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## **Hidden morals, explicit scandals : public values and political corruption in the Netherlands (1748-1813)**

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## 8 Gin, Cloth, Meat: Political Corruption in the Batavian Republic (1798)<sup>33</sup>

### 8.1 Introduction

In chapter four I discussed the main changes in the organization of the state in the French-Batavian period (1795 – 1813). These changes led to a government that increasingly consisted of strong central or national and weaker provincial and more local institutions. They also led to more ‘top-down’ rather than ‘bottom-up’ administration. The beginnings of what is sometimes referred to as a ‘Napoleonic’ system of administration (cf. Lok, 2009; Van der Meer & Raadschelders, 1995; Peters, 2008; Wunder, 1995) would lead to increased bureaucratization and professionalization of the civil service and, eventually, to more government activity for a wider public sphere. The period also brought increased politicization and a changing political culture. Among the public values promoted by the Batavians were (limited) popular sovereignty, representative government, accountability and public responsibility. The fundamental institutional changes of the period were thus about more than new structures or organizations. They also included public values.

For the French-Batavian period most attention has traditionally been directed towards the introduction of new institutions such as constitution and parliament. The underlying public values have been somewhat neglected. This is a missed opportunity since we can easily hypothesize how the fundamental changes of the period were also about new public values, about new assumptions of what government was or should be, and about new views on how public officials ought to behave. Because changes in values are inherently linked to changes in structures and institutions, this period – much like the periods around 1748 (chapter six) and around the 1780s (chapter seven) – can easily be viewed as an important driver of public value change. In this eighth chapter I discuss a scandal in the context of the dramatic events during the first years of the Batavian Republic. In the wake of the two coups d’état in January and June of 1798 (see chapter four) a ‘parliamentary’ investigation was launched by the moderates of June into the actions and morals of some January radicals. The result was a scandal involving bribery, high treason and the misappropriation of public funds for private benefit in a period when many already called for improving the morals of a nation thought to be in serious (economic, military and moral) decline (see chapter five and compare a large amount of moralist Spectator literature. See Hartog, 1872; Buijnsters, 1991: 32; Van Gemert & Sturkenboom, 2001: 123-124; Kerkhoff, 2007). With a detailed historical analysis I intend to help bring out some of the public values and perceptions of political corruption in the French-Batavian period. Secondly, I also offer tentative answers regarding value change in this crucial period. This is done by means of an assessment of a hypothetical link between processes of

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<sup>33</sup> Parts of this chapter will be published in a special issue of the *Journal of Modern European History* (forthcoming, 2013) on corruption and the rise of modern politics in Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, edited by A.D.N. Kerkhoff, D.B.R. Kroeze, and G. Corni.

state-formation, democratization and politicisation of the period on the one hand, and changing public values on the other.

## 8.2 State formation, democratization and public value change

It has been suggested that corruption became an important element in public and political discourse from the end of the eighteenth century onwards. Bayly for instance wrote how the French revolution and similar occurrences throughout Europe (including, I argue, the Dutch Batavian Revolution) started debates on the nature of good government in which representations of political corruption played a central role (2004: 101, 159, 286-288). In the French case, according to Bayly, this seemed to have happened within an already existing tradition of 'civic republicanism'. For the Dutch case a similar suggestion can be made once we look at moral reform movements of the time (see chapters five and seven) which sought to tame the tyranny of the Stadholders and the regent corruption which supposedly threatened the Republic.

According to Engels (2006) corruption in Germany and France likewise became a political issue from the end of the eighteenth century onwards and notions of political corruption also started to change which, we can assume, included public value systems. For Engels, this shift occurred partly as a result of democratization and politicisation which started a debate about the best non-corrupt form of political organization with bureaucrats who would safeguard the common interest as best as possible. Similarly, Asch, Emich & Engels (2011: 7-9, 19-27) explained this change in the context of major processes of increasing bureaucratization and democratization. The idea that links existed between such processes and changing public values and perceptions of political corruption from roughly the 1790s onwards is also supported in various other recent contributions, such as those of Bösch (2009), Schattenberg (2009), Fahrmeir (2009), Kroeze (2008) and Kerckhoff et al. (2010; forthcoming). This makes it plausible and worthwhile to also hypothetically link processes of state-formation, democratization and politicisation of the French-Batavian period to changing public values. The fast rise of a centralized bureaucratic, more democratic and politicised Dutch state could well have been an active catalyst of a 'new and improved' public morality (cf. Bayly, 2004: 245-284). The latter could well have evolved in processes of constitution-building, increased parliamentary control, growing popular influence and political participation, and changing ideas of political representation based on wider notions of popular sovereignty. Closely related is the question whether processes of state-formation, democratization and politicisation in the years around 1800 also caused a shift from early modern value pluralism (the co-existence of different and separated value systems) to modern coherent political ideologies that shared a single public value system. We already saw some movement towards ethical monism in the case of chapter seven. This, we can hypothesize, is likely to have gone ahead in later decades. Early modern value pluralism has been described by Von Thiessen who has shown how parallel norms existed within sixteenth and seventeenth century societies (2009: 94-98; 2010: 205-220).

According to Von Thiessen, early modern administrators constantly had to deal with values from two distinct moral codes. The first involved legally and formally fixed norms in service of the community. The other consisted of the informal or 'face-to-face' norms of administrative praxis. Early modern diplomats, for example, were constantly finding a balance between these two (Nützenadel, 2009: 121-142; Von Thiessen, 2010: 211-212). Such balancing has also been described by Wagenaar (2010: 1-2) who examined face-to-face rules versus more

bureaucratic ones when looking at seventeenth century Dutch bailiffs. He described face-to-face rules as functioning in a society “lacking central population registrations, large state bureaucracies, police files, social security, insurance companies and so on” consisting of members who “compensated by simply knowing anyone they had to do business with, and knowing his or her family”. These highly personal and ‘particularistic’ face-to-face norms befitted a political culture dominated by particularism, collegialism and patronage (see chapter four) and could sometimes come in conflict with the impersonal and ‘universalistic’ norms that were also already attached to early modern bureaucracy. In effect, early modern times were often characterised by two separate, co-existing value systems and administrators would often be judged according to both (cf. Hoenderboom & Kerkhoff, 2008). The following case study in part assesses whether, and if so how, this early modern world of value pluralism ended around the turn of the nineteenth century. Were different and separated public value systems indeed replaced by a single public value system based on shared public values and perceptions of political corruption and, if so how or why did this happen? Answers are offered by historical institutional analysis.

### 8.3 Cases of political corruption

As soon as the moderate Interim Directorate had taken charge after the second coup d'état on 12 June 1798 (see chapter four), the leaders of the overthrown radical Provisional Directorate were arrested.<sup>34</sup> On 12 June two companies of grenadiers, led by general Daendels (who had by that time turned against the radical regime) were sent to arrest the radical leaders Stefanus Jacobus van Langen (1758 – 1847), Wybo Fijnje (1750 – 1809) and Pieter Vreede (1750 – 1837). As soldiers entered the room where the three were having dinner with Charles-Francois Delacroix – then French ambassador to the Batavian Republic – Van Langen was arrested on the spot and immediately imprisoned. Vreede and Fijnje however managed to escape through the window (Schama, 1977: 350). Vreede fled to Lierre in the Austrian Netherlands (Molhuysen, et al., 2008, part 9: 1251) and would as a result not be arrested. Wybo Fijnje turned himself in on 24 August 1798 and was, like Van Langen, imprisoned. The other two members of the Provisional Directorate, Berent Wildrik (1754 – 1831) and Johan Pieter Fokker (1755 – 1831) were also arrested but allowed to leave prison after only a few hours. Apparently they had been left out of the loop by Van Langen, Vreede and Fijnje and seem to have been members of the Executive Committee in name only (Colenbrander, 1905-1922, part II: lxxiii). Furthermore, since they had already promised to resign, they were left alone. In a letter to the French Directorate, dated 12 June 1798, the Interim Directorate of the Batavian Republic states how “les citoyens Vreede et Fijnje ont pris la fuite, le citoyen Van Langen a été le seul arrêté. Quand aux citoyens Wildrik et Fokker, indignes de la conduite affreuse de leurs collègues ils avaient déjà dormés leur demission ce matin”.<sup>35</sup>

Following the arrests of Van Langen and Fijnje, the Moderate Interim Directorate was asked by the first chamber of the Representative Assembly to launch what we might call the

<sup>34</sup> Nationaal Archief, Den Haag [NL-Na-HA], *Wetgevende Colleges 1796 – 1810*, nummer toegang 2.01.01.01, inv.nr. 509: folder with loose documents entitled “Minutes of 12 June 1798”, document number [doc. no.] 25: Warrant for the arrest of Vreede, Fijnje and Van Langen, 12/06/1798.

<sup>35</sup> Nationaal Archief, Den Haag [NL-Na-HA], *Wetgevende Colleges 1796 – 1810*, 2.01.01.01, inv.nr. 509, “Minutes of 12 June 1798”.

first ‘parliamentary’ investigation of the Netherlands into the actions of Van Langen, Fijnje and Vreede during the radical regime’s brief period in power. While initially undoubtedly designed as an instrument in the ongoing political strife between different factions, the reports and evidence published by the Interim Directorate – largely based on investigations led by attorney general Cornelis Felix van Maanen (1769 – 1846) (cf. Kluit, 1953; Molhuysen, et al., 2008, part 3: 803) offer much evidence. The radicals (mostly Van Langen and a host of ‘lesser cronies’ but Vreede and Fijnje as well) had been guilty of all kinds of wrong behaviour, ranging from high treason to financial mismanagement and abuse of public funds for private benefit.

### *Reports on political corruption*

The main report (Pijman, et al., 1798) – hereafter called *Memorie* – was presented on 1 August 1798 and describes events leading up to and during the radical regime’s six months in power. It provides unique views on what was thought to be unacceptable public official behaviour at a time when the newly formed Batavian Republic was still trying to find its bearings. Despite (or perhaps because of) the fact that the case against the members of the radical Directorate was at least partly politically motivated, the *Memorie* offers a view on what both moderate regime as well as the lawyer Van Maanen believed to be wrong or ‘corrupt’ behaviour. Still, because the *Memorie* also served a particular purpose (to incriminate political adversaries) it most likely deliberately withheld or even changed some information (Colenbrander, 1905-1922, part II: xii). Therefore, the following makes use of other documents as well. These are, mainly, the so-called *Authentique bylagen tot den 12 Junij* (*Authentic appendices to the events of 12 June*)<sup>36</sup> made public by the Interim Directorate in eighteen separate issues in 1798 containing incriminating evidence (letters, bills of exchange, lists of expenses etc.) against Van Langen and others. Other documents used in the following were gathered and organized by Colenbrander.

### *Use of public funds for private benefit*

When planning their coup of 22 January, Van Langen, Vreede, Fijnje and Theodorus van Leeuwen (on Van Leeuwen see Colenbrander, 1905-1922, part II: xlix; Geyl, 1948-1959: 473; Schama, 1977: 287) knew they needed French support and money. Past experience had taught them that French assistance would not be cheap (in 1795 the French had already ‘asked’ the Batavians for a hundred million florins – three times the amount of the Dutch annual tax income at the time. Cf. Pfeil, 1998: 126). When radicals in France took control in a coup on 4 September 1797 – after a Royalist conspiracy against the French revolution had been unveiled (cf. Rosendaal, 2005b: 21) – the radical democrats in the Batavian Republic saw an opportunity to get support for their own plans from a French Directorate of kindred spirit (cf. Geyl, 1948-1959: 472). The very first steps in approaching the French were not so much taken by Van Langen and co. but by an eclectic collection of individuals, aptly dubbed by Schama as the “Eykenbroek-Eberstein circle” (1977: 298), who functioned as intermediaries between the French and the Dutch radicals. Members of the circle included Jan Eykenbroek, Hobbe van Eberstein, Hendrik Nobbe, Wouter Struyk, Anthonie Boeseken, Brahain Ducange, and A.H. Bode. Some, like Eykenbroek and Eberstein, were returned Patriots who had fled the Republic

<sup>36</sup> See NL-HaNA, 2.01.01.01, inv.nr 509 and NL-NaHA, *Collectie 039 Gagel, 1752-1820*, 2.21.005.39, inv.nr. 172. Present there are issues 1, 2, 3 and 7.

after the 1787 Orangist crackdown. Others, like Bode, Boeseken and Nobbe were ‘Amsterdam Jacobins’, fierce unitarians and members of Batavian clubs such as “Letter Z” (Molhuysen, et al., 2008, part 1: 1384) which were largely responsible for purging the Amsterdam Primary Assembly (cf. Schama, 1977: 330). Despite some variation among these men they all belonged to what Schama has called “the throng of fortune hunters and office-mongers as well as more down-at-heel but reputable Patriots swarming like locusts around Paris” (Schama, 1977: 284). They were politically active ‘democratic’ radicals who were also mainly driven by personal financial interests (see below). All of them hoped to capitalize on the Batavian Revolution (Colenbrander, 1905-1922, part II: xlix).

