

The Struggle for the Souls of the Children: The Effect of the Dutch Education Law of 1806 on the Emigration of 1847

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While it is commonly acknowledged that the Seceders under Van Raalte left the Netherlands to settle in America for freedom to worship and to improve their lot materially, there was a third, equally compelling reason why they chose to pack their bags for America, namely freedom to give their children a religious-based education in keeping with their beliefs.¹

In their pamphlet, *Emigration, or why we promote the Migration to North America and not to Java?*, Anthony Brummelkamp and Albertus C. Van Raalte stress, besides the deplorable living conditions and wage earning capacity of the laborer, the desire to establish their own Christian schools, for (in the public school) ...the Bible is banned.²

After arriving in America, Van Raalte wrote to Brummelkamp on January 30, 1847, "I am glad that I can now say with my whole heart to the Seceded Churches, which in Holland enjoy a limited freedom, but in the education of their children no freedom at all, Come over, and enjoy this good land of liberty."³

Dutch historians, Alle and Hendrik Algra wrote: "One of the most important motives for emigration by the Seceders was that in the

¹The Seceders were a group of believers who in 1834, under the leadership of Hendrik de Cock (1801-1842), left the State Church in order to form their own denomination, De Christelijke Afscheiden Kerk.

²A. Brummelkamp and A. C. Raalte, *Landvershuizing, of waarom bevorderen wij de volksverhuizing en wel naar Amerika en niet naar Java?* (Amsterdam: Hoogkamer & Compe, 1846).

³*Classis Holland Minutes 1848-1858* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1950), 16.

Netherlands there was no freedom of education. One must take that literally. It was not possible for anyone to organize a private school.”⁴ Dutch historian, I. J. Brugmans observed, “There have been complaints that it was easier to obtain permission from The Hague to run a brothel than to run a private school.”⁵

What was it about the educational system in the Netherlands—a system so exemplary that people from other nations came to observe it—that made Van Raalte, Brummelkamp, and many others look elsewhere?⁶ The answer is worth noting as it directly impacted the goals and scope of emigration.

In this chapter, I will examine how some of the articles of the law directly affected the Seceders; how the law was enforced, the proponents, the opponents, the Seceders’ attempt at educating by means of clandestine schools, and the impact on their emigration.

Education after the Reformation (1600 to 1800)

Before the Reformation, education fell under the domain of the Roman Catholic Church. The nobility and the wealthy hired tutors for their offspring, but most everyone else who desired an education for their children looked to the church whose monks, nuns, and priests were given the task of educating the young. This was also the case in the Netherlands. All of that changed with the Reformation in 1600 when the Dutch Reformed Church took control, exercising a good deal of power over the State, and taking education under its jurisdiction.⁷ The local Dutch

⁴A. Algra and H. Algra, *Dispereert Niet: Twintig Eeuwen Historie van de Nederlanden*, 9th ed. (Franeker: T. Wever, 1983), 3: 193. “Een van de belangrijkste motieven van de emigratie der Afscheidenen was, dat er in Nederland geen vrijheid van onderwijs bestond. Men moet dat zo letterlijk mogelijk nemen. Het stond niemand vrij een bijzondere school te stichten.”

⁵I. J. Brugmans, ed., *Honderdvijfentwintig Jaren Arbeid op het Onderwijsterein, 1836-1896*. (Groningen: J.B. Wolters, 1961), 51. “Er is wel eens geklaagd, dat het in Den Haag gemakkelijker was toestemming te verkrijgen voor de oprichting van een bordeel dan van een bijzondere school.”

⁶*Ibid.*, 60. Friedrich Thiersch from Germany visited the Netherlands in 1835. Victor Cousin (1792-1867), French philosopher, minister of education, historian, visited the Netherlands in 1836.

