognizance of his Person should be taken with regard to the Teutonic Order of Bailiwicks in Utrecht’.<sup>21</sup> The members of the chapter accepted his help with gratitude: it freed them from accusations of disloyalty for failing to cold-shoulder the Batavian government – and, in its shadow, the French authorities.

Less than a year later, the Order’s policy of maintaining a low-profile in revolutionary times was articulated in explicit terms by coadjutor Johan Walraat van Welderen, who still resided in London. It came in his response to a proposal for reunion with the grand master. Many years earlier, van Welderen had already advocated this. In 1775 and again in 1791 he had even initiated concrete action to this effect, but the disasters that had befallen the country since 1795 had caused dreams of reunion to evaporate. It had now become necessary to make the best of matters; he pointed out that steward-general Cazius had ‘avec tout de prudence et de succès’ been able to manage the Order without attracting the attention of the authorities, ‘to some extent hiding us from Government scrutiny, in order to save

<sup>20</sup> ‘de menigvuldige diensten en goede voorzorg, die door den Hoog Wel Geb. Heer V.R. Bentinck, zo tot conservatie van deze Order in het gemeen, als ook met betrekking tot het Duitschen Huijs in het bijzonder gedurende de laatst verlopen jaren heeft genomen waardoor veele onaengenaamheden zijn verhoed, die van de nadeeligste gevolgen hadden kunnen zijn’: *ibid.*, 11-4, fol. 39.

<sup>21</sup> ‘hem verzogt hadde, dat geene verdere notitie van zijn Persoon concerneerende de Deutsche Orden der Balije binnen Utrecht mogte genomen worden’: *ibid.*, 11-4, fol. 38.

us through the bushes, as one says'.<sup>22</sup> The best way of guaranteeing the survival of the Bailiwick, van Welderen maintained, was by continuing this policy. The idea of not doing so perturbed him greatly. In the end, however, nothing came of this last attempt to heal the 1640 rupture.

## Conclusion

Van Welderen was right to observe that the best strategy for survival was by not attracting the attention of the revolutionary regimes. The philosophy of the revolution was diametrically opposed to that of the military orders, which was deeply rooted in the Ancien Régime and even in its most reprehensible feudal and ecclesiastical aspects.

As we have seen above, the French confiscated the property of the Teutonic Order and the Order of the Knights of St John, not only in France, but also in the lands they occupied between 1792 and 1795. Napoleon Bonaparte, who had determined the totality of French policy since 1799, bore a particular grudge against old institutions, which he was therefore glad to humiliate, strip of their assets, or even disband, two examples being the Venetian Republic and the Papal State. When dealing with Bonaparte, clumsiness could be fatal, as the Knights of Malta were to discover after the impulsive German Ferdinand von Hompesch had succeeded the circumspect Frenchman Emmanuel de Rohan in 1797. Bonaparte's conquest of the island took place in the run-up to his attack on Egypt. The policies of von Hompesch played into his hands, and in June 1798 he brought an end to the Hospitaller State in Malta.

Maximilian Francis and Charles of Austria, the grand masters of the Teutonic Order, were more careful, and managed to prevent their organization from being disbanded. With French support, the German monarchs sought to take church property – including that of the Order – in compensation for their losses on the left bank of the Rhine. However, when the matter of compensation was settled in 1803, the Teutonic Order came to no harm. Instead, the end came six years later in a brief order of the day from Napoleon.<sup>23</sup> In 1811, shortly after annexing the Netherlands, the emperor also abolished the Bailiwick of Utrecht. As the bailiwick had been able to survive until then, William I, the new Dutch king, was to reverse this decision when independence was re-established. Although this period is outside the scope of this paper, the survival strategies I have described had proved essential to the continued existence of the Teutonic Order of the Bailiwick of Utrecht.

<sup>22</sup> 'en nous dérochant en quelques sorte aux regards du Gouvernement, pour nous sauver à travers du broussilly, comme on dit': *ibid.*, 131, stuk 65.

<sup>23</sup> F. Täubl, *Der Deutsche Orden im Zeitalter Napoleons*, QuStDO 4 (Bonn, 1966), pp. 171–7.

