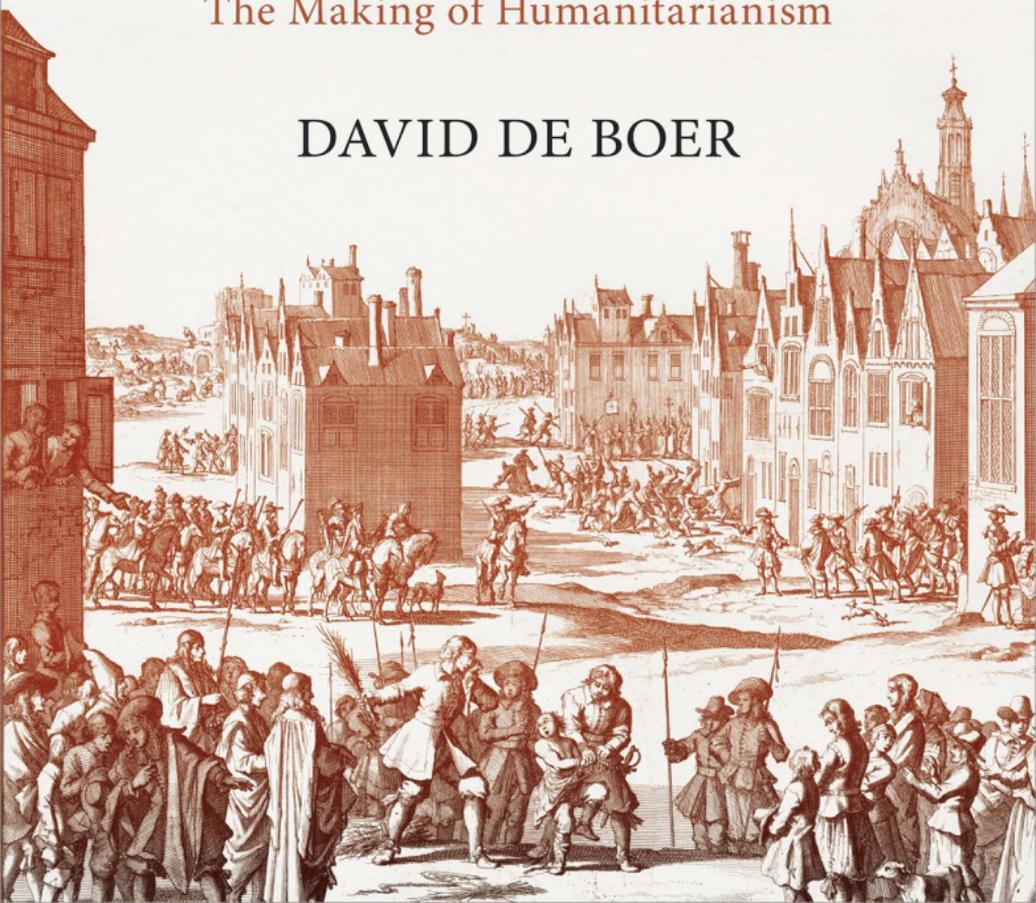


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THE EARLY MODERN DUTCH PRESS IN AN AGE OF RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION

The Making of Humanitarianism

DAVID DE BOER



The Early Modern Dutch Press in an Age of Religious Persecution

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To my parents, Marc de Boer and Yvonne Engels

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Introduction

At the turn of the eighteenth century Amsterdam was a gateway to the world in more than one sense. Not only did the city have one of Europe's biggest ports from which ships sailed to all corners of the known world, it was also home to about 150 printers and booksellers, who produced and sold all sorts of literature covering what was going on beyond the borders of the Dutch Republic.¹ One of these printers was Johannes Douci, whose shop was well situated on a junction of the busy Singel, not far from Dam Square, the city's beating heart. Customers browsing the shop's stock in 1714 were likely to stumble upon a small book called *Story of the torments inflicted upon the Reformed on the galleys of France*, written by the Frenchman Jean-François Bion. In case the title did not immediately attract potential readers, the cover further explained why they should buy the work: it had been translated from French into Dutch for the "common good, but especially for those who take the oppression of Zion to heart."²

In *Story of the torments*, Bion shared with the world his experiences aboard the royal galley *La Superbe*, on which he had been chaplain since 1703.³ Remarkably, most of the *forçats*, the galley slaves who formed the majority of the ship's crew, were not fellow Catholics. Over half of them were Huguenots from the Cévennes, a mountainous region in south-eastern France that was plagued by a destructive religious civil war against the Crown.⁴ The other galley slaves included Turks, deserters, highwaymen, and peasant smugglers. Bion described the horrendous circumstances on board, where the slaves were reduced to a life of beatings, rotting food, and physical labor so arduous that it quickly ruined their health. One Sunday, after the chaplain had sung Mass, the *comitre*—commander of the slave crew—ordered that the Huguenots were to receive a foot whipping, as punishment for refusing to kneel to the Holy Sacrament. Struck by guilt and pity, Bion realized that the men endured their fate solely for having chosen to obey God rather than

¹ J. Gruys and C. de Wolf, *Thesaurus 1473–1800. Nederlandse boekdrukkers en boekverkopers* (Utrecht, 1989).

² J.-F. Bion, *Verhaal der tormenten die men de gereformeerde, welke op de gallyen van Vrankryk zyn, heeft doen ondergaan* (Amsterdam: Johannes Douci, 1714), p. 1; all translations of primary and secondary literature in this work are the author's.

³ For more biographical information on Bion see P. M. Conlon, *Jean-François Bion et sa relation des tourments soufferts par les forçats protestants* (Geneva, 1966), pp. 13–56.

⁴ See Chapter 4.

men. In a dramatic reversal of roles, the priest converted to the Reformed religion and fled to Geneva.⁵

The refugee's account of the enslavement of Huguenot rebels, engulfed in a religious war against their sovereign Louis XIV, reminds us that sixty years after the end of the Thirty Years War (1618–1648), Europe had not shaken off the specter of religious violence. The fate of the Cévennes Huguenots exemplifies that the secularization of politics that many historians and political scientists believe to have come in the wake of the great wars of religion was a rocky road at best. Throughout much of the twentieth century, little historiographical attention was paid to persecutions after 1648. They were treated as historical anomalies, irrelevant disturbances within the larger narrative of political modernization. Over the last few decades, historians have begun to revise this picture, demonstrating that politics remained rife with confessional antagonism in the century after the Peace of Westphalia.⁶ Still, how victims and the international community reacted to instances of religious violence remains largely overlooked.

Bion's pamphlet also illustrates, however, that in a time when consuming news became an everyday practice for many Europeans, victims of persecution and their advocates increasingly managed to raise international attention for religiously inspired maltreatments, executions, and massacres. Oppressing rulers often tried to manage or contain information about the religious conflicts within their realms.⁷ But despite their attempts to monopolize public political communication through censorship, monarchs had few means to stop foreign publishers from covering their persecutory measures. For them, the backlash in the international press against the maltreatment of religious minorities increasingly became a force to be reckoned with.

This book argues that religious minorities and their advocates, in search of international support, played a foundational role in the emergence of a humanitarian culture in Europe. Especially in the wealthy and urbanized Dutch Republic, the period's dominant international news hub and a renowned safe haven for religious refugees of various stripes, authors found a relatively comfortable climate to employ print media in their efforts to raise transnational solidarity (Figure 1).

⁵ Conlon, *Jean-François Bion*, p. 26; the book did not describe Bion's flight to Geneva.

⁶ B. J. Kaplan, *Divided by faith: Religious conflict and the practice of toleration in early modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA and London, 2007); for the role of religious conflict in Dutch foreign policy see D. Haks, *Vaderland en vrede 1672–1713: Publiciteit over de Nederlandse Republiek in oorlog* (Hilversum, 2013), pp. 86–114; D. Onnekink, *Reinterpreting the Dutch Forty Years War, 1672–1713* (London, 2016); for Britain see T. Claydon, *Europe and the making of England, 1660–1750* (Cambridge, 2007); A. C. Thompson, *Britain, Hanover and the Protestant interest, 1688–1756* (Woodbridge, 2006); A. C. Thompson, "The Protestant interest and the history of humanitarian intervention, c. 1685–c. 1756," in B. Simms and D. J. B. Trim (eds.), *Humanitarian intervention: A history* (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 67–88; for other countries see the contributions in D. Onnekink (ed.), *War and religion after Westphalia, 1648–1713* (Farnham, 2009).

⁷ See M. Griesse, "Frühneuzeitliche Revolten als Kommunikationsereignisse. Die Krise des 17. Jahrhunderts als Produkt der Medienrevolution" (unpublished Habilitationsschrift, 2015).



Figure 1. Dirck de Bray, *People in a bookshop*, seventeenth century, reproduced with permission from the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

They benefited from a genuine interest in information about religious persecutions among different strata of early modern society, and publishers in Dutch cities were keen to meet this international demand. By using the printing press, victims of persecution and their allies repeatedly managed to turn their plight into international media events. *Story of the torments* too became an international success. After the first edition in French it was soon translated into Dutch, English, and German;⁸ and seven years after the first Dutch-language edition Douci still saw enough potential in the story to publish it again.⁹

To reach and affect their audiences, opinion makers had to address a fundamental question, one that we still grapple with today: *How to make people care about distant suffering?* Bion's pamphlet demonstrates that even individual authors developed different answers to that question. On the one hand, the convert told a typical story about persecution and religious truth. His account of

⁸ For a list of all editions see Conlon, *Jean-François Bion*, pp. 57–66.

⁹ J.-F. Bion, *Verhaal der tormenten die men de gereformeerde, welke op de galeyen van Vrankryk zyn, heeft doen ondergaan* (Amsterdam: Johannes Douci, 1721).

spiritual steadfastness in a life of hopeless suffering, and his religious enlightenment that was its consequence, must have struck a sensitive chord among a Reformed readership. People who lived close enough to Europe's theological front lines had been confronted with similar stories for almost two hundred years. Narratives about violence committed against true Christians had been part and parcel of the propaganda wars surrounding the Protestant and Catholic Reformations. For all the deep religious divisions, apologists on all sides of the confessional divide agreed that God's Church was a persecuted church. Clearly, this genre had not lost currency by the eighteenth century.

On the other hand, Bion also employed a much more inclusive language of compassion. In the preface, he warned his readers that he would not only discuss the fate of the Reformed but pay attention to the other *forçats* as well.¹⁰ He elaborated on poor peasants on the galley who had resorted to smuggling salt to feed their families.¹¹ Readers learned about deserters who, while guilty of an inexcusable crime, could not but incite pity as "young men, who have been raised tenderly in the arms of their parents, [who] live . . . a life a hundred times more cruel than death."¹² The former priest also paid ample attention to the Muslim galley slaves whom he described as men who, like all enslaved people, continued to long for their freedom. Indeed, he praised them for taking good care of one another and for the faithfulness they showed toward their religion, even refusing to relieve their pain with wine.¹³ In other words, Catholic peasants and Muslims also invoked pity, despite their utter religious otherness. They were portrayed as fellow human beings, with human desires for freedom, affection, and companionship, and therefore worthy of the reader's sympathy. Bion, hence, used two languages of compassion—one confessional, the other more inclusive—encouraging his readers to identify with the *forçats* in different ways.

The Rise of Print as a Humanitarian Tool

If we want to locate this double appeal to religious and human solidarity in history, two historiographies come into view that do not usually overlap. Calls for confessional solidarity, on the one side, can be seen as an expression of what early modernists call "Protestant internationalism," a transnational sense of religious community which structured how contemporaries viewed international relations.¹⁴ Confronted with the disastrous sectarian violence of the Yugoslav Wars and the September 11 attacks, scholars have rehabilitated religion as crucial

¹⁰ Bion, *Verhaal der tormenten*, p. 5.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 23–24.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 24.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 19–20.

¹⁴ Some historians have rephrased the term more restrictively as "Calvinist internationalism." For a recent overview see M. P. Holt, "International Calvinism," in R. W. Holder (ed.), *John Calvin in context* (Cambridge, 2020), pp. 375–382. See also O. P. Grell, *Brethren in Christ: A Calvinist network in*

for understanding present and past international politics. Reevaluating confessional ideology, historians of the British Isles and the Dutch Republic have consequently begun to pay attention to the mutual constitution of foreign policy and the vernacular press. We now know that a “master narrative of confessional strife” between Protestantism and Catholicism continued to shape the boundaries of debate on foreign politics until well into the first half of the eighteenth century.¹⁵ As Benjamin Kaplan concluded in his seminal synthesis of early modern religious conflict and toleration, by the early eighteenth century “the age of religious wars had not yet ended.”¹⁶

Universalizing appeals to compassion, on the other side, are commonly approached by scholars as a chapter in the history of humanitarianism and human rights. Historians tackling the deep history of humanitarian engagement usually identify appeals to “common humanity” as fundamentally opposite to confessional identification.¹⁷ They either describe how the concept took form through a gradual disentangling from religious associations, or approach it as an explicit *alternative* to religious norms. Lynn Hunt has famously argued that with the proliferation of the novel in the second half of the eighteenth century, people first learned to sympathize with people across the social boundaries that separated them. The printed encouragement of psychological identification with unfamiliar individuals subsequently led to a new political order that saw “ordinary secular life as the foundation of morality.”¹⁸

Reformation Europe (Cambridge, 2012); M. Prestwich (ed.), *International Calvinism 1541–1715* (Oxford, 1987); D. J. B. Trim, “Calvinist internationalism and the English officer corps, 1562–1642,” *History Compass* 4.6 (2006), pp. 1024–1048; Claydon, *Europe and the making of England*.

¹⁵ Claydon, *Europe and the making of England*. See also Onnekink (ed.), *War and religion; Thompson, Britain, Hanover; Thompson, “Protestant interest”; Haks, Vaderland en vrede; Onnekink, Reinterpreting the Dutch Forty Years War; J. Stern, Orangism in the Dutch Republic in word and image, 1650–75* (Manchester and New York, NY, 2010).

¹⁶ Kaplan, *Divided by faith*, p. 343.

¹⁷ M.-D. Grigore, “Humanism and humanitas: The transition from the humanitas christiana to humanitas politica in the political writings of Erasmus,” in F. Klose and M. Thulin (eds.), *Humanity: A history of European concepts in practice from the sixteenth century to the present* (Göttingen, 2016), pp. 73–90; J. Headley, *The Europeanization of the world* (Princeton, NJ and Oxford, 2008), esp. pp. 63–148; M. Delgado, “‘All people have reason and free will’: The controversy over the nature of the Indians in the sixteenth century,” in Klose and Thulin (eds.), *Humanity*, pp. 91–106; see also A. Pagden, *The fall of natural man: The American Indian and the origins of comparative ethnology* (Cambridge, 1982), esp. pp. 119–145; P. Stamatov, *The origins of global humanitarianism* (Cambridge, 2013); see also M. Halme-Tuomisaari and P. Slotte, “Revisiting the origins of human rights: Introduction,” in M. Halme-Tuomisaari and P. Slotte (eds.), *Revisiting the origins of human rights* (Cambridge, 2015), pp. 1–36.

¹⁸ L. Hunt, *Inventing human rights: A history* (New York, NY, 2008), pp. 38, 57. Michael Frazer has similarly argued that the Enlightenment was an intellectual revolution characterized by two currents. Alongside the celebration of rationalism, there was also a sentimentalist revolution, which focused on “reflectively refined feelings shared among individuals via the all-important faculty of sympathy”; M. L. Frazer, *The Enlightenment of sympathy: Justice and the moral sentiments in the eighteenth century and today* (Oxford, 2010), p. 4; see also R. S. Crane, “Suggestions toward a genealogy of the ‘man of feeling,’” *Journal of English Literary History* 1.3 (1934), pp. 205–230.

Some students of humanitarianism have tried to push back this timeline. They point out that already in the sixteenth century, Bartolomé de las Casas and some of his contemporaries lobbied against the cruel subjugation of the native population of the Americas, with recourse to the universalizing principle that “all people in the world are humans.”¹⁹ While de las Casas’ tireless advocacy had some level of success, it is hard to deny that such efforts were extremely patchy on a wider scale. It would take two more centuries before the structural violence committed against subjugated and enslaved people in the Americas became widely contested by those living in the empires’ metropolises. Most historians therefore stick to the late eighteenth-century timeframe, identifying the impressive campaigns against the slave trade as one of the first humanitarian practices.²⁰

The accounts of persecuted minorities that circulated throughout Europe thus appear to be stuck between two historiographical narratives, respectively concerning a confessional and a more secular age in European history. At the same time, they suggest that the distinction between these two forms of concern for the suffering of distant strangers should not be overdrawn. The present study advances the argument that regardless of their confessional or universal argumentation, opinion makers writing about foreign persecutions shared a similar conviction that they could make a difference by raising awareness through print media. An insight into when and why opinion makers appealed to confessionally bounded or more inclusive solidarity with suffering strangers—before regarding it as reflective of a certain zeitgeist—may in fact help us to better understand the extent to which the printing press drove a process of political secularization in the century that followed the great wars of religion (Figure 2).

The Making of Humanitarianism investigates the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century press as a crucial site of experiment in which the techniques and languages of humanitarianism were developed. While the terms human rights and humanitarianism are often conflated, scholars have recently made a strong case that the latter concept is more practice-oriented and restrictive in scope, and therefore has a deeper history.²¹ Humanitarianism pertains to concerns about foreign atrocities and the immediate needs of suffering strangers. As such, it does not necessarily

¹⁹ Stamatov, *The origins of global humanitarianism*; Delgado, “‘All people have reason and free will’”; Pagden, *The fall of natural man*, esp. pp. 119–145. Quotation from Delgado, “‘All people have reason and free will,’” p. 93.

²⁰ See for instance S. Moyn, “Human rights and humanitarianization,” in M. Barnett (ed.), *Humanitarianism and human rights: A world of differences?* (Cambridge, 2020), pp. 33–48; T. W. Laqueur, “Mourning, pity, and the work of narrative in the making of ‘humanity,’” in R. A. Wilson and R. D. Brown (eds.), *Humanitarianism and suffering: The mobilization of empathy* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 31–57; A. Moniz, *From empire to humanity: The American Revolution and the origins of humanitarianism* (Oxford, 2016). For a good introduction to abolitionist campaigns see J. R. Oldfield, *Popular politics and British anti-slavery: The mobilization of public opinion against the slave trade, 1787–1807* (London, 1998).

²¹ M. Barnett, “Human rights, humanitarianism, and the practices of humanity,” *International Theory* 10.3 (2018), pp. 314–319; M. Geyer, “Humanitarianism and human rights: A troubled

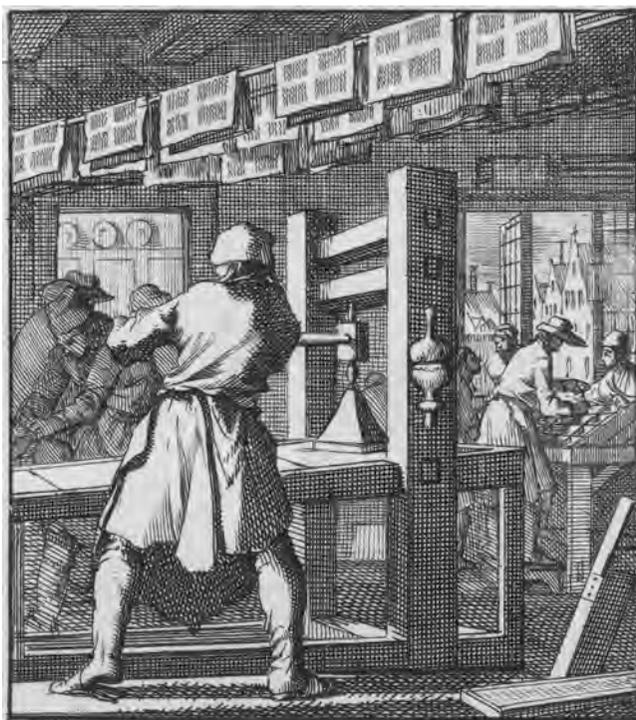


Figure 2. Jan Luyken, *The book printer*, in Jan and Caspar Luyken, *Het menselyk bedryf*, 1694, reproduced with permission from the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

require the kind of Enlightenment universalism with which it is commonly associated.²² A sustained and broad-based European tradition of engagement with distant suffering thus comes into view, which developed as a consequence of the religious conflicts that had plagued the continent since the Protestant Reformations. These humanitarian practices were more limited in scope than later abolitionist campaigns, but their mobilizing potential should not be underestimated.

This new-found concern with distant suffering can be traced to the second half of the sixteenth century, when Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists, and Anabaptists

rapport,” in F. Klose (ed.), *The emergence of humanitarian intervention: Ideas and practice from the nineteenth century to the present* (Cambridge, 2016), pp. 31–55; S. Moyn, “Substance, scale, and salience: The recent historiography of human rights,” *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 8 (2012), pp. 123–140; A. Heraclides and A. Dially, *Humanitarian intervention in the long nineteenth century: Setting the precedent* (Manchester, 2015); K. Cmiel, “The recent history of human rights,” *American Historical Review* 109.1 (2004), pp. 117–135.

²² Barnett, “Human rights”; D. J. B. Trim and B. Simms, “Towards a history of humanitarian intervention,” in Simms and Trim (eds.), *Humanitarian intervention*, pp. 1–24.

all began to canonize stories about the violent deaths of their respective martyrs, thus creating a confessional cultural memory which transcended state borders.²³ This transnational sentiment of religious belonging was reinforced by the harsh realities of forced migration, which religious intolerance continued to bring in its wake.²⁴ Subsequent generations of exiles cultivated their history of persecution as a central part of their religious and civic identity.²⁵ The cherished memory of persecution recurrently inspired people to action. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Protestants, Catholics, Anabaptists, and Jews all tried to put the fate of oppressed brethren in the faith on political agendas and raised funds for them, which traveled along confessional trading networks.²⁶ States would sometimes offer military or diplomatic support to persecuted co-religionists, which some historians have identified as the first humanitarian interventions.²⁷ People may not have used the term until the nineteenth century, but the goals and means—averting or stopping atrocity through diplomatic or military pressure—were very similar.²⁸

This book tells the story of how opinion makers spurred people and their governments into action and how they created an international stage on which they put up religious persecutions for public scrutiny. Investigating the rise of print as a humanitarian tool, it asks first, which political norms were invoked to communicate religious persecution. This question has not received the attention it

²³ B. S. Gregory, *Salvation at stake: Christian martyrdom in early modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1999).

²⁴ For a recent overview see N. Terpstra, *Religious refugees in the early modern world: An alternative history of the Reformation* (Cambridge, 2015).

²⁵ J. Müller, *Exile memories and the Dutch Revolt: The narrated diaspora, 1550–1750* (Leiden and Boston, MA, 2016); D. van der Linden, *Experiencing exile: Huguenot refugees in the Dutch Republic, 1680–1700* (Farnham, 2015). For the Dutch Revolt and Catholic experiences of exile see G. H. Janssen, *The Dutch Revolt and Catholic exile in early modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2014).

²⁶ See G. H. Janssen, “The legacy of exile and the rise of humanitarianism,” in B. Cummings, C. Law, K. Riley, and A. Walsham (eds.), *Remembering the Reformation* (Abingdon, 2020), pp. 226–242. For Reformed charity campaigns see Grell, *Brethren in Christ*; A. Schunka, “Immigrant petition letters in early modern Saxony,” in B. S. Elliott, D. A. Gerber, and S. M. Sinke (eds.), *Letters across borders: The epistolary practices of international migrants* (London, 2006), pp. 271–290; E. Boersma, “Noodhulp zonder natiestaat. Bovenlokaal geefgedrag in de Nederlandse Republiek, 1620–circa 1800” (unpublished PhD thesis, 2021). Boersma also explores Anabaptist charity campaigns. For Jewish long-distance charity see A. Teller, *Rescue the surviving souls: The great Jewish refugee crisis of the seventeenth century* (Princeton, NJ, 2020); D. Kaplan, *The patrons and their poor: Jewish community and public charity in early modern Germany* (Philadelphia, PA, 2020). For Catholics see D. Hershenzon, *The captive sea: Slavery, communication, and commerce in early modern Spain and the Mediterranean* (Philadelphia, PA, 2018); Janssen, *The Dutch Revolt*. Also in earlier times, some religious groups organized long-distance charity campaigns, including the early Christians. See C. W. Concannon, *Assembling early Christianity: Trade, networks, and the letters of Dionysios of Corinth* (Cambridge, 2017), pp. 155–177.

²⁷ D. J. B. Trim, “‘If a prince use tyrannie towards his people’: Interventions on behalf of foreign populations in early modern Europe,” in Simms and Trim (eds.), *Humanitarian intervention*; Thompson, “Protestant interest”; see also T. Weller, “Humanitarianism before humanitarianism? Spanish discourses on slavery from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century,” in Klose and Thulin (eds.), *Humanity*, pp. 151–168.

²⁸ Trim and Simms, “Towards a history of humanitarian intervention.”

deserves, as historians too often reduce narratives of persecution to confessional propaganda. This assessment also goes a long way in explaining why such expressions of transnational solidarity have long remained disregarded as a form of humanitarianism; they are dismissed as expressions of confessional tribalism. As will become clear, however, print media played a fundamental role in the cautious deconfessionalization of humanitarian practices.

Second, this study identifies which stakeholders were engaged in the international production of topical persecution literature, and examines whom they believed to be their audience; one might expect that preachers, for instance, would usually give religious meaning to news about the persecution of brethren in the faith whereas political officeholders might be more inclined to provide a more worldly evaluation. Whether this was actually the case, however, is a question that begs to be answered. Finally, the present study explores the role which topical persecution literature hoped to play in domestic and international politics. The nascent historiography on early modern “public diplomacy” has highlighted how diplomats used the press to influence foreign audiences and shape international relations.²⁹ Yet they were certainly not the only actors to engage in such practices.³⁰ How did religious minorities and their protectors influence foreign policy by employing the printing press? And how did rulers respond to the international public stage on which their policies were criticized?

The Terms of Debate

While making occasional references to canonical philosophers for context, comparison, or clarification—and of course whenever they are referred to in the sources—this book deals with political argumentation rather than theory, and with ephemeral texts rather than full-blown works of philosophy and high scholarship. In doing so, it speaks to the relatively recent insight that local event-oriented communication of governance by political agents and commentators played a decisive role in the negotiation and conceptualization of political order. If one studies conceptual change over a longer period of time, as Luise Schorn-Schütte suggests, political languages become “just as tangible in local conflicts as in theoretical treatises and the texts that instituted legal norms.”³¹

²⁹ H. J. Helmers, “Public diplomacy in early modern Europe,” *Media History* 22.3–4 (2016), pp. 402–403; N. Lamal and K. Van Gelder, “Addressing audiences abroad: Cultural and public diplomacy in seventeenth-century Europe,” *The Seventeenth Century* 36.3 (2001), pp. 367–387.

³⁰ See Helmers, “Public diplomacy in early modern Europe,” p. 402. For a reflection on non-state actors and public diplomacy from the perspective of today’s world see also T. La Porte, “The impact of ‘intermestic’ non-state actors on the conceptual framework of public diplomacy,” *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* 7 (2012), pp. 449–450.

³¹ L. Schorn-Schütte, *Gottes Wort und Menschenherrschaft. Politisch-Theologische Sprachen im Europa der Frühen Neuzeit* (Munich, 2015), p. 14.

Investigating how opinion makers engaged their audiences with acute political crises, this study covers a small area in the vast realm of early modern political communication. Yet it was a particularly versatile area. Decisions to punish dissenting religious groups were among the most controversial and consequential policies of early modern rulers. They gave rise to a remarkably dynamic printed debate that invoked many, if not all, of the main norms underlying Europe's political order—except, perhaps, the relation between gender and power. The predicament of religious minorities thus provided unmatched occasions for opinion makers to discuss fundamental questions about humans and their attitude toward fellow men and women, about princes' bonds with their subjects, as well as about the relations between different rulers. In other words, religious persecutions acutely laid bare questions about how society is best and most justly ordered and maintained.

Like all evaluations of political decision-making, the public communication of decisions to penalize a religious minority largely revolved around either justifying or rejecting it in reference to the common good. In early modern Europe this usually pertained to communal welfare or the shared benefit of people in a given society, and increasingly applied to the state.³² Cutting through different political ideologies, including ruler-centered theories of absolutism, the common good was regarded as the highest attainable end of a government's policy by a wide range of political philosophers, including Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, as well as many lower profile thinkers.³³ Yet there existed diverging religious and political discourses in early modern Europe on how the common good was best *attained* in a religiously divided society. Opinion makers had to navigate these discourses in their efforts to turn local struggles into matters of transnational concern.

First, and perhaps foremost, was the challenge that transnational support for persecuted minorities posed to sovereignty. The question to what extent foreign actors have the right to intervene in domestic conflicts—still a hot topic surrounding humanitarianism today—can, in fact, be traced back to the early modern period. It used to be a common trope among historians, and remains one among

³² See H. Münkler and H. Bluhm, "Einleitung. Gemeinwohl und Gemeinsinn als politisch-soziale Leitbegriffe," in H. Münkler and H. Bluhm (eds.), *Gemeinwohl und Gemeinsinn. Historische Semantiken politischer Leitbegriffe* (Berlin, 2001), esp. pp. 17–22. For the rudimentary stable definition of "common good" as shared benefit see G. Burgess and M. Knights, "Commonwealth: The social, cultural, and conceptual contexts of an early modern keyword," *The Historical Journal* 54.3 (2011), p. 662; alternative terms for the "common good" include "common interest," "public good," "public welfare," and "public felicity."

³³ B. J. Diggs, "The common good as a reason for political action," *Ethics* 83.4 (1973), p. 283; P. Wilson, *Absolutism in Central Europe* (Abingdon, 2000), esp. p. 50. In England, by contrast, the term "commonwealth" developed into an ideological opposite of absolutism; see C. Cuttica and G. Burgess, "Introduction: Monarchism and absolutism in early modern Europe," in C. Cuttica and G. Burgess (eds.), *Monarchism and absolutism in early modern Europe* (London and New York, NY, 2012), pp. 1–18; G. Burgess, "Tyrants, absolutist kings, arbitrary rulers and the commonwealth of England: Some reflections on seventeenth-century English political vocabulary," in Cuttica and Burgess (eds.), *Monarchism and absolutism*, pp. 147–158.

political scientists, that to bring a final end to generations of religious warfare, the Peace of Westphalia elevated domestic and external sovereignty to become the carrying principle of a horizontally conceptualized and non-interventionist European order.³⁴ This “Westphalian myth” has been debunked.³⁵ The recognition of a ruler’s absolute authority did not suddenly resolve all confessional conflicts *within* European societies, nor did Westphalia preclude foreign meddling in internal affairs. In fact, the peace provided Europe with a model in which the rights of confessional minorities were legally protected by foreign powers through international peace treaties.³⁶

We should keep in mind, however, that non-interference was the norm while intervention was the exception.³⁷ Sovereignty may not have suddenly become the sole rule underpinning Europe’s political landscape, but it could not be taken lightly either. By all accounts, most people crying out against persecutions in print media were not princes with a legal prerogative to alleviate the suffering of foreign subjects.³⁸ As the analysis in this study will show, transnational advocates often found themselves on thin ice criticizing the policy of their own or foreign rulers on an international stage. Many of them hence saw the need to carefully negotiate what right they or their audience had to express transnational solidarity in the first place. Studying how they did this can, in fact, give us a clearer sense of the perceived boundary between legitimate concern and unjust interference beyond the crude force of military intervention.

A second main issue that humanitarian opinion makers had to confront was the still widespread belief that a healthy polity depended on the uniform

³⁴ H. Steiger, “Konkreter Friede und allgemeine Ordnung. Zur rechtlichen Bedeutung der Verträge vom 24. Oktober 1648,” in K. Bußmann and H. Schilling (eds.), *1648. Krieg und Frieden in Europa*, 2 vols. (Münster, 1998), vol. 1, pp. 437–446; D. Philpott, *Revolutions in sovereignty: How ideas shaped modern international relations* (Princeton, NJ, 2001), pp. 437–446; D. Grim, *Sovereignty: The origin and future of a political and legal concept* (New York, NY, 2015); D. Philpott, “The religious roots of modern international relations,” *World Politics* 52.2 (2000), pp. 206–245; Philpott, *Revolutions in sovereignty*; V. Gerhardt, “Zur historischen Bedeutung des Westfälischen Friedens. Zwölf Thesen,” in Bußmann and Schilling (eds.), *1648*, vol. 1., pp. 485–489.

³⁵ A. Osiander, “Sovereignty, international relations, and the Westphalian myth,” *International Organization* 55.2 (2001), pp. 251–287; S. D. Krasner, “Rethinking the sovereign state model,” *Review of International Studies* 27 (2001), p. 17; S. Beaulac, *The power of language in the making of international law: The word sovereignty in Bodin and Vattel and the myth of Westphalia* (Leiden and Boston, MA, 2004), pp. 127–183; B. Teschke, “Theorizing the Westphalian system of states: International relations from absolutism to capitalism,” *European Journal of International Relations* 8.1 (2002), pp. 5–48; H. Duchhardt, “Westfälischer Friede und internationales System im Ancien Régime,” *Historische Zeitschrift* 249.3 (1989), pp. 529–543.