⁷Article 21 of the Church Order of Dort stated that “Consistories everywhere shall see to it that there are good school teachers, not only to teach the children reading, writing, languages, and the liberal arts, but also to instruct them in godliness *and in the*

Reformed Church chose the teacher and oversaw the curriculum. Children who attended school were taught the Bible, the Heidelberg Catechism, and Reformed doctrine along with their lessons. This state of affairs lasted until 1795, when under Napoleon, France occupied the Netherlands and separated church and state, whereby the Dutch Reformed Church lost its privileged position of influence over public education. This would have a long-reaching and lasting effect on the educational system of the country as well as on the Seceders. In 1806 a new national education law—the Law for Primary School Attendance and Education in the Batavian Republic—went into effect.⁸

Education Law of 1806

For the first time in Dutch history, education became the responsibility of the State, which divided the country into school districts and appointed supervisors to oversee that the laws were adhered to in their districts. These supervisors were chosen by the government, who for the first few decades were made up mostly of Dutch Reformed Church clergy. They were to work closely with provincial and municipal authorities to insure that proper school facilities were made available. They were also to visit the schools in their district periodically to check the quality of teaching, classroom decorum, and pupils' performance.⁹

The law allowed for two kinds of education: public and private.¹⁰ Public education was to be paid for in part by the parents and in part by the state. Private education might, for instance, be desired by a group such as a religious group, or persuasion; however, even though such a group could not be expected to receive any financial aid from the state, it would still fall under the supervision of the state and had to adhere to the same standards as the public school. Though the latter clause seemed like a good thing, it would prove very negative for the Seceders.

Catechism.

⁸*Wet voor het Lager Schoolwezen en Onderwijs in de Bataafsche Republiek*, 3 April 1806.

⁹R. Reinsma, *Scholen en schoolmeesters onder Willem I en II* (Den Haag, Voorheen van Keulen Periodieken, n.d.), 9.

¹⁰Private schools were divided into two classes: those founded by charitable institutions like orphanages, deaconates, etc., and those started by an individual teacher, e.g., a French language school.

Teachers

The law also enacted a set of reforms for teachers. They were to be properly instructed and had to pass examinations before being allowed to teach. There were four stages of certification, beginning with the fourth, or lowest rank, which required a basic knowledge of reading, writing and arithmetic, to the first, or highest rank, which required additional knowledge of geography, history, Dutch language and grammar, natural sciences, and mathematics.¹¹ Fourth and third level teachers were allowed to be assistant teachers only until they passed to the second and first level. Examinations were held twice a year for anyone who felt he could complete the next level. Special teacher training colleges, were founded to train new teachers in the state requirements. A newly developed monthly magazine, dealing with pedagogical and educational issues, helped teachers improve their skills and keep up their education. Teachers were no longer to use physical punishment as a way to instill good behavior. Believing that rewards worked better than punishment, incentives such as books and other prizes were made available to students for doing well.

Salaries

Teachers' salaries were based upon the number of students. There was to be one teacher for the first seventy children.¹² For each additional seventy, another teacher was hired. Parents with children between the ages of five and twelve were taxed 1 ½ nickel per child per week, whether the child attended school or not.¹³ The state also paid the teacher a certain amount per pupil per lesson. To ensure that schoolteachers would receive a livable wage, the law strictly forbade any group or organization to begin a new school in a community without the permission of the authorities.¹⁴ This was to prohibit the drain of students away from a qualified teacher,

¹¹E. P. Booy and P. Th. F. M. Boekholt, *Geschiedenis van de School in Nederland: vanaf de middeleeuwen tot aan de huidige tijd* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1987), 110, 112.

¹²L. W. De Bree, *Het Platteland Leert Lezen en Schrijven: Het lager onderwijs op het platteland in de eerste helft der 19e eeuw* (Amsterdam: P.N. van Kampen & Zoon, n.d.), 39.

¹³H. Bouma, *Een Vergeten Hoofdstuk: Een bladzijde uit de worsteling van de sedert 1834 wedergekeerde kerken voor gereformeerd schoolonderwijs* (Enschede: J. Boersma, 1959), 23.

¹⁴Reinsma, *Scholen*, 101.

which would cut into his salary. This particular article of the law would also become problematic for the Seceders.

Proponents of the Law

The primary task of the new educational system was to instill in the pupil good citizenship, patriotism, Christian virtues, and after 1815, a love for the Dutch Royal House. Because *teaching religion* was thought to cause division, no particular religious bias favoring one group over another was to be taught. The Heidelberg Catechism could no longer be used, and although Bible stories were allowed for their moral content, the Bible itself was not considered a textbook. In this way, other denominations besides Reformed—i.e., Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Baptist, Remonstrant, and Jewish—were to be included. The school day was to open and close with a proper prayer and an appropriate song.

The Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church came out in favor of this public school system, not surprising since the Reformed Church's hierarchy were all handpicked by the Government.¹⁵ For men like Petrus Hofstede de Groot, professor of theology at the University of Groningen and a school supervisor, this new law was "...a brilliant law ... the crown jewel of all our laws."¹⁶ For the overwhelming majority of the population, it seemed right to have one educational system available to all, with its aim being the welfare of society as a whole.

Hofstede de Groot, the man well known as Hendrik de Cock's adversary, saw the need for a uniform public school system as a way to prevent national unrest and disunity. According to De Groot, "Just think what could happen if many schools would arise. All these schools would immediately become sectarian schools. First, schoolboys from the various sectarian schools call each other names, soon they engage in fistfights, later when grown, they use swords against each other, and the next thing you have an entire overthrow like that of 1795, and the fact that the house of Orange could be driven into exile becomes a real threat."¹⁷

¹⁵Algra, *Dispereert Niet*, 3: 206

¹⁶Booy, *Geschiedenis*, 139. "...een meesterwerk van wetgeving ..het sieraad onzer wetten."

¹⁷T. M. Gilhuis, *Memorietafel van het Christelijk Onderwijs: De geschiedenis van de Schoolstrijd* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1974), 95. "Denken wij dan eens na wat er zou gebeuren, indien er zoo vele scholen kunnen komen scholen zullen hier bijna oogenblikkelijk secten-scholen worden. Eerst schelden de schooljongens elkander uit,

De Groot's slippery slope argument was not as farfetched as we may think. The first to oppose the law were the Roman Catholics concentrated in the southern provinces and Belgium. By 1830, the Belgians revolted and after a decade-long standoff, gained their independence. The Dutch and the government were very skittish about further riots and unrest. They saw a strong public school system as a way to consolidate the people by producing first of all, good citizens reducing the possibility of public unrest and uprisings.

Seceders Dispute State-Sponsored Education

So, if the schools were better managed, the teachers better qualified, the physical space healthier, and there seemed to be ample accent on Christianity and virtue, prayer and singing, why were the Seceders so apprehensive to send their children to these schools? Five main reasons emerge.

1. Heidelberg Catechism

The first has to do with the fundamental difference of doctrine being taught in the school—namely liberal Protestantism versus orthodox Calvinism. Every person, the State declared, could with a good education, become a model citizen, a good and decent person, and a worthwhile member of society. It was all a matter of upbringing. The Seceders, however, argued that a person was born in sin and prone to all matter of misery and evil, yes, even to damnation itself, unless he was born again. He must know his sinful state in order to be reborn and live a godly life out of gratitude for his deliverance. This is what they believed and what they wanted their children to be taught. The prohibition of the Heidelberg Catechism as a teaching tool for the doctrine of sin-salvation-service became a major issue.

2. Fundamental Differences about Human Life and Eternal Life

The authors of the law of 1806 saw these statutes as a means to develop useful citizens for the Kingdom of the Netherlands. To further the nation's well-being in this world—not the next. The Seceders were not concerned

weldra beproeven zij de vuisten, later de zwaarden tegen elkander. Eene omwenteling, misschien gelijk aan die van 1795 ...ook het huis van Oranje op nieuw kon verdreven worden, staat voor de deur.”

with this world. *They were not of this world.* Dutch historian, A. Th. van Deursen wrote about this phenomenon in *The Silent Community: Experiential Reformed in the Nineteenth Century*. In a study done about the writings of the *kleine luyden*, or common people, he states, "...for them their struggle was not for daily bread here below, they looked beyond earthly needs, to eternity. Their journey was not of this world. Heaven was their home, this earth only a temporary abode."¹⁸ So for them, the education of their children's souls was of much greater importance than the mere development of their minds, which only led to perdition.