Vreede, Fijnje, Van Leeuwen and Van Langen hardly ever dealt directly with the French (this could be perceived as treason, as it later indeed would be!) but used their henchmen to convince the French into helping the radical Dutch cause. First contact with the French on behalf of the radicals seems to have been made by Bode. Attached to a letter to Vreede is a note from 27 October 1797 from Bode to Paul Barras, the most powerful member of the five man French Directorate and according to some notoriously corrupt and greedy (Molhuysen, et al., 2008, part 9: 1250; Schama, 1977: 285-287). The note reveals the first steps in negotiating with the French as it says how “the spirit is good in Holland, the majority wants the good. There is no shortage, neither of arms nor money, which will be offered to France as soon as the voice of the friends of their country is heard” (Colenbrander, 1905-1922, part II, doc. 527).<sup>ccxiii</sup> Following this initial contact, Bode, Eykenbroek and Eberstein were sent to Paris by Vreede and others for further negotiations (Colenbrander, 1905-1922, part II: xlix). Eberstein furthermore asks Ducange to act as middle man between the Eykenbroek-Eberstein circle and Charles Delacroix (Colenbrander, 1905-1922, part II: lx-lxi).

The Eykenbroek-Eberstein circle eventually managed to secure a deal with Barras. Colenbrander (1905-1922, part II: lxxv. See also Geyl, 1948-1959: 472-473) discusses the rounds of negotiations that begin with a French request for 1,000,000 guilders in return for their backing of the Dutch radicals. Eykenbroek is then authorized to get 200,000 guilders in cash (Molhuysen, et al., 2008, part 9: 1249-1250). The rest of the money will be paid in goods (gin, cloth and meat) meant as provisions for the French troops already camping in the Batavian Republic since 1795 (Kluit, 1953: 66-67; Rosendaal, 2005b: 21). Apart from the deal for French backing of the coup, another deal is also made in which the Batavians promise 1,500,000 guilders (part cash and part goods) to the French in return for acquiring territory, a trade agreement, protection for Batavian property under a neutral flag and decreasing the number of French troops on Batavian soil (Colenbrander, 1905-1922, part II, doc. 588: 717). On 11 February, Eykenbroek and Eberstein return to Paris with this offer but Barras comes up with a new one. He now wants 300,000 guilders in cash and the rest in goods for the French backing (Colenbrander, 1905-1922, part II, doc. 592) and 3,000,000 guilders for the other deal. Van Langen agrees with the first deal but reduces the second to 2,500,000 guilders. The first million would be transferred by Eykenbroek as soon as the latter was sure the French would hold up their end of the bargain (Colenbrander, 1905-1922, part II: lxxv. See also idem, doc. 588 and footnote there; Pijman, et al., 1798: 165-167; Molhuysen, et al., 2008, part 8: 1009-1010 and part 9: 1250).

For ready cash the radicals turned to the (public) funds of the former Dutch East India Company, since 1795 in the hands of the state and administered by the so-called East Indian Committee (EIC). It was convenient – but hardly a coincidence – that Van Langen was appointed member of this committee on the day of the coup on 22 January (Molhuysen, et al.,

2008, part 8: 1010) and that Fijnje was already a member (Molhuysen, et al., 2008, part 1: 906). The remaining millions to be paid to Barras were, in part, acquired through bills of exchange from the EIC. These bills were orders made by one person to another to pay money to a third person. Much like a cheque today, it was a written order by a drawer to a drawee to pay the money to a payee. In this case Van Langen – virtually the only Directorate member directly dealing with money (Molhuysen, et al., 2008, part 8: 1009) – was the drawer who ordered the drawee P. de Munnick – the secretary of the department of finance for the EIC – to pay money to the payees Eykenbroek and others who then used it to pay Barras.

In order to acquire the goods (gin, cloth and meat) for the French army the radicals turned to even more creative techniques. They decided to use their own businesses to supply these goods and pay themselves for it with EIC credit. Both Van Langen and Vreede were textile merchants who made sure their businesses would benefit from such a large order. Providing armies with equipment, clothing and food, the so-called “bonanza business of the 1790’s” (Schama, 1977: 284) was indeed lucrative. Just after 22 January 1798 Vreede already supplied a first batch of cloth to the French (Legrand, 1895: note 2 page 162; Molhuysen, et al., 2008, part 9: 1249) and paid himself for it with EIC credit. Van Langen would do the same. In a short note to Eykenbroek from 9 February 1798 Van Langen writes: “I have accepted the batch of cloth, now it is up to you to make sure it is shipped” (Colenbrander, 1905-1922, part II: doc. 590).<sup>ccxiv</sup> Other actors in the negotiations with Barras turned out to be equally self-serving. Many of the Eykenbroek-Eberstein circle already dealt in supplies for the French and Batavian armies (Colenbrander, 1905-1922, part II, doc. 525, doc. 526; Geyl, 1948-1959: 472). On 6 February 1798, a partnership between Struyk (conveniently a major in the citizens militia of The Hague and dealer in army supplies at the same time. See Colenbrander, 1905-1922, part II: 555, footnote 3), a certain Anthony Gertner and Jan Eykenbroek was, for instance, set up to supply uniforms (Colenbrander, 1905-1922, part II, doc. 523, doc. 589; Pijman, et al., 1798: 160-161, exhibit 19a). The partnership seems to have acted as a front for Vreede and Van Langen (Molhuysen, et al., 2008, part 9: 1249). Eykenbroek, furthermore, was a former distiller (Schama, 1977: 284) who might still have had connections in the field and Eberstein, finally, still owned a gin distillery at the time of the deal (Pijman, et al. 1798: 38-39, 160-161, exhibit 19a).

In short, it quickly became apparent after 12 June that Van Langen and others had used the credit of the EIC for purposes other than merely ‘arranging’ French support and ‘serving the Nation’s interests’, as Van Langen and others would later call it to defend their actions. The moderates, however, had rather different ideas about what the interests of the nation were. To them the coup of 22 January was nothing short of treason. Besides, the deal to pay part of the amount in cloth, gin and meat was a rather obvious way of serving private commercial interests. The fact that much of the communication among the Eykenbroek-Eberstein circle was written in secret code perhaps testifies they knew what they were doing was wrong. Money was, for instance, referred to as corn (or *smorfio*) and Holland was called Africa. As such, a letter from Eberstein to Eykenbroek from 11 December 1797 suddenly makes sense as the former writes that Joseph (?) and the Rabbi (?) insist that they (Eykenbroek and Eberstein) sail to Africa and get corn before they are willing to do anything (Colenbrander, 1905-1922, part II, doc. 539: 561).<sup>ccxv</sup>

The deal to supply the French army with provisions and clothing was not the only scheme for which Van Langen and others used the trick of using EIC bills of exchange. Among the documents seized by Van Maanen<sup>37</sup> was Van Langen's personal business administration which revealed how he had often used EIC funds to settle personal debts and business affairs. The administration of Van Langen's cloth factory revealed how EIC funds had been used to settle personal matters. Van Langen paid money to the Vreede's cloth company (*Authentique bylagen tot den 12 Junij*, 1798, issue no. 5; Molhuysen, et al., 2008, part 9: 1249), to Jan Pessers (a fellow cloth merchant from Tilburg and Assembly man (*Authentique bylagen tot den 12 Junij*, 1798, issue no. 5; Molhuysen, et al., 2008, part 8, 1010) and to J.E. Guerin, a clerk in Van Langen's cloth business. In part, these payments had already started before the coup of 22 January. Van Langen – by his own admission<sup>38</sup> – would sometimes decide to keep money taken from the EIC for himself and buy parts of the cloth needed for the French army from people who still owed him money (Pijman, et al., 1798: 36).<sup>39</sup> To settle his debts Van Langen's cashier Guerin seems to have been constantly looking for, and receiving, EIC money (*Authentique bylagen tot den 12 Junij*, 1798; Pijman, et al., 1798: 36-37).

Van Langen and, albeit to a much lesser extent, Vreede thus made sure they were serving the revolution as well as their personal commercial interests. A letter by Van Langen to Eykenbroek, dated 21 February 1798, is especially revealing. Van Langen calls on Eykenbroek to keep on strengthening the ties with the French (i.e., Paul Barras) since his personal financial affairs are also on the line. He writes: “how I have had to sacrifice my commercial interests to the revolution”. The French, according to Van Langen, “should therefore keep on taking steps” and Eykenbroek should “keep this in mind, or else nothing will happen, then our other engagements [the supply of gin, cloth and meat? TK] would fail, you know what I am trying to say here” (Pijman, et al., 1798: 17, 67, appendix 1).<sup>cxvii</sup> The French, in other words, had to stay on board to receive their payment which was beneficial to Van Langen and others. Furthermore, the longer the radical Directorate was backed by the French, the longer Van Langen and others could stay in power, enabling them to potentially reap even more financial benefits in the future. The fact that Van Langen and others had constantly used EIC money for a wide variety of purchases really does become apparent from the *Memorie*. One appendix (Pijman, et al., 1798, appendix 10: 88) provides a list of expenses on ‘luxury items’ found in Van Langen's office by Van Maanen's investigators. The list totals 15,926 guilders. There was, for instance, 697 guilders for renting carriages; 242 guilders for buying hats and scarves as presents for the directors Wildrik and Fokker; 15 guilders for the repair of some furniture; 5 guilders for several tea cups and 2 guilders for the repair of a chess game. Another payment by Van Langen using EIC credit was 3,000 guilders to Pieter Ondaatje (1758 – 1818),<sup>40</sup> a Patriot of the first hour and – incidentally – fellow member of the EIC as well as Secretary to the Agent of Internal Police. Perhaps the money was a bribe to keep Ondaatje quiet about taking EIC money?

<sup>37</sup> Nationaal Archief, Den Haag [NL-Na-HA], 2.01.01.01, inv.nr. 509, “Minutes of 12 June 1798”, document number [doc. no.] 13: Order to La Pierre to seize all personal documents of Vreede, Fijnje and Van Langen, 12/06/1798.

<sup>38</sup> NA, *Collectie 018 C.F. van Maanen (1900), 1717-1867*, 2.21.114.03, inv. nr. 18. Secret letters by the removed representative Van Langen to Pieter Vreede during the former's detainment at the Voorpoort in The Hague. Letter 3: Van Langen to Vreede, date unknown.

<sup>39</sup> Nationaal Archief, Den Haag [NL-Na-HA], 2.01.01.01, inv.nr. 508, item 399: “Rapport van Johan Philip Hildebrand en Adrianus Zeemans aan den burger La Pierre, agent van inwendige politie”, 27/06/1798.

<sup>40</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.01.01.01, inv.nr. 509, item 68, 06/07/1798.

*Views on the case: different sources of public values*

The case revolving around Van Langen can be viewed from a variety of sources of values. Best-opinion has been largely described in chapter five but will sometimes return in the following because some key actors in the scandal (most notably Gogel, Vreede and Fijnje) were also key best-opinion moralists. Public opinion, shop floor and legal sources of public values also had an important part to play. Even though there is often much overlap between the sources (see chapter three) I will – as in the other two cases – separate them as much as possible.

*A mixture of sources: the Interim Directorate on bad government*

First there were documents from the Moderate Interim Directorate itself. Obviously there was the *Memorie*. This source of values in the case is, in reality, more of a mixture of sources. It holds personal (shop floor) views of members of the moderate Directorate who condemned the actions of the radicals. At the same time these views are also best-opinion stances from the new political leaders and (for instance in the case of Isaac Gogel) long time Patriot ideologists (see chapter five). The *Memorie* can also be regarded a legal source of public values. It was partly assembled by legal prosecutor Van Maanen and judgment by the Interim Directorate was therefore also based on legal arguments. Although the *Memorie* is by far the most elaborate and important source through which we can view the public values of the Interim Directorate, they also published the, already mentioned, *Authentieke bylagen tot den 12 Junij*. Clearly, the Interim Directorate wanted to get public opinion on their side. In the following both sources are discussed.