³⁶ R. Lesaffer, “Peace treaties and the formation of international law,” in B. Fassbender and A. Peters (eds.), *The Oxford handbook of the history of international law* (Oxford, 2012), esp. pp. 72–89; A. Osiander, *The states system of Europe, 1640–1990: Peacemaking and the conditions of international stability* (Oxford, 1994); see also B. de Carvalho and A. Paras, “Sovereignty and solidarity: Moral obligation, confessional England, and the Huguenots,” *International History Review* 37.1 (2014), pp. 1–21.

³⁷ Krasner, “Rethinking the sovereign state model.”

³⁸ For an elaborate discussion of the right of intervention see Chapter 1; for sovereignty and interventionism see also de Carvalho and Paras, “Sovereignty and solidarity.”

adherence of its people to the true religion, which rulers had the duty to protect and enforce.³⁹ Of course, most dissidents believed that theirs was the true faith and that they were therefore *ipso facto* unjustly persecuted. As most advocates realized, however, loudly proclaiming one's religious righteousness and calling for international confessional solidarity might be a good strategy to move foreign brethren in the faith, but would do little to convince the persecuting authorities in question. On the contrary, it could quickly alienate potential allies across the confessional divide.

To reach a broader audience in a religiously divided Europe, advocates thus often had to opt for universalizing argumentative strategies. One important strategy was to appeal to the rule of law. From the sixteenth century, the position of many religious minorities had been formalized in some kind of religious peace treaty or edict. These documents were pragmatic compromises granted—often grudgingly—to religious dissenters until the ideal of religious unity could once again be achieved.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, religious peace treaties and edicts turned confessional deviants into legal entities.⁴¹ Despite their non-ideological origins, they imposed and legitimated a “secular ‘rule of law’ in spheres of life previously governed by religion.”⁴² Opinion makers could thus analyze whether violence committed against a religious minority had been lawful within the specific legal framework of the country in question, without lapsing into the stalemate of theological polemic.

Apart from the positive laws of the polity in question, they could also invoke natural law. In the seventeenth century, political philosophers began to develop secular concepts of natural law and—its counterpart for the international stage—the law of nations.⁴³ They built upon the legal settlements that ended the

³⁹ Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, pp. 99–126.

⁴⁰ R. Forst, *Toleranz im Konflikt. Geschichte, Gehalt und Gegenwart eines umstrittenen Begriffs* (Berlin, 2003).

⁴¹ J.-F. Missfelder, “Verrechtlichung, Verräumlichung, Souveränität. Zur politischen Kultur der Pazifikation in den französischen Religionskriegen (1562–1629),” in D. Hücker, Y. Kleinmann, and M. Thomsen (eds.), *Reden und Schweigen über religiöse Differenz. Tolerieren in epochen-übergreifender Perspektive* (Göttingen, 2013), pp. 139–140.

⁴² W. P. te Brake, *Religious war and religious peace in early modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2017); M. Stolleis, “The legitimation of law through God, tradition, will, nature and constitution,” in L. Daston and M. Stolleis (eds.), *Nature, law and natural law in early modern Europe: Jurisprudence, theology, moral and natural philosophy* (Farnham, 2008), pp. 45–56; D. Saunders, “Juridifications and religion in early modern Europe: The challenge of a contextual history of law,” *Law and Critique* 15.2 (2004), p. 99. For the concept of “juridification” as a form of political secularization see M. Heckel, “Reichsrecht und ‘Zweite Reformation’. Theologisch-juristische Probleme der reformierten Konfessionalisierung,” in H. Schilling (ed.), *Die reformierte Konfessionalisierung in Deutschland. Das Problem der ‘Zweiten Reformation.’ Wissenschaftliches Symposium des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte* (Gütersloh, 1985), pp. 11–43; W. Schulze, “‘Geben Aufruhr und Aufstand Anlaß zu neuen heilsamen Gesetzen’. Beobachtungen über die Wirkungen bürgerlichen Widerstands in der Frühen Neuzeit,” in W. Schulze (ed.), *Aufstände, Revolten, Prozesse. Beiträge zu bürgerlichen Widerstandsbewegungen im frühneuzeitlichen Europa* (Gerlingen, 1983), pp. 261–285; see also A. De Benedictis and K. Härter (eds.), *Revolten und politische Verbrechen zwischen dem 12. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt, 2013).

⁴³ L. Daston and M. Stolleis, “Introduction: Nature, law and natural law in early modern Europe,” in Daston and Stolleis (eds.), *Nature, law and natural law*, pp. 1–12.

wars of religion and universalized them, giving the secular state and religious coexistence theoretical and ideological currency. Becoming increasingly popular in the 1680s and finding its political zenith in the eighteenth century, natural law aimed to set the universal boundaries for people to live in society with other people, without being concerned with their salvation after death.⁴⁴ Most political philosophers believed that princes too were subjected to natural law, although they disagreed about the extent to which they could rightfully be resisted if they did not uphold it.⁴⁵ Being a wide intellectual movement, natural law thinking defies an easy definition, but as Anthony Pagden succinctly summarizes, it typically establishes “rationally conceived, and thus universally acceptable, first principles.”⁴⁶

This brings us to another main argumentative strategy which persecuted minorities and their advocates could use to find allies across social boundaries, namely by appealing to the human capacity to reason.⁴⁷ While often associated with the Enlightenment, Europe had been home to rich vernacular literary cultures which celebrated natural reason as a moral guide since at least the sixteenth century.⁴⁸ And whereas the use of reason in politics was initially associated with moral flexibility or relativism, seventeenth-century philosophers began to reconcile or even conflate it with justice.⁴⁹ Indeed, in the course of the early modern period, many European thinkers would come to elevate reason as the principal tool by which humans could make sense of, order, and restructure the political world in which they lived, increasingly independent of dogmatic tradition, superstition, and unquestioned authority. In this light, Jürgen Habermas famously regarded “rational debate” as the bedrock of the emerging public sphere.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ Saunders, “Juridifications and religion,” pp. 101–102.

⁴⁵ B. Straumann, “Early modern sovereignty and its limits,” *Theoretical Inquiries in Law* 12.2 (2015), pp. 423–446; C. Cuttica, “An absolutist trio in the early 1630s: Sir Robert Filmer, Jean-Louis Guez de Balzac, Cardin le Bret and their models of monarchical power,” in Cuttica and Burgess (eds.), *Monarchism and absolutism*, p. 133; R. Y. Jennings, “Sovereignty and international law,” in G. Kreijen, M. Brus, J. Duursma, E. De Vos, and J. Dugard (eds.), *State, sovereignty, and international governance* (Oxford, 2012), p. 28.

⁴⁶ A. Pagden, “Introduction,” in A. Pagden (ed.), *The languages of political theory in early-modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 4.

⁴⁷ Although the triumph of reason after an age of religious warfare is one of the central leitmotifs of Europe’s turn toward modernity, few terms in conceptual history remain as elusive as reason. For instance, in Brunner, Conze, and Koselleck’s magnum opus *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, an article dedicated to reason is conspicuous by its absence.

⁴⁸ The Low Countries, especially, had a rich tradition of rationalist moral philosophers who catered to broad audiences by writing in the vernacular. See R. Buys, *Sparks of reason: Vernacular rationalism in the Low Countries* (Hilversum, 2015).

⁴⁹ M. Viroli, *From politics to reason of state: The acquisition and transformation of the language of politics* (Cambridge, 1992); H. Höpfl, “Orthodoxy and reason of state,” *History of Political Thought* 23.2 (2002), pp. 211–237; J. R. Snyder, *Dissimulation and the culture of secrecy in early modern Europe* (Berkeley, CA, 2012); L. Kattenberg, *The power of necessity: Reason of state in the Spanish monarchy, c. 1590–1650* (Cambridge, 2023); Q. Skinner, *Reason and rhetoric in the philosophy of Hobbes* (Cambridge, 1997).

⁵⁰ J. Habermas, *The structural transformation of the public sphere: An inquiry into a category of bourgeois society*, trans. T. Burger (Cambridge, 1992).

This study argues that appealing to reason was just one argumentative strategy among others.⁵¹ However, it seeks to demonstrate that evaluating persecution on the basis of whether the rational mind allowed or dictated it, with a general audience designated as moral arbiters, was crucial for the rise of a humanitarian culture.

A final universalizing strategy, as we have briefly discussed above, was to invoke a sentiment of shared humanity. Relatively few historians have so far looked for appeals to our fundamental human parity in the premodern world.⁵² After all, life in early modern Europe was structured around countless forms of inequality and hierarchy, most of which were justified as divinely ordained.⁵³ Confession was one of the few markers of division that was recognized as a social group which people could join or leave—one that had serious consequences in virtually every early modern society. In short, human distinctions rather than human parity could be seen as the first foundation of moral order in early modern society. After the shattering of the *Corpus Christianum* in the Protestant Reformation and the destructive religious wars that came in its wake, however, some political theorists—most notably Hugo Grotius—began to look beyond religion as a basis of community, and found it in natural human sociability.⁵⁴ As will become clear, such ideas were hardly restricted to highbrow philosophy. Publishing minorities and their advocates played a fundamental role in advancing and democratizing the idea of shared humanity to cut through prevailing social divisions and call attention to atrocities.⁵⁵

A Center of Appeal

Persecuted minorities and their advocates laid the foundations of a distinct humanitarian language by bringing together, negotiating, and sometimes juggling these different argumentative strategies—sovereignty, confessionism,

⁵¹ See also G. Hauser, *Vernacular voices: The rhetoric of publics and public spheres* (Columbia, SC, 1999), pp. 53–55.

⁵² For important exceptions see footnote 18.

⁵³ Most theologians certainly preached some form of egalitarianism in access to the world to come, but this concerned the dead only. Calvinist theology is illustrative of this complex relationship between Christian doctrine and shared humanity. On the one hand, double predestination makes a clear-cut distinction between the elect and the non-elect. On the other hand, the elect group cuts right through most social inequalities and remains difficult, if not impossible, to identify. For a study of social stratification and the development of Reformed Protestantism see M. Zafirovski, “Society and ‘heaven and hell’: The interplay between social structure and theological tradition during early Calvinism,” *Politics, Religion, and Ideology* 18.3 (2017), pp. 282–308.

⁵⁴ Headley, *Europeanization of the world*, pp. 75–79; C. McKeogh, “Grotius and the civilian,” in E. Charters, E. Rosenhaft, and H. Smith (eds.), *Civilians and war in Europe, 1618–1815* (Liverpool, 2012), pp. 37–38.

⁵⁵ See F. Bethencourt, “Humankind: From division to recomposition,” in Klose and Thulin (eds.), *Humanity*, pp. 29–50.

rule of law, reason, and humanity—to address a fragmented European audience and raise transnational support. A revolution in the infrastructural conditions of long-distance communication allowed them to do this. In the seventeenth century, printed news about Europe’s political landscape began to publicly circulate on a routine basis, creating what historians have identified as an information public sphere.⁵⁶ With the rise of the press emerged a new consciousness of the present. News consumers began to see European politics as interdependent, contingent, and, to an extent, as something that can be criticized and influenced.⁵⁷ A much larger number of people gained access to foreign news, enhancing their capacity to care about the suffering of strangers outside their community.⁵⁸

Advocates could raise attention for the predicament of distant communities through an expanding range of different news media, including newspapers, news digests, and periodicals. But, as will become clear, they primarily did so by publishing pamphlets. To be sure, “pamphlet” was not a term used by contemporary Dutch people for the topical print works they could buy in bookshops and from peddlers in the streets.⁵⁹ This always creates the risk that we lump together media that contemporaries considered as essentially different, or that we make unhelpful distinctions between media that they regarded as belonging to the same category. While the present study tries to avoid such pitfalls by specifying the genre of specific publications (printed sermons, songs, conversation pieces, etc.), pamphlet remains a useful overarching term to refer to opinionating topical publications which appeared on an irregular basis.⁶⁰

What follows is an investigation of the employment of print media as a humanitarian tool, tying in with recent efforts to break open the national paradigm in which Habermas first conceptualized the public sphere. In the last two

⁵⁶ C. Zwierlein and B. de Graaf, “Security and conspiracy in modern history,” *Historical Social Research* 38.1 (2013), pp. 7–45; B. Dooley, *The dissemination of news and the emergence of contemporaneity in early modern Europe* (Farnham, 2010); J. Raymond and N. Moxham (eds.), *News networks in early modern Europe* (Leiden and Boston, MA, 2016); A. Pettegree, *The invention of news: How the world came to know about itself* (New Haven, CT, 2014); B. Dooley and S. Baron (eds.), *The politics of information in early modern Europe* (Abingdon, 2001); R. Harms, R. Raymond, and J. Salman (eds.), *Not dead things: The dissemination of popular print in England, Wales, Italy, and the Low Countries* (Leiden and Boston, MA, 2013); see also N. Fraser, “Transnationalizing the public sphere,” in M. Pinsky (ed.), *Globalizing critical theory* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 37–47.

⁵⁷ Zwierlein, “Security and conspiracy in modern history.”

⁵⁸ For an overview of Dutch newspapers in the seventeenth century see A. der Weduwen, *Dutch and Flemish newspapers of the seventeenth century, 1618–1700* (Leiden and Boston, MA, 2017).

⁵⁹ For peddlers selling topical literature see J. Salman, *Pedlars and the popular press: Itinerant distribution networks in England and the Netherlands 1600–1850* (Leiden and Boston, MA, 2013).

⁶⁰ See F. Deen, D. Onnekink, and M. Reinders, “Pamphlets and politics: Introduction,” in F. Deen, D. Onnekink, and M. Reinders (eds.), *Pamphlets and politics in the Dutch Republic* (Leiden 2012), pp. 1–30; R. Harms, *Pamfletten en publieke opinie. Massamedia in de zeventiende eeuw* (Amsterdam, 2011); C. Harline, *Pamphlets, printing, and political culture in the early Dutch Republic* (Dordrecht, 1987).

decades, students of the early modern press have shown that a transnational sense of contemporaneity played a pivotal role in structuring the political thought and behavior of both political officeholders and the broader public.⁶¹ By charting the international production and dissemination of news in early modern Europe, they have critically evaluated the boundaries of the public sphere. In fact, most students of print media now identify a multitude of public spheres, which were ordered around permeable social, discursive, and geographical boundaries, many of which transcended state borders.

Building on these insights, this book does not aim to find a monolithic “humanitarian public sphere.” This is not a story about some long-term concerted campaign to end all forms of religious persecution. Instead, it departs from the idea that a range of different opinion makers throughout Europe came to believe that they could use print as a means of observation and a tool to influence specific policies on an ad hoc basis. Unfortunately, the majority of the authors and printers discussed in this study followed the common practice to publish their works anonymously, making it difficult to typify them in terms of their occupational background. But the authors whose identities can be retrieved indicate that we are dealing with a remarkably diverse group of people from different parts of Europe, including ministers, journalists, diplomats, political officeholders, and clergymen from the Dutch Republic, the Holy Roman Empire, France, Savoy, England, and other places. By the seventeenth century, this eclectic group of opinion makers had elevated printed works to be the dominant media of long-distance public debate about religious persecutions.⁶²

At the same time, opinion makers by no means operated in a public sphere that was fully separated from the political authorities they discussed. Cross-border publicity certainly hampered governments’ efforts at monopolizing political communication. But government officials also frequently produced textual interventions into foreign and domestic public discussions, blurring the line between government publicity and public debate.⁶³

To understand how, when, and why these people turned to the printing press to inform the world about the fate of persecuted minorities, this study will focus on works published in the United Provinces. This also inescapably causes a gravitation toward Holland, the most populous and prosperous province with the biggest printing industry. Fueled by high levels of urbanization, a devolved political structure, and relatively lax censorship, by the seventeenth century the Republic

⁶¹ Dooley, *The dissemination of news*; Raymond and Moxham (eds.), *News networks*; Pettegree, *The invention of news*.

⁶² R. Schlögl, “Politik beobachten. Öffentlichkeit und Medien in der Frühen Neuzeit,” *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 35.4 (2008), pp. 581–616.

⁶³ See J. Peacey, *Politicians and pamphleteers: Propaganda during the English Civil War and the Interregnum* (Farnham, 2004); Helmers, “Public diplomacy in early modern Europe,” pp. 402–403.

had become Europe's most versatile and prolific hub of the printed word.⁶⁴ If an early modern opinion maker wanted to advocate his or her cause in front of a large European audience, the Dutch press was often the preferred choice. After having been published in The Hague, Utrecht, or Amsterdam, printed news media often traveled abroad again.⁶⁵ Even if the opinion maker in question first turned elsewhere, there was still a good chance that, before long, Dutch or French editions would be produced in the United Provinces.⁶⁶

This was all the more the case because the Republic did not only have an impressive market share in the international production of printed opinion, it was also a main center of appeal (Figure 3). Dutch society was characterized by a pronounced discussion culture and a widely shared sense of political involvement.⁶⁷ While not officially part of the political process, petitioning and lobbying different levels of government was a common practice.⁶⁸ As Andrew Pettegree and Arthur der Weduwen recently put it, "to Dutch statesmen, ministers and writers, pamphlets were persuasive tools, allowing for the continuation of politics by other means."⁶⁹ It comes as no surprise then that the Dutch were also used to

⁶⁴ A. Pettegree and A. der Weduwen, *The bookshop of the world: Making and trading books in the Dutch Golden Age* (New Haven, CT and London, 2019); J. W. Koopmans, *Early modern media and the news in Europe: Perspectives from the Dutch angle* (Leiden and Boston, MA, 2018); Deen et al. (eds.), *Pamphlets and politics*; Harline, *Pamphlets, printing, and political culture*. For an insightful historiographical discussion of the Dutch public sphere see van Netten, "Propaganda, publics, and pamphlets." For newspapers in the Dutch Republic see E. J. Baakman and M. van Groesen, "Kranten in de Gouden Eeuw," in H. Wijffes and F. Harbers (eds.), *De krant. Een cultuurgeschiedenis* (Amsterdam, 2019), pp. 21–46; M. van Groesen, "(No) news from the western front: The weekly press of the Low Countries and the making of Atlantic news," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 44.3 (2013), pp. 739–760. Good overviews of censorship in the Dutch Republic are: I. Weekhout, *Boekencensuur in de noordelijke Nederlanden. De vrijheid van de drukpers in de zeventiende eeuw* (The Hague, 1998); H. E. van Gelder, *Getemperde vrijheid. Een verhandeling over de verhouding van kerk en staat in de Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden en de vrijheid van meningsuiting in zake godsdienst, dukpers en onderwijs, gedurende de 17^e eeuw* (Groningen, 1972); J. W. Koopmans, "Bloei en beteugeling van kranten, 1700–1813," in Wijffes and Harbers (eds.), *De krant. Een cultuurgeschiedenis*, pp. 47–86; S. Groenveld, "The Mecca of authors? States assemblies and censorship in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic," in A. Duke and C. Tamse (eds.), *Too mighty to be free: Censorship and the press in Britain and the Netherlands* (Zutphen, 1987), pp. 63–81.

⁶⁵ M. van Groesen, *Amsterdam's Atlantic: Print culture and the making of Dutch Brazil* (Philadelphia, PA, 2017).

⁶⁶ Pettegree and der Weduwen, *Bookshop of the world*.

⁶⁷ H. J. Helmers, "Popular participation and public debate," in H. J. Helmers and G. H. Janssen (eds.), *The Cambridge companion to the Dutch Golden Age* (Cambridge, 2018), pp. 124–146; van Groesen, *Amsterdam's Atlantic*; W. Frijhoff, "Calvinism, literacy, and reading culture in the early modern Northern Netherlands: Towards a reassessment," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 95 (2004), pp. 252–265.

⁶⁸ For a short introduction to Dutch civic culture and political involvement see M. Prak, "Urbanization," in Helmers and Janssen (eds.), *Cambridge companion*, pp. 15–31; J. van den Tol, *Lobbying in company: Economic interests and political decision making in the history of Dutch Brazil, 1621–1656* (Leiden and Boston, MA, 2021); M. Reinders, "The citizens come from all cities with petitions: Printed petitions and civic propaganda in the seventeenth century," in Deen et al. (eds.), *Pamphlets and politics*, pp. 97–118.

⁶⁹ Pettegree and der Weduwen, *Bookshop of the world*, p. 67.



Figure 3. Jan Miense Molenaer, *Folk singers selling their songs*, 1630–1635, reproduced with permission from the RKD—Netherlands Institute for Art History.

operating the presses to raise charity after the floods and fires that periodically ravaged local communities.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ See Boersma, “Noodhulp zonder natiestaat”; L. Jensen, “‘Disaster upon disaster inflicted on the Dutch’: Singing about disasters in the Netherlands, 1600–1900,” *BMGN—Low Countries Historical Review* 134.2 (2019), pp. 45–70; L. Jensen (ed.), *Crisis en catastrofe. De Nederlandse omgang met*

Moreover, interest in printed opinion about religious violence was fostered by introspection. Calvinist Dutchmen and women were fortunate enough to be members of a Church that was supported rather than oppressed by the state in which they lived, but they deeply cherished their history of persecution and exile in the sixteenth century.⁷¹ Past persecution was part of “patriotic scripture,” the stories which many Dutchmen and women told themselves and others to construct their identity.⁷² As a main marker of legitimacy, the memory of persecution also permeated discussions about domestic and foreign politics.⁷³ And while some Dutch people were embarrassed by the religiously pluriform society in which they lived, by around 1650, others began to take pride in their tolerance and their country being a safe haven for religious exiles.⁷⁴ By all accounts, the powerful Republic seemed a natural ally for victims of persecution. In short, bringing distant suffering close often meant bringing it to the United Provinces.

To understand the dynamics of early modern humanitarianism, however, it is equally important to look at its limitations and identify the social groups who failed to find support through the Dutch press. Printed outrage primarily revolved around the persecution of Protestants, while news media remained mostly silent about the maltreatment of Catholics, Anabaptists, Jews, and other confessional minorities. By studying the parameters of early printed humanitarianism, this study then also aims to offer new insight into why early modern people seem to have remained largely indifferent to many forms of distant suffering, despite the prevalence of inclusive languages of compassion.

This book is divided into five chapters, taking up episodes of religious persecution in different parts of Europe between c.1650 and 1750. Chapter 1 analyzes the extensive print coverage of the 1655 massacre that occurred amongst the Reformed Waldensians in Piedmont. Chapter 2 asks why Dutch media hardly discussed the persecution of the Huguenots in France in the late 1670s and early 1680s. Chapter 3, by contrast, examines the outpouring of publications after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the refugee crisis that followed it. Two

rampen in de lange negentiende eeuw (Amsterdam, 2021); A. Duiveman, “Praying for (the) community: Disasters, ritual, and solidarity in the eighteenth-century Dutch Republic,” *Cultural and Social History* 16.5 (2019), pp. 543–560.

⁷¹ E. Kuijpers, J. Pollmann, J. Müller, and J. van der Steen (eds.), *Memory before modernity: Practices of memory in early modern Europe* (Leiden and Boston, MA, 2013); J. Pollmann, *Memory in early modern Europe, 1500–1800* (Oxford, 2017); J. van der Steen, *Memory wars in the Low Countries, 1566–1700* (Leiden and Boston, MA, 2015).

⁷² J. Pollmann, “Met grootvaders bloed bezegeld. Over religie en herinneringscultuur in de zeventiende-eeuwse Nederlanden,” *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 29.2 (2013), pp. 154–175; S. Schama, *The embarrassment of riches: An interpretation of Dutch culture in the Golden Age* (London, 1987), pp. 51–125.

⁷³ Van der Steen, *Memory wars in the Low Countries*; Haks, *Vaderland en vrede*.

⁷⁴ G. Janssen, “The Republic of the refugees: Early modern migrations and the Dutch experience,” *The Historical Journal* 60.1 (2017), pp. 233–252; B. J. Kaplan, “‘Dutch’ religious tolerance: Celebration and revision,” in R. Po-Chia Hsia and H. van Nierop (eds.), *Calvinism and religious toleration in the Dutch Golden Age* (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 8–26.

decades after the prohibition of the Reformed religion, civil war broke out in the mountainous Cévennes between remaining Huguenots and the French Crown. Chapter 4 explores how opinion makers operated the presses in an effort to steer the course of this religious conflict. Chapter 5, finally, compares the news coverage of two instances of religious persecution in Central Europe, the so-called “Bloodbath of Toruń” in 1724 and the expulsion of the Jews from Prague in 1745.

The cases under analysis were not the only instances of religious persecution that were publicized in Protestant Europe. The Waldensians, for instance, were not only persecuted in 1655, but also in the 1680s and the 1730s. In 1731, the expulsion of 20,000 Protestants from Salzburg led to an impressive outpouring of pamphlets, most of which originated in Prussia—whereas there were surprisingly few Dutch news media commenting on the matter.⁷⁵ Many more persecutions of varying degrees and scope could be named, the printed echoes of which all merit investigation. After all, this study will show that the complex interplay between the agency of the persecuted, the appropriation of the news by foreign publicists, and specific international (religio)political circumstances guaranteed that different persecutions were always discussed through very different patterns of argumentation. However, I have prioritized the thorough investigation of a limited number of cases, spread out over a relatively long timeframe, over an exhaustive account of all instances of persecution and their printed echo in the merchant cities of the Rhine Delta. The snapshots 1655–1656 (Chapter 1), 1679–1685 (Chapter 2), 1685–1689 (Chapter 3), 1702–1705 (Chapter 4), and 1724–1747 (Chapter 5) largely cover the persecutions with which the Dutch were most concerned and have good intervals to track potential changes in political argumentation.

⁷⁵ See G. Turner, *Die Heimat nehmen wir mit. Ein Beitrag zur Auswanderung Salzburger Protestanten im Jahr 1732, ihrer Ansiedlung in Ostpreußen und der Vertreibung 1944/45* (Berlin, 2008); M. Walker, *The Salzburg transaction: Expulsion and redemption in early modern Germany* (Ithaca, NY and London, 1992); G. Florey, *Geschichte der Salzburger Protestanten und ihrer Emigration 1731/32* (Graz, 1977).

1

The Paradox of Intervention

In the spring of 1655 Protestant Europe was shocked by the news of a massacre that had occurred amongst the Reformed Waldensians in the Alpine valleys of Piedmont. Around Easter, an army under Savoyard command had entered the Pellice Valley, some 60 kilometers south-west of Turin, where they wreaked carnage among the local men, women, and children. According to modern estimates, about two thousand people were killed while entire villages were razed to the ground during what came to be known as the Piedmont Easter. The survivors fled across the border into the French Dauphiné, where their leaders developed a plan to draw international attention to their predicament.¹

Much to the chagrin of Charles Emmanuel II, Duke of Savoy, this plan was successful. News of the macabre fate of the Waldensians quickly crossed the Alps, traveling north to Geneva, Paris, Amsterdam, and London, where it was widely discussed and decried in print media. Attention was soon followed by action. The Dutch States General and the Commonwealth of England declared national days of prayer for the persecuted and organized charity campaigns to aid the survivors.² Contemporary observers were struck by the intensity of the transnational solidarity. Three years after the massacre, Samuel Morland, one of the extraordinary ambassadors sent to Turin to mediate for the Waldensians, recalled that since the beginning of the Reformation, there had never been “such a marvelous unity in the cause of Religion.”³

By summer, the massacre appeared to be escalating into an international political crisis, as Protestant governments started negotiations to jointly confront the attack on their confession, under the leadership of the Lord Protector.⁴

¹ M. Laurenti, *I confini della comunità. Conflitto europeo e guerra religiosa nelle comunità valdesi del Seicento* (Turin, 2015), pp. 175–176; D. J. B. Trim, “Intervention in European history, c. 1520–1850,” in S. Recchia and J. Welsh (eds.), *Just and unjust military intervention: European thinkers from Vitoria to Mill* (Cambridge, 2013), p. 36.

² N. C. Kist, *Neêrlands bededagen en biddagsbrieven. Een bijdrage ter opbouwning der geschiedenis van staat en kerk in Nederland*, 2 vols. (Leiden, 1849), vol. 2, p. 334; charity campaigns were also organized in France and Switzerland; N. Greenspan, *Selling Cromwell's wars: Media, empire and godly warfare, 1650–1658* (London, 2012), p. 137; for Dutch charity initiatives see Boersma, “Noodhulp zonder natiestaat”; E. Boersma, “Yrelantsche traenen gedroogd. Transnationale solidariteit en lokale politiek in Zeeland, 1641–1644,” *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 2 (2015), pp. 201–222.

³ S. Morland, *The history of the Evangelical churches in the valleys of Piemont* (London: Henry Hills, 1658), p. 540.

⁴ H. C. Rogge, “De Waldenzen-moord van 1655 en de zending van Rudolf van Ommeren naar Zwitserland en Savoye,” *Verslagen en mededeelingen der koninklijke akademie van wetenschappen* 4.5 (1903), pp. 303–312.

Tensions rose so high that notable observers began to worry that Europe was again standing on the brink of religious war. Ministers at the court of the young Louis XIV feared that England would incite a Huguenot rebellion in France and send Swiss mercenaries to Savoy.⁵ Upon hearing that the Protectorate considered sending the fleet to Nice, Willem Boreel, the Dutch ambassador at the court of Paris, also sounded the alarm. He urged Grand Pensionary Johan de Witt, the Republic's de facto head of government, not to undertake a military intervention, lest the conflict escalate and lead to a new age of confessional warfare in Europe:

It was about one hundred years ago, namely in 1561 and 1562, that they started to massacre the believers in [France]. God wants to save us from a similar century, which could also begin with an event like that, and this nation, which is bigoted and impetuous, should not be roused to such barbarian cruelties, which we have already seen way too much of here.⁶

The massacre thus seemed to open a scar on Europe's religio-political landscape. Only seven years earlier, representatives of the continent's main powers had optimistically believed they had established a perpetual "Christian peace" between the confessions after the destructive Thirty Years War. In 1648, Europe had freed itself from the deception that religious uniformity could be acquired by the power of the sword. Its days of confessional warfare were over. This, at least, was what the peacemakers had hoped to achieve in Münster and Osnabrück.⁷ But despite the settlement's claims to universality, states like the Duchy of Savoy remained unshackled by its regulations for religious peacekeeping. At the same time, the massacre showed that early modern governments firmly held on to the belief that they had the right or duty to intervene in the domestic policy of other states if its subjects suffered tyranny.⁸ And even those who feared this right, like Boreel, still understood Europe's social and political landscape along hostile confessional lines.

Such a polarized confessional outlook of international politics provided opportunities for victimized minorities looking for humanitarian aid, but it also carried risks. Turning to the printing press to raise international attention was by no means a standardized practice. Publicity surrounding massacres was often directed or backed by representatives of a sovereign government or, in cases of civil war, a political body that was in open confrontation with that government. The 1641 massacres in Ireland, for instance, were made into an international media event

⁵ Trim, "If a prince use tyrannie," p. 59.

⁶ Willem Boreel to Johan de Witt, June 11, 1655, in *Lettres et negociations entre mr. Jean De Witt, conseiller pensionnaire & garde des sceaux des provinces de Hollande et de West-Frise et messieurs les plenipotenciaires des Provinces Unies des Pais-Bas*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam, 1725), p. 330.

⁷ D. Croxton, *Westphalia: The last Christian peace* (Basingstoke, 2013), p. 383.

⁸ Trim, "Intervention in European history."

by the English colonial administration.⁹ The Waldensians had no such backing, leaving them stuck in what this study will identify as the paradox of intervention.

This chapter follows the European echo of the massacre from the refugees who first wrote down their experiences in the mountains to the printing presses in the Dutch Republic. It will become clear that persecuted minorities seeking foreign humanitarian engagement stepped into a complex communicative landscape through which they had to steer carefully and reckon with the rules of the game. How did the Waldensians assume international political agency as non-state actors? What arguments did they use to convince their international audience that they had suffered unjust violence and deserved help? And how did the international community respond to this diplomatic engagement?

In total, about twenty pamphlets and periodicals could be retrieved that discussed the fate of the Waldensians in 1655 and 1656.¹⁰ Investigating the strategic deployment of confessional and confessionally neutral argumentation in these works, this chapter tries to explain and nuance the recent historiographical observation that Protestant polemic shifted “from martyrology to humanitarianism” in the mid-seventeenth century.¹¹ It will be argued that rather than seeing historical turning points in polemic, advocates employed religious and inclusive argumentative strategies depending on the audiences they hoped and sometimes feared to reach.

The Poor of Lyon

We should begin by taking a step back to briefly consider the tensions that led up to the tragedy of 1655. The Waldensians located their origins in the twelfth century as a religious community that preached the merits of poverty and basing one’s faith on Scripture alone. Despite centuries of persecution, remnants of the movement managed to persist, mainly in the Cottian Alps, where its adherents lived secluded lives as shepherds and farmers.¹² In 1530 they declared themselves Reformed and rethought their creed and church order in a Calvinist fashion.¹³

⁹ J. Ohlmeyer and M. Ó Siochrú, “Introduction—1641: Fresh contexts and perspectives,” in M. Ó Siochrú and J. Ohlmeyer (eds.), *Ireland, 1641: Contexts and reactions* (Manchester, 2013), p. 2.

¹⁰ It is impossible to know whether this number comprises all pamphlets about the Waldensians that circulated in this period. Not all seventeenth- and eighteenth-century print media have withstood the ravages of time. There is an unknown number of pamphlets of which we no longer have any copies. See Pettegree and der Weduwen, *Bookshop of the world*, pp. 13–17.

¹¹ Trim, “If a prince use tyrannie.”

¹² G. Audisio, *The Waldensian dissent: Persecution and survival, c. 1170–c. 1570* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 68.