Abraham Kuyper's "sphere sovereignty" outlook on the world was still many years away. In her book, *De Gereformeerden*, Agnes Amelink describes how finally, with Kuyper's blessing, the children of the *Gereformeerden*, which had incorporated the Seceders remaining in the Netherlands with the *Dolerenden*, grasped the concept of education to better themselves and so "redeem" the world.¹⁹ This concept of "redeeming" society was not yet a part of the Seceders' vocabulary—they were *intent on redeeming themselves and their children, not for this life but the life hereafter.*

3. Vaccination

In 1823, the State decreed that all children attending public school had to be vaccinated against smallpox. Many of the Seceders were against vaccination. They reasoned that Jesus clearly stated, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor..."²⁰ Also, the Heidelberg Catechism in Lord's Day 10 stated that "...health and sickness...come to us not by chance but from his fatherly hand." So anyone using vaccination was running ahead of the Lord by protecting himself against any chastisement the Lord might want to impose upon him. Unless a child came to school with proof of vaccination, he or she was not allowed to attend. Nevertheless, parents still

¹⁸A. Th. van Deursen, "Vreemdelingen in Mesech" in F. A. van Lieburg, ed., *De stille luyden, Bevindelijk gereformeerden in de negentiende eeuw* (Kampen: De Groot Goudriaan, n.d.), 85-89. "Maar het ging hun om grotere dingen. ... niet om de zorg voor het dagelijks brood. Zij keken over de drempel van dood en leven heen. Hun reisdoel lag buiten deze wereld. Hier op aarde waren ze alleen maar onderweg."

¹⁹Agnes Amelink, *De Gereformeerden*. 4th ed. (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2002), 41-45.

²⁰Matthew 9:12, NIV

had to pay the school tax, whether the child attended or not.²¹ This wholesale refusal to be vaccinated only strengthened the State's prejudice against the Seceders, marking them not only as church trouble makers, but also as a public health threat.²²

4. *Baptismal Promises*

Many parents felt that when they promised at baptism, "to instruct these children...in the aforesaid doctrine, and cause them to be instructed therein, to the utmost of your power," they could not then in good conscience send their children to what they saw as a secular school. Either they had to make a false promise in church, or they had to withhold their children from school.

5. *Freedom of Choice and Civil Rights*

Finally, their frustration over their inability to establish Christian schools must be seen in light of the political situation of the time. From the inception of the law in 1806 to 1815, when the French left and King Willem I was proclaimed king, the majority of the people were still members of the Dutch Reformed Church, which had endorsed the new school law. When in 1815, King Willem I ratified the law, there was still no great outcry. And, since many of the supervisors were clergy, they were trusted to safeguard Christian teaching. Also, many of the teachers teaching at the time had not been replaced and were teaching by the old standards. Alje Bolt wrote in his *History of Uithuizen*:

The institution of the law of 1806 for the founding of Public Schools did not mean in practice the bond between church and school were immediately broken, on the contrary, not much changed initially, the spiritual climate in the schools was and remained Christian. What did change was the quality of the education with which the people of Uithuizen were very much taken.²³

²¹Bouma, *Vergeten Hoofdstuk*, 23.

²²Roel A. Bosch and Freerk Pereboom, "De Hevormde Kerk in de periode 1795-1840," in H. Hille and H. Reenders, eds., *Van scheurmakers, onruststokers en geheime opruijers: de afscheiding in Overijssel* (Kampen: Ijsselakademie 1984), 71.

²³Alje Bolt, *De Geschiedenis van Uithuizen* (Uithuizen: Bakker, 1982), 98. "De grondlegging in 1806 van het instituut Openbare School betekende in de praktijk allerminst dat de band met de kerk nu onmiddellijk werd verbroken, integendeel. Er

However, two decades later, by 1830-35, many new teachers, trained by the government, were in charge of the curriculum, who under the watchful eye of district supervisors, had no choice but to teach humanism. Concerned Christian parents began to sit up and take notice.