A first major line of critique in the *Memorie* entails broad or general critique at the political corruption of the entire radical regime. Here we can recognize Johnston's notion of classical political corruption as the corruption of the body politic in general. The moderate Directorate focuses on bad government by the radicals, which is especially reprehensible in times of political and economic hardship. They criticize, for instance, the purges following 22 January 1798 which were – at least according to Colenbrander – generally detested (1905-1922, part II: lxxiii). Bad government also entailed the way in which the radicals had assumed power. This had resulted in a lack of legitimacy, problems of accountability and office hunting of the regime. The inability of the radicals to follow proper procedure and keep their administration in order was also criticized. The *Memorie* shows how the Interim Directorate was unanimous in condemning the coup and the behaviour of the previous regime. "Solid reasoning", the *Memorie* (Pijman, et al., 1798: 27) states, "makes one understand that the administration of a nation cannot be left to men who, through a desire for self preservation and self elevation, have acted with so little tact that the building only just built [i.e., the Batavian Republic, TK] already had to collapse under its own weight".<sup>ccxvii</sup> "One would have to search in vein", the moderates continue, "for men of capability, loyalty and courage [...] all of it testifies to their incapability, negligence, sloppiness and disloyalty" (Pijman, et al., 1798: 30).<sup>ccxviii</sup>

Clearly, the Interim Directorate was critical. While undoubtedly politically motivated, their critique also consisted of a fundamental ethical positioning. A first set of ethical issues raised was the perceived lack of legitimacy and accountability of the radical regime. According to the Interim Directorate – as explained in the *Memorie* – Van Langen, Vreede and others had

formed an “unconstitutional and illegitimate” Directorate after 22 January. In the constitution of 1 May 1798 it had been stipulated that the Constituent Assembly should organize the election of a new Representative Assembly after which the former was to be dissolved. However, despite of this stipulation the radicals introduced a so-called ‘two-thirds’ rule. With this rule they decided that two thirds of the new Representative Assembly were to be former members of the purged convention that had come into being after 22 January (Elias, et al., 1991: 11-12; Palmer, 1954: 31). In a way the temporary Constituent Assembly which had been purged of all ‘aristocratic’ elements had thus decided to elect itself as the new Representative Assembly on 4 May. The radical Directorate (Van Langen and others) also remained in power instead of stepping down. In applying the ‘two-thirds rule’, the radicals had, according to the *Memorie*, bypassed the constitution and ‘re-elected’ themselves without giving the population a proper chance to vote. They had thereby undermined the idea of popular sovereignty so essential to the Batavians. It had “attempted to secure and consolidate its position before the representative body had a chance to decide on the constitution and before the population had a chance to speak” (Pijman, et al., 1798: 26-27).

The leaders of the Republic, as the *Authentique bylagen tot den 12 Junij* described it, had turned into “usurpers, trampling on the constitution” (issue no. 4: 13). The critique seems, at least with regard to Vreede, not completely fair. Someone like Vreede had always been one of the most fervent advocates of more and improved popular voting. His proposal of 24 January 1797 (leading up to the ‘referendum’ of august 1797 to vote on a new constitution) to get rid of the system of electors in order “to link popular will and government” was, for instance, denied (Colenbrander, 1905-1922: xlv; Molhuysen, et al., 2008, part 9: 1248; Rosendaal, 2005b: 29-30). At the same time, however, the radicals had clearly wanted to push through and grasp the moment instead of lingering on in elaborate (bureaucratic) procedures and routines. By their own admission (see shop floor codes of Van Langen and Vreede below), their desire to provide the Batavian Republic with a new unitary constitution seems to have trumped their ability or desire to follow proper procedures, even when (or because?) it concerned their own rules.

To the Interim Directorate, lack of representation and proper procedure had resulted in a lack of legitimacy and accountability. This, according to the *Memorie* became apparent from the improper way of appointing people in office; among them was La Pierre, one of the drafters of the *Memorie* (see also below). While executive orders and letters by the radical regime showed how people had been appointed there were no official minutes of deliberations on such matters of any kind. This, to the *Memorie*, proved that “important offices were given without their parameters having been properly defined”. It also proved how “the lack of instructions designed for these officials lays bare how the interests of the nation have become dependent on the ability, honesty and moderation of a single person” (Pijman, et al., 1798: 30).<sup>ccxix</sup> These offices were handed out without procedures, instructions or proper (parliamentary?) supervision. The idea that lack of procedure and instructions led to a lack of accountability and legitimacy is of course interesting and, potentially, new. The fact that La Pierre, himself a member of the moderate Interim Directorate and co-author of the *Memorie* which attacked people for similar reasons, felt comfortable to have his own name mentioned is interesting too. It could have been a case of double standards and/or a remnant of ‘old regent ways’ but perhaps a more fundamental assumption was made. Perhaps it was wrong to appoint officials without proper procedure but not wrong for the official to accept a position offered to him in this way?

Other nominees for important offices also proved dubious. Fijnje, for instance, had been persistent in his nomination of Pieter Weiland (1754 – 1842) for the post of Minister of the Interior. When Weiland, a Remonstrant preacher in Rotterdam, told Fijnje he did not want the office as he had no knowledge of such matters, Fijnje apparently told him one learns as one goes along. When Weiland still refused, Fijnje (without success) threatened to use force to keep him (Molhuysen, et al., 2008, part 9: 1251). We have to wonder why Fijnje was so adamant in appointing someone who was clearly unwilling and, by his own admission, incapable. Perhaps he wanted ignoramuses in important offices so that he himself could have more control? The selection of other ‘officials’ by the Directorate Directorate had also been shady. Eykenbroek, for instance, had been clerk of Van Langen’s business prior to the revolution (Molhuysen, et al., 2008, part 8: 1009-1010) and reappeared as Van Langen’s confidant in Paris.

Various requests for offices were also directed at the new regime. Investigations by Van Maanen showed correspondence between Fijnje and certain members of the Eykenbroek-Eberstein circle asking for jobs. Hendrik Nobbe (*schout civiel* in Amsterdam as of 15 March 1798) asks if a certain G. Sonneveld could get a post in the navy (cf. Colenbrander, 1905-1922, part II, doc. 542, footnote 2)<sup>41</sup>; H.H. Midderigh asked of a certain H.C. Hooft could be placed as clerk somewhere<sup>42</sup>; a certain Pieter Pijpers sent two letters asking for employment<sup>43</sup>; Lucas Butot (for Butot see Schama, 1977: 328-329, 330, 333) puts in a good word for a certain De Jonge and Gieseken who, Butot writes, will go to Fijnje to ask for a job as clerk or something similar. Butot says of them “they write well, speak French and English and have spirit enough to work in a capable way [...] both families are loyal to the patriot cause and are brave, revolutionary and trustworthy [...] I ask you, if possible, help them”.<sup>44</sup> A certain Nozeman requests Fijnje to hire Pieter van Groeneveld<sup>45</sup> who would in 1799 (see below) be indicted for conspiring to bring down the moderate government of the Batavian Republic.<sup>46</sup>

Lack of proper procedure and keeping a good administration also caused problems of accountability as far as the Interim Directorate was concerned. The moderate directors seem to have been appalled by the chaos at the radical Directorate’s offices (Molhuysen, et al., 2008, part 9: 1251). It was so disorganized that it proved near impossible to check what the radical Directorate had done after they had assumed power. The minutes of their meetings were largely incomplete. Worse still, information that Van Maanen was able to find in all sorts of places could not be found in the official minutes. This obviously did not constitute open access to information or ensure proper accountability or control. To a suspicious eye (and by now there were many), it also hinted at irregular behaviour which the radical directors might have been anxious to conceal (Pijman, et al., 1798: 30).<sup>ccxx</sup>

The purges of 1798 and the way in which the radical regime had appointed other new ‘officials’ (apart from Agents like La Pierre and Wielema) was another problematic moral issue to the moderates. According to the *Memorie*, the purges had been the result of an insatiable lust for offices. Purging of both National Assembly and Primary Assemblies of “good patriots” had been followed by appointments of men “who were incapable and unsuitable [...] who’s only asset was being able to shout real loud” (Pijman, et al., 1798: 45).<sup>ccxxi</sup> Some, like Bode and

<sup>41</sup> NL-HaNA, *Wetgevende Colleges 1796 – 1810*, 2.01.01.01, inv.nr 508: Letters to Wybo Fijnje, letter 12, no date.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, letter 13, no date.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, letter 14, 15, no date.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, letter 32, 02/02/1798.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, item 91.

<sup>46</sup> NL-HaNA, *Collectie 018 C.F. van Maanen (1895), 1709-1807*, 2.21.114.02, inv.nr. 20, item 1, 28/06/1799.

Boeseken had “made arrests deviating completely from the common rule of law, stemming only from the conceit of the administrators [...] thus weakening police and justice in the Batavian Republic” (Pijman, et al., 1798: 46).<sup>ccxxii</sup> The role these men played in the purges (cf. Colenbrander, 1905-1922, part II: lxx) was also criticized in the *Authentique bylagen tot den 12 Junij* (issue no. 4: 12) in which it was asked “are not all able and respectable citizens driven from their offices by incapable and evil men? Are not thousands of innocent civil servants, with their wives and children, reduced to beggary, by incapable men, drunkards without morals?”<sup>ccxxiii</sup> It has been argued that Vreede and the other radicals simply “wanted to rid the National Assembly of the best and most honest people in order to have free reigns, so that their criticism would not hinder them” (Molhuysen, et al., 2008, part 9: 1248).

Another batch of criticism was directed at the fact that radicals had surrounded themselves with (and trusted, see below) people of bad reputation and supposed ill character. Of course, this involved the likes of Eykenbroek, Eberstein and other members of the circle. The disdain for these men was great. The *Memorie*, for instance, targeted Boeseken “who’s spiteful spying and devious insinuations were rewarded by an offer [by the radicals, TK] to make himself useful to the nation” (Pijman, et al., 1798: 45).<sup>ccxxiv</sup> About Eberstein the *Authentique bylagen tot den 12 Junij* (issue no. 6: 8-11) state: “he will always be a chameleon [...] sliding through the grass like a snake, showing himself only in the dark; he claims to have revolutionary principles but his true disdain for these principles becomes apparent from his tone against everything having to do with the revolution. He lives like a king but nobody knows where he gets his funds”.<sup>ccxxv</sup>

In a note from Jacob Blauw and Caspar Meyer (both representatives of the Batavian Republic in Paris) to Vreede and Van Langen (Colenbrander, part II, doc. 617) of 18 March 1798, the former complain about Eykenbroek (and others). They criticize his lack of experience and knowledge and his high-handed actions without following proper procedures (through Meyer and Blauw). They also state they had wondered whether it had been truly necessary to offer so much money to the French and that they questioned whether all that money had reached those it was intended for or had, instead, ended up in pockets of those whose authority only rests in making a show”.<sup>ccxxvi</sup> This was also true for Eberstein who is (again) called a chameleon and a snake who only comes out at night. Another favourite target was Ducange who the *Authentique bylagen tot den 12 Junij* (issue no. 8: 3) called “that scum of humanity [...] that villain, whose life is nothing but a succession of atrocities” [...] He who for a hand of gold served the party of the Stadholder and England, he who betrayed that same court as soon as the French gave him bread”.<sup>ccxxvii</sup>

Clearly, accusations and suggestions launched at Eykenbroek and others served to criticise Van Langen and others in the process. The second issue of the *Authentique bylagen tot den 12 Junij* presents five letters from Boeseken to the radical Directorate. From these letters it becomes apparent, according to the Interim Directorate, “how the national time has been wasted in such a scandalous way by the previous Directorate Directorate, among other things by correspondences that had no other point than to keep for themselves the positions they had managed to nestle in, not for the people! Only for themselves. [...] Now we will let the people judge in whom the Directorate power of the Batavian Republic put its trust without suspicion [...], whose wishes it granted without thinking [...]. They used them only as tools for their disguised lust to rule” (issue no. 2: 3-4).<sup>ccxxviii</sup> It was a way to criticize the abuse of trust, the harming of the interests of the people, the lust for power, the misappropriation of power

under false pretences, wasting the national time (there were better things to do!) and serving private interests with public offices of the *entire* group.

The Eykenbroek-Eberstein circle was perceived as foreign diplomats, or at least as useful secret agents, by Van Langen and others but as detestable conspirators by the moderate Interim Directorate. In the name of the revolution, they had been, after all, mostly interested in making their own fortunes. According to Schama, Bode and Eberstein had, for instance, persuaded Eykenbroek to use his political connections with Barras for their mutual benefit, “adding that the successful outcome of their venture could only redound to the greater good of their beloved fatherland” (1977: 285). Also, a letter recommending Bode was sent by Van Leeuwen to Caspar Meijer, who would later arrest Eykenbroek in Paris (see Schama 1977: 340; Colenbrander 1905-1922, part II, doc. 602: 728) on 13 November 1797. The letter was later submitted to the Interim Directorate (on 27 July 1798) as evidence against the radicals (Colenbrander, 1905-1922, part II, doc. 534; cf. Geyl, 1948-1959: 473). Van Leeuwen recommends Bode to Meijer as being a “trusted friend, a brave patriot” and asks Meijer “to be so good as to trust him as you would trust me. Let him know everything you know [...] point him which way to go so that he may achieve his goal. These services provided to him I will regard as services provided to me and mine; you will receive your reward in your conscience”.<sup>ccxxix</sup> The letter was clearly given to the Interim Directorate to show how the radical Directorate had put all their trust and a huge responsibility in the hands of ‘thugs’ like Bode.

According to Schama (1977: 286), Colenbrander’s interest in the individuals of the Eberstein-Eykenbroek circle gave them greater status and influence than they actually had. This might be so (this is not the place to discuss this) but when assessing the morals of the time, however, their position and actions are very relevant indeed. To the Interim Directorate (and others, see public opinion sources) men like Boeseken, Eykenbroek or Eberstein seem to have only been important because they were an easy target. Their existence enabled them to criticize the bad judgment and corrupt nature of the previous Directorate. Van Langen and others had, after all, put their trust, public money, matters of national importance and the national honour, in the hands of “fortune hunters and schemers” who abused the nations’ interests in favour of their own on useless schemes and intrigue.