¹³ E. Cameron, *Reformation of the heretics: The Waldenses of the Alps, 1480–1580* (Oxford, 1984), pp. 202–215; C. Zwierlein, *Discorso und Lex Dei. Die Entstehung neuer Denkrahmen und die Wahrnehmung der französischen Religionskriege in Italien und Deutschland, 1559–1598* (Göttingen, 2006), p. 359.

Unfortunately, religious unification did not bring political protection; the Waldensians continued to live under Catholic rulers, who insisted on religious unity within their realm. The threat of persecution therefore remained, hanging like the sword of Damocles over the heads of the small groups of Alpine Protestants.

Following Europe's first religious peace settlements in Switzerland and Germany in 1529 and 1555, the Waldensians initially found some form of legal protection as a religious minority under the 1561 Peace of Cavour.¹⁴ The treaty stated that the Waldensians were allowed to practice their religion in a restricted number of valleys. Despite the peace, they were repeatedly threatened with violence in the decades that followed. But whereas the specter of religious warfare haunted different parts of Europe between the 1560s and 1640s, the Waldensians successfully kept armed conflict at bay. They did so by repeatedly requesting their rights to be reconfirmed by the subsequent dukes of Savoy.¹⁵

However, faced with overpopulation, Waldensian communities had at some point begun to settle beyond the localities assigned to them. On January 25, 1655, a judge named Andrea Gastaldo ordered the Waldensians to convert to Catholicism or return to the localities first yielded to them in the Peace of Cavour on the penalty of death.¹⁶ Bound to work the land on which they lived for survival, the Waldensians did not comply.¹⁷ This would prove fatal. On April 17, Charles Emanuel Philibert, Marquis of Pianezza, the Savoyard army's commander and a zealous Catholic, led an army to the Pellice Valley to punish those who had stayed.¹⁸ Waldensian apologists would later claim that the attack had come as a surprise. This was not what had actually happened. Warned by Swiss brethren in the faith about the approaching army, the Waldensians had vacated their villages and entrenched themselves in Torre Pellice.¹⁹ A battle ensued, which was won by the Savoyard army. When a French army joined the troops under Pianezza's command in the hope of taking a share in the spoils, a massacre ensued. The survivors either converted to Catholicism or fled into the mountains.

On May 28, Gastaldo published another edict forcing all Waldensians to remove themselves from the duke's lands in an effort to finally extinguish all

¹⁴ See C. Zwierlein, "The Peace of Cavour in the European context," in S. Stacey (ed.), *Political, religious and social conflict in the states of Savoy, 1400–1700* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 125–168.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ For a translation of Gastaldo's ordinance into English see J. Stoppa, *A collection, or narrative, sent to His Highness, the Lord Protector of the Common-Wealth of England, Scotland, & Ireland, &c* (London: H. Robinson, 1655), pp. 7–8.

¹⁷ The following summary of events is based on E. Balmas and G. Zardini Lana, *La vera relazione di quanto è accaduto nelle persecuzioni e i massacri dell'anno 1655. Le "Pasque Piemontesi" del 1655 nelle testimonianze dei protagonisti* (Turin, 1987), pp. 15–35.

¹⁸ Laurenti, *Confini della comunità*, p. 180.

¹⁹ B. Peyrot, "Giosuè Gianavello, ovvero il Leone di Rorà," in C. Mornese and G. Buratti (eds.), *Banditi e ribelli dimenticati. Storie di irriducibili al future che viene* (Milan, 2006), p. 209.

heresy from Savoy.²⁰ Shortly before, rumors of a massacre in the valleys of Piedmont started reaching the United Provinces, with the event mentioned for the first time in the States General on May 19.²¹ In the meantime, the survivors in the Dauphiné, where they were guaranteed Louis XIV's protection, retaliated. Aided by local Huguenots, they managed to win several victories over the Savoyards.²² But their situation remained dire and in the course of the summer several military expeditions ended in defeat.

Petitioning and Treason

What do you do when you have fallen from your sovereign's favor? Since the right of resistance was among the trickiest questions occupying political theorists in the early modern period, persecuted minorities could rely on a rich tradition in answering this question. Spurred by persecution and war, Reformed thinkers had developed an impressive number of resistance theories. These included theological arguments, aimed against rulers who disobeyed the laws of God, and more secular approaches, directed against tyrants who oppressed their people.²³ Recent history provided ample examples of how such theories had been put into practice. The Dutch had built a republic upon the precepts of resistance theory—a state that had at last become universally recognized in 1648—and the Huguenots had successfully fought for extensive rights as a religious minority in France. More recently, Calvinist Parliamentarians—themselves inspired by the Dutch Revolt—had ended the English Civil War by executing King Charles I.²⁴

From the late sixteenth century onwards, however, political theorists increasingly came to reflect on Europe's era of revolt and confessional warfare as proof that the rights of subjects to resist their rulers should be drastically limited. Few went as far as to deny them fully, but influential philosophers such as Jean Bodin and Hugo Grotius strongly preferred that when subjects were in extreme and imminent danger, foreign sovereigns would intervene on their behalf.²⁵ To be

²⁰ Balmas and Zardini Lana, *Vera relazione*, p. 37.

²¹ Rogge, "Waldenzen-moord van 1655," p. 307.

²² A. Muston, *The Israel of the Alps: A complete history of the Waldenses of Piedmont and their colonies*, 2 vols. (Glasgow, 1857), vol. 1, p. 356.

²³ R. M. Kingdon, "Calvinism and resistance theory, 1550–1580," in J. H. Burns and M. Goldie (eds.), *The Cambridge history of political thought, 1450–1700* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 193–218.

²⁴ H. Dunthorne, "Resisting monarchy: The Netherlands as Britain's school of revolution," in R. Oresko, G. C. Gibbs, and H. M. Scott (eds.), *Royal and republican sovereignty in early modern Europe: Essays in memory of Ragnhild Hatton* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 125–148.

²⁵ The right to wage war to protect foreign subjects had also been advocated in the first half of the sixteenth century by Francisco de Vitoria. See W. Bain, "Vitoria: The law of war, saving the innocent, and the image of God," in Recchia and Welsh (eds.), *Just and unjust military intervention*, pp. 70–95; D. Baumgold, "Pacifying politics: Resistance, violence, and accountability in seventeenth-century contract theory," *Political Theory* 21.1 (1993), pp. 6–27; M. Barducci, *Hugo Grotius and the century of revolution, 1613–1718: Transnational reception in English political thought* (Oxford, 2017). Grotius

sure, this right to intervention was not universally recognized. Thomas Hobbes, for one, while granting a very limited right of resistance, opposed foreign interventions.²⁶ But most political thinkers in the seventeenth century agreed that the compromising of external sovereignty was less problematic than the fracturing of domestic sovereignty.²⁷

As is so often the case, the facts on the ground in Piedmont quickly blurred the apparent clarity and consistency of political theory. It was not easy to translate pervasive political norms of resistance and intervention into practice. As mentioned, the Waldensian refugees reorganized in the Dauphiné and took up arms. Yet they refrained from publishing a manifesto justifying their resistance. Nor did they initially send out requests for aid to foreign governments. Instead, they sent several messages to Savoyard officials pleading for the hostilities to cease.²⁸

The reason for this was that the Waldensians were stuck in what we can call the paradox of intervention. Since foreign intervention was preferable to domestic revolt, it made sense for subjects to stress that they were passive victims. Such passivity not only implied that they were defenseless in a military sense, but also that they had not taken any diplomatic initiative. In the course of the seventeenth century, non-state actors slowly began to lose formal access to Europe's increasingly differentiated spaces of diplomatic communication.²⁹ If the subjects of a state sought the help of any foreign power against their own sovereign they *ipso facto* subverted the latter's authority.

The Waldensians had already broken this taboo by seeking foreign aid before the massacre had taken place. Upon hearing the news of Gastaldo's order from January the Swiss evangelical cantons had jointly written a letter to the Duke of Savoy, requesting him "to look upon his pitifully afflicted subjects with an eye of commiseration" and let them live within their old habitations.³⁰ The duke replied that "the boldness that [the Waldensians] take to make their addresses to forraign

was in fact inspired by Bodin. See P. Piirimäe, "The Westphalian myth and the idea of external sovereignty," in H. Kalmo and Q. Skinner (eds.), *Sovereignty in fragments: The past, present and future of a contested concept* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 68–70.

²⁶ See P. J. Steinberger, "Hobbesian resistance," *American Journal of Political Science* 46.4 (2002), pp. 856–865; S. Sreedhar, *Hobbes on resistance: Defying the Leviathan* (Cambridge, 2010); R. Tuck, "Grotius, Hobbes, and Pufendorf on humanitarian intervention," in Recchia and Welsh (eds.), *Just and unjust military intervention*, pp. 96–112.

²⁷ C. Kampmann, "Kein Schutz fremder Untertanen nach 1648? Zur Akzeptanz einer responsibility to protect in der Frühen Neuzeit," in T. Haug, N. Weber, and C. Windler (eds.), *Protegierte und Protektoren. Asymmetrische politische Beziehungen zwischen Partnerschaft und Dominanz (16. Bis frühes 20. Jahrhundert)* (Cologne, 2016), pp. 201–216.

²⁸ Balmas and Zardini Lana, *Vera relazione*, p. 49.

²⁹ M. S. Anderson, *The rise of modern diplomacy, 1450–1919* (London and New York, NY, 1993), p. 42.

³⁰ J. Léger, *Histoire générale des églises evangeliques des vallées de Piemont, ou Vaudoises*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Jacques le Carpentier, 1669), vol. 2, p. 203.

states” only made matters worse.³¹ He admonished the evangelical cantons to mind their own business and reminded them of the 1653 Swiss peasant revolt.³²

And as in the last revolt of your own subjects, the horror that we had of their rebellious attempt, moved us not to afford them any help or favour, either directly or indirectly; so likewise We hope, that your prudence will move you to testify the same affection and deportment towards us, in abstaining from giving any foundation or appearance of reason, to uphold their vain and insolent temerity.³³

Some weeks after the massacre, a similar letter was sent to the cantons after a Waldensian minister had been caught in the Susa Valley during his return from a mission to Lausanne. He had carried various drafts for treatises against the court.³⁴ In a magnanimous gesture Susa’s governor set the minister free. The intercepted documents were sent back to Bern with an accompanying letter expressing the hope that the authorities had not been involved in anything that could endanger the harmony that existed between allied states.³⁵ The fact that writing to foreign governments with pleas for help was understood as a form of *lèse-majesté* explains why the Waldensians long refrained from doing so. In one of their first pamphlets, the *True account of what happened during the persecutions and massacres carried out this year*—which will be investigated in further detail below—they actually used this as proof of their unconditional loyalty to the Duke of Savoy:

They have accused the said Reformed Churches of having sought the protection of foreign princes or states, but they are no less wrong than in the preceding impositions: Because it is true, as the said princes and states are willing to testify, that they have never received a letter or even the smallest note from these churches. If they [the foreign princes and states] have written letters in their [the Waldensians] favor to His Most Serene Highness, then this has only sprung from their holy zeal and ardent charity.³⁶

In May—the month in which the Waldensians began their military offensive against the duke—they reiterated this argument of obedience in the *Latest*

³¹ Morland, *History of the Evangelical churches*, p. 542; translation by Morland.

³² See A. Holenstein, “Der Bauernkrieg von 1653. Ursachen, Verlauf und Folgen einer gescheiterten Revolution,” *Berner Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Heimatkunde* 66 (2004), pp. 1–6.

³³ Morland, *History of the Evangelical churches*, p. 542; translation by Morland.

³⁴ G. Claretta, *Storia del regno e dei tempi di Carlo Emanuele II, duca di Savoia*, 3 vols. (Genoa, 1877), vol. 1, p. 138.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Anonymous, *Relation veritable de ce qui s’est passé dans les persecutions et massacres faits cette année, aux Eglises Reformées de Piemont* (s.l.: s.n., 1655), pp. 45–46.

authentic and very true account of what happened during the persecutions and massacre. This pamphlet stated that foreign princes and states had interceded on their own initiative “out of pity with their poor brothers.”³⁷ As their military situation worsened, the Waldensian committee did finally send a letter to the States General in July. In it, they apologetically explained once again why they had not sought the Dutch Republic’s help before:

This has not happened because shortly after the start of our miseries, the enemies of the true religion have accused us of having sought help from foreign powers, in order to better charge us as malefactors against the state. Because we were staggered by this, we have resolved to endure their rage (to give less credence to this calumny) rather than give them the opportunity to make us look bad and to brand us with a crime of which we are completely innocent.³⁸

Ironically, despite the letter’s explicit warning of the dangers pleas for help might entail, the States General decided to publish the letter both in the French original and in Dutch, to stir people for the upcoming prayer days and collections.³⁹ The Waldensians’ decision to directly address the States General, despite this potentially serving as evidence of subversion, gives us a sense of the value that they put on receiving support from as many powers as possible. With the publishing of the letter, the names of the leaders of the Waldensian resistance were now for the first time publicly circulating throughout Europe—albeit without evidence that they actually fought in the mountains. The States General must have believed that publicity outweighed the dangers of evidence of *lèse-majesté*.

This does not mean that the Dutch Republic had been idle before. The States General had already sent a letter to Charles Emmanuel II via Willem Boreel on May 27, nine days after they had first discussed the rumors of the massacre in Piedmont.⁴⁰ They requested an immediate cessation of the violence committed against the Waldensians and the restitution of their goods and territories.⁴¹ However, the letter had been judged inadmissible by the Savoyard court, because it had made the insulting mistake of not addressing the duke as King of Cyprus, a title he claimed.⁴² On July 13, the States General also decided to send a special envoy to Turin to advocate the Waldensian cause and provide them with reliable information from a court in which they had no resident ambassador.⁴³

³⁷ Anonymous, *Relation dernier authentique & tresveritable de ce qui s’est passe dans les persecutions et massacres, faits ceste année* (s.l.: s.n., 1655), pft 7633.

³⁸ Anonymous, *Translaet uyt den Françoysche, vande missive, geschreven aen de Hooge en Mogende Heeren Staten Generael der Vereenighde Nederlanden* (The Hague: s.n., 1655), pft 7626.

³⁹ Rogge, “Waldenzen-moord van 1655,” p. 315.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 307–308; for a transcription of this letter see Léger, *Histoire générale*, vol. 2, p. 231.

⁴¹ Rogge, “Waldenzen-moord van 1655,” p. 308.

⁴² Claretta, *Storia del regno*, vol. 1, p. 140.

⁴³ Individual provinces’ squabbles over finances and the death of van Ommeren’s father delayed the envoy’s departure until August 21; Rogge, “Waldenzen-moord van 1655,” pp. 313–314.

Despite all the diplomatic and financial support Dutch regents gave, they were far from insensitive to the possibility that they might be supporting a revolt. This became painfully pressing when news reached the Republic that on August 18, 1655 the Waldensians had signed a “Patent of grace and pardon,” after two weeks of peace negotiations between a Savoyard, Waldensian, and a Reformed Swiss delegation with French ambassador Abel Servien serving as mediator.⁴⁴ The document, signed by all parties, officially stated that the Waldensians had indeed rebelled. The city council of Amsterdam thereupon initially decided to freeze the money raised for charity, to make sure that they were not supporting rebels.⁴⁵ Early modern observers were aware of the disruptive potential of religious intolerance, but they were equally wary of the revolts that had recently plagued France, England, and Italy.⁴⁶

Two months after the signing of the peace, Willem Boreel forwarded a letter written by Waldensian representatives to the States General. The ambassador included a personal note in which he stressed that the document had been handed to him “under the particular recommendation that both the letter and the sender . . . will be kept strictly secret, because—[as] your High Mightinesses will sufficiently notice from the content—[it] would suffice to bring the poor people to utter ruin and misery.”⁴⁷ The letter was another request for help and argued that the peace had been signed under severe pressure. Clearly hoping to still receive the raised money, the Waldensians implored the States General “not to diminish their compassion shown to [them].”⁴⁸ This time, as requested, the States General refrained from publication. Finally, in early 1656, almost a year after the massacre, the Waldensians received their money, which was transferred via the consistory of Geneva.⁴⁹

Public Diplomacy

Clearly, keeping up the appearance of passive obedience while at the same time asking foreign governments for aid is a tricky thing to do, especially if the governments in question rashly publish your pleas. There were no laws in early modern Europe, however, that forbade subjects from communicating with

⁴⁴ For a transcription of the Italian original see Morland, *History of the Evangelical churches*, pp. 652–663.

⁴⁵ Resoluties met munimenten of bijlagen, 1 and 4 oktober 1655, Archief van de vroedschap 5025, inv. nr. 21, Stadsarchief Amsterdam; the *vroedschap* ultimately followed the States of Holland, who decided that the money would be sent to Piedmont; I thank Erica Boersma for providing me with this source.

⁴⁶ See G. Parker, “Crisis and catastrophe: The global crisis of the seventeenth century reconsidered,” *American Historical Review* 113.4 (2008), pp. 1055, 1060–1064.

⁴⁷ Transcription in Rogge, “Waldenzen-moord van 1655,” p. 341.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 342–343.

⁴⁹ H. C. Rogge, “Vervolging der Waldenzen in 1655 en 1656,” *Nederlandsch archief voor kerkgeschiedenis* 2 (1903), pp. 152–155.

foreigners per se.⁵⁰ To a considerable extent, every state's economic well-being depended on the freedom of communicating with people across political borders. This meant that there was always a gray area between "innocent" cross-border communication—which might advertently or inadvertently draw the attention of another country's government—and treasonous pleas for foreign intervention. Resistance theorists generally did not really touch upon the lawfulness of international communication. Grotius, for instance, did stress that states did not have to wait for requests for help to intervene against tyranny.⁵¹ But what was perhaps the more interesting question, whether subjects were allowed to ask for foreign help—the very bridge between resistance and intervention theory—political philosophers left untouched.

Resistance theory focused on the clash of arms. How a foreign power was to know about the misbehavior of a ruler toward his subjects in the first place remained undiscussed. In Roman law, violating the honor or rule of one's sovereign through libel was an act of *lèse-majesté*.⁵² However, the pamphlets which the Waldensians disseminated internationally were published anonymously and included no explicit indications of authorship. They were not manifestos—an example of which is discussed in Chapter 4—that claimed to speak with the official voice of the Waldensians' leadership. Moreover, they were published far away in cities like Amsterdam, which enhanced the "dispersal of authorship."⁵³ It would thus be easy to deny that the Waldensians engaged in *lèse-majesté* through libel.

This helps us to understand why writing to foreign governments with pleas of innocence—to some extent a contradiction in terms—and requests for aid had not been the Waldensian leaders' main strategy for drawing attention to their predicament. Instead, they had, first and foremost, focused on making their cause publicly known. As we have seen above, the Waldensian pamphlets implicitly acknowledged that sending requests to foreign governments constituted *lèse-majesté*. The dissemination of print media, by contrast, was not considered an act of rebellion. After the massacre, prominent minister Jean Léger—who had managed to flee with his wife and eleven children to the French Val Chisone—brought together the surviving Waldensian leaders in an assembly and convinced them to gather eyewitness accounts and make their stories public. Armed with

⁵⁰ A. Pagden, "Human rights, natural rights, and Europe's imperial legacy," *Political Theory* 31.2 (2003), pp. 184–188.

⁵¹ P. Piirimäe, "Just war in theory and practice: The legitimation of Swedish intervention in the Thirty Years War," *The Historical Journal* 45.3 (2002), pp. 515–516.

⁵² K. Härter, "Political crime in early modern Europe: Assassination, legal responses, and popular print media," *European Journal of Criminology* 11.2 (2014), p. 149.

⁵³ M. North, "Anonymity in early modern manuscript culture: Finding a purposeful convention in a ubiquitous condition," in J. W. Starnes and B. H. Tralster (eds.), *Anonymity in early modern England: "What's in a name?"* (Abingdon, 2011), pp. 25–28.

these accounts, Léger traveled north to advocate the Waldensian cause across Europe.

The minister initially hoped to have the manuscript published in Geneva, but the canton's authorities forbade it.⁵⁴ Probably they did not want to worsen the political situation in the Swiss Confederacy, where religious tension was mounting between the Protestant and Catholic cantons—who, in fact, suspected each other of fomenting the crisis in Piedmont.⁵⁵ Léger therefore set course to Paris, where he met Boreel. The latter advised the pastor to abbreviate his account of the persecutions, probably to make it a more inviting read as a pamphlet. With Boreel's help, the manuscript was translated into several languages and sent to publishers across Europe's main Protestant states.⁵⁶

Léger's first account, the *True story of what has recently befallen the valleys of Piedmont*, was first published anonymously in French at an unknown location.⁵⁷ The *True story* was soon followed by the aforementioned *True account*, a similar but more extensive narration of the events (Figure 4).⁵⁸ Together, the *True story* and the *True account* provided the basic narrative of the persecution, from which subsequent pamphlets drew.⁵⁹

The arguments raised in the pamphlets will be extensively discussed below. For now, it is important to remember that the Waldensian leadership had made explicit in their letter to the States General in late July that they had chosen a policy of defending their innocence and passive obedience. Accordingly, the two pamphlets made no mention of any (military) leadership, resistance, or skirmishes. As such, the rhetoric of these works starkly differed from manifestos, through the publication of which non-state actors clearly postulated themselves as political actors.⁶⁰ In fact, although Léger was in all likelihood the author of the *True story* and the *True account*, he did not portray himself as one of the Waldensian victims. Instead, he emphasized that he recounted what he had heard about the massacre “from those who experienced this disastrous desolation.”⁶¹ The works did make a direct appeal to their readership, albeit of a rather

⁵⁴ Léger, *Histoire générale*, vol. 2, pp. 365–366.

⁵⁵ This would result in the First Villmergen War. See W. Oechsl, *History of Switzerland 1499–1914* (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 216–221.

⁵⁶ Léger, *Histoire générale*, vol. 2, pp. 365–367.

⁵⁷ Anonymous, *Recit véritable de ce qui est arrive depuis peu aux vallées de Piémont* (s.l.: s.n., 1655). It was translated into Dutch by an anonymous printer in The Hague: Anonymous, *Waerachtich verhael van 't gene eenigen tijdt herwaerts inde Valeyen van Piemont is voor-gevallen* (The Hague: s.n., 1655), pfl 7631; Balmas and Zardini Lana have identified five French editions of the *Recit véritable*.

⁵⁸ Anonymous, *Waerachtich verhael van 't gene gepasseert is in de vervolgingen ende moorderyen, aen de gereformeerde kercken inde valeyen van Piemont dit iaer 1655 geschiet* (The Hague: s.n., 1655), pfl 7630.

⁵⁹ See, for instance, Anonymous, *Rechte beschryvingh van de wreede vervolgingh en schrickelijke moordt, aende Vaudoisen in Piedmont gedaen in 't jaer 1655* (Amsterdam: Gillis Joosten, 1655).

⁶⁰ A. Tischer, *Offizielle Kriegsbegründungen in der Frühen Neuzeit. Herrscherkommunikation in Europa zwischen Souveränität und korporativem Selbstverständnis* (Berlin, 2012), pp. 25–26.

⁶¹ Anonymous, *Relation véritable*, p. 1.

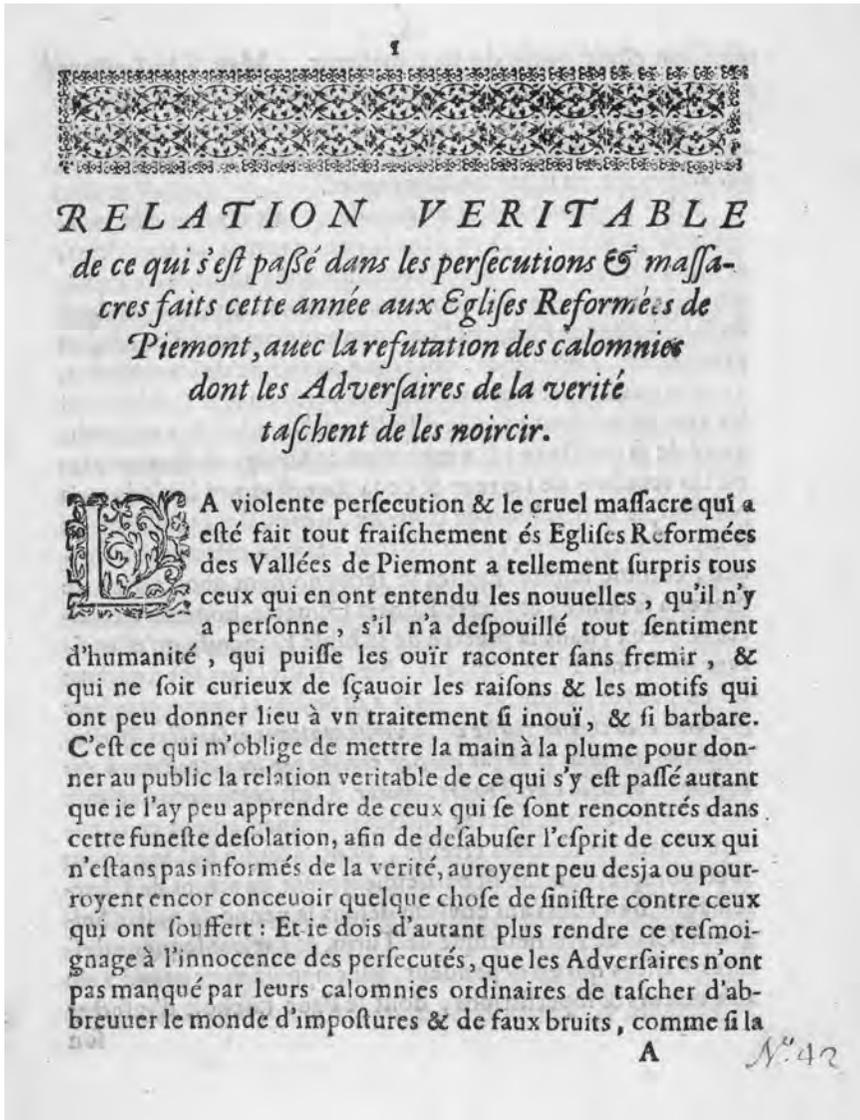


Figure 4. First page of *True account of what happened during the persecutions and massacres carried out this year against the Reformed churches of Piedmont*, 1655, reproduced with permission from Ghent University Library.

innocent sort; they asked all believers to support the victims through prayer and charity. They were, however, not presented mainly as pleas, but as truthful accounts of what had happened in Piedmont. Coupling this too closely to requests for international aid and intervention would only harm the image of passive obedience.

International Accountability

This did not, of course, mean that the duke could only stand by as this narrative gathered pace beyond his borders, although, initially, this was more or less what he did. One government-ordained pamphlet, *The conversion of forty heretics*, had been published in Turin in May, around the same time as the publication of the *True story* and the *True account*, but the work dealt exclusively with the glorious conversion to Catholicism of forty captured Waldensians.⁶² In other words, the pamphlet firmly framed events as a victory of the “true religion.” The fact that Pianezza presided over the celebration was the only implicit reminder that this was, in fact, the epilogue to a military campaign.⁶³

As the pamphlets’ telling of a massacre started spreading throughout Europe, however, the court’s silence over what had happened in the valleys became increasingly difficult to sustain. Observing the rising tensions, Savoy representatives at Louis XIV’s court tried to convince the duke that further silence could prove dangerous. The clergyman Albert Bailly, a confidant of Christine Marie of Savoy, the duke’s influential mother, wrote that one

cannot believe the malice of the rebels of the Luserna valley and they have sent accounts of the executions carried out by [the duke’s] troops . . . and they present them as so horrible, that one has never seen an emotion quite like that false pity excited in the minds of the Huguenots.⁶⁴

Bailly warned Turin that a Huguenot nobleman from Bretagne had told him that his people were waiting to “take up arms and organize themselves.”⁶⁵ He concluded with the claim made by the nuncio at Louis XIV’s court that “never had anything made such a noise throughout the north like this.”⁶⁶ Savoy’s ambassador in Paris, the Abbé d’Aglè, also began to exhort the court to engage in the public discussion in June, after having come across a Dutch publication, the *Cruel persecution and horrible murder of the Waldensians in Piedmont*, which severely worried him.

The duke had probably initially refrained from issuing an apology, because he believed that sovereigns were not to be held publicly accountable for their policy. By responding to the accusation he would lower himself to the position of a discussant rather than standing above the popular slander in cheap print. Moreover, we must keep in mind that for the duke there was little to be gained in making the story public. Publishing an account now merely served as a

⁶² Anonymous, *La conversione di quaranta heretici, con le due luoro principali ministri, dalla seta di Calvino, alla Santa Fede Catolica* (Turin: Carlo Gianelli, 1655).

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Claretta, *Storia del regno*, vol. 1, p. 137; Vallé de Luserne is the former name of the Val Pellice.

⁶⁵ Ibid. ⁶⁶ Ibid.

counterstrategy. Persuaded by the foreign reports, however, the court made an official public statement, aimed at an international public with translations into Latin and French.⁶⁷ The *Account of what happened in the Luserna Valley* was probably written by the Marquis of Pianezza himself and was published in Turin in mid-July.⁶⁸ Apart from reiterating that the Waldensians had pleaded with foreign governments, the apology also discredited their search for public attention:

They now [...] spread these strange reports, which they do not only to excite the compassion of the world toward them for their well-deserved chastisement, but also to give a sinister impression of those who justly and moderately put them right.⁶⁹

Three hundred copies of the pamphlet were made, which Savoy's ambassadors distributed within Europe's diplomatic network. Boreel was one of the first to receive a copy from Agliè. After reading the pamphlet, however, the Dutch ambassador maintained that the Waldensians had been innocent of rebellion and that their freedom of conscience had been violated. Moreover, he confronted the abbé by arguing that only those who fail to keep agreements use propaganda.⁷⁰ If he wanted to persuade, Boreel concluded, Agliè would need to back up his stories with documents and good testimonies.⁷¹

There is no evidence that the *Account of what happened in the Luserna Valley* ever circulated in the United Provinces. However, a few weeks after its publication, the Dutch could buy another pro-Savoyard pamphlet, the *Manifesto or story of the acts of the Waldensians against the Duke of Savoy*. It was published in August by an unidentified Catholic from Amsterdam with help from Bailly.⁷² The *Manifesto* also attacked the Waldensians' publicity campaign, while emphasizing the disruptive effect it had in the Dutch Republic:

All these collected tidings have caused a great overflow of bile in the pious tempers of the simple-hearted, who otherwise live together in peace, love, and civic unity, no matter what religion they profess, [but] now treat each other with fiery words, picking up these paraded lies like mud from the gutter, throwing it in the faces of their fellow citizens, neighbors, friends, [and] yes, relatives, even though they know so little about a duke of Savoy, of Waldensians, of a Luserna

⁶⁷ Balmas and Zardini Lana, *Vera relazione*, p. 169; Claretta, *Storia del regno*, vol. 1, p. 135. For the Italian original and an English translation of this pamphlet see Morland, *History of the Evangelical churches*, pp. 385–403.

⁶⁸ Balmas and Zardini Lana, *Vera relazione*, p. 173. ⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 404.

⁷⁰ Claretta, *Storia del regno*, vol. 3, p. 136. ⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² See P. Cifarelli, "Bailly et les pâques piémontaises," in M. Costa (ed.), *Monseigneur Albert Bailly quatre siècles après sa naissance, 1605–2005. Actes du Colloque international d'Aoste (8 et 9 octobre 2005)* (Aosta, 2007), pp. 73–93.

valley and so forth, [as if] a common man is due to answer for the deeds of kings and princes in the lands where they rule.⁷³

No matter what the truth of the matter may have been, so the argument went, it was not something which common people living in foreign lands should form an opinion on in the first place, especially if this opinion-making implied accusations against a sovereign prince.

This spoke to the widespread idea among the Dutch that pamphlets were potentially hazardous to society.⁷⁴ Virtually everyone agreed that a certain degree of censorship was necessary for the stability of society. In fact, Dutch pamphleteers often accused one another of having resorted to print media, an unscrupulous move to which the other side could only respond, albeit reluctantly, by providing their own public answer.⁷⁵ The danger of sedition was most often associated with pamphlets reflecting on domestic politics. Pamphlets on foreign issues could also face censorship.⁷⁶ Yet such prohibitions were usually aimed at ensuring that the United Provinces' international relations remained stable—they were not concerned with domestic tranquility. The fact that the manifesto nevertheless pointed to domestic civic unrest to make a point about something that had happened about one thousand kilometers from Amsterdam, gives us an indication of the intensity with which some must have reacted to the news, as will be discussed in more detail below.

Law

Seventeenth-century relief campaigns were almost always initiated by religious kin, and many contemporary observers were quick to interpret foreign persecutions within a confessional framework. Most scholars therefore approach long-distance engagement with victims of persecution as a form of confessional commitment, fueled by a militant sense of religious brotherhood. They have argued, for instance, that charity initiatives for the persecuted Palatines during the Thirty Years War were motivated by an apocalyptic worldview and a strong sense of confessional righteousness.⁷⁷ Puritan propagandists, in turn, drew heavily on John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* in their coverage of the 1641 Ulster massacres, presenting the Irish perpetrators as "Biblical oppressors" and the murdered "Protestants as

⁷³ Anonymous, *Manifest, of verhael van het bedrijf der Vaudoisien, tegens syne conincklijke den hertoch van Sauoye* (1655), pfl. 7627.

⁷⁴ M. Meijer Drees, "Pamfletten. Een inleiding," in J. de Kruijf, M. Meijer Drees, and J. Salman (eds.), *Het lange leven van het pamflet* (Hilversum, 2006), p. 26.

⁷⁵ Harms, *Pamfletten en publieke opinie*, pp. 51, 102.