Dirk van Hogendorp, son of one of the authors of the Dutch Constitution under Willem I, made a walking tour of the Netherlands in the summer of 1826 in order to report to his father about the general conditions of the country. About the school situation, he comments:

In Doetichem I saw a sad example of the degenerating influence of the Public Schools. I had breakfast with my host, and his wife and mother, and their children. His mother, an old woman, did not want to eat without first praying. Father and mother were simple, honest folk but did not pray. The children were spoiled brats who in their god-provoking shamelessness ridiculed their grandmother's prayer.²⁴

When by 1835, the Secession became a reality, the Seceders hoped that their desire to initiate Christian schools would soon follow. According to Bouma, in *A Forgotten Chapter*, for the Seceders the restoration of the church was tied irreversibly to the reformation of the schools.²⁵

Unfortunately for them, the Chief Inspector, H. Wijnbeek, an honorable, hard working Christian, could not be objective when it came to the Seceders.²⁶ "He detested people who joined separatist churches, were against vaccination, wouldn't sing hymns, and who would have nothing to

veranderde eigenlijk niet zoveel: het geestelijk klimaat in de school was en bleef christelijk. Wel verbeterde de kwaliteit van het onderwijs gaandeweg aanzienlijk, waarmee de Uithuizers zeer ingenomen waren.

²⁴Dirk van Hogendorp *Reisdagboek Zomer 1826*, Van Hogendorp Family Archives, Algemeen Rijksarchief, Den Haag (Collectie 49, 196). "In Deutichem zag ik een droevig voorbeeld van het verpesterende der Volks Scholen. Ik ontbeet met mijn hospes, zijn vrouw, kinderen en moeder. Zijn moeder eene hoog bejaarde vrouw wilde niets gebruiken zonder eerst te bidden. Vader en moeder waren hoogsteenvoudige menschen doch baden niet. De kinderen waren fatjes en hadden de Godtergende onbeschaamdheid hun biddende grootmoeder te bespotten."

²⁵Bouma, *Vergeten Hoofdstuk*, 85, "Kerkhersel hangt onlosmakkelijk samen met reformatie van het schoolonderwijs."

²⁶H. Wijnbeek (1772-1866) was appointed Chief Inspector in 1832.

do with the concept of ‘one church’ but instead endorsed sectarianism.”²⁷ Wijnbeek took it upon himself to visit almost all the schools in the Netherlands between 1833 and 1844 (some 5000), and made reports on all of them.²⁸ And woe to that schoolmaster found teaching anything other than the authorized curriculum. Time and again, the Seceders desire for their own schools was seen as extreme *antisocial behavior*. Wijnbeek’s observation: “First you wreck our church, now you wreck our schools.”²⁹

The Seceders begged the King for permission to start their own schools.³⁰ After all, the law allowed for private schools. They were willing to pay all the costs themselves as long as they could appoint their own teachers. Although it allowed for these schools, the State retained the right to approve the application and to inspect the schools, and if they were found wanting, to close them down. The authorities used this leverage to keep private schools from sprouting up, as was the case with the very first Christian School started in Smilde, province of Drenthe, with Douwe Vander Werp as the first teacher. He had the required teacher certification, and the parents were willing to pay Douwe’s salary, yet the State came to inspect the premises, found it wanting, and closed it down.³¹

When there seemed to be little to be gained under King Willem I, the people put their hope in his son, Willem II. When he began his reign in 1840, he gave in to the demands of the *Afgescheiden* to form their own churches and halted all persecution against them. With renewed hope in this king, the Seceders hoped he would help them gain educational freedoms. From 1845 to 1847, the King received fourteen petitions from the province of Drenthe alone.³² In the province of Groningen, Rev. D. Postma, while pastor at Bedum-Middelstum (1842-1844), worked tirelessly for Christian education. As president of the synodical gathering

²⁷Reinsma, *Scholen*, 18. “Hij verfoeide die mensen die aparte kerkjes hadden, tegen vaccinatie waren, geen gezangen wilden zingen, en niets moesten hebben van een geloof boven geloofsverdeeldheid.”

²⁸These reports rest with the Algemeen Rijksarchief.

²⁹Bouma, *Vergeten Hoofdstuk*, 86. “Gij maakt alles kapot; eerst heb ge met de kerk gebroken, en moet nu de school er ook nog aan geloven?”

³⁰Gilhuis, *Memorietafel*. 10.

³¹Douwe J. Vander Werp (1811-1876).