While the petty corrupt conspirators of the Eykenbroek-Eberstein circle were thus relatively unimportant in the grand scheme of things, their involvement in the revolutionary cause was important as it reflected poorly on the radical Directorate. This becomes clear from the eighth issue of the *Authentique bylagen tot den 12 Junij* (issue no. 8: 3-5) which promised “several letters of a man [Ducange, TK] who deserved being despised by all but who nevertheless had a decisive influence on the French emissary Delacroix and the majority of the Directorate Directorate of the Batavian Republic – and who manages as such to rule the Republic. You ask how is it possible that a man completely without morality, known to be despicable, can get the trust of the administration in such a way? These letters will tell you the answer: he starts with flattery, he grovels, he begs for favours, all means are welcome [...] he does not know true and noble love for people”.<sup>ccxxx</sup> The *Authentique bylagen tot den 12 Junij* further commented that a revolution (i.e., the second coup of 12 June) had indeed been necessary when “the hard earned money of the citizen was not spent right or simply stolen”.<sup>ccxxxi</sup> The dishonesty towards the population was continuously stressed and unanimously condemned because representatives were there to serve the interests of the people and not their own: “it is indeed terrible to see such horrible deeds of men placed in high positions of power to serve our interests” (*Authentique bylagen tot den 12 Junij*, 1798, issue no. 5).

A second main line of critique in the *Memorie* and *Authentique bylagen tot den 12 Junij* was about specific individual acts of abuse of office and financial malversations. It concerned the condemnation of individual and specific acts of stealing, bribery and abuse of public funds for private gain. This is reminiscent of Johnston's notion of more 'modern' perceptions of individual (financial) political corruption (see chapter one). The critique focused, above all, on the use of public money for private benefit and luxury and the Directors' inability (or unwillingness) to keep their administration in order. From the outset the *Memorie* (1798: 33) expressed the desire for a thorough investigation "to find out the reasons for the scandalous theft of so much money".<sup>ccxxxii</sup> It also reacted to an earlier report which Gogel and La Pierre had sent on 25 July 1798 to the other members of the Interim Directorate by stating how: "the Batavian people, so famous for its frugality and simplicity has apparently had to pay for the extravagant expenses of three of its fellow citizens, as Fokker and Wildrik occupied an expensive home in The Hague [and how] in these destitute times we have seen how the nation has paid for costumes, a theatre and carriages [for Van Langen, TK], meant to serve the Directors' idle waste of time while so many citizens are so often waiting in vain to be heard" (Pijman, et al., 1798: 34)<sup>ccxxxiii</sup>

Proof of this supposed idle waste soon emerged. According to a letter from the minister of justice on 4 July 1798, Van Langen had apparently indeed taken six thousand guilders from the EIC to pay for the renovation of the Amsterdam theatre (*Authentique bylagen tot den 12 Junij*, 1798, issue no. 5). Vreede and Van Langen also seemed to have had a taste for opulence. They tried (but failed), for instance, to turn the court (The Noordeinde palace in The Hague) into their official residence (Molhuysen, et al., 2008, part 9: 1251). Just how much this kind of behaviour bothered the moderate Directorate becomes apparent from the fact that they published a letter from Ducange to Van Langen on the topic in the *Appendices* to June 12 (issue no. 3: 13-14) in which Ducange supported the Directors in their efforts to find 'suitable' accommodation and wrote: "is it not necessary indeed that with the high dignity with which all five of you have been bestowed, should come a certain amount of splendour?"<sup>ccxxxiv</sup> In a reaction to Ducange, the moderate Directorate wrote that "the splendour of Republicans is virtue, courage and sincerity and where these are lacking, affluence is a poor varnish to hide the stains".<sup>ccxxxv</sup>

The combination of a nation in decline (see chapters four and five) while its Directors were living the good life was strongly condemned by the moderate Interim Directorate. The *Authentique bylagen tot den 12 Junij* (issue no. 6: 8-11) speak of the poor citizens who "give the most precious interests of the fatherland in the hands of people that do not deserve any trust and who, as soon as they had gained power, no longer thought of its terrible state; they squandered treasures that were entrusted to them which they knew how to extort in such a way that any decent Dutchman can only shiver at the thought of it".<sup>ccxxxvi</sup> The Interim Directorate goes on to say that "they know people are not without interests or cannot be disinterested with their own good and that of their family but that there are still times when the fatherland requires one to be virtuous. We cannot, therefore, be more astonished at the fact this hunt for offices, this affliction to the common good, becomes more common in times when so many sources of wealth are clogged or dried up" (*Authentique bylagen tot den 12 Junij*, issue no. 9: 3-5).<sup>ccxxxvii</sup> The accusation of using public funds for private benefit is mostly directed at Van Langen. In the initial report by Gogel and La Pierre of 25 July 1798 (see earlier) the two stated miserable the state of Van Langen's financial administration was (cf. *Memorie*, 34, appendices 9 and 10 and *Authentique bylagen tot den 12 Junij*, 1798, issue no. 5: 7).<sup>ccxxxviii</sup> However, they had still

managed to find enough evidence (such as the list of expenses for the chess game and tea cups) to warrant an extension of Van Langen's arrest (see also legal codes later on) and further investigations into the case. As the investigations went on the Interim Directorate became increasingly convinced of the political corruption of Van Langen. His business deals with Pessers, Vreede and Van Marle became known and the list of bills of exchange made out to all sorts of people grew ever longer.

What the Interim Directorate seems to have been especially concerned about was Van Langen's use of EIC money to straighten his own disorganized financial affairs and to indulge in luxury. They wrote: "no matter how bad all of this is [the many expenses on luxury goods by all members of the radical regime, TK], it is nothing when compared to the reprehensible behaviour by Van Langen, being guilty of such vile behaviour of direct theft to keep his own mixed-up affairs in order at the expense of the nation" (Pijman, et al., 1798: 35).<sup>ccxxxix</sup> The Interim Directorate was also amazed to learn about the deals and secret negotiations by Eykenbroek and Eberstein involving payments in cloth, gin and meat. Having examined the evidence they quickly realized Van Langen's (and Vreede's) intent: "since this way the citizen Directors Van Langen and Vreede, being the suppliers, could also get some extra profit" (*Authentique bylagen tot den 12 Junij*, 1798, issue no. 8).<sup>ccxli</sup>

Amazement quickly turned into outright condemnation when the Interim Directorate was confronted with "the shameless behaviour of one of the Directors [Van Langen, TK] in enriching himself with the Nations' money". "It is indeed difficult", they continue, "to believe how a member of the Directorate could have such vile an intent as corruption" [the first of two occasions, see below for the second, in which the word corruption is used as such in the case, TK] (Pijman, et al., 1798: 40-41).<sup>ccxli</sup> The *Authentique bylagen* furthermore stated: "We shiver at the fate of our sweet fatherland when we see the desire to obtain offices become so widespread that people no longer ask whether the bread they receive from the fatherland is earned or not; whether the office one desires is earned or not. We shiver when we see that honesty and good faith are forgotten as soon as the opportunity arises to benefit on the expense of the common good, when people are indifferent about the way in which they satisfy their greed. It is, for example, unforgivable and harmful that those who have the highest rank abuse the power for their own benefit" (issue no. 9: 3-5).<sup>ccxlii</sup>

### *Public values from legal sources*

While the *Memorie* and *Authentique bylagen tot den 12 Junij* already contained some legal codes of their own, there were also separate legal sources of public values. Verdict and sentencing of the accused based on Van Maanen's investigations contains, for instance, a host of public values and (legal) condemnations and expectations of correct public official behaviour. The variety of actors in the case (from a trafficker and hustler like Eykenbroek to a distinguished Director like Vreede) makes for variety in sentencing and legal deliberations, providing us with many different legal codes. In any case, and this is interesting enough, it becomes clear that not all members of the Directorate were considered equally accountable or guilty in the eyes of the moderate Interim Directorate. Directors Berent Wildrik and Johan Pieter Fokker had, as mentioned, immediately been cleared of any involvement after 12 June and were soon released from prison (Molhuysen, et al., 2008, part 10: 1207). Although both were sometimes mentioned in relation to political corruption (in the sense of being extravagant, greedy and/or too

subservient to the other Directors) they were largely perceived to be merely ceremonial members of the Directorate and victims of the schemes of Van Langen, Vreede and Fijnje (*Memorie* 1798: 43).<sup>ccxliii</sup> Wildrik was considered of such insignificance in the whole affair, that the Interim Directorate appointed him as member of the new Provisional Assembly on 12 June (Molhuysen, et al., 2008, part 10: 1207). He would retire from politics in may 1801. For the same reason as Wildrik, Fokker could become a member of the Interim Directorate Directorate until 30 July 1798. Some sources (Molhuysen, et al., 2008, part 1: 870-871) report how Fokker was eventually forced to leave The Hague as a result of his partaking in the radical Directorate but do not elaborate. In any case, he retired to his native province of Zeeland to practice medicine until his death in 1831.

Pieter Vreede was not arrested or detained due to his escape to the Austrian Netherlands. However, already in July 1798 he was bold (or desperate?) enough to request the Interim Directorate to let him return to his hometown of Tilburg. His wife had died and he needed to take care of his children. At the end of August he was permitted to do so, which, perhaps, is proof that the Interim Directorate was not as cross with him as they were with Van Langen (see below). Vreede was granted his request despite the fact that he was often mentioned in the *Memorie* and *Authentique bylagen*. As some have correctly pointed out (Molhuysen, et al., 2008, part 9: 1253), Vreede had certainly been in the thick of it all along and appears, contrary to Fijnje but similar to Van Langen, to have also used EIC funds for his own personal gain, such as the deliveries of cloth to his and Van Marle's firm. Furthermore, he seems to have been of somewhat ill character. Together with Van Langen he tried (but failed), for instance, to persuade Fijnje to deport Pensionary Van de Spiegel and his advisor Bentinck van Rhoon (see chapters four and five) as criminals to Surinam. Vreede was also not prepared to extend the kind of help and sympathy to others which he himself would later receive. When Van Marle (one of the 28 purged and jailed Assembly members and his business partner at that) requested to be temporarily released from jail to visit his dying son, the radical Directorate, including Vreede, had refused. A request by purged Assembly member H.H. Vitranga to visit his dying 80 year old father was likewise denied (Molhuysen, et al., 2008, part 9: 1253).

Wybo Fijnje and Jacobus Van Langen were, contrary to Vreede, both detained. They were also immediately accused (whereas the charges eventually launched at Vreede seem to have taken much longer to develop). Fijnje and especially Van Langen had been the financial administrators of the Batavian Republic between January and June and were for this reason accused of embezzling the nation's money. The fact that both were member of the EIC and had used (abused?) its public funds was an important element in condemning them. An early report<sup>47</sup> by Reinier Tadema, the first minister of Justice, to the Interim Directorate Directorate, dated 6 July 1798, displays his initial (legal) reflections on the case against Fijnje and Van Langen as it was evolving. He writes how he (or rather attorney general Van Maanen and the investigators Philip Hildebrand and Adrian Zeemans) had already found evidence of dereliction and malversations of both men in spending public funds from the EIC using bills of exchange. He placed the blame squarely on Fijnje and Van Langen<sup>ccxliv</sup>, especially since he did not believe the other members of the Directorate (mainly Fokker and Wildrik) had known what was going on. It is interesting to note Tadema's initial logic concerning the use of EIC credit. According to him it was warranted to get money from the EIC but only as long as the

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<sup>47</sup> NL-HaNA, *Wetgevende Colleges 1796 – 1810*, 2.01.01.01, inv.nr 508, item 68, Report by Tadema to the Interim Directorate, 06/07/1798.

money was spent on the nation's interests and as long as it was approved by the entire Directorate. Since neither condition was met, he thought Van Langen and Fijnje were surely guilty. Furthermore, Van Langen and Fijnje were (as yet) unable to account for their actions and explain where all the money had gone to. It might seem odd that Tadema did not include Vreede in this argument. Vreede, after all, had mixed public and private interests and was therefore at least as guilty as Fijnje who had 'only' used the money for revolutionary (but 'public') purposes. At the same time, Tadema's investigations were only just getting under way so we can imagine he did not have the full picture yet.