⁷⁶ See Koopmans, *Early modern media and the news*, pp. 282–302.

⁷⁷ Grell, *Brethren in Christ*.

God's chosen people."⁷⁸ More recently, however, historians have observed a shift toward non-confessional rhetoric in the mid-seventeenth century. Some opinion makers began to decry persecution as inhumane, without dwelling on the religious quality of the victims.⁷⁹ The remainder of this chapter shifts attention from the practices to the discourse of public diplomacy and tries to explain and nuance this historiographical observation. It will show that the Waldensians indeed showed a reluctance to frame their predicament in typical narratives of religious redemption, confessional righteousness, and overt anti-Catholicism in their search for humanitarian engagement. Instead, they mainly tried to convince foreign audiences to support them with recourse to the rule of law and the idea that they had suffered inhumane cruelty, in a conscious move to transcend the confessional divide.

To understand the argumentative strategies deployed by the Waldensians, we first need to keep in mind that when Jean Léger took up his pen to inform the world about the tragedy that had befallen his people, he had to reckon with the fact that nowhere in Europe did freedom of religion exist. Adhering to a confession other than the one dominant in the state in which one lived always entailed at least some degree of discrimination. This way of ordering society found virtually universal acceptance. Few people would argue that princes or states should not politically favor one confession over another, or not punish anyone for religious dissidence. That the Waldensians were tolerated only within the limits of a set number of valleys in Piedmont may have saddened Protestants throughout Europe, but few would have considered it an outrage.

Religious tolerance and discrimination took form first and foremost in the everyday coexistence between common people as they went about their daily lives.⁸⁰ Yet in the second half of the sixteenth century the experience of violence led rulers to regulate the confessional divisions within their states through new laws in the form of peace treaties.⁸¹ As pragmatic compromises, religious peace treaties were of a somewhat paradoxical nature.⁸² Most early modern treaties did not employ a language of justice. But they did provide a legal framework for both parties to fall back on, giving them significant normative value.⁸³ Early modern

⁷⁸ E. H. Shagan, "Constructing discord: Ideology, propaganda and English responses to the Irish Rebellion of 1641," *Journal of British Studies* 36.1 (1997), p. 15.

⁷⁹ Trim, "If a prince use tyrannie." ⁸⁰ Kaplan, *Divided by faith*.

⁸¹ For a comparative overview of religious peace treaties in Europe see te Brake, *Religious war and religious peace*.

⁸² Kaplan, *Divided by faith*, p. 8; R. Po-Chia Hsia, "Introduction," in R. Po-Chia Hsia and H. van Nierop (eds.), *Calvinism and religious toleration in the Dutch Golden Age* (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 2–4; B. B. Diefendorf, "Waging peace: Memory, identity, and the Edict of Nantes," in K. Perry Long (ed.), *Religious differences in France: Past and present* (University Park, PA, 2006).

⁸³ R. Lesaffer, "Gentili's *ius post bellum* and early-modern peace treaties," in B. Kingsbury and B. Straumann (eds.), *The Roman foundations of the law of nations: Alberto Gentili and the justice of empire* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 24–25.

people were used to mining the past when searching for legitimacy.⁸⁴ Historic privileges, edicts, and treaties thus formed society's customary legal blueprints.⁸⁵ Individuals, groups, or third parties might be unhappy with the terms of a given settlement but they would not be quick to question its overall validity as long as they believed or accepted that it had been drawn up by mutual consent.⁸⁶ Religious peace settlements also allowed Europeans to distinguish between religious persecution and the legal punishment of religious minorities who had broken the law, even if these laws were specifically designed to curtail them. For religious minorities it was therefore imperative to prove that they had not broken the law, and were indeed persecuted.

We have already seen that this legal issue informed the Waldensians' decision to employ the printing press to attract international attention in the first place. But they also devoted a significant amount of space in their pamphlets to legal argumentation. This makes sense if we consider the fact that finding a legal foothold for their cause was a difficult undertaking. Indeed, the Peace of Cavour, the legal arrangement with their sovereign on which they mainly based their case, provides a compelling example of the ambiguity of early modern religious peace. It was the typical half-hearted product of a military stalemate.⁸⁷ While its creation remains shrouded in mystery, it appears that the document was a draft settlement, drawn up and signed by a ducal representative and four Waldensian pastors. It should have been—but probably never was—formalized in an actual edict of toleration promulgated by Emmanuel Philibert, the then Duke of Savoy.⁸⁸

Although designed to transform the Waldensians from a foreign body that needed to be extirpated into a discriminate group of subjects with a geographically bounded legal status—at least for the time being—the Peace of Cavour therefore remained a rather elusive document.⁸⁹ In the decades after Cavour, the legal relation between the Waldensians and the court of Savoy would become ever more complex. We have seen that demographic realities soon began to put pressure on the arrangements of 1561, leading the Waldensians to work lands and buy estates beyond the tolerated valleys.⁹⁰ Whether the Cavour settlement permitted this was controversial. It allowed the Waldensians to

⁸⁴ Pollmann, *Memory in early modern Europe*, p. 1.

⁸⁵ L. Schorn-Schütte, "Confessional peace as a political and legal problem in the early modern period," in G. Hellmann (ed.), *Justice and peace: Interdisciplinary perspectives on a contested relationship* (Frankfurt am Main and New York, NY, 2013), p. 107.

⁸⁶ See R. Lesaffer, "The medieval canon law of contract and early modern treaty law," *Journal of the History of International Law* 2.2 (2000), pp. 178–198; see also S. Belmessous, "The paradox of an empire by treaty," in S. Belmessous (ed.), *Empire by treaty: Negotiating European expansion, 1600–1900* (Oxford, 2015), pp. 1–18.

⁸⁷ Zwierlein, *Discorso und Lex Dei*, pp. 363–364.

⁸⁸ R. De Simone, "La Pace di Cavour e l'Editto 1° di San Germano nella storia della tolleranza religiosa," *Bollettino della Società di studi Valdesi* 110 (1961), pp. 40–41.

⁸⁹ Zwierlein, *Discorso und Lex Dei*, p. 370. ⁹⁰ Balmas and Zardini Lana, *Vera relazione*, p. 17.

purchase houses outside the valleys, but they were not allowed to permanently live and preach there.⁹¹

In the decades leading up to the massacre, Savoyard policy swung back and forth between chasing the Reformed from “forbidden” areas and leaving them be.⁹² The dukes of Savoy repeatedly issued decrees expressly forbidding the Waldensians from owning property outside the tolerated valleys. The Waldensians would then petition the duke to grant concessions in exchange for a fee.⁹³ In other words, the Order of Gastaldo from January 1655, which once again ordered the Waldensians to leave the valleys outside the limits of toleration, was not unprecedented. That an army was suddenly sent to the valleys to enforce the order must, however, have come as an unpleasant surprise.

Although the legal status of the Waldensian settlements was thus ambiguous—if not outright confusing—it had for some decades been relatively stable in practical terms; the Reformed communities had probably become used to being presented with the same prohibitions every few years, while their successful petitions against them had become a ritual negotiation of conflict. It was a repetitive play of disunion and reconciliation that confirmed and stabilized the relationship with the duke, who demonstrated that the Waldensians could not rely on presumed privileges, but remained dependent on his mercy.

After the breakdown of this *modus vivendi* and the subsequent massacre, the Waldensians extensively elaborated on the legal nature of the settlements drawn up between them and their sovereign to convince foreign audiences of their cause. The *True story* devoted about one-third of its forty-seven pages to the details of all the settlements and decrees issued between 1561 and 1653 to convince its foreign audiences that the 1655 crackdown had been a breach of contract.⁹⁴ In other words, what made a massacre a massacre depended to a considerable extent on the legal details of the conflict and not just on the violence itself. As the *True account* put it: “to see with more certainty whether it was with reason that they came to such rigor . . . depends on knowledge of the law.”⁹⁵

Interestingly, both parties shared this perspective. When the court of Savoy finally engaged with international public polemic in July 1655, they put even more emphasis on the conflict as a legal issue. One of the two court-issued pamphlets, the *Sum of reasons and foundations on the basis of which His Royal Highness prohibited the heretics of the Luserna Valley from living outside the tolerated limits*, exclusively presented a positive legal history of the toleration of the

⁹¹ Zwierlein, *Discorso und Lex Dei*, p. 371.

⁹² M. Battistoni, “Reshaping local public space: Religion and politics in the marquisate of Saluzzo between Reformation and Counter-Reformation,” in M. A. Vester (ed.), *Sabaudian studies: Political culture, dynasty, and territory, 1400–1700* (Kirksville, MO, 2013), pp. 240–258.

⁹³ See W. S. Gilly, *Narrative of an excursion to the mountains of Piemont in the Year MDCCCXXIII and researches among the Vaudois, or Waldenses, Protestant Inhabitants of the Cottian Alps* (London, 1825), pp. xxix–xxxii.

⁹⁴ Anonymous, *Recit veritable*.

⁹⁵ Anonymous, *Relation veritable*, p. 41.

Waldensians.⁹⁶ It emphasized, among other issues, that the Peace of Cavour had never been ratified by Emmanuel Philibert.⁹⁷ It also argued that later edicts promulgated by the dukes of Savoy confirmed that “no privilege, grace, or toleration [was] granted to the inhabitants.”⁹⁸ Moreover, the Order of Gastaldo did nothing more than force those who broke the contract to move and comply again.⁹⁹ Disobeying the order was therefore a move “full of injustice and rebellion”:¹⁰⁰

After all this, how can anyone question or doubt that their chastisement was most just, and that simply to transport themselves from one place to another, between which there is exceedingly little distance, was the mildest punishment that could be inflicted upon them for so great a stubbornness?¹⁰¹

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to argue which of the two warring parties provided a more coherent legal case. The point to stress here is that such legal details were considered all-important when appealing to an international public in print. Modern Western readers are likely to judge that the positive legal position of a discriminated minority becomes fully irrelevant in the face of mass murder. As we have seen, however, the court of Savoy, the Waldensians, and Dutch regents were all greatly concerned with the question of whether the latter had “rebelled” and so deserved some kind of punishment.

In a way, this question was bound to remain unresolved. Whether treaties made by sovereign predecessors did or did not have to be ratified by current ones, whether fees were paid as punishments or as guarantees, or whether and how concessions—which were always issued as a merciful gesture—could be revoked, were questions about which there was no clear-cut consensus or an authoritative and detailed European tradition.¹⁰² Despite efforts to legally define the boundaries of religious coexistence, toleration remained dependent on a benevolent interpretation of a sometimes inconsistent system of laws.¹⁰³ It is no wonder, therefore, that the parties involved were so set on discussing legal niceties in the form of historical contracts.

To some extent, the court of Savoy tried to transcend the positive legal framework by arguing that the ruler’s power went beyond maintaining existing

⁹⁶ Anonymous, *Somma delle ragioni & fondamenti con quali S.A.R. s’è mossa a prohibire alli heretici della Valle di Luserna l’habitatione fuori de limiti tolerate*, transcription in Morland, *History of the Evangelical churches*, pp. 405–422.

⁹⁷ Anonymous, *Somma delle ragioni*, p. 406.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 407.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 408.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 421.

¹⁰¹ Translation by Morland; *ibid.*, p. 420.

¹⁰² H. Mohnhaupt, “Privileg, Gesetz, Vertrag, Konzession. Subjektives Recht und Formen der Rechtserteilung zwischen Gnade und Anspruch,” in T. J. Chiusi, T. Gergen, and H. Jung (eds.), *Das Recht und seine historischen Grundlagen. Festschrift für Elmar Wadle zum 70. Geburtstag* (Berlin, 2008), pp. 635–638.

¹⁰³ B. Stollberg-Rilinger, *The emperor’s old clothes: Constitutional history and the symbolic language of the Holy Roman Empire* (New York, NY, 2015), p. 6.

laws; the *Sum of reasons* argued that historical contracts are only of consequence if they have been ratified by the current ruler. This argument fits within a tradition of absolutist thought in which toleration is dependent on the sovereign's will.¹⁰⁴ However, responding *in extenso* to the Waldensians' legal reflections, Savoyard apologists did not completely subordinate the rule of law to the ruler's absolute sovereignty. Considering their intended readership, this was probably a sensible move; it is unlikely that audiences in the Dutch Republic and England, countries with strong contract-oriented political traditions, or even in France, where an edict kept the religious peace, would have found such reasoning very convincing.

By providing an almost exclusively positivist legal response to the Waldensian pamphlets, the duke's apologists provided their readers with a rather particular sense of the justness of the situation. Justice was weighed almost entirely on the basis of whether laws had been adhered to or broken. Why these laws were just or reasonable was not an object of discussion in the Savoyard pamphlets. The court made no effort to publicly justify its policy of territorially bounded toleration. Although the court's pamphlets meticulously pointed out why the duke had the right to force the Waldensians back into the three valleys, they did not explain his motivation for doing so.

The Waldensian pamphlets, by contrast, went beyond positive law by elaborating on the facts on the ground. The *True account* argued that those who lived within the tolerated valleys—and who were therefore innocent—almost succumbed under the population pressure of those who were forced to return.¹⁰⁵ The Order of Gastaldo was thus delegitimized because it forced the Waldensians into unlivable circumstances. The *Sequel to the true account* also argued that the sudden obligation to abandon the settlements and return to the tolerated valleys, which could not support so many people, effectively amounted to a death sentence.¹⁰⁶ In other words, above the positive laws, the Waldensians adopted, without conceptualizing it, a Tacitean notion of necessity and the right to self-preservation.¹⁰⁷

Savoyard apologists did not directly engage with the problem of overpopulation as a pragmatic argument against the living restrictions. On the contrary, they stated that the fact that the Waldensians resorted to reasons of “remote distance, incommodity, and barrenness” to dissuade the duke from enforcing the Order

¹⁰⁴ V. Kahn, *Wayward contracts: The crisis of political obligation in England, 1640–1674* (Princeton, NJ, 2004), p. 42.

¹⁰⁵ Anonymous, *Relation véritable*, p. 21.

¹⁰⁶ Anonymous, *Suite de la relation véritable*, incorporated in Anonymous, *Relation véritable de ce qui s'est passé dans les persecutions & massacres faits cette année, aux Eglises Reformées de Piemont* (s.l.: s.n., 1655), pp. 60–61. The *Suite de la relation véritable* was also published in Dutch in The Hague; Anonymous, *Vervolch van het waerachtich verhael* (The Hague: s.n., 1655), pflit 7632.

¹⁰⁷ L. Ashworth, *A history of international thought: From the origins of the modern state to academic international relations* (London and New York, NY, 2014), pp. 32–33.

of Gastaldo, only proved that they lacked a legal foothold.¹⁰⁸ Whereas the Waldensians rhetorically distinguished between legal right and human necessity, the Savoyard apologists refused to recognize the latter as a proper justification.

Religious Persecution

By pointing out that the violence lacked a proper legal basis, the Waldensians tried to convince their audience that the Savoyards persecuted them for their religion. At first glance, accusations of religious persecution appear to fit within a confessional strategy, meant to portray the victims as true believers against an irreligious foe. After all, religious difference was identified as the main cause behind the violence, which was enacted by an intolerant perpetrator, with familiar characteristics. For instance, the *True account* described how a Franciscan friar and a priest had been among the main culprits and had set a church on fire.¹⁰⁹ Even more tellingly, a commission for the extirpation of heresy had recently been founded in Turin and, most importantly, a conversion to Catholicism would guarantee amnesty for the persecuted.¹¹⁰ The Waldensian *Sequel to the true account*, which was published in response to Pianezza's apologies, highlighted this last point:

None of those who remained steadfast in the profession of their religion received mercy . . . This proof is not countered by the subterfuge and evasion which the Marquis [of Pianezza] found, saying that it is a clemency, which the Prince [of Savoy] could give to those who abjured the Reformed religion and that through this abjuration the alleged rebellion of living outside the limits ceased . . . If these cavils took place, it would not be possible to say that the pagan emperors ever persecuted or killed anyone for reasons of religion, nor that there was ever any confessor or martyr who had suffered to maintain the Christian faith, as one could always have said that it was because they lived in the Empire, against the orders of the Emperor.¹¹¹

What made the argument so powerful, however, was that it followed a very different logic, one that was not dependent on confessional truth claims. The question of what constituted religious persecution was hotly contested by contemporaries but most observers approached it in reference to the law, which always discriminated between different corporate bodies. Early modern societies knew no equality before the law. Differentiating between confessional groups thus

¹⁰⁸ Anonymous, *Somma delle ragioni*, p. 409.

¹⁰⁹ Anonymous, *Relation veritable*, 76.

¹¹⁰ Anonymous, *Recit veritable*, p. 4.

¹¹¹ Anonymous, *Suite de la relation veritable*, p. 63.

followed a rationale that structured all layers of society. Religious persecution required a breach of contract.

This legal framework made it possible to accuse a party of indulging in religious persecution without making a value judgment regarding the confession of either the persecuting or persecuted parties. Of course, as we have seen above, Catholicism was often accused of being particularly prone to religious persecution. But the gist of the argument was precisely that it transcended the realms of theological truth claims. In other words, the Waldensians appealed to a shared, confessionally neutral principle that religious persecution was categorically wrong. And indeed, the court of Savoy was quite set on arguing that the punishment of the Waldensians had not been about religion but about rebellion.

Inhumanity

Whether an atrocity had taken place depended not only on the law but also on the nature of the violence. Compared to the legal discussions, actual accounts of the violence had a modest place in the Waldensian pamphlets.¹¹² Nevertheless, how the massacre was framed for highly sensitized European audiences who both cherished and dreaded the memory of interconfessional violence could make all the difference.¹¹³ It is important to remember, however, that early modern Europeans did not only communicate their experiences with violence in order to confirm the purity of their religious beliefs. The fact that one had suffered atrocities could also be used as a political tool to denounce the perpetrator in a way that transcended the confessional divide.¹¹⁴ Even—or especially—if the perpetrator belonged to a different religion, counterattacks in the form of pamphlets describing an atrocity depended on a shared notion of what constituted unacceptable violence. On no side of the confessional divide in early modern Europe would one find authoritative political thinkers or theologians who argued that cannibalism, infanticide, or rape were legitimate acts of violence or legal punishment.¹¹⁵ As such, having suffered such acts of violence provided a confessionally neutral argument against the adversary who had purportedly indulged in them.

¹¹² In their pamphlets, the Waldensians devoted between one-sixth and one-tenth of their pages to recounting the actual violence.

¹¹³ See Introduction.

¹¹⁴ R. Voges, "Macht, Massaker und Repräsentationen. Darstellungen asymmetrischer Gewalt in der Bildpublizistik Franz Hogenbergs," in J. Baberowski and G. Metzler (eds.), *Gewalträume. Soziale Ordnungen im Ausnahmezustand* (Frankfurt am Main and New York, NY, 2012), p. 40.

¹¹⁵ A. P. Coudert, "The ultimate crime: Cannibalism in early modern minds and imaginations," in A. Classen and C. Scarborough (eds.), *Crime and punishment in the middle ages and the early modern age: Mental-historical investigations of basic human problems and social responses* (Berlin and Boston, MA, 2012), pp. 521–522.

The Waldensians juggled with these two narratives of violence. They clearly tapped into a tradition of martyrdom. For instance, both in the *True story* and the *True account* there were several reports in which the victims were portrayed in a martyr-like fashion, remaining steadfast in their faith as they were tortured and murdered.¹¹⁶ The *True account* also contained the more polemical confessional statement at the implicit expense of Catholicism that the Lord had “maintained this smoking candle amidst the darkness of error and superstition.”¹¹⁷ However, such references to confessional superiority were omitted from the shorter *True story*. We have seen that Willem Boreel proposed editorial changes to Léger’s first manuscript. In the light of the ambassador’s concern about religious war, it is quite possible that he suggested deconfessionalizing the narrative.

By all accounts, this was about as far as the confessional martyrdom script went. The fates of most victims were not described with recourse to religious qualities; they were above all approached as suffering humans rather than as Protestants. Their fates were presented as stupefying more than edifying. The pamphlets emphasized that the army indiscriminately killed “the young and the old, the great and the small, the men and the women.”¹¹⁸ They recounted how with “barbaric cruelty” the soldiers raped more than 150 women, literally tore apart children, cut open people and rubbed salt and gunpowder in their wounds, genitally mutilated people of both sexes, while other soldiers indulged in cannibalism and tried to eat the brains of their victims. Readers got the impression that the soldiers made a game out of their killing, tying people up and rolling them from hills and playing ball games with severed heads. The aftermath of the massacre was described as something that resembled the mess after a feast:

You would find the head of a child here, the genitals of a man [there], and the pieces of flesh of many, which the beasts had not yet managed to eat.¹¹⁹

Outrageous games with body parts, cannibalism, and rape constituted forms of violence from which the perpetrator appeared to derive satisfaction. The pamphlets told their readers that the violence had not been orderly and controlled in the name of the law but random and pleasure-oriented. One could judge solely from the violence itself that it had not been a legitimate punishment because it was also enacted against people who could not have been presumed guilty. Moreover, it included appalling forms of violence which in no circumstances could constitute a legitimate form of punishment. The author accordingly used an inclusive language of identification:

¹¹⁶ Anonymous, *Relation véritable*, p. 21.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹¹⁹ Anonymous, *Recit véritable*, pp. 34–35.

There is no one, who has not discarded all sentiments of humanity, who can bear to hear this without trembling and who is not curious to know the reasons and motives that might have led to actions so barbarous and unheard of.¹²⁰

Pity, conversely, was identified as an innate human property. Several pamphlets emphasized this with hyperbolic statements about how even those on the margins of humanity, such as cannibals, would protest against such cruelty. They presented the violence as repugnant by any human standard, degrading it to inhumane or bestial behavior. Since it was inhumane, it was all the more unchristian:

The pen falls from my hand describing these horrible things. From bringing back the thought alone, my body turns cold . . . It would take a diamond heart, a hand of steel, and an iron pen to describe these tragic spectacles and the appalling examples of cruelty that have been seen, unheard of in the most barbarous of ancient times.¹²¹

That the inhumanity of the event was distinguished from religious injustice becomes strikingly clear in the *Latest authentic and very true account*, which argued that both “common right and the laws of God . . . do not permit that the innocent be punished as the guilty.”¹²²

Since such stories appealed to a shared notion of what constituted unacceptable violence, the Savoyard authorities were compelled to either deny them or refrain from discussing them. As we have seen, the *Sum of reasons* accordingly dealt almost exclusively with the legal aspects of the event. The *Account of what happened in the Luserna Valley*, in turn, retaliated in kind.¹²³ It recounted how the Waldensian insurgents indulged in all sorts of “extraordinary cruelties,” murdering numerous innocent Catholics “who had never even thought of troubling them” and mutilating their dead bodies.¹²⁴ The pamphlet concluded by arguing that every man should be able to see that the rebels had themselves “brought ruin over them.” This led them to publish strange reports

to excite compassion for their well-deserved chastisement and give a sinister impression of those who treated them justly and moderately, while they indulged in barbarous and inhumane behavior . . . against people over whom they had no authority, committing unheard of cruelties against the most innocent, their

¹²⁰ Anonymous, *Relation véritable*, p. 1.

¹²¹ Anonymous, *Relation véritable*, p. 21.

¹²² Anonymous, *Relation dernier*, p. 20. In a Dutch version of the pamphlet “common right” is translated as “human rights” (“menschelijke rechten”); Anonymous, *Laetst of nieuwst authentiek en seer waerachtigh verhael aengaende de vervolginge ende moorderijen der Gereformeerde Kercken in Piedmont wedervaren/desen selven jare M.DC.LV* (s.l.: s.n.: 1655), pfl 7634, p. 23.

¹²³ Laurenti, *Confini della comunità*, p. 189.

¹²⁴ Anonymous, *Relazione de' successi seguiti nella valle di Luserna*, transcription in Morland, *History of the Evangelical Churches*, pp. 402–403.

country- and kinsmen, and those who had had no knowledge at all, nor taken part in the troubles that had happened.¹²⁵

That stories of atrocity served a political strategy on both sides does not imply that they were works of fiction. It has, of course, long been impossible to verify these accounts, but it is perfectly possible that at least some of these acts of violence had indeed been committed by soldiers and insurgents. It is important to note, however, that many of the discussed acts of violence had been tropes in atrocity media since at least the Reformation. Stories of unborn children cut from their mothers' wombs in accounts of the Piedmont Easter can also be found in sixteenth-century publications about, among other events, the Conquest of the New World, the Sack of Rome, and the Dutch Revolt.¹²⁶ Often, they also harked back to biblical precedents. To a considerable extent, and perhaps unintentionally, stories about historical episodes of (interconfessional) violence to which the Waldensian community had access "premediated" the 1655 massacre. As Astrid Erll argues, "existent media which circulate in a given society provide schemata for new experience and its representation."¹²⁷ Such tropes helped to "transform contingent events into meaningful images and narratives."¹²⁸

At the same time, references omitted can be as insightful as the ones that were made. None of the Waldensian pamphlets referred to famous episodes of religious persecution in more recent history, such as the 1641 Ulster massacres in Ireland, the persecutions in the Low Countries under the Duke of Alba, or the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre. Not all of these events were equally famous throughout Europe, but the 1572 slaughtering of Huguenots in France must have been well known among (educated) Waldensians, as was the history of the Low Countries. Only in their request to the States General from July 27 did the Waldensian Assembly allude to the Dutch Revolt, arguing that "the misery, which you have suffered in different times assures us of your Christian compassion."¹²⁹

¹²⁵ Anonymous, *Relatione de' successi*, p. 404.

¹²⁶ See for instance A. C. Pipkin, *Rape in the Republic, 1609–1725: Formulating Dutch identity* (Leiden and Boston, MA, 2013); K. Hirt, "Der Sacco di Roma 1527 in einer zeitgenössischen italienischen Versflugschrift. Das Massaker und die Einheit der Nation," in C. Vogel (ed.), *Bilder des Schreckens. Die mediale Inszenierung von Massakern seit dem 16. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main and New York, NY, 2006), pp. 46–47; W. Cilleßen, "Massaker in der niederländischen Erinnerungskultur. Die Bildwerdung der Schwarzen Legende," in Vogel (ed.), *Bilder des Schreckens*, pp. 93–135; E. Kuijpers, "The creation and development of social memories of traumatic events: The Oudewater massacre of 1575," in K. Rutkowski and M. Linden Hurting (eds.), *Memories and beneficial forgetting: Posttraumatic stress disorders, biographical developments, and social conflicts* (Amsterdam, 2013), pp. 194–196; F. Edelmayer, "The 'Leyenda Negra' and the circulation of anti-Catholic and anti-Spanish prejudices," *European History Online (EGO)* (2011), <http://www.ieg-ego.eu/edelmayerf-2010-en>; D. de Boer, "Between remembrance and oblivion: Negotiating civic identity after the sacks of Mechelen (1572, 1580)," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 51.4 (2020), pp. 963–982.

¹²⁷ A. Erll, "Remembering across time, space, and culture: Premediation, remediation and the 'Indian Mutiny,'" in A. Erll and A. Nünning (eds.), *Media and cultural memory/Medien und kulturelle Erinnerung* (Berlin and New York, NY, 2009), p. 111.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

¹²⁹ Citation from Rogge, "Vervolging der Waldenzen," p. 143.

That such references were not used in pamphlets was probably a conscious strategy, given that the Waldensians were set on disproving the accusation that they had rebelled against their sovereign. They therefore told a story of violence inflicted upon the harmless and left out the armed resistance that followed the Piedmont Easter. Making explicit comparisons with the Dutch Revolt—which ultimately led to the abjuration of a king—could harm this carefully constructed image of murdered innocence. The St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre, in turn, remained a highly controversial issue that stood in an uneasy relationship with the confessionally neutralized memory of the wars of religion adopted by the French Crown to maintain peace within his kingdom.¹³⁰ Evoking this event thus carried the risk of losing Louis XIV’s goodwill. In short, invoking the memory of the wars of religion while searching for humanitarian engagement could easily backfire. Invoking the pity of one’s religious kin without confessional triumphalism and warmongering was a safer strategy when using a medium that was also read by actors across the confessional divide.

Confessional Animosity

At this point, we should ask the question whether the Waldensians’ efforts to bridge the confessional divide were successful. Unfortunately, there is only anecdotal evidence on how the Dutch felt about the news of the massacre, but it offers telling insight. In the evening of June 9, 1655—a national day of prayer declared by the States General during which ministers undoubtedly discussed the fate of the Waldensians in their sermons—several Reformed and Catholics had ended up in a fight in the streets of Leiden, which had evolved from a discussion between a Catholic priest and a Reformed pastor about the massacre in Piedmont.¹³¹ During the brawl a Catholic local named Jan Practijck had shouted that the *Geusen*—a term of abuse for Protestants—deserved “a blow in their vests like [they had in] Savoy.”¹³² The bailiff recounted in the city’s criminal verdict register that the crime

had not only been to the disadvantage of the true Christian Reformed Religion and [to] the disruption of the common peace of this state in general and the city in particular, but also incited others to scheme evil deeds, with dangerous

¹³⁰ D. van der Linden, “Memorializing the wars of religion in early seventeenth-century French picture galleries: Protestants and Catholics painting the contested past,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 70 (2017), pp. 169–170.

¹³¹ Crimineel klachtboek. Manuscript, Schepenbank (Oud rechterlijk archief), Criminele vonnisboeken, 1455–1811, 508, inv. No. 3. Regionaal Archief Leiden, p. 186; I want to thank Christine Kooi for bringing this source to my attention.

¹³² *Ibid.*

consequences which should under no circumstance be suffered in a well-off republic, but should be punished severely so as to deter them.¹³³

The city tribunal took the crime seriously and sentenced Practijck to a flogging and lifelong banishment from Holland. This sense of religious tension was shared by provincial authorities. When the States General ordered the provinces to raise funds for the persecuted on June 18, discussions arose as to how collections should be organized. The initial plan to go from door to door was dropped out of fear that it could “cause bitterness and estrangement” if the non-Reformed refused to donate or gave less.¹³⁴ It was considered more prudent for money to be collected in the churches instead.¹³⁵

As we have seen, this confessional response to the massacre hardly reflected the rhetoric of the Waldensian pamphlets. Yet it did mirror the language uttered by Dutch opinion makers. The popular news digest *Hollandse Mercurius*, which provided yearly overviews of the most important news, devoted fourteen of its 150 pages to a confessional account of the massacre. Author Pieter Casteleyn claimed that the massacre had been orchestrated by the Jesuits and remembered the dead as “sad relics of Christian love to their fellows and a bad encouragement for Jews and heathens to become Roman Christians.”¹³⁶ Discussing some of the reactions to the massacre throughout Europe, Casteleyn showed how it stirred up old confessional animosities: in the Southern Netherlands, Brabanters mocked the attempts of Protestants to help rebellious peasants and claimed that the Lord Protector strived to become the “universal chief of all sectarians and heretics throughout the different parts of Christendom”;¹³⁷ in the small Catholic canton of Schwyz about forty Catholics renounced their faith upon hearing about the cruelties and converted to the Mennonite and Reformed religions;¹³⁸ Switzerland quickly lapsed into confessional violence after the Reformed cantons began to intercede in Piedmont.¹³⁹ Indeed, the *Hollandse Mercurius* concluded that the Piedmont Easter was an “eternal stain for the Catholics of our century.”¹⁴⁰

Pamphlets of Dutch origin also connected events to the domestic confessional landscape. About a month after the massacre, The Hague printer Hendrik Hondius III printed the *Letter from a Protestant in Switzerland to his trusted friend in Holland*. Both the author and the receiver of the letter remain anonymous, but the intended audience of the published version is clear; the letter was

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ L. Aitzema, *Saken van staet en oorlogh in ende omtrent de Vereenigde Nederlanden*, vol. 3 (The Hague: Johan Veelt, Johan Tongerloo, and Jasper Dolk, 1669), p. 1229.

¹³⁵ Boersma, “Noodhulp zonder natiestaat,” pp. 83–95.

¹³⁶ P. Casteleyn, *Hollandse Mercurius, behelzende 't geen aenmerckens waerdigh in Europa, en voornamelijck om 't stuck van Oorloch en Vrede 't gantze Jaer 1655 voorgevallen is* (Haarlem: Pieter Casteleyn, 1656), pp. 38, 128.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

introduced with a short salutation to “the Christian reader.”¹⁴¹ The salutation explained that the purpose of the publication was to reveal the innocence of the Waldensians, so that the reader could “offer them all the pity, which the henchmen of Rome have tried to suffocate with the lies that shame about the enormity of the matter has made them spread in these provinces.”¹⁴² The opposition between false information, consciously and maliciously spread in the United Provinces, and the truth as it was supposedly found in the letter, is remarkable, as there is no evidence that any works defending the persecution circulated in the Republic at the time. The first (surviving) pamphlets in the United Provinces that outright defended the Savoyards did not appear until early August.