³²Tineke Piersma, “Het protestants-christelijk lager onderwijs in Drenthe (1834-1889)” *Nieuw Drentes Volkسالmanak*, 1984, 37-55.

in Groningen in September, 1846, he advocated requesting this freedom from the authorities.³³

To his credit, Willem II formed a committee to study the situation. His appointed committee was made up of two Protestant and two Roman Catholic theologians and two politicians, one of whom was Groen van Prinsterer.³⁴ The committee's report: three voted not to allow freedom to found private schools, two voted to give that right only to the church, and only one, Groen van Prinsterer voted in favor of the right of minorities to found their own schools. So, in 1848, there was still no light at the end of the tunnel for the Seceders to have freedom of education.³⁵

A Way around the Law

With the authorities and public opinion against them, the Seceders were left with few options. In those schools where the teacher still taught solid Christian principles, the children attended school, and sometimes parents from other districts sent their children there as well.³⁶ Others bypassed the law by forming clandestine schools. The State said that it was not the business of the State to teach religion since that was the parents' duty, and hence, it allowed for children to gather for religious education. In Heerde, Smilde, Dwingelo, Hoozevee, and many other places in the province of Drenthe, parents gathered children in homes or barns and hired a teacher to give religious instruction. However, with the approval of the parents, (not the law) these teachers also taught the children reading, writing, and arithmetic.³⁷

That is, when the coast was clear. If a school inspector was found to be anywhere in the vicinity, all ABC primers were hid, and the Bible and catechism booklets put on full display. Albert Gort, deacon of the Secession church in Hoozevee taught in this manner for four years. After the children were all inside, he simply bolted the door, giving him enough time to put away the illicit materials and have the children sing a psalm

³³*Handelingen en verslagen van de Algemene synoden van de Christelijk Afscheidene Gereformeerde Kerk (1836-1869)*, Art. 83, Synode 1846.

³⁴Willem Groen van Prinsterer (1801-1876) was a Dutch historian, politician, and confessing Christian who did not go along with the Seceders, but fought for their right to exist in the government, as well as their right to establish separate schools.

³⁵Algra and Algra, *Dispereert Niet*, 3: 193-94.

³⁶Bouma, *Vergeten Hoofdstuk*, 123.

³⁷Gilhuis, *Memorietafel*, 69.

should the inspector knock on the door.³⁸ Because of the growing number of such “clandestine” school groups, the school inspector of Drenthe wrote to the Minister of the Interior “to step in with force, because unpunished, these schools would flourish like weeds.” Indeed, the inspector encouraged civil actions against anyone attempting to teach unlawfully.³⁹

The third and most drastic measure was to keep the children home from school. In the summer of 1837, the consistory of the newly formed Secession congregation in Midwolda, province of Groningen, admonished its members that it was their Christian duty to keep their children out of school.⁴⁰ According to Derk Hoksbergen, an influential farmer from Wilsum near Kampen, “The schools are just as rotten as the churches and if we don’t want to attend those churches, how can we send our children to those schools?”⁴¹

Because he was against vaccination, and because of liberalism being taught, Hendrik De Cock, the leader of the Secession movement, kept his own children out of school and advocated the Seceders to do so as well.⁴² That they heeded his words and kept their children home is evidenced by county reports such as the one in Heerde which mentions a decrease in attendance year after year beginning in 1835.⁴³

So widespread was this practice of keeping the children out of school, that of the forty men ranging in age between fifteen and thirty-five years of age entering the newly founded Theological School at Kampen in 1854, thirty-seven were able to write an admission essay, none of them had any secondary education, and all had received only a very poor elementary education.⁴⁴

³⁸Crom, A.P. et al, eds. *Anderhalve Eeuw Kerkgeschiedenis* (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1985), 11.

³⁹Bouma, *Vergeten Hoofdstuk*, 52, “Immers zulk een onwettige school behoort naar het gevoel van Zijne Excellentie “krachtadig geweerd te worden;” “straffeloosheid zoude het aantal dier scholen hand over hand doen toenemen.”

⁴⁰J. Wesseling, *De Afscheiding van 1834 in Groningenland*, 3 vols. (Groningen: De Vuurbaak, 1972-1978), 2: 180.

⁴¹H. Bouma, *Vergeten Hoofdstuk*, 9, “De schoelen bint net so bedurven as de karken en zollen wie er uut blieven, maar sturen onse kinders der henne?”

⁴²J. A. Wormser. *Werken Zoolang het Dag is: Het Leven van Hendrik de Cock* (Nijverdal: E. J. Bosch, 1915), 155.