The early investigations by Van Maanen in July (as it was partly disclosed in the later *Memorie* and *Authentique bylagen tot den 12 Junij*) led to the call by the Court of Holland for a more thorough legal investigation into the dealings of Van Langen and Fijnje.<sup>48</sup> On 7 September, Van Maanen writes that the evidence has "raised serious suspicions that Van Langen and Fijnje are guilty of disloyal and for the nation disastrous and most criminal use of their office". On 17 September Van Maanen reiterates the charges against Van Langen and Fijnje<sup>49</sup> and adds they "were guilty of disloyal and to the nation ruinous occupation of aforementioned important offices, in which they disposed of the nation's money in a criminal, irresponsible, wasteful way, yes even stealing the nation's money [...]".<sup>ccxlv</sup> Van Maanen also wrote<sup>50</sup> how they had used or allowed others without qualifications [Eykenbroek *cum suis*, TK] to use this money, even before they were elected as members of the Provisional Administration".<sup>ccxlv</sup> This time, however, Van Maanen makes an interesting distinction between them. Although Fijnje was essentially guilty of 'bad government', for instance in taking the lead to appoint Pieter Weiland (see earlier), he had not (contrary to Van Langen and Vreede) used the embezzled EIC funds for other than revolutionary purposes. While Van Langen was served with a criminal indictment (see below), Fijnje was only summoned to appear before court on 26 September 1798.<sup>51</sup> He was initially spared the more serious indictment because Van Maanen wanted more time to investigate matters.<sup>52</sup> However, later he would get one after all on 1 October 1798.<sup>53</sup> The reasons for Van Maanen's change of heart can be found in his archives. Based on the interrogations of Van Langen (see below) it appears that Fijnje had known about the secret instruction to Eykenbroek to start negotiating with Barras (see Colenbrander, part II, doc. 588: 717. For the secret instruction see *Ibid.*, part II: doc. no. 605). According to Van Maanen, Van Langen had told him<sup>54</sup> that Fijnje had given him EIC money to pay Guerin on 18 January 1798. Fijnje had, furthermore, known about Van Langen's tricks with the bills of exchange and had, of course, also known about the use of EIC funds to bring about the revolution.<sup>ccxlvii</sup>

While Van Maanen and others had been lenient towards Wildrik, Fokker, Vreede and (initially) Fijnje, it seems nobody needed much time to point to Van Langen as the main culprit. It had been Van Langen who had "made use of money for his own individual, personal purposes". According to Van Maanen<sup>55</sup>, Van Langen was therefore "guilty of stealing from the nation".<sup>ccxlviii</sup> Van Langen had also<sup>56</sup> "been involved in the scandalous theft of the nation's

<sup>48</sup> NL-HaNa, *Collectie 018 C. F. van Maanen (1895), 1709-1807*, supplement 1, 2.21.114.02, inv.nr. 4: 402.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 419-420.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 449-450.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 460-461.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 465-469.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 473.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 472-473.

<sup>55</sup> NL-HaNa, *Collectie 018 C. F. van Maanen (1895), 1709-1807*, supplement 1, 2.21.114.02, inv.nr. 4: 449-450.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 419-420.

money, having made use of these funds [of the EIC, TK] before he was even elected as a member of the Directorate”. In short, the fact which made Van Langen’s behaviour wrong to Van Maanen (i.e., in a legal sense) was that he used EIC funds (public money) for private purposes while not (yet) being in the position to do so, i.e., *before* belonging to the Provisional Directorate on 25 January 1798.<sup>ccxlix</sup> Given the evidence, it is not strange that such accusations were mainly launched at Van Langen. Still, one gets the impression that he seems to have also become some sort of scapegoat or ‘token corrupt official’ for the entire radical regime. He, at least, would see it this way (see below). His escapades formed a perfect example with which the entire previous radical Directorate was to be set straight, something Samuel Wiselius (1768 – 1845) as one of the leading Batavian politicians was, for instance, very anxious to do (Schama, 1977: 360).

It was certainly not just the former Directors that felt the sting of the Interim Directorate. The group of people of the Eykenbroek-Eberstein circle was also prosecuted. Eykenbroek seems to have been the main target (cf. Schama, 1977: 360). He had been arrested in Paris on 12 June by Meijer but was released by the French soon thereafter. Perhaps they were not too keen on keeping and investigating Eykenbroek because he could open up a big can of worms. However, to the Dutch moderate Batavians Eykenbroek’s release was not the end of the matter. The official resolution by the Court of Holland to prosecute and charge Eykenbroek (next to Boeseken and some others) is made on 4 December 1798. The whole group is charged<sup>57</sup> with what Van Maanen calls: “these pernicious machinations against the safety of the state [...] their treacherous and most criminal designs in Paris and Brussels to commit corruptions with money collected by citizens [Van Langen and others, TK] of this Republic”.<sup>cccl</sup> Here – incidentally – is the second and final time the term corruption is used as such in the case. Several members of the Eykenbroek-Eberstein circle (among them Eykenbroek and Boeseken) would be charged with *crimen perduellionis* or high treason.<sup>58</sup> Sentencing of this mixed bag of culprits was however delayed and postponed<sup>59</sup> due to a failed attempt at yet another coup in which Eykenbroek and Boeseken were apparently also involved (Schama, 1977: 359-361). Van Maanen seems to have gathered clues of a plan to assassinate the five moderate Interim Directors.<sup>cccli</sup> Eykenbroek, at least, was supposed to have made the highly provocative or suggestive comment to the French that there was a rumour that the Directors might get killed or were already dead.<sup>60</sup> and had apparently added: “such rumours are usually good predictions of such things actually happening”.<sup>ccclii</sup> For Eykenbroek these ‘machinations’ undoubtedly led to his recapture in Paris and sentencing “to be punished with the sword hanging over their head [traditionally a warning in most sentencing], to be imprisoned for 12 years at his own expense and afterwards to be banished for ever from the Batavian Republic.”<sup>61</sup>

However, on 17 November 1798 the moderates and their case against the radicals received a devastating blow when the Court of Holland received a letter from the representative assembly.<sup>62</sup> The letter stated that the French had decided on a general amnesty which would be

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 659, 676, 678.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 667-668.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 20.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>61</sup> NL-HaNA, *Hof van Holland, 1428-1811*, 3.03.01.01, inv.nr. 5670: 7-37.

<sup>62</sup> NL-HaNA, *Collectie 018 C. F. van Maanen (1895), 1709-1807*, 2.21.114.02, inv. nr. 4: extract van besluit van de eerste kamer van het vertegenwoordigend ligaaam relatief S.J. Van Langen en W. Fijnje ontvangen en gesteld in handen van den Procureur Generaal omme consideratien”.

published in the *Bataafsche Courant* on 12 December 1798.<sup>63</sup> The amnesty meant to “forgive and forget what had happened, to establish constitutional order and to reunite all friends of freedom and order behind the constitution”. All crimes of the past years that had been “so closely related to politics that indeed they are inseparable from each other” were to be pardoned.<sup>ccliii</sup> The argument is interesting. What, after all, is left of ‘political corruption’ if corruption that occurred in close relation to politics is pardoned? Perhaps the moderate Batavians saw it this way too. In the very least they were not happy about it. The French decision was a blow to them, not least because they had come to resent French involvement in ‘internal matters’ (Schama, 1977: 401) and because it meant that the cases against the members of the radical Directorate were to be over. Despite overwhelming evidence of bad government, abuse of office and/or treason, the charges against a host of individuals thus had to be dropped. Vreede, who had by now been accused but still not detained or arrested, was cleared of any charges. According to the French<sup>64</sup>, the actions of Van Langen and Fijnje were clearly political in the aforementioned sense and they ought to be cleared of all charges too.<sup>ccliv</sup> Even Eykenbroek was to be released (Schama, 1977: 401).

The reasons for the amnesty seem clear enough. To the French, any proceedings against Van Langen and others would be “dishonourable to their [French, TK] interests” (op cit. in Schama, 1977: 401). The French seemed not at all sure that their own role in the coup of 22 January had been a good one. They wanted bygones to be bygones, forget about the whole thing and, importantly, they still had the influence to make it happen. In November 1798, The moderate Interim Directorate and Representative Assembly, however, dug their heels in the sand one last time. In an attempt to still prosecute Van Langen and Fijnje despite of the French ‘request’, they instructed the Court of Holland to reassess the case against them. On the 17<sup>th</sup> they asked the Court to assess whether their crimes had really been ‘too closely related to political affairs’<sup>65</sup> but it seems that French pressure was too much to withstand. On 19 December 1798 minister of justice Tadema requested the immediate release of Van Langen and Fijnje, which happened the following day. A possible sign of a grudge against Fijnje might be that his salary for his time as Director would only be paid after his death in 1809. Van Langen reappeared in politics in 1799 and would even be elected by three constituencies but the Directorate, possibly still embarrassed by the Amnesty and/or also holding a grudge against Van Langen, decided to prevent the appointment (Schama, 1977: 359). That, perhaps, was their way of punishing Van Langen after all. At the same time Van Langen still received a yearly allowance from the Kings Louis Napoleon, William I and William II until the day he died (Molhuysen, et al., 2008, part 8: 1011).

An attempt to explain to a wider audience why so many would in the end not be prosecuted also appeared in the *Bataafse Courant* of 12 December 1798. This shows the mixed feelings the moderate Directorate had about the case. On the one hand, they knew the case was lost because the French wanted it to be over. On the other, they knew that what Van Langen and Fijnje had done was considered wrong and corrupt across the board. Letting them go would look bad. The Interim Directorate, then, had to navigate with care through this minefield of politics and public opinion. For this reason, the article not only provides an interesting public (legal) motivation for letting Van Langen and others go although the

<sup>63</sup> NL-HaNA, *Collectie 039 Gogel, 1752-1820*, 2.21.005.39, inv.nr 74.

<sup>64</sup> NL-HaNA, *Collectie 018 C. F. van Maanen (1895), 1709-1807*, 2.21.114.02, inv. nr. 4: 604 – 605.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, inv. nr. 608.

Directorate was clearly against it. “If”, the article stated, “we were to judge the case by our initial feelings [and a large amount of evidence, TK] then it would have been decided already. We would have painted a picture of two men [Van Langen and Fijnje, TK] who have wasted the nations’ money and used it for their own benefit, or at least helped each other in this [thus accusing Fijnje of ‘indirect’ corruption, TK], who abused the high dignity of their office which obligate them to practice the virtues they preached to their fellow citizens and to avoid committing crimes they are supposed to find highly punishable in others, the abuse of the nation’s money and especially converting this money for their own use. We would have shown you how such actions result in prosecution and trial. We would have also shown you the dangerous consequences should criminal procedures against them be halted for political reasons, an act surely [to be] condemned by all parties”. Then, however, the appealing of the French starts. To twist things around, the French logic is after all adopted as the proclamation reads that “the abuse of state funds and in particular the use of these funds for personal gain has indeed been very intertwined with political events”. Because, it states, “these crimes have originated in the political events in such a way that without the revolution of 22 January, they could not have been committed [...] we have decided to apply the amnesty to both men”.<sup>cclv</sup> Jeremy Bentham (1824: 366) once stated how “abuse can only be defended by fallacies”, i.e., that which is wrong can only be made to *seem* right by the (deliberate) use of incorrect reasoning. This seems to have been the case here.

#### *Public values from public opinion sources*

While some of the documents discussed above were circulated as pamphlets and can thus be considered a form of public opinion, there were also other separate public opinion sources on the case. These mostly included pamphlets and political periodicals written and published in response to the *Memorie* and *Authentique bylagen tot den 12 Junij* discussing the scandal surrounding the coups of 22 January and 12 June and, more specifically, the cases of Van Langen and others. In general, the views and arguments of different sources of values (legal, shop floor, best-opinion) are all reflected in various public opinion media. This demonstrates how all parties and vested interests managed to get their views across to whoever was willing and able to read their papers. One important periodical was *De Politieke Blixem*, most likely written and published by Bernardus Bosch or J.C. Hespe (Colenbrander 1905-1922, part II: 732, footnote 2). The periodical argued in favour of the unitarians and the coup of 22 January. It put forward similar arguments as Vreede, Van Langen and Fijnje (see below for a discussion of shop floor sources), and said something simply had to be done to end the continuous debating and to start working on the future of the state. To the *Blixem*, much like the radical Directors, the end justified the means of revolution. Lumping together aristocrats, Orangists and federalists, the periodical blamed them for their pride and lust to rule and thereby justified the coup of 22 January (*De politieke blixem*, 1797-1798, issue 36, 13 February 1798: 281-282).<sup>cclvi</sup> It was a shame, though, that the radicals (or at least some of them) were guilty of exactly the same ‘offences’. A similar point of view was offered by J.C. Hespe’s *De Constitutionele Vlieg*, a series of commentaries revolving around a fly that, figuratively of course, managed to enter people’s homes unnoticed and listen in on their conversations, only to later comment on their arguments, views and opinions. The introduction of the first issue can be considered exemplary for many similar political writings in this period. In it the *Vlieg* says he will be “just and fair, but never

sparing anyone who deserves critique, like those who engage in pernicious ‘diaboloocracy’ [the devils’ democracy or could it mean oligarchy? TK], those demagogues, those hunting for offices and engaging in party politics. The *Vlieg* wrote (Hespe, 1798, issue 1: 2) how he had been favourable to the coup of 22 January and vouched to help complete it by “exposing fake friends, double-hearted, self-interested people and plotters and schemers and distinguish them from true and virtuous believers in the revolution”.<sup>cclvii</sup> He promised to fight “those who stir up discord, schemers, fortune hunters, ignoramuses and unfettered and loud Patriots”.

