

the impressions gained. With some exceptions I have scanned only the reactions during the summer and autumn of 1891. I have taken representative organs of the whole spectrum of political opinions as expressed in the Dutch press in the early 1890s: I have tried to gauge the reaction of the Socialists (in *Recht voor Allen*), the free thinkers (in *De Amsterdammer* and *Vragen des Tijds*), the liberals (the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, *Het Nieuws van de Dag*, the *Algemeen Handelsblad*, and the *Oprechte Haarlemsche Courant*), and the Calvinists (in *De Standaard* and *De Heraut*). Amongst the Catholic press, dailies have been selected which cover a wide range of views, from the ultramontane conservative *De Maasbode*, through the episcopate-loyal *De Tijd*, to the sometimes quite progressive and independent *Het Centrum*.⁵

The encyclical was eagerly awaited, and reports of rumours and leaks about the tone and content were disdainfully scorned, but nonetheless reported in detail, by the Dutch Catholic press. The ultramontane *De Maasbode*, with its strong orientation both towards Rome and to the person of the pontiff, peppered its reports in early May 1891 with indications of the importance of the awaited encyclical, its probable contents, and its progress through all the stages of preparation, translation and publication.⁶ 'This momentous document is impatiently awaited', exclaimed the foreign editor, 'and it will create quite a sensation amongst the non-Catholics as well'.⁷ The rest of the Catholic press also kept its readers up to date with the leaks,⁸ as did the free-thinking liberal *De Amsterdammer*.⁹ The bishops' mouthpiece, *De Tijd*, printed an extraordinary article on 20 May called 'In Anticipation of the Papal Encyclical',¹⁰ in which it argued that the interest shown by non-Catholics, and particularly by the liberals, was because the only way to avoid the imminent disastrous and apocalyptic social revolution (itself a result of the venomous effects of liberal *laissez-faire* capitalism) was to turn to the Catholic Church as 'the only spiritual power which, with God's help, is capable of performing the miracle'.¹¹

5. A useful summary of the characteristics of the Catholic press at this time is provided by J.P. de Valk, in 'Rooms-katholieke stemmen over de Doleantie', *Documentatieblad voor de Nederlandse kerkgeschiedenis van de negentiende eeuw*, 22-23 (1986), 47-52.

6. *De Maasbode*, 3, 17 and 21 May 1891.

7. *De Maasbode*, 3 May 1891.

8. *De Tijd*, 16 May 1891; *Het Centrum*, 20 May 1891.

9. 17, 18, 19 May 1891.

10. 'In Verwachting der Pauselijke Encyclick'.

11. *De Tijd*, 20 May 1891.