⁴³C. W. J. Teeuwen, *Wegen God’s in Gelre: Een bijdrage tot de geschiedenis der Afscheiding op den Noord-Oosterlijken Veluwerand* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1935), 150.

⁴⁴Gerben Heitink, *Biografie van de Dominee* (Baarn: Ten Have, 2002), 106.

Emigration

Because there are no specific entries in the emigration ledgers stating “school issues” as a reason for emigrating, and we therefore do not have a precise count, we may be sure that many who wrote “religious freedom” as the cause of their emigration meant “freedom to teach our children as we see fit.” To them, these two freedoms were indistinguishable. Anthony Brummelkamp wrote to Groen van Prinsterer: “For us, who have landed outside of the Reformed Church denomination, the question of Church and School was one. We saw the schools equally as decayed as the church.”⁴⁵

The 1846 synodical gathering of the Secession churches identified the school situation as *the* cause of emigration.⁴⁶ In a (1846) letter to the King pleading for the right to have private schools, the consistory of Hooerveen informed his majesty that many were emigrating for this reason, and unless the king dealt with the problem, *all* those who desired freedom of education for their children would leave the country.⁴⁷

The first ones to be shipped out under the auspices of the newly formed Emigration Society on May 28, 1846 were Derk and Louise Arnoud and children; William and Neeltje Kwinkelenberg and children, and Jan Jacob and Nieske Arnoud, all driven by the hope to be able to achieve Christian education for their children.⁴⁸

Egbert Dunnewind, a teacher at Rheeze, ran into trouble with the law when he became an elder in Van Raalte’s congregation. The school supervisor brought charges against Dunnewind on grounds of article 23 “...that the teaching of denominational doctrines by schoolteachers will not be allowed.”⁴⁹ After considerable struggle with the authorities, Dunnewind threw in his lot with Van Raalte, and although the reason for

⁴⁵Bouma, *Vergeten Hoofdstuk*, 8, 85, “Voor ons, die buiten het Kerkgenootschap geraakt waren, was de vraag van Kerk en School één.” “Kerkherstel hangt onlosmakkelijk samen met reformatie van het schoolonderwijs.

⁴⁶*Handelingen en verslagen van de Algemene synoden van de Christelijk Afgescheidene Gereformeerde Kerk (1836-1869)* (Houten: Den Hertog, 1984), Synod 1846, Art. 83.

⁴⁷Bouma, *Vergeten Hoofdstuk*, 85, “omdat de klagten in dezen niet verhoort worden, en wanneer dit voorts geweigerd word, zullen welligt allen die dit begeren dat voetspoor volgen.”

⁴⁸Gilhuis, *Memorietafel*, 83.

⁴⁹Bouma, *Een Vergeten Hoofdstuk*, 122 “...dat het geven van Onderwijs in het leerstellige van het Kerkgenootschap niet zal geschieden door den schoolmeester.”

his departure in the official record states “religious freedom,” the reason noted in the church minutes of Heemse, dated August 1846, state: “*The principle reason for our departure is as follows: to seek for our children Christian schools which we cannot find here.*”⁵⁰

Women were not exempt from prosecution either. On January 23, 1838, the Civil Court at Arnhem dealt with the matter against Grietje Takken, wife of Hendrik Bosch at Heerde. Grietje was accused of giving lessons to children without having the proper license to do so.⁵¹ On December 28, 1837, Grietje taught children in the wooden shoe factory of her husband. The ABC primer that she used was taken as evidence, and Grietje, six months pregnant at the time, was sentenced to three days in jail and courts costs of f5.29. She experienced first hand that the Education Law of 1806 was denying her five children the education she so desperately wanted for them. As a result, she and Hendrik and their children sailed to America in 1847. On their way west, Hendrik and two of their children passed away in Buffalo, N.Y. Later, in the colony, Grietje married Aalt Kamper. She died at age eighty-eight, having seen all the promises of freedom in spite of hardship. She was one of the many who looked to America for freedom, not only to worship, but also to educate.

⁵⁰Ibid, 122, “De Hoofzakelijke reden tot vertrek geven de vertrekkenden op, als volgd: a. voor hunne Kinderen Christelijke Scholen te zoeken die hier niet te vinden zijn.”

⁵¹Teeuwen, *Wegen God*, 150.