On 9 June 1798, in an attempt to attack bribery and other vices, the *Vlieg* tells the story of the Roman consuls Marcus Curius and Caius Fabricius; symbols of incorruptibility in administration whose depictions were, for precisely this reason, on the walls of the Amsterdam burgomasters’ chambers in the town hall (the story of Marcus Curius, who refused a bribe from the Samnites and chose turnips over gold, is depicted on the cover of this book with a painting by Govaert Flinck). To the *Vlieg* the Romans exemplified the good virtues of justice, honesty, and simplicity. They were steadfast and selfless. Bad characteristics, on the other hand, were chaos, lust to rule and self-interest (Hespe 1798, issue 3: 17-18). On 16 June 1798, four days after the moderate counter coup, the *Vlieg* discusses the case against Eykenbroek and, by association, Van Langen and others. He calls upon them to provide a full account of their dealings (Hespe 1798, issue 5: 34). At the core of the message lies the fact that what happened on and after 22 January is in principal not a problem. Only when those participating in it acted out of self-interest does the coup become questionable. Finally, Cicero’s *On Duties* (see book 1, chapter 25) referred to by the *Vlieg* to provide lessons in politics and administration. Most of all, administrators should serve the interest of the citizens who have entrusted their faith in them. They should serve the state’s interests instead of particular ones (Hespe 1798, Issue 20: 43-44).

In this way the journal echoes some of the (initial) legal arguments of Van Maanen and, we can say, the French. As long as actions had been public business (Van Maanen) or ‘political dealings’ (the French in their amnesty) things were not so bad. As it was, though, since the men of 22 January did not meet these requirements, the *Vlieg* was glad they had been removed. The members of the constituent assembly and the radical Directorate had, after all, made a mess of things: “they had trampled on the rights of the people, renounced reasonable and moral principles, had been blinded by lust to rule and had, by the mad urges of some of its members, thrown away the esteem they would have received otherwise”.<sup>cclviii</sup> Van Langen and others had, according to the *Vlieg* (Hespe 1798, issue 6), “jeopardized property and personal safety of civilians, given offices to ignorant debauched and blind members of their own faction, driven the best patriots from government, made use of services from a swarm of intriguing men”. Had they not, indeed, “pillaged the nations’ treasury to satisfy those who were bankrupt [Van Langen’s business? TK]. Yes, millions have been wasted to bribe the French government to help them in their cause”.<sup>cclix</sup> It was time, the *Vlieg* said, for the “justice, fairness and all honest principles that have been adopted in the constitution after so much trouble.”<sup>cclx</sup> Issue number eight went on to accuse Van Langen directly. It said “well now, former director Van Langen. It is a nice sum, to get fifty thousand guilders all of a sudden for your personal use” (cf. Molhuysen, et al., 2008, part 8: 1011). But, the *Vlieg* continued, “*quod non audent regnandi cupido* – what does lust for power not bring about!” (Hespe 1798, issue 8: 33). The *Vlieg* warns of men like Van Langen and others who had “wasted the nations’ time. Heed those chameleons, showing their different colours at will, blowing in the direction of each new wind (compare the image of a wind vane discussed in chapter seven, see also Lok 2009). They are

hunters for office, did not serve the nation, and wanted only wealth and splendour for themselves. They hide behind a mask of love for freedom and the people but shunning the name of citizen like the plague. Under such men, treasuries do not have bottoms, laws do not have impartial protectors and the people have no protection” (Hespe 1798, issue 8: 71-72).<sup>cclxi</sup> “Yes, Batavian citizens”, the *Vlieg* went on to say (Hespe 1798, Issue 8: 72-73), “pay heed to doubters, traitors, the rich and shouting wallowing in abundance. Choose [in the upcoming elections, TK] an honest man, someone from among you, someone you know. Chose someone who loves people, is honest and affable and who has not, through conceit or haughtiness risen above his true status, who is virtuous, down to earth and cool headed. Chose those who know how to unite a lofty character, excellent merits, a great spirit, proven wisdom and political principles with a virtuous civic lifestyle.”<sup>cclxii</sup>

A final telling and quite common public opinion view is provided by the journal *De politieke donderslag* (*Political Thunder*, the follow-up of *Political Lightning*) which appeared from 23 July 1798 until 17 September 1798 in 10 issues. In the very first issue (*De politieke donderslag*, 1798, issue 1: 4-5) the author explains his reasons for publishing the journal as he writes: “Keep an eye out, Batavians! For those creatures who speak with conviction to pick your pockets”.<sup>cclxiii</sup> He then explicitly mentions Van Langen, Fijnje and Vreede: “those infamous political charlatans” who had fortunately been “crude or extravagant enough to show their true colours, or else we would perhaps have been stuck with them for a long time to come, to all our ruin [...] never could the ex-director Van Langen have provided a better service to the nation than to use a lot of money in so little time; the sooner he would be caught out”.<sup>cclxiv</sup> The author speaks of the fact that Van Langen had been too slow to see what was coming on 12 June. Fijnje and Vreede, however, had been quicker on their feet (to escape through the window, TK) as the author continues: “the great Pieter Vreede and Wybo Fijnje were more clever and took to their heels. Could these statesmen, with their escape, have proven even better that it is easier to swear on the battery [as in a group of large guns and the men handling them, TK] in service of the country than it is to be killed this way”.

The author seems to say how the Directors had not stuck to their word, had only made easy promises and had let others (the Eykenbroek-Eberstein circle?) do the hard work. He continues (*De politieke donderslag*, issue 1: 6-7) saying: “when we observe the mess that has been left by the three ex-directors, we have to wonder how it is possible that so much was still done. With so many unskilled skippers on the bridge who knew not of quay, ship or wind it is incomprehensible that they have not utterly ruined the fatherland, incomprehensible that the ship of state has not struck on a rock in splinters”.<sup>cclxv</sup> As it turned out, the author concludes, “we have been cheated by this miserable lot of war-horses, by the shining cover with which they concealed their true identity and learned, to our disgrace, that all that shines is not gold [...]. Piet Vreede writes nicely but throws dust in our eyes. When it comes down to it, deeds are lacking” (*De politieke donderslag*, issue 1: 6-7).<sup>cclxvi</sup> Perhaps the author makes reference to the Patriot pamphlets which Vreede had published (see for an overview Molhuysen 2008, part 9: 1245ff). The comment here serves to state how the radicals talked the talk but not walked the walk or, in present terms, displayed a lack of integrity.

In another issue of 27 August 1798 the author returns to Vreede and discusses whether it had been right to let him return to the Batavian Republic (*De politieke donderslag*, issue 7: 52). To the author, Vreede’s flight had clearly been an act of cowardice and his return could be dangerous. If, so the pamphlet reads, Vreede believes to be innocent than he should turn himself in since “the nastiness of a dungeon can not startle an honest heart”.<sup>cclxvii</sup> In the second

issue of 30 July the author deals with Eykenbroek *cum suis* as he notes how the constitution after 22 January was forced upon the nation and became a toy for fortune seekers and bullies (*De politieke donderslag*, Issue 2: 13). Another issue of 6 August provides an imaginary discussion between boss Piet [Pieter Vreede, TK] and his henchman Jacob [Van Langen, TK] in which Jacob confesses to Piet that the fourth of may [the day the ‘unconstitutional’ Representative Assembly had been elected out of the purged constituent assembly, TK] still weighs heavy on him (*De politieke donderslag*, Issue 3, 6 August 1798: 20). In the same issue, finally, a folk song is presented on Jan Eykenbroek and Pieter Vreede (*De politieke donderslag*, Issue 3: 23-24). It sings Pieter Vreede handed out offices to his friend and selected men who were only famous for their screaming. It sings of the use of public money to provide Eykenbroek with security and high office. It also sings of how Eykenbroek went to negotiate even though he had no knowledge of things and of Eberstein who was so skilled in cheating and acting like a wind vane in stealing money and breaking their oath and duty”.<sup>cclxviii</sup>

### *Public values from shop floor sources*

While some shop floor accounts have been discussed in the previous as well, separate ones can, finally, be found too. In the following I will mainly focus on Van Langen and Vreede as they published their personal account of events in pamphlets. Their opinions are in part of course justification strategies of accused men. Still, their accounts simultaneously contain shop floor ideas on appropriate conduct. Their accounts tell us what values or norms they adhered to; whether there were differences of opinion between them and other sources and what they thought of the accusations. Also, I will focus on reports of their interrogations by the investigators in the case to discuss how various actors in the scandal felt, thought and argued. Finally, I pay attention to private correspondence in letters, for instance between Eykenbroek and Van Langen and between Van Langen and Vreede, and notes as they have been gathered and organized by Colenbrander.

On 9 October 1798, Pieter Vreede submitted a seventy page long account to the Representative Assembly of his “public behaviour” which had resulted in his removal from the Assembly.<sup>66</sup> With his account Vreede hoped to rehabilitate himself by “separating guilt from innocence and accusation from proven truth” (1798: 1-2).<sup>cclxix</sup> It was partly a direct response to the *Memorie* and *Authentique bylagen tot den 12 Junij* and provides an interesting view on Vreede’s shop floor views. According to Vreede, the federalists, aristocrats and Orangists had been the truly self-interested ones. This, together with the paralysis of the state due to the continuous bickering between moderates and radicals over the form of the state and the new constitution, had been sufficient reason for the coup of 22 January and the following purges. As Van Langen would later argue as well (see below), without a coup it would have been impossible to end “the paralysis and lack of administration and create an energetic government” (Vreede, 1798: 9-12). Vreede (1798: 15), interestingly, then stresses the fact that the purging had been done irrespective of rank. Also, where mistakes had been made, they had corrected them.<sup>cclxx</sup> Furthermore, the accusation that he and the others had been guilty of acquiring offices and/or helping friends to them was ridiculous.

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<sup>66</sup> NL-HaNA, *Collectie 001 Dumont Pigalle, 1780-1800*, accessnumber 2.21.057, letter QQQQQ; NL-HaNA, *Wetgevende Colleges*, 2.01.01.01, inv.nr. 509.

To Vreede, appointing like-minded people and purging opponents might have constituted nepotism and/or favouritism but this was natural in times of revolution. He writes: “was it a crime or a duty that we began to purge all constitutional powers; and appoint those persons, in the departmental administrations and municipalities, whose views were the same as ours?” (1798: 56-57). Vreede then turns things around (as Van Langen would too, see below) and focuses on the many things others did wrong. He argues that any government will always be surrounded by people asking for offices. He, however, had never felt this hunger and had thus never satisfied it. Others, however, wanted to put their relatives in lucrative offices; others have always tried to come out on top with every change of government; others have come forwards as Patriots only to disappear to the back once they got their fat piece in their possession, but never had he acquired any position for himself for other reasons than doing his duty and being of use.<sup>cclxxi</sup> ‘Never’ probably had a peculiar meaning to Vreede as he admitted to have helped his second son Paul to a job at the ministry of foreign affairs. Importantly, Vreede does however sense this might have been a wrong move but tries to redeem himself by rhetorically asking: “is this lust for offices of a father who has six sons, who has never before taken anything for himself while always fighting for the cause of freedom?” (1798: 56-57).<sup>cclxxii</sup> Apparently, nepotism was alright according to Vreede as long as one also fights for ‘freedom’.

Having defended the coup and the purges and having denied any wrongdoing in getting offices for himself or his family, Vreede (1798: 37) then goes on to counter other accusations made against him and the Directorate as a whole. He agrees that any criminal activity should be thoroughly investigated: “rightly so!”, he says, “investigate these evil deeds! Rightly so! Let the world know! Call it stealing, thievery, thievery of the land if you will. While I desperately hope that my colleague [Van Langen, TK] will be able to give a full account of his actions [...] there is not a shred of evidence that I have been involved in any crime. It appears that no evidence has been found against any of my other colleagues [either]”.<sup>cclxxiii</sup> However justified it is to investigate crimes, Vreede (1798: 38) believes it is unfair how the entire Directorate should be held accountable for the actions of only a few of its members.<sup>cclxxiv</sup> A feeling Van Langen would also express (see below).