Perhaps the pamphlet referred to rumor, communicated orally in the streets or in the Catholic community, the sort which had led to the banishment of Practijck in Leiden. But here too, we see that news about the Waldensians was premediated, as the pamphlet made sense of events through the trope of “deceitful popery.” There was a widely shared belief among Protestants that Catholicism was an anti-religion. The argument went that the Catholic Church’s very essence was to spread lies to destroy the Protestant world and replace it with anti-Christian tyranny.¹⁴³ In the Dutch Republic anti-Catholicism was never as virulent as it was across the Channel; Catholics were structurally discriminated against, but not often actively persecuted.¹⁴⁴ Yet in times of political crisis, Dutch Catholics were often regarded with suspicion as a potential fifth column. Well into the eighteenth century, the United Provinces recurrently witnessed panics among Protestants about Catholics plotting to massacre them.¹⁴⁵

Such conspiracy theories were, of course, predicated on a cultural memory of religious violence. Dutch Calvinists were familiar with the narratives about the Dutch Revolt, the religious wars in France, and, more recently, the 1641 Ulster massacres in Ireland. It was therefore not hard to imagine that Catholic deceit also surrounded the Piedmont Easter. News about a foreign religious persecution turned such narratives into present realities. As such, the event provided an opportunity to discuss the Republic’s confessional landscape within an ongoing

¹⁴¹ Anonymous, *Lettre d’une suisse protestant écrite a un sien amy en Hollande* (The Hague: Henri Hondius, 1655), pfl 7620. Hondius also published a Dutch translation of the pamphlet: Anonymous, *Brief van een protestant in Switserland, gheschreven aen een zyn speciae vriend woonende in Hollant* (The Hague: Henricus Hondius III, 1655), pfl 7621.

¹⁴² Anonymous, *Lettre d’un suisse protestant*.

¹⁴³ P. Lake, “Anti-popery: The structure of a prejudice,” in R. Cust and A. Hughes (eds.), *Conflict in early Stuart England: Studies in religion and politics, 1603–1642* (London, 1989), pp. 75–76.

¹⁴⁴ C. Kooi, *Calvinists and Catholics during Holland’s Golden Age: Heretics and idolaters* (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 90–129; for a recent study of Catholic culture in the Dutch Republic see C. Lenarduzzi, *Katholiek in de Republiek. De belevingswereld van een religieuze minderheid 1570–1750* (Nijmegen, 2019).

¹⁴⁵ J. W. Spaans, “Violent dreams, peaceful coexistence: On the absence of religious violence in the Dutch Republic,” *De zeventiende eeuw* 18 (2003), pp. 149–166; see also W. T. M. Frijhoff, “De paniek van juni 1734,” *Archief voor de katholieke geschiedenis van Nederland* 19 (1977), pp. 170–233.

public discussion. Since the Dutch authorities were involved and had encouraged public involvement, there was a relatively friendly climate to publicly discussing such issues.

The *Letter from a Protestant* was ambiguous in its observation about Dutch Catholics. The author argued that “they are forced to live among the people of our confession,” which might lead them to indulge in the same sort of cruelties under false pretexts as had happened in Piedmont.¹⁴⁶ However, he deemed it to be unlikely, “because the lies they forged will not damage the truth for the people who are close to these desolate places and have themselves heard it from the mouths of those who saw it.”¹⁴⁷ In other words, the international distribution of news about the event was deemed important not only for the sake of the persecuted in question, but also because of the hazardous consequences that false reports could have for the security of the Dutch Republic. As we have seen earlier in this chapter, the Dutch pro-Savoyard *Manifesto* made a similar point, albeit in defense of the Savoyard court. The argument made in the *Letter from a Protestant* rested on the widely shared idea of Dutch Catholics as misinformed and gullible, but not outright evil. Indeed, the author argued that “the best among the papists [are] ashamed of this barbaric cruelty.”¹⁴⁸

The *Two questionable reasons for the horrible murder of the innocent Waldensians*, an originally Dutch pamphlet which openly opted for the kind of military intervention that Boreel dreaded, argued in a similar fashion. The pamphlet used the Piedmont Easter as a starting point to present a general treatise on the evil of popery and the need to “build an armada of more than a hundred thousand men against this common enemy,” a narrative in which the Waldensians took only a modest place.¹⁴⁹ In the preface, however, the author admonished the reader to be well disposed toward Catholic laymen, in the hope that they would at some point see the light.¹⁵⁰ Foreign popery may have been the main threat to Protestantism, but Catholics could still be won for the true religion.¹⁵¹

In short, we see that in Dutch appropriations, the massacre of the Waldensians became a reference point for discussions that transcended the specificity of the case. News about foreign religious persecutions turned old narratives into present realities. Since the States General was involved and had encouraged popular involvement, it was fairly safe to publicize these issues. In accordance with the idea of the Piedmont Easter as part of a bigger tale about the danger of Catholicism, the Dutch pamphlets were not only more confessionally militant. They also differed from Waldensian pamphlets in the kind of information they

¹⁴⁶ Anonymous, *Brief van een protestant*, p. 5.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ Anonymous, *Twee bedenckelijcke reden, vut oorsaecke van de afgrijslijke moordt der onnosele Waldensen* (s.l.: s.n., 1655), pfl 7636.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ Lake, “Anti-popery,” p. 83.

provided. The Waldensian pamphlets primarily purported to provide facts—in order to maintain their credibility and avoid further accusations of *lèse-majesté*. The Dutch pamphlets, on the other hand, did not contain lengthy legal discussions; the specificities and context of the violence became irrelevant within their religious framing of events. Recontextualizing the Piedmont Easter in a sectarian framework, the Dutch authors left aside the historical, legal, and anecdotal specificities of the massacre. Instead, they told a transcendental truth, urging good Christians to stand up and fight the Catholic threat.

The case of the Waldensians thus became a subchapter in the “master narrative of confessional strife” in Europe.¹⁵² This combination of exhortation and appeals to religious brotherhood is particularly visible in the pamphlet *Ephraim with Judah, which is England with Holland*, written by the orthodox Calvinist minister Jacobus Sceperus from Gouda. As the title suggests, the preacher was mainly concerned with the volatile relationship between England and the Dutch Republic.¹⁵³ He aimed to counter the ideology of the regent regime under Johan de Witt, which had recently come to power in the Dutch Republic. De Witt’s regime pursued a foreign policy based on the principles of reason of state and mercantilism, which fostered a sense of economic rivalry with England.¹⁵⁴ Sceperus instead called for solidarity among the Protestant “tribes” against the ungodly Catholic Church. The fate of the Waldensians was presented as the most recent example in a long list of Catholic bloodletting across Europe.

Interestingly, Sceperus explained why the Savoyards took pains to argue that the Waldensians were not massacred for their religion but for rebellion. In the past, he claimed, they had not held back from persecuting the Waldensians as heretics. However, times had changed. In this century, in which “the inquisition had become so hated and cursed by the world,” one would do better to persecute religious enemies as “mutineers, rebels, and insurgents.”¹⁵⁵ The minister believed that shame now guided Savoy, or at least awe for Europe’s Reformed powers.¹⁵⁶ Indeed, the Habsburgs had similarly changed their policy during the Dutch Revolt in face of the international community:

First, they condemned all the inhabitants of the land to the flames as Beggars and heretics . . . But since this conduct of the Spaniards was horrible in the eyes of many princes and potentates in Europe, the false and evil Duke of Alba

¹⁵² Claydon, *Europe and the making of England*.

¹⁵³ J. Sceperus, *Ephraim met Juda. Dat is Engelant met Hollant* (Amsterdam: Johannes van Ravesteyn, 1655), pft 7635.

¹⁵⁴ G. Rommelse, “Mountains of iron and gold: Mercantilist ideology in Anglo-Dutch relations (1650–1674),” in D. Onnekink and G. Rommelse (eds.), *Ideology and foreign policy in early modern Europe (1650–1750)* (Farnham, 2011), pp. 243–266.

¹⁵⁵ Sceperus, *Ephraim met Juda*, p. 63.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

demanded from the Dutch things to which they could not consent without losing their honor and oath, property and blood.¹⁵⁷

Having contextualized the persecution in this eschatological religious framework, as part of the enduring struggle between the true Reformed churches and the whore of Babylon, Sceperus concluded his treatise with a rhetorical move not found in any of the other pamphlets, namely by making an explicit call:

Wake up all kings, princes, and states in Europe, which profess the true restored religion and want to retain that in your countries... Support each other and unite... because if you will not unify... be assured that stinking holes and prisons will become the houses of your subjects;... murder, burning, hanging, choking, beheading, and drowning of fellow citizens will be the daily... spectacle.¹⁵⁸

We thus see that publicity for the persecution of the Waldensians had a remarkable dynamic. In their bookshops Dutch people could buy the printed disputes between a faraway prince and his subjects. To address their international readership, both these parties appealed to confessionally neutral political norms. But Dutch pamphleteers, who did not depend on Catholic goodwill, had no qualms about reconsecrating the conflict and promptly used the massacre to discuss domestic issues about religion and politics.

The Limits of Humanitarian Engagement

The limits of seventeenth-century humanitarianism become even more salient in the persecutions that Dutch Protestants failed to engage with. Most churchgoers who donated money for the Waldensians during the Republic's first national fundraising campaign in September 1655 were probably oblivious to the fact that their Jewish neighbors had been quietly raising money for the survivors of a string of pogroms that had plagued the war-torn Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth since 1648.¹⁵⁹ The human costs of these persecutions made the Piedmont Easter pale by comparison.¹⁶⁰ Still, the pogroms received hardly any international coverage from Christian printers. Although European news media provided ample reports about the wars in Poland-Lithuania, the fate of the Jews was not singled out. Copying Swedish propaganda, newspapers instead elaborated upon the horrors inflicted on Protestants by Polish forces.¹⁶¹ The few newspaper

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 63. ¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 65.

¹⁵⁹ See Y. Kaplan, "Amsterdam and Ashkenazic migration in the seventeenth century," *Studia Rosenthaliana* 23 (1989), pp. 22–44.

¹⁶⁰ Teller, *Rescue the surviving souls*, p. 48.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. 164.

reports that pointed specifically to violence against the Ashkenazim presented it as well-deserved.¹⁶²

The meager public attention to the fate of the Ashkenazi Jews was not due to a lack of accessible information. In Amsterdam, by now a main printing center of Jewish literature, Sephardic printers had published several accounts of the persecutions in Hebrew.¹⁶³ Accounts published in Venice also circulated in Amsterdam.¹⁶⁴ Yet these works were not translated into Dutch, French, or any other language suitable for the vast majority of Christian readers that did not read Hebrew.¹⁶⁵

This lack of attention can partly be explained by the fact that the persecuted themselves were largely responsible for paving the road to publicity, as we have seen throughout this chapter. There is no evidence that the persecuted Ashkenazim or their Sephardic saviors actively tried to mobilize their Christian neighbors or the Dutch authorities for their cause. In fact, many early modern Jews believed that their laws forbade them from accepting charity from non-Jews.¹⁶⁶ Still, this strict segregation of charity is striking if we consider that the graphic accounts of rape, infanticide, and cannibalism that circulated in Jewish communities throughout Europe were quite similar to the ones penned by the Waldensians.¹⁶⁷ The rejection of persecution on the basis of shared humanity could, in principle, have been applied just as easily to Lithuania's Jews as it had been to the Waldensians. But no printer made the translation.

It is difficult to assess whether a Jewish effort to appeal to Christians would have been successful. The Jewish community in Amsterdam knew better than to draw public attention to them by employing the non-Hebrew press, which is telling in and of itself. Yet some evidence suggests that it would not have been completely futile. In 1655, the Polish Jew Nathan Shapira had arrived in Amsterdam on a mission to raise funds for Jews in the Holy Land who had been struck by famine. Shapira failed to convince the Sephardic *ma'amad* (council of elders) to donate. But during his visit, he was approached by a group of millenarian Protestants, who believed that the conversion of the Jews would herald the Second Coming. Moved by Shapira's story about the predicament of the Jews in the Holy Land, they raised 395 ducats for them.¹⁶⁸ Interestingly, the millenarians' decision to support the

¹⁶² J. Raba, *Between remembrance and denial: The fate of the Jews in the wars of the Polish Commonwealth during the mid-seventeenth century as shown in contemporary writings and historical research* (New York, NY, 1995), p. 166.

¹⁶³ A. Polonsky, *The Jews in Poland and Russia*, vol. 1: 1350–1881 (Liverpool, 2009), p. 128.

¹⁶⁴ A. Teller, "A portrait in ambivalence: The case of Nathan Hannover and his chronicle, *Yeven Metsulah*," in A. Glaser (ed.), *Stories of Khmelnytsky: Competing literary legacies of the 1648 Ukrainian Cossack uprising* (Stanford, CA, 2015), p. 24; M. Heller, *The seventeenth century Hebrew book*, vol. 2 (Leiden and Boston, MA, 2011), p. 735.

¹⁶⁵ After a translation into Yiddish, the first major European language in which the most influential chronicle was published was in German in 1720; S. Schechter and M. Seligsohn, "Hannover, Nathan (Nata) Ben Moses," in *The Jewish encyclopedia* (New York, NY, 1906), pp. 220–221.

¹⁶⁶ Teller, *Rescue the surviving souls*, pp. 170–173.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

Jews was guided by a strong sense of confessional superiority, which was also the exact reason why many Jews believed they should not take charity from Christians. This exception aside, at least in one direction the world of long-distance compassion remained firmly segregated. But the kind of confessionally neutral condemnations of persecution with recourse to law and humanity used by the Waldensians would open up a path for Dutch Jews, Anabaptists, and Catholics to chip in during fundraisers for persecuted Protestants, as will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Conclusion

The case of the Waldensians shows that print could be a powerful weapon of the weak in Europe's polarized religious landscape, but it was not an easy game to play. Although the parameters of sovereignty were contested, it was a norm taken very seriously by all sides in the conflict—persecuted, persecutor, and intercessor. Religious brotherhood was not enough to ensure political solidarity. The persecuted also had to convince foreign authorities that they respected their ruler's sovereignty. In order not to be accused of rebellion and lose international sympathy, persecuted minorities had to draw attention to their cause without giving the impression that they were pleading with foreign governments for help. Disseminating public reports about one's fate to a general international audience served as an effective way to encourage foreign authorities to act on one's behalf while circumventing this political problem. Moreover, by turning to the printing press the Waldensians created a space of international observance, indirectly compelling the Savoyard authorities to internationally account for their deeds.

Depending on the goodwill of both Protestant and Catholic powers in a confessionally tense political landscape, the Reformed refugees could not simply appeal to religious solidarity. They could, however, advocate for transconfessional support as victims of religious persecution, which required them to frame the massacre as illegal and inhumane. Aiming for the widest possible denunciation of the massacre, they foregrounded human rather than religious suffering. The interesting dynamic of this public battle for hearts and minds was that the persecuting party was pushed to follow suit, with the rule of law and humanity as the commonly agreed rules of play. This did not mean, however, that people of all confessional stripes could play this game. Not all those engaged in the humanitarian relief of faraway victims had equal access to the public sphere of the United Provinces. Moreover, much of the momentum depended on the Dutch giving a domestic spin to the story, connecting faraway politics with local hopes and fears.

2

A Silent Persecution

In 1655 few people would have expected that Louis XIV, having provided food and shelter to displaced Protestant minorities in his realm and negotiating a peace for them with the Duke of Savoy, would go down in history as an intolerant king.¹ From the 1660s onwards, however, the Huguenots faced new restrictions on the rights, among others, to gather, communicate between congregations, and contract mixed marriages.² From the late 1670s a stricter interpretation of the Edict of Nantes (1598) was reinforced with the actual stripping away of rights and privileges and active persecutions. In 1681, the Huguenots of Poitou were the first to be subjected to a *dragonnade*, in which billeted soldiers were ordered to harass their hosts into conversion.³ In the following years, Protestants in different parts of the realm would suffer a similar fate.

Compared to the Waldensians in the 1650s, one would expect that the persecution of the Huguenots would by all accounts garner more publicity in the United Provinces. The Huguenots were in much greater numbers, many of them lived in well-connected mercantile cities, and, overall, there were much tighter channels of economic, political, religious, and private communication between France and the Republic. But even as circumstances became increasingly dire in France in the early 1680s and the Republic began to welcome the first groups of exiles, there was remarkably limited public attention for the persecution of the early 1680s.

Investigating Huguenot advocacy in the years preceding the prohibition of Protestantism, this chapter asks why this was the case. It identifies two important conditions for a religious persecution to become a *cause célèbre*. First, publicity strongly depended on whether the victims themselves regarded international attention as desirable to attain their political ends. Second, despite little enforced censorship, publicity nevertheless depended on the tacit approval or stimulation of the Dutch authorities. As we shall see, news about the Huguenots led to conflicting humanitarian responses between different church and worldly

¹ Willem Boreel to Johan de Witt, June 10, 1655, in *Lettres et negociations*, vol. 1, pp. 328–329; for France's policy toward the Waldensians see Laurenti, *Confini della comunità*, pp. 204–206.

² D. Garrioch, *The Huguenots of Paris and the coming of religious freedom* (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 25–26.

³ L. L. Bernard, "Foucault, Louvois, and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes," *Church History* 25.1 (1956), p. 33; the term *dragonnade* was coined by Pierre Jurieu; L. Panhuysen, *Oranje tegen de Zonnekoning. De strijd van Willem III en Lodewijk XIV om Europa* (Amsterdam and Antwerp, 2016), p. 285.

authorities in the United Provinces, which had an effect on the role publicity played within the negotiation of this conflict. The chapter then discusses how the refugee pastor Pierre Jurieu tried to break the relative silence surrounding the persecution of the Huguenots by employing the printing presses in The Hague, anticipating a period of fierce printed opposition to the policies of the Sun King.

Unconditional Loyalty

Historians have long recognized the cultural impact of Huguenot refugees on their host societies.⁴ Many exiles took up the pen to turn the memory of displacement into a shared experience. By recounting their stories of persecution and flight, they nurtured their (religious) identity and gave shape to a new exile community.⁵ As David van der Linden remarks, if in the late seventeenth century you were looking for enthralling adventure stories you would do best to go to a Huguenot exile.⁶ This raises the question of whether many people were looking for such a story, and whether or how refugees were willing to share them with their hosts. In fact, the communication between the newcomers and their hosts appears to have been rather minimal.

Abraham Casteleyn's popular news digest *Hollandse Mercurius*, which summarized the main news stories of the preceding year, offers an interesting first glimpse. One can imagine that many of the refugees arriving in the United Provinces must have been curious about how their recent predicament had been covered in the foreign press. To get a more or less coherent view of news about the persecutions in the preceding year, the *Hollandse Mercurius* would have been an obvious work to turn to, especially since it was also available in French at that time.⁷

Contrary to what we might expect, however, buyers could read strikingly little about the persecutions in France. In the 1681 edition—the year of the first dragonnades—they could read that the French clergy had begun a campaign to

⁴ See Chapter 3.

⁵ Van der Linden, *Experiencing exile*; C. Lougee Chappell, *Facing the revocation: Huguenot families, faith, and the king's will* (Oxford, 2017); R. Whelan, "Writing the self: Huguenot autobiography and the process of assimilation," in R. Vigne and C. Littleton (eds.), *From strangers to citizens: The integration of immigrant communities in Britain, Ireland and Colonial America, 1550–1750* (Brighton, 2001), pp. 80–121; D. A. Watts, "Testimonies of persecution: Four Huguenot refugees and their memoirs," in J. H. Fox (ed.), *Studies in eighteenth-century French literature: Presented to Robert Niklaus* (Exeter, 1975), pp. 319–322.

⁶ Van der Linden, *Experiencing exile*, p. 163.

⁷ Abraham Casteleyn had taken over the news digest after the death of his brother in 1677; G. Verhoeven and S. van der Veen, *De Hollandse Mercurius. Een Haarlems jaarboek uit de zeventiende eeuw* (Haarlem, 2011), p. 69; H. Bots and J. Sgard, "Le Mercure Hollandais (1672–1684)," in *Dictionnaire des journaux 1600–1789* (2015), <http://dictionnaire-journaux.gazettes18e.fr/journal/0944-le-mercure-hollandais>; Verhoeven and Van der Veen, *Hollandse Mercurius*, p. 60.

convert the realm's Protestants to the Catholic religion; the author dryly remarked that a new law which allowed seven-year-olds to convert might "be judged as violent by some";⁸ he overestimated that up to 100,000 people had fled the country to prevent their children from being taken away. He also provided transcriptions of official announcements made by Charles II of England and the Duke of Ormond, viceroy of Ireland, inviting all refugees to settle in their lands.⁹ Only in the 1683 edition, two years after the first dragonnade, did the *Hollandse Mercurius* first elaborate on the violence committed against the Huguenots.¹⁰ One year later, the news digest sketched a bleak picture:

From France, where the light of the Reformation once broke through so clearly, one hear[s] of nothing but the thick, dark mist of oppression, forged by the Roman clergy, church after church is closed and reduced to rubble upon the least pretense, preachers are trampled upon and chased away, the Reformed thwarted from leaving the country and forced, with or without their minds, to become members of the Roman Church: And this so far that the small remnant of this religion, if God does not hinder it, will soon be fully annihilated.¹¹

Still, the *Hollandse Mercurius*' description was as ominous as it was opaque. Readers learned few details about the actual violence that had been suffered. They would search in vain for a more elaborate discussion on Louis' restrictive policies, the respective responsibility of court and clergy, or the response of the Huguenots. Indeed, the two sentences quoted above were the only ones devoted to the fate of the Reformed in 1684, the year in which a wave of dragonnades, beginning in Béarn, washed over the realm, heralding the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in October 1685.¹²

Dutch newspapers, in which news from France usually took up a considerable amount of space, were also remarkably reserved about the persecutions, and offered an explanation. Jean Alexandre de la Font (?–1685), editor of the *Nouvelles extraordinaires de divers endroits*—the popular French-language

⁸ A. Casteleyn, *Hollandse Mercurius, Verhalende de voornaemste saken van staet en andere voorvallen, die in en omtrent de Vereenigde Nederlanden en elders in Europa in het Jaer 1681 zijn geschiet* (Haarlem: Abraham Casteleyn, 1682), p. 146.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 148–153. The Irish government had been sending agents to France since the 1660s to persuade Huguenots to settle on the island and increase the number of Protestants; Lachenicht, "Differing perceptions of the refuge?," p. 43.

¹⁰ A. Casteleyn, *Hollandse Mercurius, Verhalende de Voornaemste Saken van Staet en andere Voorvallen, die in en omtrent de Vereenigde Nederlanden en elders in Europa in het Jaer 1683 zijn geschiet* (Haarlem: Abraham Casteleyn, 1684), pp. 193–194.

¹¹ A. Casteleyn, *Hollandse Mercurius, Verhalende de Voornaemste Saken van Staet en andere Voorvallen, die in en omtrent de Vereenigde Nederlanden en elders in Europa in het Jaer 1684 zijn geschiet* (Haarlem: Abraham Casteleyn, 1685), pp. 276–277.

¹² R. McCullough, *Coercion, conversion and counterinsurgency in Louis XIV's France* (Leiden and Boston, MA, 2007), p. 141.

newspaper that was later rebaptized as *Gazette de Leyde*—shared the dilemma with the reader. He argued that all sensible Protestants in France pointed to the dangers of exaggerating the persecutions. Only those already living in exile in the United Provinces thought differently.¹³ The gazetteer concluded that it was best to think of the public good and listen to those on the ground.¹⁴

This hesitation fitted with local strategies to make the persecutions stop. Even as the dragonnades swept through France, Huguenots were petitioning the king to find their way back into his favor and persuade him to reverse his policies.¹⁵ Their strategy to redeem their sovereign's grace was based almost entirely on an argument of absolute loyalty. An international publicity campaign to put external pressure on the Sun King would undercut this argument. Moreover, most refugees hoped that one day, Louis XIV or his successor would reverse his policy and let the exiles return home. Causing international unrest and giving rise to religious antagonism by publicizing one's predicament would not help that wish to come true.

The Divided Provinces

That the first dragonnades remained largely undiscussed in the Dutch press cannot be understood in terms of Huguenot restraint alone. This becomes clear if we briefly shift focus to the British Isles in the early 1680s. In England the Huguenot persecutions already gave rise to fierce polemic in 1681. Refugees and news about the persecutions crossed the Channel at a moment of particular religious and political unrest caused by the Popish Plot and the ensuing anti-Catholic hysteria. Whigs and Tories were at each other's throats over the impending succession of a Catholic to the throne, and tensions with the English Dissenters—Protestants who refused to conform to the Anglican Church—had flared up.

News about the persecutions and the influx of refugees was therefore largely hijacked by domestic polemic: Charles II welcomed the Huguenots to present himself as a good Protestant monarch; Tories used the willingness of refugees to become Anglicans to accuse the Dissenters; Whigs elaborated on the gruesome

¹³ Pierre Bayle would come to praise this newspaper as responsible for the enduring good reputation of French newspapers from the Dutch Republic; P. Rétat, *La Gazette d'Amsterdam. Miroir de l'Europe au XVIII^e siècle* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 31–42; J. Sgard, "Jean de la Font (?–1685)," in A.-M. Mercier-Faivre and D. Reynaud (eds.), *Dictionnaire des Journalistes (1600–1789)* (2005), <https://dictionnaire-journalistes.gazettes18e.fr/journaliste/442-jean-de-la-font>.

¹⁴ H. Bots, "L'écho de la Révocation dans les Provinces-Unies à travers les gazettes et les pamphlets," in R. Zuber and L. Theis (eds.), *La Révocation de l'Édit de Nantes et le protestantisme français en 1685* (Paris, 1986), p. 290.

¹⁵ J. Garrison, *L'Édit de Nantes et sa révocation. Histoire d'une intolérance* (Paris, 2014); J. M. Hintermaier, "The first modern refugees? Charity, entitlement, and persuasion in the Huguenot immigration of the 1680s," *Albion* 32.3 (2000), p. 439.

fate of the Huguenots to foment public opinion against Catholics and prove that preventing James II from ever taking the throne was a matter of life and death; other anonymous—perhaps Tory—voices tried to depict the persecutions as a scam and accused the refugees of being crypto-Catholics or Dissenters who would ruin the kingdom's trade and peace.¹⁶ Very few pamphlets actually spoke or purported to speak with the voice of the persecuted themselves. At least in England, the appropriation of news for domestic discourse did not entirely depend on the initiative of the persecuted.

The political situation in the Dutch Republic, while also tense, had a different effect. Rather than fueling the debate, it obstructed humanitarian advocacy through pamphlets. Renewed persecution of the Huguenots began during peacetime. With the 1678–1679 Treaties of Nijmegen, France had brought eight years of warfare with the Dutch Republic, Spain, and the Holy Roman Empire to a successful conclusion.¹⁷ Louis XIV could now shift his attention inward and use the remainder of his largely disbanded army to missionize his own subjects.¹⁸ An extra advantage of the peace was that the former Dutch enemy, still licking its wounds, was hesitant to intercede in France's domestic policy and risk renewed hostilities.

The Peace of Nijmegen had left the Dutch political landscape deeply divided. At one end of the spectrum was the States faction, which—to Stadtholder William III's dismay—had managed to independently reach peace with France in 1678, dissolving the anti-French alliance with, among others, Spain and the Holy Roman Empire.¹⁹ The core of this loose faction, which had inherited many of the mercantile sentiments of the overthrown de Witt regime (1650–1672), was Amsterdam, supported by Leiden and several other cities in Holland.²⁰ They found allies in the States of Friesland and Groningen, whose autonomy was enhanced by having their own stadtholder, Henry Casimir II, Prince of Nassau-Dietz (1664–1696), who was not on friendly terms with his cousin William III of

¹⁶ A. Dunan-Page, "La dragonnade du Poitou et l'exil des huguenots dans la littérature de controverse anglaise," *Moreana, Association Amici Thomae Mori* 171.2 (2007), pp. 86–121; B. J. Cottret, *The Huguenots in England: Immigration and settlement c. 1550–1700*, trans. P. Stevenson and A. Stevenson (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 187–194; S. Lachenicht, *Hugenotten in Europa und Nordamerika. Migration und Integration in der frühen Neuzeit* (Frankfurt am Main, 2010), pp. 242–246.

¹⁷ C. J. Nolan, *Wars of the age of Louis XIV, 1650–1715: An encyclopedia of global warfare and civilization* (Westport, CT and London, 2008), pp. 128–129.

¹⁸ W. Troost, *William III, the stadholder-king: A political biography* (Farnham, 2005), p. 153.

¹⁹ S. Groenveld, "William III as stadholder: Prince or minister?," in E. Mijers and D. Onnekink (eds.), *Redefining William III: The impact of the king-stadholder in international context* (Abingdon, 2007), p. 29; E. Edwards, "Amsterdam and the ambassadors of Louis XIV 1674–85," in T. Claydon and C.-É. Levillain (eds.), *Louis XIV outside in: Images of the Sun King beyond France, 1661–1715* (Farnham, 2015), p. 197.

²⁰ J. I. Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its rise, greatness, and fall, 1477–1806* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 825–826.

Orange, stadtholder of the other five United Provinces.²¹ Adherents of the States faction could also be found in the States of Utrecht, Zeeland, and Overijssel.²² The Dutch Republic was still recuperating from the severe economic blow caused by the last war. Fear of another French invasion, which had upended the Dutch Republic in 1672, loomed large.²³ Many regents therefore hoped to establish, if not an alliance, at least a lasting peace with France.

On the opposite end stood Stadtholder William III and his allies—prime among them Grand Pensionary of Holland Gaspar Fagel (1634–1688).²⁴ Being first and foremost a military leader, the stadtholder's power had dwindled since the Peace of Nijmegen. The costly war had taken a heavy toll on the prince's reputation among Dutch citizens, who had come to the sobering realization that their Republic's economy was in decline.²⁵ Many of the civic and provincial officeholders from within his clientele were disliked, a feeling which was worsened by the widespread corruption among their ranks.²⁶ Between these opposite factions lay numerous cities—and hence provinces—with fluctuating allegiances. Despite these deep divisions, which also cut sharp lines between the States of Holland and the States General, the dominant sentiment tended toward keeping cordial relations with the French. In the years following the Peace of Nijmegen the prince thus used what was left of his political capital to sway civic and provincial authorities to his side and establish a defensive alliance with England against the presumed expansionism of his lifelong adversary Louis XIV.

When news about the persecution of the Huguenots began to reach the Dutch Republic, calls for religious solidarity and humanitarian engagement soon began to conflict with the prevailing sentiment of war-weariness, giving rise to new frictions between provincial church authorities and the individual provinces. Between 1679 and 1685 different church consistories repeatedly urged the secular authorities to respond to the predicament of their French brethren in the faith. Yet they found themselves fighting an uphill battle against arguments of political prudence. Frisian church leaders were the first to discuss the persecution of the Huguenots during a 1679 provincial synod. Church delegates of Dokkum voiced the recurrent argument that given the situation in France and England, where the Popish Plot had caused great public disquiet, existing placards against Dutch

²¹ J. W. van Sypesteijn, *Geschiedkundige bijdragen. Derde aflevering. Eenige gebeurtenissen gedurende het leven van Prins Hendrik Casimir II van Nassau (1664–1696)* (The Hague, 1865), pp. 9–19.

²² Groenveld, "William III as stadholder," p. 30.

²³ For the French invasion of 1672 see O. van Nimwegen, *De Veertigjarige Oorlog 1672–1712* (Amsterdam, 2020); L. Panhuysen, *Rampjaar 1672. Hoe de Republiek aan de ondergang ontsnapte* (Amsterdam, 2009).

²⁴ J. H. Grever, "The structure of decision-making in the States-General of the Dutch Republic, 1660–1668," *Parliaments, Estates, and Representation* 2.2 (1982), pp. 125–153.

²⁵ S. B. Baxter, *William III* (London, 1966), p. 178.

²⁶ Israel, *Dutch Republic*, pp. 826–827.

Catholics should be executed with renewed rigor.²⁷ The synod agreed to bring the request to the States of Friesland, but decided—probably taking into account the States' sympathy toward France—that it would be wise if the oppression of the Huguenot churches was not mentioned.²⁸ Advocacy for religious issues was fine, but it should not spill over into international politics.

At the Walloon Synod in Breda and the Synod of Utrecht, both held in 1680, plans to set up provincial funds for incoming French refugees also faltered over the hesitation of the authorities; the President of the States of Utrecht, Everhard van Weede van Dijkveld, declared himself sympathetic to the idea, but ultimately decided against it, arguing that the States General would fear Louis XIV's reaction.²⁹ Instead, he suggested that individual magistrates were at liberty to set up secret funds, provided that they refrained from any publicity.³⁰ The Dutch were free to offer humanitarian support, but the authorities discouraged using print to gain momentum. One year later, in 1681, provincial authorities first began to pursue an integration policy, offering tax exemptions and citizenship to Huguenots who would settle in their provinces. Civic governments quickly followed, competing for refugees by promising their own advantageous conditions for settlement.³¹ These invitations were media events only in so far as they were advertised in Dutch Francophone newspapers, which they knew were illegally read in France.³²

In the meantime, the fate of the Huguenots was widely discussed through another public medium: the pulpit. Every Sunday, ministers throughout the United Provinces were preaching against France to their congregations, many of them undoubtedly encouraged by the prince's favorites. In 1680, the States of Zeeland felt compelled to publish a missive directed at their four provincial *classes*, the regional church assemblies which were largely responsible for the everyday administration of the Reformed Church in the Dutch Republic.³³ The missive forbade ministers to preach in favor of an alliance with either France or England

²⁷ Similar arguments were made in response to the persecution of the Waldensians in 1655, the persecution of the Huguenots after 1685, and the Tumult of Toruń. See Chapters 1, 3, and 5. It is unlikely that this appeal was influenced by William III, who had always been a supporter of religious toleration, Catholics included; T. Claydon, "Protestantism, universal monarchy and Christendom in William's war propaganda, 1689–1697," in Mijers and Onnekink (eds.), *Redefining William III*, p. 127.