Next, Vreede counters accusations launched in the *Memorie* (and various public opinion sources) that the Directorate had wasted public money on idle and extravagant display and food (1798: 39-41). He remarks that the Directorate had spent money on tablecloths and furniture (presumably for their new lodgings in The Hague) and on a big dinner for the *corps diplomatique*. He then launches a counter attack and asks: “does this deserve a reprimand? Is this excess? What am I to think of such an accusation? When the nation gives that money to the Directors, how can it be berated when they use it?” He sounds indignant now as he continues: “Yes, we have been to the theatre. Occasionally we needed relaxation from working all day, to keep on serving the nations’ interests at night with renewed strength, is that criminal? Yes, we have used carriages. The five Directors, the first civil servants of the Republic, *rented* two carriages a month! Would it even have been a crime had we *bought* five? Our dinner table was always sober and orderly, never wasteful. Never did we indulge in drinking. Why the commotion about the costs of our expenses and lodgings? Why these accusations that we waste money meant for widows and orphans on useless things? Would the nation be better off if its Directors put money [which was apparently rightfully theirs to spend, TK] in a box without touching it?”<sup>cclxxv</sup>

Not a word is, perhaps not surprisingly, said by Vreede about any deal with the French and the fact that his and Van Marle’s company had been involved in supplying cloth. He does

speak of the secret negotiations between the radicals and Barras and about the use of men like Eykenbroek. In a passage that would have made Machiavelli proud, Vreede (1798: 60) writes how secrecy and lack of morality is often a virtue. The end simply justifies the means as: “diplomacy follows different values, different morals and different duties. The honest man, used to sincerity and having an open mind, is unsuitable for it. He is fearful of the slippery paths that need to be taken, his morals prevent him from doing what needs to be done”.<sup>cclxxvi</sup> To Vreede (1798: 61), what he calls “Italian statecraft” is inevitable and can therefore never be a crime.<sup>cclxxvii</sup> The use of morally corrupt men like Eykenbroek is, consequently, not wrong either which Vreede explains with two simple analogues. In the first (1798: 62) he writes: “a flamboyant nobleman, arriving with his horse and carriage, ringing the doorbell of a house and finding out he is not allowed to enter, surely is less suited for diplomacy than a civilian who arrives on foot, goes through the back door and gets things done”.<sup>cclxxviii</sup> In a final analogy (1798: 63) Vreede notes that like a general on a battlefield, he knows “to expect something different from his spy than from his chaplain”.<sup>cclxxix</sup>

Van Langen also did not remain silent on the affair. In a public statement somewhat similar to Vreede’s, he discusses the coup of 22 January, his own part in it and addresses some of the accusations against him.<sup>67</sup> Since 12 June, Van Langen had been arrested, prosecuted and detained for months. Although he was eventually freed in the general amnesty he had, arguably, been hit hardest by the entire ordeal and desperately tried to clear himself if only to stop his cloth business from going under (Molhuysen, et al., 2008, part 8: 1011). On the coup and purges after 22 January, Van Langen was clear and brief. To him the removal of political adversaries, “those not belonging to our system” had been perfectly in order. The end justified the means since without the purges and removals, nothing would ever have gotten done (Colenbrander, 1905-1922, part II: 605). In the process of clearing himself, Van Langen accused others of immoral behaviour just like Vreede had done. While trying to drag others along in your fall and spreading the responsibility is, perhaps, a logical or human response, it also provides an interesting view on Van Langen’s own morals. After all, the accusations he made tell us something about what he believed or knew to be wrong. At the very least it tells us what he knew others would consider wrong or morally corrupt behaviour.

Van Langen wrote how the Directorate had had to ‘thank’ General Barthélemy Joubert, representative of the French army in the Batavian Republic (Molhuysen, et al., 2008, part 7: 687) and Delacroix with ‘proper’ gifts. Joubert was offered a couple of horses which the Frenchman apparently refused, replying he wanted a thousand guilders instead (Colenbrander, 1905-1922, part II: 615). Delacroix received ten thousand guilders according to Van Langen. A note by Van Leeuwen to the Directorate seems to confirm Van Langen’s story at least partly when Van Leeuwen discusses the gift when he writes: “I have to tell you that since we are up to our elbows in money [EIC credit? TK], we should honour our commitment to minister Delacroix and give him a present so he can buy furniture and other nice things” (Pijman, et al., 1798, appendix 22, 6 February 1798).<sup>cclxxx</sup> The simple note caused quite a row when it was disclosed, as the Interim Directorate considered it proof of how the radicals had carelessly wasted the money entrusted to them (Pijman, et al., 1798: 40-41).<sup>cclxxxi</sup> Van Langen, however, seemed to want to show how much worse some others were compared to him. At the very

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<sup>67</sup> NL-HaNA, *Collectie 002 S. Dassevael, 1790-1838*, 2.21.048. Also published by Colenbrander, 1905-1922, part II: #574: 594-623, no date but written after 1801.

least, it proved he was not alone in seeking riches or wanting to profit from political circumstances.

Van Langen (like Vreede) also discusses the scramble for offices that erupted immediately after 22 January. General Daendels had reminded Van Langen of his services to the coup of 22 January and had demanded offices for himself, for one of his nephews and for his friend J.C. Hespe (Colenbrander, 1905-1922, part II: 603).<sup>68</sup> Apparently Daendels was refused these favours, something which according to Van Langen had caused Daendels' 'betrayal' on 12 June (Colenbrander, 1905-1922, part II: 607). Van Langen recounts how others had equally tried but failed to acquire offices through him which had turned them into enemies of the Directorate. One of them was Admiral Jan Willem de Winter, who was taken hostage by the English after the disastrous Dutch defeat at the battle of Camperdown on 11 October 1797. De Winter had, according to Van Langen, asked for compensation for his dining expenses while imprisoned. When Van Langen told him that "since he technically was not in command of any fleet, let alone a ship, he could not possibly expect this to happen". De Winter had not been amused. After 12 June, incidentally, the Interim Directorate would still pay the Admiral 21,600 guilders for his expenses while in England (Colenbrander, 1905-1922, part II: 607).

In his public statement Van Langen (like Vreede) does not mention the deal with the French or his attempts to straighten his own business with public money. However, he does so in other places. The archives of attorney general Van Maanen contain several personal accounts from Van Langen concerning the case as he was detained and questioned. He also apparently started an illegal correspondence with Wybo Fijnje who was also incarcerated in the same prison in The Hague<sup>69</sup> in which he provides an account of his interrogations which are otherwise not to be found in the official case files. These letters and notes provide detailed accounts and excuses of what he had done and offer a unique and honest-as-can-be view on how Van Langen perceived his case and behaviour.<sup>69</sup> After all, to each other the 'accomplices' Van Langen and Fijnje might not have had many secrets. Furthermore, the fact that the letters were intended to remain secret add to the truthfulness of these accounts compared to public statements intended for a wider audience. As it was, however, the notes were intercepted.

During the first interrogation, when questioned on possible bribery by Van Langen, the latter denied ever to have bribed anyone. The sums of money taken from the EIC for his personal use had instead been meant for "travel expenses and correspondence". The bills of exchange found by the investigators – a great number of handwritten bills are attached to the file as evidence – could, according to Van Langen all be accounted for. When asked why the investigators could not find any proof of this, Van Langen responded that he had made verbal instead of written agreements with the rest of the Directors. The money and cloth given to Eykenbroek to conduct business with the French could not be considered bribery either. Rather this was meant for "secret negotiations". When asked whether Fijnje was aware of these bills of exchange, Van Langen answered yes. Finally, Van Langen was confronted with his letter to Eykenbroek (where he had insisted on proceeding as planned). When asked what he had meant by this, he answered that this was simply to protect "the system of 22 January and

<sup>68</sup> NL-Ha-NA, *Collectie 018 C. F. van Maanen (1895), 1709-1807*, 2.21.114.02, inv.nr. 27.

<sup>69</sup> NL-Ha-NA, *Collectie 018 C. F. van Maanen (1900), 1717-1867*, supplement 2, 2.21.114.03, inv.nr. 18: Secret letters by the removed representative Van Langen to Pieter Vreede during the former's incarceration at the Voorpoort in The Hague.

to serve the nation”.<sup>70</sup> His own commercial interests had nothing to do with it. The second interrogation mainly served to find out why Van Langen and others had continued using the funds of the EIC even after they had gained legal access to funds from the committee of foreign affairs (once they had become the Directorate). Van Langen says they at first did not know of these other funds. When they eventually found out it was easier, he said, to keep on using the credit of the EIC. Besides, he added, many people working at the EIC had had a hand in the coup of 22 January (remember the 3000 guilders Van Langen paid to Pieter Ondaatje, see earlier). This made sticking to EIC funds a logical choice. Van Langen denies they used the EIC to keep withdrawals hidden. Again he remarks that he had verbally asked and gained consent from Vreede and the others.<sup>71</sup>

After a while the interrogators seem to have gotten annoyed with Van Langen. When, finally, they ask whether he really thinks he does not need to take any personal responsibility and account for his actions, Van Langen continuously refuses to do so.<sup>72</sup> He tells them that if they had a problem with the way things had been done they should ask the entire (former) Directorate and not just him. Everything he had done had been on behalf of the Directorate.<sup>cclxxxiii</sup> Apparently he considered himself a scape-goat (see earlier). Whether he actually meant this is impossible to tell but he did remain consistent just as his interrogators remained convinced that he could not hide behind the other directors and kept applying pressure.<sup>73</sup> They told Van Langen outright that “this way it will take a long time before we can make any progress with your case. You can’t deny personal responsibility or call on the other Directors. We will need a different answer”.<sup>cclxxxiv</sup> This they would not get, even when they confronted Van Langen with paperwork showing the deals with Pessers and Guerin. Importantly, from his answers it becomes clear how he did not consider it wrong in any way to use his own firm and settling his private business with public money from the EIC. Much like Vreede had argued, as long as the nations’ interests were served as well it did not matter to Van Langen where the money went. There was, in other words, no sense of any conflict of interest on his part. Besides, Van Langen recounts saying to his interrogators in another letter<sup>74</sup>, the other Directors knew everything and also did it, which made it alright.<sup>cclxxxv</sup> Van Langen might have had a point here. Resolutions from the radical Directorate show, for instance, how Vreede had approved of getting 400,000 guilders from the EIC.<sup>75</sup>

## 8.4 Analysis and concluding remarks

In the following – as in previous chapters – I will conclude this case study with a brief overview of the main public values in the case. I will also provide a comparison between the various sources of values and will then address questions of change and continuity of public values in the context of wider institutional developments (such as democratization and politicisation) in the French-Batavian period.

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<sup>70</sup> NL-Ha-NA, *Collectie 018 C. F. van Maanen (1900), 1717-1867*, supplement 2, 2.21.114.03, inv.nr. 18: Secret letters by the removed representative Van Langen to Pieter Vreede during the former’s incarceration at the Voorpoort in The Hague. Letter 1: Van Langen to Vreede, no date.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter 2: Van Langen to Vreede, no date.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter 4: Van Langen to Vreede, 9 September 1798.

<sup>75</sup> NL-HaNA, *Wetgevende Colleges 1796 – 1810*, 2.01.01.01, inv.nr 509: item 260, 21/02/1798 and 23/02/1798.

*Public values and value statements in the case*

The case study has provided an extensive amount of public values, value statements and notions of political corruption. The first thing that becomes clear is that wrong public official behaviour could mean many different things to different actors. This conclusion is not as trivial as it may seem. It tells us there was quite a large variety of terms and concepts with which to condemn or condone public official behaviour. Furthermore, when we survey the third case study and the large amount of values, value statements and notions of political corruption, these can roughly be classified in two categories.

First, there seems to be a category of values and value statements that were either new or at least re-emphasized. This included having a lust for power and the abuse of power which were considered wrong or immoral especially since both were often regarded as a betrayal of common good and popular sovereignty; concepts that seems to have acquired new meaning or gained importance in the period (see below). According to many, it was wrong to abuse the power that people had invested in an office (and not, importantly, so much in a person). This requirement is interesting as it denotes the existence of the idea among various actors that the power of administrators was derived from a mixture of trust and a mandate which they had been given. We also find bureaucratic and behavioural or personal requirements as part of this first category of values and value statements. It concerns skills, capabilities or merits that were desired, supported or condemned. A large amount of desirables can be discerned in the case. Public officials should, for instance, act with tact, be calm, courageous, orderly, frugal, honest, trustworthy, virtuous, impartial, neutral in their work, be of lofty character, of good faith, moderate in their behaviour, reasonable, unpretentious, have ‘true and noble love for people’ and do as they promise. Undesirables, of course, also abound. Saying one thing but doing another (a lack of integrity?) was frowned upon and so was being disorganized in one’s administration. Public officials should not act like chameleons (i.e., ‘double-hearted’ traitors who change sides or ‘colours’ as they see fit), be conceited or haughty, doubtful, devious or loud. They should also not be plotting and scheming (faction strife), be drunk, sloppy, spiteful, stirring up discord, throw dust in someone’s eyes, or – in a very general and unspecified sense – be without morality or be incapable.

Second, there is a category of values and value statements having to do with wasting money and time in general, and wasting *public* money and time in particular. In times of economic hardship and military defeatism, wasteful and excessive behaviour and an exuberant lifestyle, hunting for fortune, squandering money, idly wasting time and/or having a ‘blinding’ lust for offices and power were considered shameful and, we can say, corrupt. For example, the condemnation of the use of public EIC funds to pay for a coup d’état was considered to be mismanagement of public funds. Crucially, this was not the same as stealing, which seems to have been an accusation in its own right. Mismanagement and wasting public money and time denoted a lack of administration. The subtle but important distinction between taking public funds for personal benefit and wasting public funds on excesses while in office also becomes clear from a third category of values and value statements pertaining to the use of public funds for private benefits. This was called direct theft or stealing, satisfying one’s personal interests or fortune, lining one’s pockets at the expense of someone else, self-interest or expediency and self-preservation. Self-interest versus that of a wider community was an essential part of late eighteenth-century political corruption debates.