²⁸ F. R. J. Knetsch, "Les églises réformées des Pays-Bas et la Revocation," in M. Peronnet (ed.), *Tricentenaire de la Revocation de l'Edit de Nantes. La Revocation et l'exterieur du royaume. Actes du IVème Colloque Jean Boisset* (Montpellier, 1985), p. 178.

²⁹ Van Weede van Dijkveld had been one of the negotiators of the Peace of Nijmegen; O. van Nimwegen, *The Dutch army and the military revolutions, 1588–1688* (Woodbridge, 2010), pp. 508–510; Knetsch, "Eglises réformées," pp. 181–182.

³⁰ Knetsch, "Eglises réformées," p. 182.

³¹ W. Frijhoff, "Uncertain brotherhood: The Huguenots in the Dutch Republic," in B. Van Ruyambeke and R. J. Sparks (eds.), *Memory and identity: The Huguenots in France and the Atlantic diaspora* (Columbia, SC, 2008), pp. 143–146.

³² See van der Linden, *Experiencing exile*, p. 47.

³³ G. Groenhuis, *De predikanten. De sociale positie van de gereformeerde predikanten in de Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden voor ± 1700* (Groningen, 1977), pp. 22–23.

by referring to the 1672 massacres at Bodegraven and Zwammerdam—which had been canonized as low points of French cruelty by Romeyn de Hooghe, Govard Bidloo, and other masters of affective print.³⁴

With regard to the printing press, the church authorities appear to have been compliant, and did not try to stir up public opinion against the will of the authorities through print; there is no evidence of any pamphlets calling for fundraisers or restrictions on the liberties of Catholics in the first half of the 1680s. Indeed, it would not have been a logical first move; not only did the ministers depend on the authorities' goodwill to achieve any of their objectives, they also received their salaries from the authorities. Moreover, many considered that preaching from the pulpit was an effective way to shape public opinion. The fiercely Orangist minister Jacobus Stermont had tellingly argued in a pamphlet in 1650, a year also marked by heavy factional strife, that "one should know that one [man] preaching from the pulpit could do more harm than one hundred pamphlets."³⁵ It may well be true that sermons—which, as oral communication, are irretrievable—were more powerful than pamphlets in shaping Dutch (Reformed) public opinion. They were, however, also more contained in time and place than pamphlets, and therefore less politically sensitive on an international level.

Indeed, some prominent advocates of an anti-French policy were cautious in their response to the persecution of the Huguenots and therefore favored the use of sermons to shape public opinion. Fagel's posture is a case in point. In 1682 and 1683 the Grand Pensionary took the exact opposite stance to the States of Zeeland. According to Claudes de Mesmes, Count of Avaux, the French ambassador to The Hague, Fagel instructed all preachers in Holland to elaborate in their sermons on the persecution of the Huguenots in France, compare it to the 1672 invasion, and insist that everything should be done to prevent it from happening again.³⁶ One year later, in late 1684 the synod of the francophone Walloon Churches—consisting of descendants of the Walloon Reformed who had fled the Southern Netherlands in the late sixteenth century—sent a delegation to the Grand Pensionary with a request to have the States General intercede with the French

³⁴ Anonymous, *Missive van de heeren Staten van Zeelandt, gesonden aan het Classis van Zeeland* (Zierikzee: s.n., 1680); R. de Hooghe and G. Bidloo, *De France wreetheyt, tot Bodegrave en Swammerdam* (Amsterdam?: s.n., 1673), <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.358818>; see Haks, *Vaderland en vrede*, pp. 21–57.

³⁵ Anonymous [Jacobus Stermont], *Lauweren-krans gevlochten voor syn hoocheyt Wilhelm, de heer Prince van Oranjen, &c. over sijne eeuwig roembaere handelinghe, gepleegt tot ruste deser vereenigde lantschappen, in 't jaer 1650. In 'tsamen-spraecke, tusschen een Amsterdammer/ende Leyenaer/om-verre werpende de gronden vande Hollantsen praeter, ontstelden Amsterdammer ende diergelijcke* (s.l.: s.n., 1650), pfl. 6851; for more information on Stermont see P. C. Molhuysen and P. J. Blok (eds.), *Nieuw Nederlandsch Biografisch Woordenboek*, vol. 10 (Leiden, 1937), pp. 973–975.

³⁶ Claude de Mesmes, Count of Avaux, in L. Durand and N.-J. Pissot (eds.), *Négociations de Monsieur le Comte d'Avaux en Hollande, depuis 1685, jusqu'en 1688*, vol. 1 (Paris: Durand and Pissot, 1752), pp. 263–264; for the Walloon Churches see Frijhoff, "Uncertain brotherhood."

government in favor of the Huguenots and to establish funds for exiled pastors.³⁷ This time, Fagel replied that news of foreign relief initiatives could prove dangerous for the remaining Huguenots in France.³⁸ Furthermore, he believed that an intervention would in no way help the persecuted, since the United Provinces lacked authority and prestige and did not have a good relationship with Louis XIV. He argued that an intervention would make more sense if other princes took the initiative and a concerted effort was organized.³⁹ In other words, Fagel wanted all talk and no action, but why?

It is unclear whether the Grand Pensionary truly had the interests of the remaining Huguenots at heart, or mainly tried to gather public support before confronting France—which would explain his sympathy for sermons but hesitation to intervene. Considering how people justify their actions to themselves, it was probably a little of both. Ultimately, he gave the Walloons his permission to advocate their cause with the States of Holland, probably to use the fate of the Huguenots as ammunition in the debate with the province's States faction leaning cities.⁴⁰ With Fagel's blessing the consistories' deputies drew up a "vigorous and moving" request, providing a detailed description of the persecution, the dragonnades, and a list of sixteen Huguenot pastors who had been condemned to death. It invoked Bern, which had set up a fund of 100,000 guilders for the aid of exiled pastors, as a good example. To their disappointment, the States of Holland, who found the request an embarrassment, did nothing.⁴¹

To some extent, the religious and worldly authorities' caution toward publicity reflected official policy (both within the Orangist and States factions). In 1651 the States General had for the first time issued a placard prohibiting publications which insulted foreign princes. This ordinance was occasionally renewed and it was not a dead letter.⁴² In 1679 Ambassador Avaux had issued a complaint about the *Gazette d'Amsterdam*, which had published extracts of an anti-Gallican pamphlet that was forbidden in France. In response, the States of Holland forbade the production of all newspapers in French.⁴³ Similar prohibitions were issued by several urban authorities in the following years, yet some French newspapers continued to be published more or less secretly.⁴⁴ In 1681 the predominantly States faction leaning States of Holland published yet another placard—and renewed it in 1684—forbidding any publications about foreign rulers without revealing the true name of the publisher.⁴⁵

³⁷ Knetsch, "Eglises réformées," p. 185. ³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 184. ³⁹ *Ibid.* ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 186. ⁴² Weekhout, *Boekencensuur in de Noordelijke Nederlanden*, p. 51.

⁴³ Rétat, *La Gazette d'Amsterdam*, pp. 19–20; the States of Holland recurrently prohibited the publication of newspapers in French between 1673 and 1688 in an effort to appease Louis XIV; Baakman and van Groesen, "Kranten in de Gouden Eeuw," p. 43.

⁴⁴ Rétat, *La Gazette d'Amsterdam*, p. 21. Unfortunately, few clandestine newspapers from this period have survived.

⁴⁵ S. van Beaumont, *Placaet van de Staten van Hollandt ende West-Vrieslandt, verbiendende het drucken van eenigerhande schandaleuse of fameuse libellen, 't zy met of sonder naem van den Drucker, &c. In date den achtentwintighsten November 1681*, in C. Cau (ed.), *Groot Placaet-Boeck Vervattende de*

In October 1685, weeks before the Revocation, and with a significant number of refugees arriving in the Dutch Republic, the States of Zeeland proposed the States General look for a way to “move the heart of his royal majesty of France” and asked them to declare a day of public prayer.⁴⁶ On October 12, the States of Holland agreed to the latter proposal, but seconded Fagel’s judgment that an intercession would be harmful.⁴⁷ Ten days later the Reformed religion was prohibited in France, and the States General had done nothing to prevent it.

(In)convenient News

For William III and his supporters, the news about France’s religious policies was quite convenient. The persecutions served as proof that France was a morally perverse state and the stadtholder did not shy away from using this to his political advantage. In April 1680, the stadtholder’s cousin and his Zeeland deputy Willem Adriaan van Nassau, Lord of Odijk, had the honor of serving as the weekly president of the States General.⁴⁸ He took the opportunity to present the delegates with a royal placard from February 20, 1680, which prohibited the delivery of children by Huguenot midwives, and used it to accuse delegates adhering to the States faction:⁴⁹

Behold, gentlemen, how the King of France treats those of our religion. He wants to abolish it, and while the King of England puts himself in danger to maintain it, there are people here who want us to unite with France.⁵⁰

Yet William III too had to be careful. As prince and stadtholder he had great prestige and power as well as an extensive patronage network in different corners of the political landscape, including the States General.⁵¹ But despite all this, the stadtholderate remained an office in service of the provincial states. As

Placaten, Ordonnantien ende Edicten van de Hoogh Mogende Heeren Staten Generaerl der Vereenighde Nederlanden ende van de Ed. Groot Mog. Heeren Staten van Hollandt ende West-Vrieslandt, mitsgaders van de Ed. Mog. Heeren Staten van Zeelandt, vol. 3 (The Hague: Jacobus Scheltus, 1683), p. 1415.

⁴⁶ Knetsch, “Eglises réformées,” p. 187.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ See Introduction.

⁴⁹ Avaux, *Négociations de Monsieur le Comte d’Avaux*, vol. 1, pp. 94–95; C. Martin, *Les compagnies de la propagation de la foi (1632–1685)*. Paris, Grenoble, Aix, Lyon, Montpellier. *Etude d’un réseau d’associations fondé en France au temps de Louis XIII pour lutter contre l’hérésie des origins à la Révocation de l’Edit de Nantes* (Geneva, 2000), p. 474; G. Robert, “La Révocation de l’Edit de Nantes et la dispersion des professionnels de santé hors de France,” *Histoire des sciences médicales* 39.4 (2005), p. 415.

⁵⁰ Avaux, *Négociations de Monsieur le Comte d’Avaux*, vol. 1, p. 95. It is important to note that Avaux started writing his memoirs after 1684; Edwards, “Amsterdam and the ambassadors,” p. 201.

⁵¹ See Groenveld, “William III as stadholder”; D. J. Roorda, “William III and the Utrecht ‘government-regulation’: Background, events, and problems,” *The Low Countries History Yearbook* 12 (1979), pp. 85–109.

stadtholder, he was the commander-in-chief of the army, but the individual provincial assemblies and the States General remained his official superiors.⁵²

The prince's political power was thus informal and depended on persuading state assemblies of his cause rather than overpowering them. The Prince of Orange and his opponents knew that they ultimately had to accommodate and compromise over their conflicting interests.⁵³ Neither party would be served in letting the conflict escalate. In that respect, unleashing a full-blown propaganda war defaming Louis XIV flew in the face of the censorship policies of the States General and the States of Holland, and would probably do more harm than good. Moreover, as we have just seen, it appears that William III did not feel ready to confront Louis XIV with defamatory printed propaganda quite yet.

Copies of official documents and royal placards—such as the one against midwives—offered a useful alternative. Several Dutch translations of official documents were published, usually by printers who chose to hide behind anonymity. One was a Huguenot request from 1680, offered to the king, imploring him to reverse his anti-Huguenot policies.⁵⁴ A translated request from August 1681 by delegates from Poitou to the French king was probably the first published testimony from which the Dutch learned about the dragonnades.⁵⁵ Two months before, on June 17, 1681, Louis XIV's declaration that allowed all children from the age of seven to convert was also translated and printed in the United Provinces.⁵⁶ In all likelihood, such publications were commissioned by stakeholders from within the prince's circle in order to influence public opinion, and, in doing so, local and provincial authorities. William III used the French occupation of the Occitan city of Orange in August, over which he ruled as prince, in a similar way. Two weeks after the occupation, deputies of the stadtholder sent a number of testimonies to the States General, drawn up by members of the principality's representative assembly, describing how the dragoons

⁵² Groenveld, "William III as stadholder," p. 18.

⁵³ Edwards, "Amsterdam and the ambassadors," p. 194.

⁵⁴ Anonymous, *Request aen den koningh, by die van de gereformeerde religie in Vranckryck* (s.l.: s.n., 1680), pfl 12287.

⁵⁵ Anonymous, *Coppe van 't request gepresenteert aen den koning, door de gedeputeerde van de gereformeerde kerken van de provincie van Poitou, in de maent augusto, 1681, waer inne in 't kort te sien is een waer en oprecht verhael der ongehoorde overlasten en geweldnarigen, diemen tegens haer in 't werck stelt, om haer daer door te dwingen van Godt dienst te veranderen* (s.l.: s.n., 1681).

⁵⁶ Anonymous, *Declaratie des koninghs, concernerende sijne onderdanen van de gereformeerde religie. Gegeven tot Versailles den 17. Juny 1681 en geregistreert in 't parlement den 8 july aenvolgende* (s.l.: s.n., 1681); see also Anonymous, *Arrest van den Raedt van Staten des Konings, medebrengeende vernietinge en suppressie van de academie van de gereformeerde religie tot Sedan. Gegeven tot Versailles, den 9 dag van July, 1681* (s.l.: s.n., 1681); see also Anonymous, *Declaratie van den koning van Vranckrijck, inhoudende dat alle mahometaense afgodendienaren die sullen willen christenen worden, geen andere religie sullen mogen aennemen, als de rooms-catholijcke* (Amsterdam: Jochem van Dijk, 1683).

plundered, harassed, and raped.⁵⁷ The message they were supposed to convey was made explicit:

May all this . . . become known, so that your High Mightinesses take into consideration the manifest wrong inflicted upon his Highness, in breach of the most recent peace treaties, as well as the misery and utter ruin which has been inflicted upon the poor inhabitants of his Highness' city and principality.⁵⁸

It is unclear whether the deputies themselves published the testimonies and the exordium, or whether it was done by someone sympathetic to the prince's cause from within the States General. Yet the fact that it was printed by the States General's publisher (*landsdrukker*) Jacobus Scheltus is a testimony to the lack of control that the States faction had over the assembly's official output. Some publications in fact came from cities leaning toward the States faction. In 1682, Amsterdam printer Gerardus Borstius published a letter in French and Dutch by an anonymous Huguenot from Montpellier to an equally anonymous friend, about the prohibition of the exercise of the Reformed religion and the razing of Reformed churches.⁵⁹

As evidence of France's policy of persecution, royal declarations and victim accounts spoke loud and clear, but could not be regarded as libelous. Nonetheless, they could be profoundly irritating to those hoping for the continuation of good relations with France. Ambassador Avaux worriedly noted that the child-conversion placard had caused a considerable number of delegates to change their views, among them Willem van Haren, representative of the States of Friesland. Now convinced that Louis XIV was aiming for the extirpation of the Reformed religion in France, van Haren began to urge delegates of the States of Friesland and Groningen to support the stadtholder and his policy of rapprochement with England.⁶⁰ The French ambassador personally tried to persuade van Haren to change his mind, but failed to convince the delegate that Louis XIV had done nothing against the Edict of Nantes and otherwise had every right to do as he pleased within his own realm.⁶¹

Public pressure appears to have been a significant factor in the stance of officeholders toward France; extraordinary ambassador to England, Diederik van Leyden van Leeuwen, visited Avaux in The Hague to report to him that since the placard of June 17, all members of the States General had become

⁵⁷ Anonymous, *Verbalen van 't gepasseerde in de stad ende het prinsdom van Orange* (The Hague: Jacobus Scheltus, 1682), pfl 11805, pp. 7–8, 20.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁵⁹ Anonymous, *Lettre écrite d'un protestant demeurant a Montpellier* (Amsterdam: s.n., 1682).

⁶⁰ Avaux, *Négociations de Monsieur le Comte d'Avaux*, vol. 1, pp. 151–152; Baxter, *William III*, p. 179.

⁶¹ Avaux, *Négociations de Monsieur le Comte d'Avaux*, vol. 1, p. 153.

convinced that Louis XIV planned to destroy the Reformed religion in France. Moreover, this belief was so strong among the people that “those who were part of the government in any way . . . would not be safe if they would talk about an alliance with France.”⁶² According to van Leeuwen, nobody dared to block the prince forming an alliance with England any longer “out of fear of being torn apart by the people,” an ominous reference to the lynching of William III’s adversaries Johan and Cornelis de Witt in 1672.⁶³ Avaux concluded that for those who remained unsympathetic to the stadtholder’s plans “the matters of religion had made it impossible for them to express their feelings.”⁶⁴

William III’s opposition was not as muzzled by the persecutions as the French ambassador would have it in his memoir—which was written partly as an apology for his failure to hold the prince at bay.⁶⁵ But the realities of Louis XIV’s religious policy did become increasingly embarrassing for those who wished to see a rapprochement with France. In Chapter 1, we have seen how “atrocious claims” created an asymmetry in public debate; one party accused the other of an act of inhumane violence, to which the other party responded by arguing that such an event had not taken place. Whether or not the specific act of violence was legitimate or illegitimate was not up for debate. That infanticide, rape, or torturing someone until conversion were atrocious acts was implicitly agreed by both parties. This agreement over what constituted atrocity structured the royal communication of the persecutions; even if Louis XIV regarded the dragonnades as effective measures, he would never publicly celebrate them. Instead, the Crown argued in 1685 that the Protestant religion had simply died out in France without the use of violence.⁶⁶

In the Dutch Republic the persecution of the Huguenots created a similar dynamic of communication; although Amsterdam was in favor of normalized relations with France, it was hard to find an Amsterdammer who would openly argue that the persecution of the Huguenots was justified. Indeed, in 1681 the city showed its hospitality for the persecuted by building houses for incoming refugees, while, according to Avaux, songs lamenting the fate of the Huguenots were sung in the streets.⁶⁷ Continued sympathy toward France thus depended on dissociating international relations from the fate of the Huguenots.

In 1683 this problem became pressing, as developments in international politics caused the tug-of-war between Orangist and States faction regents to accelerate dramatically. Early that year, the Sun King had begun to muster an army on his northern border to seize strategic cities and lands in the Southern Netherlands,

⁶² Ibid., p. 158. ⁶³ Ibid., pp. 163–164. ⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 200.

⁶⁵ Edwards, “Amsterdam and the ambassadors.” ⁶⁶ See Chapter 3.

⁶⁷ Avaux, *Négociations de Monsieur le Comte d’Avaux*, vol. 1, p. 154; for peddlers selling ballads in the streets see J. Salman, “Frail echoes of singing in the streets: Tracing ballad sellers and their reputation in the Low Countries,” *Renaissance Studies* 33.1 (2019), pp. 119–135.

which sparked the War of the Reunions (1683–1684) with Spain.⁶⁸ The Spanish Crown requested the United Provinces to send troops southwards. An initial 8,000 were dispatched, but the stadtholder was thwarted when he asked for another 16,000 troops to be put under his command in the Southern Netherlands. Although the majority of the States of Holland took the prince's side, Amsterdam, Leiden, and Delft—still backed by Henry Casimir in Friesland—vetoed the plan; financial measures required a unanimous vote.⁶⁹ Tensions rose so high in the United Provinces that one observer spoke of “Hook and Cod times,” referring to the civil wars that had plagued the County of Holland in the fifteenth century.⁷⁰

An intensive pamphlet war followed, in which over a hundred printed works were produced.⁷¹ A considerable chunk were missives, resolutions, and accounts, which had been drawn up by delegates and ambassadors during the course of their negotiations. The rest included arguments written by “real patriots,” regents ranting under the cover of pseudonyms, and fictitious discourses set on towing barges between traveling merchants, soldiers, Frenchmen, and citizens from The Hague, Rotterdam, and Amsterdam. The persecution of the Huguenots never became a main theme in this pamphlet war, but about half a dozen pamphlets used it as ammunition to press the point that William III's foreign policy served to protect the Reformed religion. Orangist pamphleteers used Louis XIV's religious intolerance as a nightmarish vision of what would befall the Dutch Republic if France were not kept at bay.⁷² A three-hour speech to the Amsterdam city council by Fagel, which was published with the prince's signature, is a case in point. Countering the mercantile arguments made by adherents of the States faction against the war, the Grand Pensionary conceded that the Dutch Republic could

⁶⁸ J. A. Lynn, *The French wars 1667–1714: The Sun King at war* (Wellingborough, 2002), p. 48.

⁶⁹ Israel, *Dutch Republic*, pp. 830–831.

⁷⁰ A. Olofsz (ed.), *Vita politica. Het burgerlyk leven, beschreven door Simon Stevin, in sijn leven raad, ende ingenieur sijner princelicke excellentie Maurits Grave van Nassau, &c. stadhouder van Holland. Seer nodig om in alle Houkse ofte Cabeljaawse tijden: ende bysonderlik gedurende onse verschillen in Holland, geleesen te warden* (Amsterdam: Abraham Olofsz, 1684).

⁷¹ An insightful—albeit not exhaustive—overview is provided by P. A. Tiele (ed.), *Bibliotheek van Nederlandsche pamfletten. Eerste afdeeling. Verzameling van Frederik Muller te Amsterdam. Naar tijdsorde gerangschikt en beschreven*, vol. 3 (Amsterdam, 1861), pp. 151–173.

⁷² Anonymous, *Onnut discours, over de Antwoort op een missive geschreven by een regent, &c.* (s.l.: s. n., 1684), pfl 12136; Anonymous, *Samenspraak tusschen een militair, coopman, en burger. Gehouden in een trek-schuyt, tusschen Delft en Rotterdam* (s.l.: s.n., 1684), pfl 12168a; C. Fagel, Ed. *Propositie, gedaan door den heer raat pensionaris Fagel, aan de edele groot achtbare heeren burger-meesteren en vroedschap der stad Amsterdam, nevens het antwoort van haer edele groot achtbare en 't gene verders is gepasseert* (s.l.: s.n., 1684), pfl 11952; Anonymous, *Nader bericht van een liefhebber der waarheyd aen sijn vrind, nopende de swevende verschillen over de wervingh* (s.l.: s.n., 1684), pfl 12129; see also Anonymous, *Nader bericht van een liefhebber der waarheit aan sijn vrind. Nopende de swevende verschille over wervingh* (s.l.: s.n., 1684), pfl 12128; and Anonymous, *Nader bericht van een liefhebber der waarheyd aen syn vriendt, nopende de swevende verschillen over de werving* (s.l.: s.n., 1684), pfl 12129a.

not sustain itself without “commerce, fishery, and manufacture,” but he insisted that these pillars would fall without the free exercise of religion.⁷³

Not a single person in this country . . . will want to remain [here], if he were to lose the aforementioned free exercise of his Religion and the freedom that all enjoy here.⁷⁴

The argument that the Dutch Republic’s welfare depended on it being a safe haven for religious exiles was not new, nor was it particularly Orangist. Both the influential States faction thinkers Johan and Pieter de la Court and the Orangist contemporary historian Pieter Valckenier agreed that the pull factor of religious toleration had brought Holland—“an inn for all sorts of refugees”—its remarkable power and prosperity.⁷⁵ In the 1680s it made little sense for adherents of the States faction to dust off this argument to plead for a policy of neutrality. News about the persecutions in France had given Orangists the opportunity to combine the commercial arguments for religious toleration with their warnings about universal monarchy. States faction pamphleteers, such as the author of the *Answer from a republican* were put in the uncomfortable position of denying that the persecution of the Huguenots should inform foreign policy:

I am not unhappy to confess that the persecutions of our brethren in the faith in France have cooled our affection for that king here . . . But what shall one say? The spirit of persecution which reigns there, reigns even stronger in other parts of the so-called Christian world . . . Italy and Spain, where the inquisition rules, that hellish monster, . . . can testify to this spirit: And those who draw any comparison between these lands and France will have to confess that the differences in spirit are almost infinite: I do not say this in the least to endorse the spirit of persecution, because I abhor them all, but to make our nation understand that a country . . . where the Reformed religion can still be taught and preached openly . . . should not be compared to those lands where it would be a capital crime to profess in caverns and caves a faith other than the one that predominates there.⁷⁶

Ultimately, public opinion against the stadtholder proved too strong. William III had failed to sway the chief cities of Holland and Zeeland.⁷⁷ The pamphlet war of

⁷³ Fagel, *Ed. propositie, gedaan door den heer raat pensionaris*. ⁷⁴ *Ibid*.

⁷⁵ P. Valckenier, *T verwerd Europa ofte politijke en historische beschryvinge der waare fundamenten en oorsaken van de oorlogen en revolutien in Europa, voornamentlijk in en omtrent de Nederlanden zedert den jaere 1664 gecauseert door de gepretendeerde universele monarchie der Franschen* (Amsterdam: Hendrik and Dirk Boom, 1675), p. 7; A. Weststeijn, *Commercial republicanism in the Dutch Golden Age: The political thought of Pieter and Johan de la Court* (Leiden and Boston, MA, 2012), pp. 327–328.

⁷⁶ Anonymous, *Antwoordt van een republiquain op het lasterschrift van den nieuwen Vargas, schuilende onder den naam van Philalethes en van een regent van Hollandt* (Amsterdam: Jan Rieuwerts, 1684), pflit 12142, p. 31.

⁷⁷ Quotation taken from Israel, *Dutch Republic*, pp. 833–834.

1683 and 1684 nevertheless appears to have been a significant moment in the rise of religious rhetoric concerning international politics between in the 1680s, which will be further elaborated on in Chapter 3.

The Voice of the Persecuted

Earlier, we saw that for the Huguenots, still hoping that the king would reverse his policies, it made little sense to use the international press as a humanitarian tool in the years leading up to the Revocation. On September 23, 1680, Pierre Jurieu (1637–1713), professor of theology at the Academy of Sedan, made a notable exception to this silence when he entrusted a manuscript to his longtime friend Jean Rou, who was traveling to Liège, en route to going into exile in the Dutch Republic (Figure 5).⁷⁸ Three months later, Jurieu's work was published as *The policy of the clergy in France* by Pierre Marteau from Cologne.⁷⁹



Figure 5. Portrait of Pierre Jurieu (1637–1713) by Jacob Gole, reproduced with permission from the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

⁷⁸ F. R. J. Knetsch, *Pierre Jurieu. Theoloog en politikus der Refuge* (Kampen, 1967), p. 111; see also M. Green, *The Huguenot Jean Rou (1638–1711): Scholar, educator, civil servant* (Paris, 2015), pp. 89–93.

⁷⁹ Anonymous [P. Jurieu], *La politique du clergé de France ou entretiens curieux de deux catholiques romains, l'un Parisien, l'autre provincial, sur les moyens dont on se sert aujourd-huy, pour détruire la religion Protestante dans ce royaume* ([Cologne]: [Pierre Marteau], 1681).

Of course, well-informed contemporaries knew that Pierre Marteau from Cologne was not a real person. It was a fake publishing house, widely used to notify readers that the book in front of them was politically sensitive.⁸⁰ In reality, the *Policy of the clergy* had been published by Abraham Arondeus in The Hague. Jurieu's authorship was not an open secret, although there were rumors that he was the author.⁸¹ Jansenist apostolic vicar and archbishop of Utrecht, Johannes van Neercassel (1625–1686)—a well-connected man who kept up a close correspondence with leading French publicists Antoine Arnauld and Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet—for one, believed that the Huguenot divine and opinion maker Jean Claude was the author of the work.⁸²

The *Policy of the clergy* was probably the first work produced by a Dutch printing press to provide a detailed account and judgment of the renewed persecution of the Huguenots under Louis XIV, and, as such, it became a success. Rou would later recall in a memoir that the “energetic” work caused “great sensation.”⁸³ Pierre Bayle confirmed that the work became a success in his *Dictionnaire*, even though he judged it to have “little strength of reasoning.”⁸⁴ Within two years, three editions had appeared in French.⁸⁵ By March 1681 the work had been translated into English and published in London for R. Bentley and M. Magnes, who dedicated it to the king and the Oxford Parliament.⁸⁶ Around the same time, Utrecht's university printer François Halma (1653–1722)—who would become an important publisher for first-generation refugees—published a Dutch translation, which was soon followed by second and third editions.⁸⁷

In July 1681, about a year after the manuscript had been completed, the Academy of Sedan was suppressed. Pierre Jurieu followed Rou to The Hague, before taking permanent residence in Rotterdam as a professor at the newly

⁸⁰ See L. Janmart de Brouillant, *Histoire de Pierre du Marteau imprimeur à Cologne (17–18. siècles)* (Paris, 1888).

⁸¹ S. d'Arnay (ed.), *Oeuvres de messire Antoine Arnauld, docteur de la maison et société de Sorbonne*, vol. 11 (Paris: Sigismond d'Arnay 1777). p. lviii.

⁸² Ibid.; Jean Claude will be further discussed in Chapter 3.

⁸³ F. Waddington (ed.), *Mémoires inédits et opuscules de Jean Rou, advocat au parlement de Paris (1659); secrétaire interprète de Hollande depuis l'année 1689 (1638–1711)*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1857), p. 164.

⁸⁴ P. Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1820), p. 408.

⁸⁵ For an overview of all editions and translations of the *Politique du clergé* see É. Kappler, *Bibliographie critique de l'oeuvre imprimée de Pierre Jurieu (1637–1713)* (Paris, 2002), pp. 213–235.

⁸⁶ Anonymous [P. Jurieu], *The policy of the clergy of France, to destroy the Protestants of that kingdom, wherein is set down the ways and means that have been made use of for these twenty years last past, to root out the Protestant religion, in a dialogue between two papists* (London: R. Bentley and M. Magnes, 1681).

⁸⁷ Anonymous [P. Jurieu], *De Staat-Kunde van de Geestelykhey van Vrankryk ofte Naeukeurige Samen-sprekingen van twee Rooms-Katholijken, de eene Pariziaan, en den anderen een Landzaat, over de middelen van welke men sig hedendaags dient, om de Gereformeerde Godsdienst uyt te roejen in dat Koninkrijk*, trans. F. Halma (Utrecht, 1681); P. G. Witsen Geysbeek, “François Halma,” in P. G. Witsen Geysbeek (ed.), *Biographisch anthologisch en critisch woordenboek der Nederduitsche dichters*, vol. 3 (Amsterdam, 1822), pp. 50–57; J. van Eijnatten, “The Huguenot clerisy in the United Provinces: Aspects of Huguenot influence on Dutch intellectual life after the Revocation,” in S. Pott, M. Mulson, and L. Danneberg (eds.), *The Berlin Refuge 1680–1780* (Leiden and Boston, MA, 2003), p. 226; Kappler, *Bibliographie critique*, pp. 228–229.

founded *École Illustre*.⁸⁸ In his exile home, the theologian wrote a sequel to the *Policy of the clergy*, entitled *The last efforts of afflicted innocence*, which also met with success.⁸⁹ With the two polemics, Jurieu began to build his reputation as the chief publicist of the French Refuge, or the “Goliath of the Protestants” as his adversaries came to refer to him.⁹⁰

The *Policy of the clergy* may have broken an unofficial policy of silence, but it stood in service of the same objective to seek rapprochement and establish, quite literally, an interconfessional dialogue. It presented two Catholic friends who run into each other in Paris after many years. One of the two lives in Paris, while the other resides in the countryside. They present ideal types of the political thought world of generic Catholic Frenchmen. The interlocutors are wealthy, well-educated, and cordial men, who treasure civil conversation. Although one of them maintains friendships with the Huguenot nobility, they are not noblemen, nor is it indicated that they hold political office.⁹¹

The friends agree that religious uniformity in France is desirable and, by discussing how it can best be attained, they sketch a picture of the realm and Europe’s religio-political landscape. The Parisian does not know any Protestants personally but believes them to be fundamentally dangerous and curiously asks the provincial’s opinion on the Huguenots and the measures directed against them. The provincial, a somewhat naive but benign man, is well disposed toward the Huguenots, knowing them to be honest Frenchmen.⁹² Yet by the force of prejudice over experience, the provincial soon follows his friend’s lead: the Parisian advises him to break off his friendships with the Reformed, who will soon experience the downfall of their religion.⁹³

In the *Last efforts* the same men are joined by two Huguenots, one a nobleman, the other a lawyer. In the course of their conversation, the policy of persecution is deconstructed. As to the cause behind the persecution, the two Catholics agree that Louis XIV strives for the conversion of the Huguenots as a good Catholic, but above all, because, as a king, he is in constant search of glory and reverence.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, the author follows a traditional strategy of shifting blame away from the ruler. Left by himself, Louis XIV would patiently convert the Huguenots

⁸⁸ Knetsch, *Pierre Jurieu*, pp. 122–123.

⁸⁹ Halma also translated this work into Dutch as *De uysterste verweering der verdrukte onnozelheyd*; Anonymous [P. Jurieu], *De uysterste verweering der verdrukte onnozelheyd ofte ’t vervolg der staat-kunde van de geestelijckheyd van Vrankryk* (Utrecht: François Halma, 1682).

⁹⁰ See, for instance, S. d’Arnay (ed.), *Oeuvres de messier Antoine Arnauld, docteur de la Maison et société de Sorbonne, tome trente-deuxieme, contenant les nombres XXIV, XXV & CCVL de la troisieme partie de la cinquieme classe* (Paris, 1780), p. 504.

⁹¹ The Parisian is called “monsieur,” not “gentilhomme.” In the English version this was translated as “gentleman”; P. Jurieu, *Les derniers efforts de l’innocence affligée* (The Hague: Abraham Arondeus, 1682), p. 9; P. Jurieu, *The last efforts of afflicted innocence, being an account of the persecution of the Protestants of France, and a vindication of the Reformed religion from the aspersions of disloyalty and rebellion, charg’d on it by the Papists* (London: R. Bentley and M. Magnes, 1682), p. 7.

⁹² Jurieu, *Politique du clergé*, pp. 7–8.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 8–9.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 11–12.

through soft means rather than through “steel, fire, and banishment,” but a small faction misinforms him and pushes him in this direction.⁹⁵

Like the Waldensian pamphlets, the *Policy of the clergy* dwelled extensively on the rule of law, elaborating on the legal nature of the Edict of Nantes, the peace treaty that settled the position of the Huguenots and their relationship with their ruler. By stressing the importance of the treaty, Jurieu showed that he was not necessarily in favor of religious toleration. Indeed, he parried the critique that Catholics had no rights in England by pointing out that there had never been a royal promise anchored in law to tolerate them.⁹⁶ He thus approached religious tolerance from a fully legal perspective. Jurieu showed how many of the measures against the Huguenots did not follow the Edict of Nantes, as the court professed, but in fact violated it:

The edicts of pacification [the Edict of Nantes] have the exact shape that perpetual laws are supposed to have. They have been confirmed by the parlements. They have been confirmed by a hundred declarations . . . and by a thousand royal oaths. Finally, they have been presented as irrevocable laws and as the foundation of the state’s peace.⁹⁷

Despite this emphasis on irrevocability, Jurieu gave a somewhat evasive answer as to whether the monarch was bound to uphold the treaty’s statutes and what would happen should he fail to do so. The Parisian gentleman argues that kings “continuously break peace and solemnly pledged peace treaties, because the public interest demands it”;⁹⁸ after all, the “common good is the sovereign law.”⁹⁹ The author countered this argument by stating that such annulments should always be done openly, with an official accusation against the other party. As long as the king did not revoke the Edict of Nantes, he was bound to uphold its principles in “good faith,” a term which the discussants use extensively.

In other words, there was a strong moral imperative for the king to engage with his subjects openly and not breach the contracts he had made with them, at least not covertly. Yet beyond a moral imperative, the legal consequences of not upholding the Edict of Nantes in “good faith” remained undiscussed. In later works, Jurieu would do just that. By revoking the Edict of Nantes, he would come to argue, Louis XIV had broken his bond with his Huguenot subjects, which meant that the latter could lawfully resist him and, more importantly, that they had the right to offer their loyalty to a different ruler, more specifically the person of William III.¹⁰⁰ In the *Policy of the clergy* and the *Last efforts*, however, no such rights of resistance or annulment of loyalty were offered.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 12.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 126.

⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 126–127.

⁹⁸ Ibid., pp. 127–128.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 127.

¹⁰⁰ J. I. Israel, “General introduction,” in J. I. Israel (ed.), *The Anglo-Dutch moment: Essays on the Glorious Revolution and its world impact* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 34–35.

To sum up, Jurieu assigned a central role to the rule of law as the basis of just political procedure. As such, the *Policy of the clergy* and the *Last efforts* present evidence for Michael Breen's assertion that even at the height of absolute monarchical thinking—from the late seventeenth century—"law provided the principal linguistic, cultural, and procedural framework through which individuals and corporations articulated, contested, and resolved disputes over the allocation of resources, status, authority, and power."¹⁰¹ At the same time, the law had lost its teeth, because there were no repercussions for the ruler who refused to maintain it.

Jurieu was not the only seventeenth-century philosopher in whose political theories such a friction between rule of law and absolute domestic sovereignty can be found; Hobbes—whose work Jurieu knew well—expressed a similar tension by advocating a society ordered around civil laws, which the sovereign had the duty to publicly promulgate.¹⁰² But because that very same sovereign had an absolute prerogative, he was not himself subjected to the laws through which he spoke.¹⁰³

The Psychology of Persecution

Jurieu solved this problem by rejecting the persecutions not only as unlawful, but also as unreasonable.¹⁰⁴ In order to show the imprudence of the Crown's policy of harassing the Huguenots into conversion, Jurieu developed an elaborate theory of human behavior and the workings of the human mind, which was descriptive rather than proscriptive. Indeed, the pastor devoted a considerable part of both the *Policy of the clergy* and the *Last efforts* to constructing an elaborate psychology of religion, persecution, and conversion. The state's policy of conversion was ineffective and detrimental to the state because it failed to reckon with universal properties of the human soul.

The Parisian argues that "fear and hope are the two great machines through which one moves the souls."¹⁰⁵ To persuade the Huguenots to convert, one should therefore pursue a policy of punishment and rewards. His friend from the

¹⁰¹ M. P. Breen, "Patronage, politics, and the 'rule of law' in early modern France," *Journal of the Western Society for French History* 33 (2005), p. 96.

¹⁰² H. Kretzer, *Calvinismus und französische Monarchie im 17. Jahrhundert. Die politische Lehre der Akademien Sedan und Saumur, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung von Pierre du Moulin, Moysse Amyraut und Pierre Jurieu* (Berlin, 1975), p. 369.

¹⁰³ T. Poole, *Reason of state: Law, prerogative and empire* (Cambridge, 2015), pp. 37–56.

¹⁰⁴ In this regard, Jurieu's work supports Arlette Jouanna's observation that the development of absolutism as a political discourse constituted a move away from legal conceptions of political order toward new ideals centered around a ruler's power to advance the glory of the state and the welfare of its subjects; A. Jouanna, "Die Debatte über die absolute Gewalt im Frankreich der Religionskriege," in R. Asch and H. Duchhardt (eds.), *Der Absolutismus—ein Mythos? Strukturwandel monarchischer Herrschaft* (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna, 1996), pp. 57–78, esp. p. 76.

¹⁰⁵ Jurieu, *Politique du clergé*, p. 31.

countryside agrees that this is a good method, since most people follow a certain religion out of habit rather than conviction:

How many people are of one religion by chance rather than choice, who have no commitment to the religion of their fathers; who remain within it because they were born in it . . . ? Having neither piety nor devotion, they care little about what religion they belong to. How many Catholics do you believe we have that are not of the religion of God, but of that of their king, and who would immediately convert, if they were in a state in which we would only give them offices under this condition?¹⁰⁶

Given the superficiality of people's religious convictions, the two judge it to be an effective policy to allow girls to convert at the age of twelve and boys at the age of fourteen, luring them toward the Catholic religion in their search for independence:

You know that at this age the yoke feels heavy to children, because this is the age at which they have to choose a profession, we oblige them to work and we want them to start moving away from the libertinism of childhood. They do not yet have any love for religion and often they have very little knowledge of it. The yoke of obedience and chastisement is heavy for them, so they only look for a way to release themselves from it.¹⁰⁷

The Huguenots who eventually join the discussion turn this argument of superficial religiosity around. Indeed, girls who have "lost [their] honor" will look for it again in the strongest party, and "want to cover their infamy with the veil of conversion" and punished children will avenge their parents by changing religion.¹⁰⁸ But only those whose religion was not upright in the first place will be lost as a result of such pull factors, thereby leading to nothing but a purification of the Reformed party. Those who remain will not succumb to promises and threats.¹⁰⁹ On the contrary, "the human mind stiffens against such force."¹¹⁰ The Huguenot nobleman estimates that not more than one in four converts will truly embrace their new religion:

They have converted out of interest, out of feebleness, out of fear, out of love, or out of some other passion that has caught them by surprise. When the passion has slackened, reason returns, these people are ashamed of their conversion, and their conscience reawakens.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 31–32.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 158–159.

The Catholics and the Huguenots also discuss a law which allows judges and other officials to visit people on their deathbeds and encourage them to convert:

With this fine reasoning, they tear the husband from the bed of his wife, the woman out of the arms of her husband, the children from a dying father, the father from his children. When they have no more witnesses, they promise, they menace, they intimidate . . . One stray word spoken without intention, compelled by a hot fever . . . which disturbs the judgment, is enough for the parish priest to make him cry out loud, *monsieur, or madame wants to die Catholic* . . . Our enemies have thus invented a new kind of cruelty, which was unheard of even in the ages of persecutors and martyrs of the Christian religion. If, in those times, one had to live with the religion of the emperors, at least one was allowed to die in the religion of God. Can anything in the world be more cruel? A poor sick person is struggling with death, he needs all his strength to fight it, and all the calmness of his mind to allay the fears that arise before the last moment of his life . . . He consoles himself by emitting his last sighs in the arms of his wife and children . . . He has no more strength than to die but is required to do something he could hardly do if he had all the strength of his health . . . He must respond to them, weigh their words, he must avoid the pitfalls laid before him through ambiguous interrogation. He must sustain the shock of threats and the weight of authority.¹¹²

It is important to note that Jurieu did not in any way frame this story with confessional truth claims, nor did he make martyrs out of the people who suffered this fate. The interlocutors analyze the impact of state policy on the human mind, not on the Protestant mind. This was made explicit when the discussants refer to the Roman emperors who persecuted the early Christians. The Parisian protests against the comparison, arguing that “it is a crime to persecute the true religion, but it is a work of great merit to extirpate heresy.”¹¹³ The Huguenot gentleman responds that “there is not a single person . . . who is not convinced of being of the right religion.”¹¹⁴ Moreover, he reminds the Catholics that they are investigating the policy “according to the rules of politics” rather than religious truth.¹¹⁵

In this discussion about the natural response of human beings to persecution, the author unproblematically referred to non-Christian victims of state terror. Jurieu cited at length from the *De Rebus Emmanuelis* by the humanist bishop Jerónimo Osório (1506–1580) on the reign of Manuel I of Portugal, who took away the children of Jews and Muslims to raise them as Christians:¹¹⁶

¹¹² Ibid., pp. 60–63.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 178.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 179.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ J. Osório, *De Rebus Emmanuelis Regis Lusitaniae Inulctissimi Virtute et Auspicio, annis sex, ac viginti, domi forisque gestis, libri duodecim* (Cologne: Apud Haeredes Arnoldi Birckmanni, 1581).

This could not be done without causing terrible agitations in their minds. It was a frightful spectacle to see children torn away from their mother's breast, and wrenched from the arms of their fathers . . . They maltreated the fathers and the mothers, and beat them with clubs to make them let go. From all sides the air resounded with horrible cries, and the women's cries and wailings that pierced the sky. Many of the miserable fathers were so moved by the atrocity of this deed, that they threw their children in wells and many others reached such a degree of desperation and fury that they killed themselves.¹¹⁷

Indeed, within this framework, suicide was not portrayed as a mortal sin, but as something that people could be naturally driven to. The Huguenot nobleman brings the news of two girls who, having converted under pressure in Montpellier, regretted this so much that they killed themselves, an act that he judges to be "the natural consequences of the declarations they procure against us."¹¹⁸ Even murdering one's children was portrayed as natural when people are driven to extremities:

We can be silent where nature speaks. It is the greatest of all cruelties to bereave a father and a mother of their children. It is a wrench whose pain cannot be expressed. In one word, it is a treatment unheard of in the century of tortures and massacres. You will see things that will surprise and horrify you. Motherly tenderness, religious sentiments, and anger mixed together are a compound capable of producing terrible deeds. And I fear you will see examples of fury similar to that of the Jews, who, seeing that they wanted to take away their children to baptize them, took them and hurled themselves to death with them . . . It is a new kind of torture, which will devastate France more than the massacres of the last century have done. Where is the African and cannibal heart which is able to bear unmoved the spectacle of these mothers, who are bathed in tears, . . . [who] will tear out their hair, . . . [and] cry out against those who take away their children.¹¹⁹

Jurieu's strategy of approaching persecution from the perspective of human nature finally allowed him to return to the question of resistance from a different angle. By forcing people to extremes, the court's policy of persecution was bound to backfire and could well usher in a new period of civil warfare in France. However, rather than approach resistance as a right of the people if they are attacked by their sovereign, Jurieu reevaluated it as an unavoidable consequence of pushing people to extremities. Instead of justifying resistance from a legal point of view, he portrayed it as a natural human trait, explicitly differentiating it from a

¹¹⁷ Jurieu, *Derniers efforts*, pp. 87–88.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 66–67.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 79–80.

right. He argued that people would inevitably begin to resist the authorities, while explicitly distinguishing it from their right to do so:

When a state conceals in its entrails two million malcontents . . . it is in danger of feeling terrible movements What persuades me that these movements would not be favorable to the Reformed is that God has never blessed such designs, to defend a religion with arms, to rise up against one's prince, and to wage war under the pretext of piety. Because the furies of civil war are absolutely incompatible with charity These impatient who take up arms act against the principles of religion, and against those of their religion in particular, I avow They would be massacred by the people and the arms of their sovereign. The king would certainly master them, but he would have the pain of seeing his country bathed in the blood of his subjects.¹²⁰

Despite their contemporary success, historians have paid limited attention to the *Policy of the clergy* and the *Last efforts*. Most students of the political culture of the Huguenot diaspora have focused on the period after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. This makes sense if we look at the quantity of works produced before and after October 1685. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, the Revocation was met with a flood of publications by Huguenot and non-Huguenot thinkers who tried to make sense of the enormous disruption caused by the prohibition of the Reformed religion. By comparison, the few pamphlets published in the first half of the 1680s pale into insignificance.

Quantity apart, intellectual historians have argued that the Revocation caused a shift in Huguenot political theory from uncompromising absolutism to social contract theory. Between the last Huguenot uprising—which was famously crushed by Cardinal Richelieu with the siege of La Rochelle—in 1628 and the renewed persecution of the 1680s, Huguenot subjects had come to argue that the monarch was the sole protector of their religious privileges and the only rampart against their domestic enemies—most notably the French clergy.¹²¹ Huguenot political theory was correspondingly dominated by a staunch defense of divine right absolutism; absolute loyalty to the monarch's will served to transcend the confessional divide.¹²² When Louis XIV simply denied the existence of Reformed subjects in October 1685, this position became extremely difficult to maintain,

¹²⁰ Ibid., pp. 33–34.

¹²¹ T. Hochstrasser, "The claims of conscience: Natural law theory, obligation, and resistance in the Huguenot diaspora," in J. Laursen (ed.), *New essays on the political thought of the Huguenots of the Refuge* (Leiden, New York, NY, and Cologne, 1995), pp. 17–18; M. Yardeni, "French Calvinist political thought, 1543–1715," in Prestwich (ed.), *International Calvinism*, pp. 328–329; E. Labrousse, "The political ideas of the Huguenot diaspora (Bayle and Jurieu)," in R. Golden (ed.), *Church, state, and society under the Bourbon kings of France* (Lawrence, KS, 1982), pp. 222–223; G. H. Dodge, *The political theory of the Huguenots of the dispersion* (New York, NY, 1947), pp. 5–7.

¹²² Hochstrasser, "Claims of conscience," pp. 18–19.

leading to a shift from absolutism back to the sort of social contract theory that the Reformed had developed during the wars of religion. Myriam Yardeni summarizes that

after the failure of the sentimental and quasi-mystical arguments of fidelity, . . . rationalism gained the upper hand, and, with it, there came a scarcely disguised return to monarchomach theories. The Edict of Nantes was for Protestant polemicists no longer a privilege conceded by the king. One pamphlet explained that it was 'a treaty given the form of a law', and that it was 'only necessary to read the preamble to this Edict to be convinced that it is in effect a treaty that Henry IV made with our fathers'.¹²³

In the historiography of this shift in political languages, Jurieu has usually been portrayed as a central representative of post-Revocation social contract theory. From 1686, he combined this with a stance against religious tolerance and bold prophesying, as will be scrutinized in Chapters 3 and 4. Indeed, the theologian would famously defend popular sovereignty against his colleague and former friend Pierre Bayle, who remained a steadfast supporter of uncompromising absolutism and religious tolerance. Their polemic on this matter has often been regarded as the main political debate of the Huguenot Refuge.¹²⁴ Those who have studied Jurieu's pre-Revocation works have mainly done so in search of early signs of his later political theory.¹²⁵

It is quite possible that around the time of his flight to the Dutch Republic Jurieu had already come to think of political society as based on an initial contract between people and ruler. However, what makes the *Policy of the clergy* and the *Last efforts* so interesting is that, in these, Jurieu failed or refused to offer a social contract theory against absolutism. Instead, we have seen that the author carefully navigated between the political norms of sovereignty, in the form of uncompromising absolutism, and rule of law, which served as a legal foothold for the position of the Reformed, without regarding them as opposites. Jurieu did so by judging the French court's policy on the basis of another political norm: reason. Whether a certain policy was reasonable, in turn, depended on whether it took the universal properties of humanity into account. In other words, the sovereign enjoyed absolute sovereignty, but reason dictated that he would follow the rule of law and not push his subjects to such psychological extremes that they would naturally, though unjustly, revolt. By describing the psychology of forced conversion, he

¹²³ Yardeni, "French Calvinist political thought," p. 331.

¹²⁴ Hochstrasser, "Claims of conscience," pp. 22–23.

¹²⁵ Knetsch, *Pierre Jurieu*, appendix; M. van der Lugt, *Bayle, Jurieu, and the Dictionnaire historique et critique* (Oxford, 2016); J. Howells, *Pierre Jurieu: Antinomian radical* (Durham, 1983).

shifted the conversation from what subjects were allowed to do (nothing) to what human beings would inevitably do (turn to violence).

Conclusion

This chapter has provided insight into when it made sense for persecuted minorities and their advocates to employ the Dutch presses to advocate their cause and how such endeavors interacted with domestic politics. Two factors severely hampered the development of publicity for the Huguenots in the early 1680s. First, the victims were still pleading with Louis XIV to reverse his policies. As we have discussed in Chapter 1, to seek attention through print media was considered less problematic than to attempt direct contact with foreign governments. Yet it was still a sensitive undertaking. As long as there was no full communication breakdown with the monarch, it was not a self-evident political strategy to involve foreign authorities through publicity.

Jurieu's intervention in French politics through the Dutch presses was an exception, but his argumentation was in service of the same project, to be tolerated again. The pastor therefore opted for invoking an inclusive humanitarian language to make the persecutions in his country stop. Constructing a religious narrative about one's predicament would not serve this purpose; the people that had to be convinced were Catholics, not Protestants. Jurieu thus gave an intricate explanation of why France's Huguenot subjects should be tolerated, with recourse to a complex argument about how the political norms of sovereignty, rule of law, reason, and humanity depended on each other—not as an ideal, but in reality.

Second, Dutch advocates who tried to intervene in the French crisis through fundraisers and political pressure were held back from using the printing press by the Dutch authorities. Interceding with a small and distant player like the Duchy of Savoy was one thing. Protesting against the policy of an expansionist great power at one's doorstep was something else. The United Provinces' political landscape was divided and relations with France were fickle and contested. But initially none of the contesting political parties was ready for an open confrontation with Louis XIV, which could be triggered through the production of anti-French printed news media. Orangists first had to persuade the other domestic factions of their case against France. Sermons, a medium through which one could target more specific audiences, were a safer way to do so than defamatory pamphlets. Printed copies of the Sun King's anti-Huguenot decrees—and other forms of "objective" printed evidence, served as a safe alternative; they did not argue against anything, but nevertheless imprinted the issue of the Huguenot persecution in the reader's mind.

When news about the Huguenots did begin to play a modest role in the pamphlet war of 1683–1684, it was within the boundaries of the Dutch public

sphere. Again, we see that Dutch pamphleteers appropriated the news to bring a confessional argument to a domestic dispute. Whereas the persecuted Huguenots deconfessionalized their predicament, Dutch Orangists reconfessionalized it. As will be discussed in the next chapter, confessional argumentation did not, however, necessarily revolve around religious truth claims. In fact, we will see that one of the main points of discussion in print media responding to the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, was whether Europe's religious polarization could best be understood by looking up to the heavens, or whether more worldly problems lay at its heart.

3

Covering a Refugee Crisis

The final stage of the measures against the Huguenots, the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, came as a surprise to barely anyone. The accelerating pace with which the Huguenots were stripped of their rights and their brutal harassment during the dragonnades had made people in France and abroad well aware that Louis XIV was moving toward a total annihilation of the Reformed religion in his kingdom. Indeed, Chapter 2 has explored how delegates of the States General and Pierre Jurieu had already predicted this in 1681. When the day finally came, on October 17, 1685, only about fifteen Protestant temples were still standing in all of France; thousands of Protestants had already succumbed to the terror of the “missionaries in boots” and had converted or fled abroad.¹

In fact, Huguenot France had already suffered such heavy blows that the Sun King boldly claimed that he revoked the Edict of Nantes with the Edict of Fontainebleau because the Reformed religion had died out in his realm, making its toleration obsolete.² This was not true, of course, as could be seen from the edict’s denial of the *ius emigrandi*, the right of those who refused to abjure their faith to leave the country. Only pastors, who might encourage their flocks to persist, were given two weeks to pack their bags.³ This did not prevent the Sun King from inadvertently causing, if not the biggest, certainly the most famous religious exodus in early modern Europe.⁴

Although the Revocation had been expected, its consequences were nevertheless intensely felt in the United Provinces. Despite the risk of imprisonment or enslavement on the galleys for those caught crossing the French border, the number of Huguenots hoping to find exile in the Republic’s cities rose dramatically; according to modern estimates about 35,000 out of a total of 150,000 refugees fled to the United Provinces, leading Pierre Bayle to characterize his exile home as the “great ark of the refugees.”⁵

¹ J. Bergin, *The politics of religion in early modern France* (New Haven, CT, 2014), p. 258.

² P. Zagorin, *How the idea of religious toleration came to the West* (Princeton, NJ, 2013), p. 244.

³ E. Labrousse, “*Une foi, une loi, un roi?*” *La Révocation de l’Édit de Nantes* (Geneva and Paris, 1985), pp. 196–199.

⁴ See E. Birnstiel and C. Bernat (eds.), *La diaspora des Huguenots. Les réfugiés protestants de France et leur dispersion dans le monde (XVIe–XVIIIe siècles)* (Paris, 2001).

⁵ N. Hubert, “The Netherlands and the Huguenot émigrés,” in Zuber and Theis (eds.), *La Révocation de l’Édit de Nantes*, p. 4; after William III claimed the English throne in 1688 many Huguenots moved from the Dutch Republic to England. By 1700 England was home to the largest

With the final prohibition of Protestantism in France, initial reservations about publicizing the fate of the Huguenots internationally were no longer tenable.⁶ Fear of making the situation worse for those who remained now appeared to be trumped by an urge to condemn the persecutions as loudly as possible. Indeed, the number of pamphlets reflecting on the fate of the Huguenots skyrocketed in 1685.⁷ Despite their profound impact on international politics, these pamphlets have only been studied in a piecemeal fashion, with the published pastoral letters written by exiled ministers receiving most attention—and not without reason.⁸ Written to edify the spiritually orphaned Huguenots remaining in France with treatises about religious truth, grace, and election, the pastoral letters were without doubt among the Refuge's most influential products.⁹ Jurieu's published letters played a pivotal role in shaping a collective exile memory, by collating and sharing individual experiences of Huguenot persecution throughout the Refuge.¹⁰ As a "spider in a European-wide web of correspondents," Jurieu took on a double role as journalist and polemical historian to create a spiritual narrative of contemporary martyrdom.¹¹

Focusing on this pastoral polemic, historians have considered the outpouring of printed opinion in the wake of the Revocation as either an instrument or effect of religious polarization, reinvigorating a militant confessional outlook on domestic and international politics in the late seventeenth century.¹² Exiled pastors were, however, far from the only ones who felt the urge to take up the pen and employ the Dutch presses to make sense of the Revocation and the refugee crisis that came in its wake. Not counting Jurieu's biweekly pastoral letters to those remaining in

number of refugees. See R. Gwynn, "Conformity, non-conformity and Huguenot settlement in England in the later seventeenth century," in Dunan-Page (ed.), *The religious culture of the Huguenots*, pp. 39–41.

⁶ See Chapter 2.

⁷ For a concise overview of Huguenot printers and their networks in the Refuge see Lachenicht, *Hugenotten in Europa*, pp. 49–55.

⁸ But see P. J. W. van Malssen, *Louis XIV d'après les pamphlets répandus en Holland* (Amsterdam and Paris, 1936), pp. 43–63; E. Haase, *Einführung in die Literature des Refuge* (Berlin, 1959); Bots, "L'écho de la Révocation"; E. Bergin, "Defending the true faith: Religious themes in Dutch pamphlets on England, 1688–1689," in Onnekink (ed.), *War and religion after Westphalia*, pp. 217–250.

⁹ E. Labrousse, "Les attitudes politiques des réformés français. 'Les lettres pastorales' du Refuge (Elie Benoist, Jacques Basnage, Pierre Jurieu)," in *École pratique des Hautes Études, IVe Section, Annuaire 1976–1977* 109 (Paris, 1977), pp. 793–804; G. Cerny, *Theology, politics and letters at the crossroads of European civilization: Jacques Basnage and the Baylean Huguenot refugees in the Dutch Republic* (Dordrecht, 1987), pp. 54–64.

¹⁰ Van der Linden, *Experiencing exile*, pp. 177–187; O. Stanwood, *The global Refuge: Huguenots in an age of empire* (Oxford, 2020), pp. 28–30.

¹¹ Van der Linden, *Experiencing exile*; F. R. J. Knetsch, "Debate on dragonnades, 1685–1686: The events in France as seen by Bossuet, Jurieu and Rou," *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* 78.2 (1998), pp. 215–227; D. Onnekink, "Models of an imagined community: Huguenot discourse on identity and foreign policy," in D. J. B. Trim (ed.), *The Huguenots: History and memory in transnational context* (Leiden and Boston, MA, 2011), pp. 193–215.

¹² See the contributions in Onnekink (ed.), *War and religion after Westphalia*; F. G. M. Broeyer, "William III and the Reformed Church of the Netherlands," in Meijers and Onnekink (eds.), *Redefining William III*, p. 117; Claydon, *Europe and the making of England*.

France, at least 150 pamphlets dealing with the persecution of the Huguenots came off the presses in the United Provinces between 1685 and 1688—almost one every week.¹³

Moreover, Jurieu's providential writings after 1685 raise an important question. Was this not the same man who had first sounded the alarm on the persecution of the Huguenots while carefully steering away from confessional argumentation?¹⁴ What remained of the universal principles he had deployed against his government in 1681? This chapter argues that in the wake of the Revocation, a truly international culture of discussion developed as an age-old question suddenly became an urgent matter: how do we deal with religious differences in Europe and how does it affect our confession, country, and city? We will see that an unprecedentedly diverse and international group of opinion makers sought access to the Dutch printing presses to debate this question and confront the humanitarian disaster caused by the confessional divide.

A Worried Ambassador

As we have seen in the Chapter 2, stadtholder William III failed to convince the magistrates of Amsterdam that its days of religious freedom were numbered if the city prevented him from taking an army to the Southern Netherlands to contain France's imperialist ambitions. But news about ever-worsening persecutions increasingly came to demand a public stance from civic and provincial officeholders within the States faction. French ambassador Avaux's letters to Louis XIV present a striking image of a divided republic slowly finding its unity through the misery of others.¹⁵ On March 19, the French ambassador wrote to his king about the changing political climate. He reported that the ministers in Amsterdam were very vocal about the persecutions, and that they exerted great influence not only on the people, but on some of the regents as well.¹⁶ Trusting the city's commercial priorities, the ambassador initially advised his king to offer the Amsterdam merchants trading with France some favors:

This would adequately efface the impressions the ministers give them, for I believe them to be much more sensitive about the interests of their trade, than of their religion.¹⁷

¹³ It is unclear how many pamphlets from this period have not survived. The actual number is likely to have been higher.

¹⁴ See Chapter 2.

¹⁵ Claude de Mesmes, Count of Avaux, in L. Durand and N.-J. Pissot (eds.), *Négociations de Monsieur le Comte d'Avaux en Hollande, depuis 1685, jusqu'en 1688*, vol. 4 (Paris: Durand & Pissot, 1753), pp. 290–295.

¹⁶ Avaux did not make clear whether he meant Dutch or French ministers.

¹⁷ Avaux, *Négociations*, vol. 4, p. 309.

However, Avaux quickly became less certain that the merchants' views would trump those of the ministers. Amsterdam's municipal government was not yet willing to change its political stance, but many notable people had become embittered:

I am nevertheless obligated to say to Your Majesty that the minister preachers, and the stories that are sent from France, embitter them to such an extent that I do not know what will happen next.¹⁸

Avaux stressed that friendly regents would soon no longer dare to speak in favor of France, lest they be regarded as "enemies of the country's religion and [...] be torn apart by the people."¹⁹ In November, Avaux reported to Louis XIV that the Revocation had led the burgomasters of Amsterdam to reconcile with William III. According to the ambassador, some of them had been persuaded by genuine zeal for their religion. Others had succumbed to public opinion, seeing how the people had become excited "by the rantings of the French ministers and by the false reports of these refugees."²⁰ In the meantime, the ambassador found it increasingly difficult to communicate with members of Amsterdam's city council.²¹ In short, news about the religious repression in France had significantly decreased the political polarization of the Dutch Republic.

Avaux worriedly described that newspapers and letters reported thousands of stories about the Huguenots and harassed Dutchmen in France, egging on the people, even though the States General explicitly forbade the production of works discussing the persecution in March 1686.²² The ambassador did not believe that the spread of these stories was orchestrated by William III, suggesting instead that they were initiated by the refugees. Indeed, he mentions that the stadtholder's wife, Mary Stuart, initially did not believe the described cruelties.²³ The ambassador was so worried by the letters from France describing the dragonnades that he requested Louis XIV to send an alternative account of what was happening on the ground.²⁴

It is unclear whether Avaux really thought that the letters reporting on the extent of the violence were false. Perhaps he did believe them, but did not want to discuss the violent methods of conversion. It is important to note that Louis XIV did not shy away from using the Revocation for propagandistic purposes. On the contrary, the prohibition of the Reformed religion was met with a wave of

¹⁸ Edwards, "Amsterdam and the ambassadors," pp. 206–207.

¹⁹ Avaux, *Négociations*, vol. 4, pp. 321–322.

²⁰ Claude de Mesmes, Count of Avaux, in L. Durand and N.-J. Pissot (eds.), *Négociations de Monsieur le Comte d'Avaux en Hollande, depuis 1685, jusqu'en 1688*, vol. 5 (Paris: Durand & Pissot, 1753), p. 191.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 191–199.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 212, 240.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 219–220.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 223–225.

applause in France and celebrated among many layers of French society: the Académie Française sponsored works hailing the final ousting of Protestantism from the kingdom;²⁵ engravings were disseminated throughout France celebrating the destruction of churches;²⁶ and people were summoned to engage in public thanksgivings and parades.²⁷ Yet the celebrations were silent about the violent methods that had been used.²⁸ Like we have seen in Chapter 1, the persecuting authorities preferred to deny atrocity rather than defend it.

We should, of course, be careful not to take Avaux's account at face value. The ambassador was severely critical of the Revocation and must have tried to subtly convince the king of his opinion through the reports he sent to Versailles. Yet the value that Avaux assigned to printed news media in affecting the mood of both the regents and the common people, thereby pressuring the authorities to align themselves behind William III, is telling. Equally striking was his advice to engage in a public counteroffensive. Apparently, the ambassador believed that the Dutch could still be convinced that the conversions had been peaceful. Avaux's reports certainly sketched an image of religious polarization, but his plea to invest in public relations suggests that the Huguenot reports were not just about religious truth; apparently, the ambassador believed that there was a battle over journalistic truth to be won in the Dutch Republic.

Victims

What information actually flowed from the presses in the Dutch Republic? Many print media describing the persecution came in the form of letters from France. While it is difficult to establish whether a given printed letter was truly authored by a Huguenot remaining in France, it suggests that printers valued them as credible sources. At first glance, this might seem odd; there was an enormous influx of people with first-hand experiences, making the presses' reliance on long-distance correspondence seem unnecessary. Indeed, it is likely that many of the letters published in the Republic were smuggled out of France in the pockets of refugees. Nevertheless, there appears to have been a strong preference for factual information that had been penned in France.

The letters may often have taken the same amount of time to reach Dutch print workshops as the refugees themselves, but at least they were direct reports. The anonymous author of the *Letter written from France* argued that he could well imagine that readers would find it hard to believe all the reports coming from

²⁵ G. Adams, *The Huguenots and French opinion, 1685–1787: The Enlightenment debate on toleration* (Waterloo, 1991), p. 19.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 22. ²⁷ J. A. Wylie, *The history of Protestantism*, vol. 3 (Wilmington, 2015), p. 336.

²⁸ See B. Dompnier, *Le venin de l'hérésie. Image du protestantisme et combat catholique au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1985).

different parts of France. He could barely grasp it himself, despite being in the midst of it all.²⁹ Moreover, research has shown that in the early modern period, as in other periods, people would not usually talk about traumatic experiences, unless it served a socially strategic purpose.³⁰ It is quite possible that many Dutchmen therefore listened to the stories of the refugees with some skepticism. While Dutch cities invited the refugees with open arms, scattered evidence suggests that not all incoming Frenchmen were believed to be Protestants fleeing from persecution. In Groningen, incoming refugees were interrogated to make sure they were not Catholics pretending to be Huguenots.³¹ And in 1688 between six and eight French men and women were banished from The Hague as “fake refugees.”³²

Of course, there was no doubt that the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes had actually taken place. The French court itself had disseminated copies of the edict, of which at least four Dutch-language editions soon circulated in the United Provinces.³³ Several editions and translations of the *Articles of the oath of abjuration*, the document which new converts had to sign to officially become Catholic, could also be bought in Dutch bookshops.³⁴ This document, quite literally shoved under the noses of the harassed Huguenots, was evidence of the persecutions.³⁵ In a way, the letters served a similar purpose. Instead of deriving from the memory of individuals, they were allegedly direct reports from eyewitnesses and refugees themselves of their experiences of maltreatment.