The term corruption only comes up twice in the case. First, it is used by the moderate Directorate when the radicals are accused of enriching themselves with the nation's money. Second, it is used when the Court of Holland prosecutes and charges Eykenbroek and others for their machinations against the safety of the state. Both instances have quite a different denotations, signifying abuse of public money for private benefit in the first instance and harming the state in the second. Political corruption, then, seems to have been used in both its wide classical and more narrow modern meaning (see chapter one). Furthermore, while the term itself only surfaces twice, its many surrogate terms also show that wrongful public official behaviour pertained to the moral decay of the whole body politic (a degenerated state of politics in which fraud, treason, sluggishness, indecisiveness etc. went hand in hand) as well as the individual behaviour of public officials who were stealing public money for private purposes.

### *Comparing sources of values*

Interestingly, the morality expressed by a majority of different actors in the various sources of values was similar in several important ways. Nearly all sources had similar perceptions of what was corrupt and what was not. Wasting the nation's time and money, engaging in party politics and/or faction strife, abusing the faith and trust invested in them by the people and having a lust for power and a desire to acquire offices were condemned across the board. Most of the other undesirables and desirables in the glossary also essentially seem to have been beyond dispute. The main actors in the scandal simply did not seem to propagate or endorse very different public values or views on right or wrong behaviour. When we compare some of the shop floor codes to political pamphlets, legal opinions expressed by Van Maanen or the moderate Directorate and best-opinion (see chapter five) we find they were essentially all in agreement that it was wrong to take public money for private purposes, to usurp power, to commit treason, to lie or to be disorganized (i.e., not keeping your administration in order). Again: while most groups and actors essentially argued from the same set of values they simply disagreed on whether they were guilty of such offences. Vreede, for example, wrote that he should indeed be tried if only he had actually committed the crimes he was accused of.

Another example can be found in the fact that the moral reasons for the moderate counter coup of 12 June were similar to those of the radical coup of 22 January. The radicals of 22 January believed they were fighting 'the good fight', just like the moderates after them would believe. In their declaration of 22 January the new Constituent Assembly had, for instance, said they wanted to stop the confusion and uncertainty of the past three years, they wanted to stop those who, for their own megalomania tried to prevent a unified administration. They wanted actions instead of words and wished to end lack of administration, rowdy or boisterous lust to rule, abuse of state funds for bribery, self-enrichment with the fruits of the people's labour and strife and partisanship.<sup>76</sup> These were all values and value statements that we also find among the moderates after June 12 and explains in part why some of the moderates of 12 June, like Gogel, had initially been on board on the 22<sup>nd</sup> but later decided to counter with a moderate approach to a shared ideal of a unitary state. In short, radicals and moderates in part argued from a similar or shared value system.

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<sup>76</sup> NL-HaNA, *Wetgevende Colleges 1796 – 1810*, 2.01.01.01, inv.nr. 33: 26-30.

However, at the same time there were some striking differences in the public values and assumptions of proper behaviour between some of the actors and sources of values, mostly about the way the shared ideal was to be reached. The radicals of 22 January meant to secure a unitary constitution through purges, arrests and a parliament that was devoid of opposition. Long-winded procedures and tiring deliberations were all ‘democratic’ and fair but ultimately stood in the way of progress and the quick results that were required. In the end the radicals decided for the latter as becomes apparent from the motives expressed by Van Langen, Vreede and Fijnje. The end simply justified the means even if this required some form of ‘Italian Statecraft’, meaning secrecy, hole-and-corner-agreements and circumventing proper bureaucratic, political and/or shop floor procedures. The decree from the Constituent Assembly of 22 January 1798 shows how this worked.<sup>77</sup> To restore order, special measures are allowed “so that one understands that a temporary sacrifice of parts of our civic freedom do not serve any other purpose than to acquire a good constitution, through which we will ensure ourselves of an even greater pleasure of that freedom”.<sup>clxxxvi</sup>

While moderates like Gogel initially agreed with circumventing procedures by staging a coup to get things done, they soon disagreed with the measures and behaviour of their radical peers which resulted in the ‘parliamentary inquiry’ and the *Memorie*. A similar position was taken by political pamphleteers. While initially enthusiastic about 22 January the behaviour of the directors and the way the coup was executed eventually rubbed them the wrong way. The radical Directorate’s choice to remain in power, even when their own constitution essentially required them to step down, was equally unacceptable to public opinion in general and the moderates in particular. The appearance of what seemed to be a bit of ‘true liberty’ (see chapters four and five) left in the radicals (a small group deciding for the rest), was not appreciated either. Both moderates and political pamphleteers, in contrast, constantly argued how parliament and people were to be respected and how the purges had only led to the removal of good and honest men. The radicals, while initially on the right track, had simply gone too far. Circumventing proper elections and using the likes of Eykenbroek and their ‘immoral’ characters for their schemes led to illegitimacy and a lack of accountability. It meant deception, treason, usurpation and the abuse of public trust and showed a lust for power and a desire to rule and to obtain offices at all expense.

Finally, it is important to conclude that the payments of large sums of public money for French support seems not to have been the most problematic issue to either moderate Directorate, legal codes or public opinion. The real problem was the fact that some had tried to benefit *personally* from the common cause (compare what I mentioned earlier about the distinction between stealing and wasting public money). The only real difference between best-opinion and public opinion on the one hand and some of the shop floor sources (Van Langen and Vreede) on the other therefore concerned the fact that some had tried to benefit personally from the common cause, and had thereby mixed public and private affairs. Whereas the moderate Directorate, the legal investigators and the pamphleteers thought such a mix was wrong, Van Langen and Vreede (as well as the various members of the Eykenbroek-Eberstein circle) clearly thought otherwise. They seem to have thought it was perfectly in order to use the deals with the French as a private business opportunity. Van Langen and Vreede remained defiant in their position that it had been all right to obtain private gain from public office because it helped bring about the ‘common good’ of a unitary constitution which everyone

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<sup>77</sup> NL-HaNA, *Wetgevende Colleges 1796 – 1810*, 2.01.01.01, inv.nr. 33: 32.

wanted. However, to the other sources private gain from public funds meant a line had been crossed. Of course, Van Langen was probably right in pointing to the hypocrisy of others. After all, he had not been the only one trying to personally benefit from the Batavian Revolution.

*Change and continuity of public values and perceptions of political corruption*

At the beginning of this chapter a central question concerning changing public values and perceptions of political corruption in the French-Batavian period was put forward. This was the question whether the case study is able to show how the period's increased state-formation, 'nation-building' and democratisation (including politicization) together with a changing political culture (see chapter four) led to changing public values and perceptions of political corruption. Was the period, in other words, an important driver of public value change much like the periods around 1748 (chapter six) and the 1780s (chapter seven)? Also, a hypothesis was discussed concerning the possible end of early modern value pluralism. I will assess both issues in the following.

When considering the first question we can note that the scandal does indeed show new or at least re-emphasized public values and perceptions of political corruption. Political corruption, so it seems, was increasingly framed in terms of modern public values, i.e., those linked to state-formation and democratisation of the period. These were in turn linked to a wider and more modern understanding of the common good and the public interest (compare chapter one on classical and modern definitions). The public value of representation now meant representing 'the people' instead of one's friends, family or patron. A similar change can be seen in the value of accountability and/or responsibility. Now, public officials were accountable to and responsible for their lawful superiors (people, parliament and elected officials). Wider notions of the public interest and the common good (now entailing the Batavian *nation* rather than particularistic and autonomous provinces and cities) were of equal importance to new or reemphasized core public values such as loyalty (to nation, parliament and people instead of one's family, friends or colleagues) and legitimacy (act in accordance with representative institutions and a constitution, instead of shop floor harmony and collegial office rotation). Endless political bickering, especially in times when the nation as a whole was in trouble, was often not condoned. For this reason, demagoguery, usurpation and trying to rise above 'one's true status' were rejected.

It is in this context in which we can understand what was meant with phrases such as trampling on the constitution, trampling on the rights of the people and abusing the high dignity with which officials were bestowed by the people instead of by collegial bodies and mechanisms of office rotation. A similar conclusion concerning the changing meaning and increasing importance of common good and public interest can be drawn from another often recurring perception of political corruption in the case study: Van Langen and others did not just waste money and/or appropriated it for personal benefit. They wasted *public* money that belonged to the nation which (so it was apparently commonly felt at the time) desperately needed all the funds it could get to avoid a national military and economic catastrophe. According to all parties involved (apart from people like Van Langen and Vreede, see earlier) such conduct led to inadequate administration and amounted to nothing less than undermining the moral, economic and cultural revival of the new Batavian nation.

In addition to this first conclusion we can see how the fast rise and growth of a centralized Dutch state and the growing presence and power of its administration also seem to have had an effect on public morality. The case shows how the general actions of the Batavian government as well as the individual actions of Van Langen and others sparked heated discussion on the correct form and functioning of the new state. As soon as representatives in parliament and Directorate government were placed in power by means of elections (no matter how limited as yet!) debate occurred about what these people should or should not do with their power. No longer were administrators supposed or expected to act only in accordance with their own beliefs and value systems. Again, it appears from this that the times of ‘true liberty’ in which a small group of regents decided what was best for all, were – although slowly – coming to an end. Furthermore, as administrators were indeed getting access to growing amounts of (public) resources (compare the EIC credit at their disposal) and offices (compare appointing ‘secret’ agents from the Eykenbroek-Eberstein circle) questions naturally arose whether money had been spent well and whether appointments had been correct. Increased bureaucratization of a new ‘public service’ did in fact bring about increased or reinforced attention for values such as professionalism, merit, expertise, clear rules and regulations, clear hierarchy, loyalty to your superior and neutrality in the execution of your public duties.

Similarly the voice of ‘burghers’ was more often expressed in political pamphlets which also might have influenced changing public morality. Perhaps from decades of reform from Doelists to Patriots to Batavians, many had come to believe they ought to have a greater stake in political life (i.e., participation) and a bigger say when things were handled wrong. This is expressed in the political literature of the time. Finally, democratization also led to faction strife based on ideological differences and the start of ‘parties’ and political debates on fundamental issues. It seems that in the midst of significantly restructuring the Dutch state attention was therefore also directed towards shaping and improving morality underlying public administration largely in line with the morally charged reform program of best-opinion Batavians (see chapter five). At the same time, as always, we should not be too hasty to draw a line in the sand. Old ways (nepotism, venality, patronage and family interests) were certainly not over after 1798 (cf. Schama 1977: 424-425).

A second conclusion requires an answer to the question whether early modern value pluralism indeed ended around the turn of the nineteenth century in the Batavian Republic. Some of the assumptions from the beginning of this chapter (by Bayly, Engels and others) can now be confirmed as early modern value pluralism did in fact seem to be gone almost entirely. The fact that the case shows a basic agreement between the various actors and sources of public values proves, I argue, how the French-Batavian period witnessed a shift from the co-existence of different and separated public value systems (such as shop floor versus legal-bureaucratic) to modern coherent ideas of a unified value system and shared ideas on political corruption. In an early-modern sense, political corruption occurred when actions such as patronage, nepotism, not honouring seniority or rotation conflicted with face-to-face codes on the shop floor of everyday collegial political practice. The other sources of values, hosting other value systems, had little to do with it. In the early modern debates of chapters six and seven, weak legal and bureaucratic standards usually came into play only after shop floor principles of harmony and face-to-face relations had been disrupted. The Batavian case, on the contrary, shows that there were not just different values and perceptions of political corruption at play (see earlier) but that there were also different debates going on between the various sources of values and formerly different and separated value systems.

Now, especially public opinion and best-opinion seemed to be able to counter and overcome long-since established shop floor dominance of face-to-face values. It is true that a few remaining shop floor actors in the case (such as Van Langen, Vreede, the various henchmen of the circle and all those who petitioned the radical Directorate for offices) still displayed an 'early modern' mindset. However, despite these few remaining 'pockets' of value pluralism (change does not happen overnight) the case does show how modern perceptions started to become dominant in the debates. It became more difficult for administrators or politicians to be in two worlds at the same time and to hold on to early modern notions of administration. Instead, the Batavian case shows the clear emergence of a more coherent and increasingly accepted political view on corruption which we can still see today. The disambiguation of value systems had the effect of harmonization of shop floor, legal and public opinion norms into one single concept of the public office as distinct from the realm of private interests or social life.

The case has therefore provided a view on how clashes between new ideas (such as popular sovereignty and adherence to a constitution) and established shop floor routines (such as office rotation or privately benefiting from public duties) led to the proposition and discussion of new public values and/or a renewed emphasis on existing ones. The institutional changes in the French-Batavian period thus caused old and new ways to fundamentally collide. Acts that had in previous decades been more or less accepted were now increasingly considered immoral and unacceptable. In this sense the Batavian Republic, and more specifically its two coups d'état, can be considered something of a critical juncture: a pivotal moment in the formation of a new direction taken not just in 'politics' but in morality as well. It is true, as already mentioned, that the Batavians of the 1790s owed much to the Patriots of the 1780s and even the Doelists of the 1740s. Still, it is clear that the Batavians succeeded where others had previously failed, also with regards to morality even though many new codes of conduct sometimes still had to sink in on the shop floor level. Research on other scandals in later periods will have to show whether, how much and why the 'new' ethics proposed by Batavians made a lasting impression.