²⁹ Anonymous, *Lettre écrite de France, touchant les violentes persecutions qu'on y fait a ceux de la religion reformée. Een brief, geschreven uit Vrankrijk wegens de wreede vervolgingen der gereformeerden* (s.l.: s.n., 1685), pfl 12288.

³⁰ See Chapter 1.

³¹ L. van Hasselt, “‘Fake’ refugees in the Dutch Republic, ca. 1680–1700,” *Journal of the History of Ideas—Blog* (2022), <https://jhiblog.org/2022/07/13/fake-refugees-in-the-dutch-republic-ca-1680-1700/>.

³² *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant*, April 20, 1688. Thanks to Geert Janssen for bringing this source to my attention. For a more detailed description of this case, see van Hasselt, “‘Fake’ refugees in the Dutch Republic.”

³³ *Coye van het edict der herroeping van het Edict van Nantes, zoodanigh als het opgesteld was door den Raad van Conscientie* (s.l.: s.n., 1685), pfl 12289; *Copy van't edict van wederroeping van't Edict van Nantes, soo als het opgegeven was door den Raad van Conscientie* (s.l.: s.n., 1685), pfl 12290; *Edict van den koning van Vrankryck, inhoudende het verbodt van gene gereformeerde vergaderingen meer in sijn koninckrijck toe te laten* (s.l.: s.n., 1685), pfl 12292; *Edict des koninghs verbiedende eenige publike oeffeninge vande gepretendeerde gereformeerde religie in sijn rijk te doen* (s.l.: s.n., 1685), pfl 12293; see also Anonymous, *Processie of ommegangh gedaen door heel Vrankryck* (s.l.: s.n., 1686), pfl 12447.

³⁴ Anonymous, *Articles du sermens d'abjuration, que les Reformés de France sont obligés de faire en entrant dans l'Eglise romaine. Artikelen van den Eed van Afsweeringe, dewelcke die van de Gereformeerde Religie in Vrankrijk genootsaekt zijn te doen; als sij tot de Roomse Kerk overkomen* (s.l.: s.n., 1685), pfl 12283; Anonymous, *Articles du sermens d'abjuration, que les Reformés de France sont obligés de faire en entrant dans l'Eglise romaine* (s.l.: s.n., 1685), pfl 12282; Anonymous, *Articulen tegen de gereformeerde in Vrankryck* (s.l.: s.n., 1685), pfl 12281; Anonymous, *Belydenisse des geloofs ende formulier van de abjuration, welcke de soo genoemde nieuwljcks bekeerde in Vrankryck moeten onderteekenen* (s.l.: s.n., 1685), pfl 12285.

³⁵ As one pamphlet noted, however, the *Articles* stated that the signing Huguenots abjured their religion voluntarily; [J. Claude], *Plaintes des protestans cruellement opprimez dans le royaume de France* (s.l.: s.n., 1686), pp. 121–122.

Despite clear evidence to the contrary, as apparent in the existence of thousands of refugees seeking a safe haven abroad, there were serious concerns that the French court would successfully spread the story of peaceful conversion abroad. Jean Claude, one of the Huguenots' leading theologians, pointed out that any attempt to deny the persecutions was preposterous:

Is it likely that this prodigious number of people, of all kinds, of every condition, who have already saved themselves, some in Switzerland, others in Germany, others in England, others in Holland, others in Denmark, others in Sweden, and some in America, without ever having seen each other, never known each other, never collaborated, would have been able to agree all together to lie in the same way, and to say with one voice, that the Protestants are cruelly persecuted in France...?³⁶

Claude was nevertheless worried that if the attempted cover-ups were not properly countered, contemporaries and future generations might come to believe that the royal account of events was actually true.³⁷ Recounting the persecution was therefore not only a means to satisfy an interested audience, it was considered to be a moral imperative.³⁸ Others were less worried, but nevertheless irritated by the Crown's effort to whitewash the Revocation. The anonymous *Discovery of France's Intentions* expressed bewilderment about the insolence of contemporary French historians like Antoine Varillas, who claimed that strict adherence to the Edict of Nantes had already rid the entire country of Protestants before the Revocation—a claim which all Catholics who had witnessed the dragonnades throughout the country knew to be a boldfaced lie.³⁹ Most printed correspondence between Huguenot refugees and those still in France thus shared a devotion to journalistic detail. Together, they almost structurally provided Dutch bookshops with facts on the ground.

The role assigned to religion in these printed reports varied from author to author. Some indeed focused on martyrdom; the *Letter from a friend to a Reformed refugee* gave a meticulous description of a young nobleman who died for the true faith.⁴⁰ In a similar fashion, the aforementioned *Letter written from France* repeated the trope that God's Church was a persecuted church, thereby providing an interpretation of events based on confessional truth, before providing factual information.⁴¹ Yet the stories about martyrdom and God's persecuted church were not unproblematic. After all, conversion was way more prevalent than flight or martyrdom. In fact, Catholic commentators in France saw the lack

³⁶ Ibid., p. 127. ³⁷ Ibid. ³⁸ Ibid., p. 1.

³⁹ Anonymous, *Ontdeckinge van Vranckrycks oogmerken en uytwerckingen* (s.l.: s.n., 1686), pfl 12473, p. 39.

⁴⁰ Anonymous, *Brief van een vriend aan een gereformeerd vluchteling* (Rotterdam, 1687), pfl 12563.

⁴¹ Anonymous, *Lettre écrite de France*.

of Huguenot martyrs in the 1680s as proof of the falsehood of the Protestant religion.⁴² A published letter from refugees to the Evangelical Cantons in Switzerland summarized it as follows:

Alas! There are far more people who scandalize us with their fall than those who take pleasure in glorifying our Lord with their martyrdom.⁴³

Several reports were therefore less devoted to celebrating the suffering true religion, but found themselves confronted with a pressing problem that needed to be discussed. Correspondents formulated different answers to this question. Following a similar argument as the pastoral letters, the *Letter from a friend to a friend* deplored that so many abjured, admonishing readers that going to Mass equaled conversion—thus revisiting the question of Nicodemism, which had been vigorously discussed among the first generations of Calvinists in the sixteenth century.⁴⁴ The *True report of everything that happened during the conversion of those of the Reformed religion in Metz* was somewhat more forgiving and argued that many people who succumbed to the inhumane torments were nevertheless upright God-fearing people.⁴⁵ Another pamphlet, the *Charitable advice to relieve the conscience of those who are obliged to conform to the religion of the Roman Catholic Church* expressed irritation about all the finger-pointing at those who succumbed. It instead comforted recent converts by ecumenically arguing that God does not forgive or condemn people for being Catholic, Calvinist, or Lutheran.⁴⁶ The true religion is the Christian religion, which is spiritual and does not depend on practices. The author went as far as to argue that a genuine

⁴² Knetsch, “Debate on dragonnades,” p. 222.

⁴³ Anonymous, *La tres-humble requeste des refugiés & exulés de la France* (s.l., 1686), pfl 12451.

⁴⁴ Anonymous, *Lettre d'un amy à son amy, sur l'état ou la violence des dragons a réduit les Protestans en France* (s.l.: s.n., 1685), pfl 12306. For recent explorations of Nicodemism in early modern Europe see M. A. Overell, *Nicodemites: Faith and concealment between Italy and Tudor England* (Leiden and Boston, MA, 2018); J.-P. Cavaillé, “Nicodémisme et déconfessionnalisation dans l'Europe de la première modernité,” *Les Dossiers du Grihl* (2012), <http://journals.openedition.org/dossiersgrihl/4499>; similar confessional admonishments and encouragements can be found in: Anonymous, *Lettre aux fideles persécutés à l'occasion des Saintes Assemblées* (s.l.: s.n., 1686), pfl 12462; Anonymous, *Lettre aux fidèles protestans de la province de Poitou* (s.l.: s.n., 1688), pfl 12463; Anonymous, *Brief van een harder aen sijne protestantsche gemeente in Vranckryck* (Utrecht: s.n., 1685), pfl 12305; Anonymous, *A nos freres qui gemissent sous la captivité de Babylon* (s.l.: s.n., 1686), pfl 12461.

⁴⁵ Anonymous, *Récit véritable de tout ce qui c'est passé en la conversion de ceux de la Religion Réformée à Metz* (s.l.: s.n., 1686), pfl 12456; Anonymous, *Translaet uyt het Fransch. Waeractigh verhael van al't gepasseerde omtrent het bekeeren van die van de gereformeerde religie tot Metz* (s.l.: s.n., 1686), pfl 12457.

⁴⁶ Anonymous, *Avis charitable pour soulager le conscience de ceux qui sont obligés de se conformer au culte de l'Eglise Catholique-Romaine* (s.l.: s.n., 1686), pfl 12466. This pamphlet was also translated into Dutch: Anonymous, *Liefdadig berigt om de gemoederen der geene die gedwongen zijn, de kerkelijke plegtheden van de Roomze Kerk in te volgen, eeniger maaten te verlichten* (s.l., 1687), pfl 12566; Anonymous, *Minnelijke raedgevinge, om te verlichten het gemoet van die gene, dewelke verplicht zijn om sich te conformeren met den dienst van de rooms catholijke kerk* (s.l.: s.n., 1687), pfl 12565.

belief in transubstantiation could be a true expression of faith.⁴⁷ A published letter to the Swiss Evangelical Cantons also called for lenience toward those who had succumbed by appealing to human nature:

One should not talk about their error with too much horror; but it is necessary to make this testimony to the truth, that their temptation is more than human.⁴⁸

The printed correspondence between exiled pastors and their remaining flocks thus not only presented readers with triumphalist stories about Reformed martyrs, but also about the human responses to inhumane circumstances that could lead to Reformed defeat. Some letters were more reminiscent of Jurieu's psychology of conversion in his *Policy of the clergy* than his sectarian pastoral letters.⁴⁹ To what extent the newly converted should be reprimanded as bad Protestants or embraced as suffering humans was carefully negotiated, leading to different answers.

Anonymity

Many of the printed letters were undoubtedly written by exiled pastors. However, it is often impossible to identify the authors behind specific pamphlets, as the vast majority was published anonymously. For the Huguenots reporting from France, this was perhaps a wise decision; foreign agents, such as Ambassador Avaux, kept the French authorities well informed about what was coming off the Dutch presses, so one could easily get into trouble by providing a name. Furthermore, backed as they were by visible evidence in the shape of refugees in Europe's streets, not much was needed for an account of the persecutions to be convincing; the purpose of the reports was to inform audiences about the persecutions rather than persuade them that they had actually taken place. The anonymity of the authors was therefore unproblematic. Indeed, providing a name—which would not mean much to most readers in the first place—would often be of little added value.

Anonymity could also be part of the work's rhetoric. The *Pastoral letters*, for instance, were published anonymously, even though it was hardly a secret that they were written by Pierre Jurieu. In fact, almost all of Jurieu's works were published either anonymously, or under the acronym S.P.J.P.E.P.E.Th.A.R.⁵⁰ While cryptic, the acronym was far from indecipherable—Sieur Pierre Jurieu, pasteur et professeur en théologie à Rotterdam—and probably was not intended to be. As one scholar noted, initials created a “tension between discretion and

⁴⁷ Anonymous, *Récit véritable de tout ce qui c'est passé*.

⁴⁸ Anonymous, *La tres-humble requeste*. ⁴⁹ See Chapter 2.

⁵⁰ [P. Jurieu], *L'accomplissement des prophéties ou la délivrance prochaine de l'Eglise* (Rotterdam: Abraham Acher, 1686).

exposure . . . contributing to the text's intrigue."⁵¹ Whereas most readers who took the trouble to identify the author behind the work would certainly realize it was Jurieu, the supposed anonymity of the work gave it weight, promising that the reader would be presented with sensitive or exciting information.

Indeed, of all the pamphlets on the fate of the Huguenots between 1685 and 1690, only a handful were signed by the author. Exceptions are two letters written by galley slaves in 1687—who hoped to be freed—and a couple of Dutch songs and poems lamenting the persecution.⁵² In other pamphlets names were ostentatiously replaced with dots, signed N.N. (*nomen nescio*), or simply omitted. It is quite possible that anonymity also served a second rhetorical purpose: to influence or dispel the reader's preconceptions or prejudices. If the pamphlet stated on the cover that it had been written by, for instance, Pierre Jurieu or his rival Pierre Bayle, the reputation of the writer would immediately place the work in an ideological camp. Moreover, the inclusion of a name would implicitly condone this categorization. Yet anonymity remained a tricky device. Bayle, for instance, often published anonymously or assumed a fictional identity.⁵³ But when his *Dictionary* was attacked by an anonymous group of intellectuals—probably all of them Pierre Jurieu—he refused to reply to them on the basis of their anonymity.⁵⁴

Anonymity was not only an inducement to read the pamphlet with an open mind, it could also be used to deceive the reader. For instance, the *Conversation between a Frenchman and a Hollander*—which will be discussed in more detail below—is very likely to have been written by a Catholic Dutchman. However, it claimed to have been translated from French, thus suggesting that the author was a Huguenot refugee. By implying authorship by a “credible expert,” the actual author probably aimed to circumvent its immediate rejection as a form of Catholic propaganda. Paid propagandists commenting on the Revocation also chose to hide their authorship. In 1686, William III commissioned the prominent exiled pastor Jean Claude to write the *Complaints of the cruelly oppressed Protestants in the kingdom of France*, which will be explored in more detail below. It was published anonymously under the cover of Pierre Marteau in Cologne.⁵⁵ The

⁵¹ M. North, *The anonymous Renaissance: Cultures of discretion in Tudor-Stuart England* (Chicago, 2003), p. 69.

⁵² D. Poyen, *Lettre a messieurs les pasteurs & anciens des eglises françoises* (s.l.: s.n., 1687), pfl 12571; F. de la Mothe de Jourdan, *Lettre circulaire des fideles de France* (Rotterdam: Abraham Acher, 1687), pfl 12572; A. van Cuilemborgh, *Zions klaegh-lied, over de bloedige en wreede vervolgingen* (s.l.: s.n., 1686), pfl 12468; L. Rotgans, *Gedichten op de vervolging tegen de beleiders van de hervormde godsdienst, door Lowies de XIV* (Utrecht: Rudolph van Zijll, 1691), pfl 13625.

⁵³ A. McKenna, “Les masques de Pierre Bayle. Pratiques de l’anonymat,” in B. Parmentier (ed.), *L’Anonymat de l’oeuvre (XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles)* (Paris, 2013), pp. 237–248.

⁵⁴ A. Matytsin, “Fictional letters or real accusations? Anonymous correspondence in the Bayle–Jurieu controversy,” *Society and Politics* 7.2 (2013), p. 186.

⁵⁵ See Chapter 2; see also K. K. Walther, *Die deutschsprachige Verlagsproduktion von Pierre Marteau/Peter Hammer*, Köln. *Zur Geschichte eines fingierten Impressums* (Berlin, 1983).

work, after all, was supposed to be a complaint from “oppressed Protestants,” not William III’s perspective on Europe’s international stage.

Some authors went a step further by assuming fake identities. The year 1686 saw the publication of the *Letters from the rabbis of the two synagogues in Amsterdam to monsieur Jurieu*.⁵⁶ It responded to Pierre Jurieu’s *Accomplishment of the prophecies*, a hugely successful work that predicted the imminent revival of the Protestant Church and the downfall of the Antichrist.⁵⁷ In the *Accomplishment* Jurieu had included a letter to the Jews, encouraging them to convert before it was too late. In their reply, the rabbis argued that following Jurieu’s own reasoning, one had to conclude, as the Jews did, that the Messiah had not yet arrived. They concluded that Jurieu made up the predictions to prevent the Huguenots in France from converting to Catholicism.⁵⁸ Indeed, the success of prophetic interpretations of the Revocation lay to a considerable extent in the sense of purpose they gave to a traumatized and dispersed community. Jurieu reinterpreted the Huguenot diaspora, turning it from the conclusion of a story of loss into the beginning of a story of salvation. The *Letters from the rabbis* thus hit a sensitive nerve by drawing attention back to the loss.

The cover of the *Letters from the rabbis* states that the letter was published by Joseph Athias, a successful Amsterdam printer specializing in English, Hebrew, and Yiddish bibles and a well-known figure in the Dutch publishing world.⁵⁹ However, the Jewish printer—or his son, who had taken over the business in 1685—had not published the pamphlet, neither had it been written by the rabbis of Amsterdam; the Jews lived peacefully in Amsterdam, but as a religious minority they knew better than to take a firm and unnecessary public stance in the printed debates of their host society’s dominant confession—especially if it was against an influential figure like Jurieu. The pastor realized that the work was a “villainous satire,” but failed to discover that the author was Richard Simon—a famous Catholic exegete who played an important role in the rise of historical criticism.⁶⁰ Simon had composed the letter as revenge for the direct attacks he had suffered as a result of the *Accomplishment*.⁶¹ Being a strong proponent of Jewish toleration in France, it is highly unlikely that he wanted to cause problems for the Sephardic community in Amsterdam.⁶²

⁵⁶ [R. Simon], *Lettres des rabbins de deux synagogues d’Amsterdam à monsieur Jurieu* (Brussels: Joseph Athias, 1686). A Dutch translation was also printed: [R. Simon], *Brief van de rabbinen der twee synagogen van Amsterdam aen mons. Jurieu* (Brussels 1686), pflf 12540.

⁵⁷ For a list of different editions see Kappler, *Bibliographie critique de l’œuvre imprimée de Pierre Jurieu*, pp. 41–42.

⁵⁸ [Simon], *Lettres des rabbins*, p. 30; see also P.-M. Baude, “Les accomplissement des prophéties chez Richard Simon,” *Revue des Sciences philosophique et théologiques* 60.1 (1976), pp. 3–35.

⁵⁹ In 1661 Athias had been the first Jew to become a member of the Amsterdam printers guild; L. Fuks and R. L. Fuks-Mansfeld, *Hebrew typography in the Northern Netherlands 1585–1815* (Leiden and Boston, MA, 1987), p. 290.

⁶⁰ Knetsch, *Pierre Jurieu*, p. 208.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² In 1670, Simon had written a pamphlet in defense of the Jews in Metz, who had been accused of ritually murdering a Christian child. See P. Birnbaum, *Un récit de “meurtre rituel” au Grand Siècle. L’affaire Raphaël Levy* (Paris, 2008).

In short, the polemic was waged by two theologians, one a critical Catholic, the other an orthodox Protestant—both well networked in the international republic of letters. Yet Simon spoke with a Jewish voice as a rational outsider—not unlike Montesquieu’s Persians who would also be presented to the world by Pierre Marteau some three decades later—to reinforce the argument that Jurieu’s observations were contradictory. In doing so, the priest developed an argument often used by Protestants against Catholics, namely, that their behavior—or in this case Jurieu’s theology—was so contradictory to Christian doctrine that it made all of Christendom look bad in the eyes of the heathens. This was not the last time that Simon attacked Jurieu under a false identity; in 1687 he wrote a reply to one of Jurieu’s pastoral letters under the guise of a new convert, in which he attacked the preacher for making martyrs out of rebels, thus inciting the Huguenots to rebel.⁶³

Perpetrators

In the face of mass violence, public attention for the victims is often matched or trumped by the desire to determine the motivation(s) of the perpetrator. Why the Huguenots were persecuted was a vexed question. The official and semi-official proclamations from within and around the court offered little guidance. Few seemed to accept the arguments incriminating the Huguenots as rebels in order to legitimize the Revocation; accusations concerning their alleged rebellious nature were countered by stressing their unquestionable loyalty to the king during the Fronde.⁶⁴ The French court’s main claim that the Protestant religion was already dead by the time of the Revocation flew—as we have seen—in the face of undisputable evidence.

We have already briefly touched upon one understanding of the persecution, namely, that the true church is by definition a persecuted church. Some pamphleteers went further in their religious interpretations and provided millenarian accounts.⁶⁵ In March 1686, the *True prophecy concerning the heavy persecution* predicted that the “tyranny of popery” would end in 1689, before the papacy itself would dissolve in 2015.⁶⁶ The *Comment on the Roman numbers below* claimed that Louis XIV had to be the Beast of the Apocalypse. The author transposed the letters of LVDoVICV to Roman numbers, which added up to 666, and MagnV to XIII, which added up to 1685. Several verses from the Book of Revelation further served to prove this point.⁶⁷ One year before, Jurieu had made a similar calculation

⁶³ Adams, *Huguenots and French opinion*, pp. 24–25.

⁶⁴ See for instance Anonymous, *Extract van een brief, geschreeven uit Parys, den 25 augustus ao. 1688. aan den heer M. . . vluchteling tot Amsterdam* (s.l.: s.n., 1688), pfl 12696.

⁶⁵ For millenarianism in the United Provinces in the second half of the seventeenth century, see E. van der Wall, “Mystical millenarianism in the early modern Dutch Republic,” in J. C. Laursen and R. H. Popkin (eds.), *Millenarianism and Messianism in early modern European culture*, vol. 4 (Dordrecht, 2001), pp. 37–48.

⁶⁶ Anonymous, *Waerachtige prophetie, aengaende de hevige vervolginge* (s.l.: s.n., 1686), pfl 12469.

⁶⁷ Anonymous, *Aanmerkingh, op dese onderstaande syffer letteren* (s.l.: s.n., 1685), pfl 12304.

with Roman numbers to show that the pope was the Antichrist in his *Legitimate prejudices against popery*.⁶⁸ Richard Simon sarcastically responded to this prediction by making a calculation of his own: *Roterdami*, Jurieu's exile home, also added up to 666.⁶⁹

We do not know how widely accepted such prophecies were, but it appears that they were not marginal. On one copy of the *Comment on the Roman numbers below* in the Royal Library in The Hague, a contemporary reader had taken notes, complementing the biblical predictions with further interpretations. Moreover, in 1686 at least two different commemorative medals of the Revocation were minted, presenting the king's head enclosed by the same apocalyptic title.⁷⁰ In 1690 the Amsterdam-based refugee Jacques Massard adopted the calculation and backed it up with Nostradamus' prophecies in the *Explanation of a divine dream of Louis XIV*.⁷¹ Massard also interpreted two "divine dreams" of an unnamed gentleman "of quality and merit" from The Hague—possibly the author of the *Comment on the Roman numbers below*.⁷²

Yet as with the question of victimhood, the motivations of the perpetrator were not only explained with recourse to confessional truth claims. The author of the *Letter written from France*, while reminding his audience that God's Church is a persecuted church, nevertheless expressed confusion about why the persecution was actually taking place. He argued that only those who had "shaken off all reason, humanity, godliness, and love for one's own interest" would fail to condemn such barbarities.⁷³ He pointed out that France would ruin itself, because people of whatever religion would now refuse to deal with a kingdom that "has become emaciated from many years of taxation, persecution, and barrenness, and that is already swarming with miserable and desperate people."⁷⁴

In short, we again see that references to religious truth did not exclude an evaluation of events with recourse to the universal political norms of reason and humanity. Following the same reasoning as the Dutch cities used when they enthusiastically tried to attract the first refugees, pamphlets stipulated with a combination of complacency and astonishment that France was suffering a severe drain of skill and wealth.⁷⁵ In the *Discovery of France's intentions* a Huguenot wrote to a Catholic that

⁶⁸ Pierre Jurieu, *Prejugez legitimizez contre le papisme* (Amsterdam: Henry Desbordes, 1685), p. 120.

⁶⁹ Baude, "L'accomplissement des prophéties," p. 4.

⁷⁰ P. O. van der Chijs, *Beknopte verhandeling over het nut der beoefening van de algemeene, dat is: oude, middeleeuwsche en hedendaagsche munt- en penningkunde* (Leiden, 1829), p. 46; G. van Loon, *Hedendaagsche penningkunde* (The Hague: Christiaan van Lom, 1732), pp. 254–255.

⁷¹ J. Massard, *Explication d'un songe divin de Louis XIV* (Amsterdam: Jan & Gillis Janssons, 1690), pp. 47–49.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 55.

⁷³ Anonymous, *Lettre écrite de France*.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ While this idea has long echoed in historiography, Warren C. Scoville has argued that the economic consequences of the refuge have been overestimated; W. C. Scoville, *The persecution of the Huguenots and French economic development, 1680–1729* (Berkeley, CA, 1960).

you have not been very political, that you have ordered arrests, which have made all of Europe scream against you, . . . even though it did not bring you any advantage They have . . . fulminated against you with the weapons of reason, but because they were nothing but the weapons of reason, . . . which you do not hold in esteem, you have not corrected your mistakes.⁷⁶

Jurieu too argued in one of his pastoral letters that the capital and skills of the refugees “are lost to the state, while it has benefited the foreigners.”⁷⁷ This argument was also used by the few critical voices surrounding Louis XIV, such as that of Sébastien Le Prestre, Marquis of Vauban and Etienne-Jean Bouchu, Intendant of the Dauphiné, who argued that the Revocation had impaired the country’s economy and destroyed its commerce.⁷⁸ In other words, opinion makers who preached Protestant superiority on the one hand, saw no paradox in drawing on universal arguments against persecution in different contexts.

Historians have referred to the use of different rhetorical strategies as the “blunderbuss technique,” arguing that William III’s propagandists fired off “different lines of argument even though they were technically incompatible—and perhaps hoping that the passions aroused by their words would prevent close analysis in the audience.”⁷⁹ However, we have seen a similar dynamic in print media that cannot be straightforwardly identified as propaganda. People tried to understand the Revocation on different levels: Why did so many people succumb to the pressure? What considerations of prudence and reason would motivate a monarch to do such a thing? And where was God in all this? Some propagandists may have used blunderbusses, but other opinion makers took precisely targeted shots at these different questions. This might lead to incompatible arguments at times, but they appealed to different core values of society, which is never without its contradictions.

At the same time, we have discussed in preceding chapters that propagandists consciously played down confessional interpretations so as to pander to their audiences. This also happened in the wake of the Revocation. Before he openly aspired to the throne of England, William III commissioned Jean Claude to write the *Complaints of the Protestants*.⁸⁰ This was not the first time that William III

⁷⁶ Anonymous, *Ontdeckinge van Vrankrycks oogmerken*, pp. 13–14.

⁷⁷ Quotation from Van der Linden, *Experiencing exile*, p. 40.

⁷⁸ Scoville, *Persecution of the Huguenots*, pp. 12–15.

⁷⁹ Claydon, “Protestantism, universal monarchy,” p. 133; T. Claydon, *William III* (London and New York, NY, 2002), p. 141.

⁸⁰ [Claude], *Plaintes des protestans*. The pamphlet was also published in Dutch, German, and English: [J. Claude], *Klagten der gereformeerden wreedelijk verdrukt in het koningrijk van Vrankrijk* (Utrecht: François Halma, 1686); [J. Claude], *An account of the persecutions and oppressions of the Protestants in France* (London: J. Norris, 1686); [J. Claude], *Erbärmliche Klagten der Protestirenden Religionsverwandten, über deren grausamen Unterdrück- und Verfolgung im Königreich Franckreich* (s.l.: s.n., 1686); D. C. van der Linden, “Predikanten in ballingschap. De carrièrekansen van Jean en Isaac Claude in de Republiek,” *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 27.2 (2012), p. 153.

used the fate of the Huguenots for propagandistic purposes. As has become clear in Chapter 2, he already used their plight to give a confessional spin to a political debate in the first half of the 1680s. The *Complaints of the Protestants*, however, was intended to provide an ideological basis for the alliance that William III was forming with the Holy Roman Emperor (among others) against France, the Grand Alliance (League of Augsburg). Correspondingly, the *Complaints of the Protestants* refrained from appealing to confession. Instead, Claude inclusively argued that he would “not advance anything in these reflections that is not sensible or beyond anyone’s comprehension.”⁸¹ People on both sides of the confessional divide should be concerned about the fate of the Huguenots:

They will finally open their eyes, and this [persecution], which they have executed with so much arrogance and barbarism, will be known not only to Protestants, but also to wise, equitable, and circumspect Catholics . . . Indeed, if one wishes to take the trouble to reflect on these facts, which we have come to report, and which are continuing and public, one will see that not only are the Protestants oppressed, but also that the dignity of the king is profaned, his state offended, all of the universe’s princes interested, and the pope himself with his church and his clergy shamefully defamed.⁸²

The pamphlet argues that only a “faction of bigots” feel animosity toward the Huguenots, whereas all other Catholics, commoners as well as nobles, lament their fate.⁸³ Claude remained strikingly vague about who he believed these bigots were, but they were regarded as having won a factional struggle that allowed them to indulge in arbitrary government:

They set up one party against the other; and they call the state, whichever has the power in its hands. . . . [This is] what one calls a military government, which is not regulated by justice, reason, or even humanity.⁸⁴

The political dystopia that William III’s propagandist sketched was not one ruled by a voluntarist tyrant, but by a faction that had seized power from both the sovereign and his people. Louis XIV was largely kept out of the firing line, although Claude’s remark that it was “done in the sight of the sun,” was probably an allusion to the king.⁸⁵ The author concluded with the remark that religion

⁸¹ [Claude], *Plaintes des protestans*, pp. 6–7.

⁸² [Claude], *Plaintes des protestans*, pp. 75–76.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 37. The argument that ordinary Catholics deplored the persecution of their Protestant compatriots can also be found in Anonymous, *Ontdeckinge van Vranckrycks oogmerken*; Anonymous, *Den Franssen luypaert sijn bedrogh by al de wereldt ten toon gestalt* (Amsterdam: H. de Jonge, 1689), pfl 13141.

⁸⁴ [Claude], *Plaintes des protestans*, p. 105.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 120; for the iconography of Louis XIV as the Sun King, see H. Ziegler, *Der Sonnenkönig und seine Feinde. Die Bildpropaganda Ludwigs XIV. in der Kritik* (Imhof, 2010), pp. 21–53.

should never be made to depend on the king's pleasure, but refrained from open accusations against Louis XIV. Given the imagined authors of the work—"the Protestants in France"—open accusations to the king would not fit the rhetoric, as it would constitute *lèse-majesté*. Instead, factionalism and a lack of royal authority were identified as the main problems and the Revocation was but one example of the forms of bad government this could lead to:

It only takes another intention, another passion to satisfy, another vengeance to exert, and then woe to those who want to oppose it; the dragoons will not have forgotten their profession.⁸⁶

This inhumane and unreasonable government was not only fatal to France itself, but required a response from all Protestant princes and states, as the Revocation was only the first step in the French government's attempt at the total annihilation of their religion. Catholic rulers too should see that the Revocation strengthened the voice of those who distrusted their princes, "which can only produce very ill effects."⁸⁷ Moreover, common Catholics should realize that it provided a precedent for a policy in which "all who do not want to submit to the yoke will be heretics"—turning the old discussion about heresy as rebellion on its head.⁸⁸ The clergy, in turn, would suffer from the bad image that France gave them.⁸⁹ All in all, the Revocation exemplified disastrous tyrannical government, which, as a communicative act toward Europe's many subjects, endangered the entire balance between church, state, and society.

In short, Jean Claude, a minister who had built up a reputation in France for engaging in polemics with Jansenists and Catholics about theological issues, wrote a confessionally neutral condemnation of the persecution by arguing how it violated all shared political norms of rule of law, reason, and humanity which ordered society, regardless of confession. Written using the voice of ever-loyal Huguenot subjects, the *Complaints of the Protestants* explicitly rejected resistance, not unlike Jurieu had in his *Last efforts*. As to the desired international reaction, on the other hand, Claude stated plainly but tellingly that it was "to be hoped that the Protestant princes and states will draw the right conclusions from this."⁹⁰ As was the case with the Waldensians in Piedmont, international intervention was presented as the alternative to domestic disobedience.

Interestingly, the pamphlet's supraconfessional message did not prevent the Count of Avaux from seeing it as a Calvinist manifesto.⁹¹ The count was greatly alarmed by the *Complaints of the Protestants*, which he knew to have been written

⁸⁶ [Claude], *Plaintes des protestans*, p. 150.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 156–157; see Chapter 1.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

⁹¹ For an elaborate discussion of manifestos see Chapters 1 and 4.

by Claude for William III.⁹² On April 18, he sent a copy to Louis XIV, with a letter, explaining the danger of the work:

This is not a printed work dealing, like the others, with matters of religion, nor with exaggerations of what has been done in France; . . . It is a proper manifesto for the commencement of a war of religion, which the Calvinists are capable of waging.⁹³

The Sun King was less concerned. He responded to Avaux that “we should let them spit their bile without worrying ourselves too much about it.”⁹⁴ Nevertheless, in the same year the royal printer published a refutation of both the *Complaints of the Protestants* and Jurieu’s *Policy of the clergy*.⁹⁵ The *Response to the complaints of the Protestants*—written by theologian and playwright David-Augustin de Brueys, who had converted to Catholicism in 1681—was a lengthy sectarian work, stipulating the errors of the Calvinist religion.⁹⁶

We thus see an interesting dynamic; the French Crown felt most pressured to respond to a Huguenot pamphlet that provided a confessionally neutral evaluation of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, but ultimately did so by harking back to theology. This suggests that the Crown aimed to convince Catholic readers—who might be impressed by Claude and Jurieu’s universal arguments—rather than the Dutch Protestants in whose republic these works were published. Where one ruler employed the printing press to smooth over religious differences, the other used it to drive a wedge between the confessions.

Both adversaries thus accused each other of using the persecution to stir up confessional animosity in Europe. The anonymous *Political discourse on the Reformation which is currently enacted in France* even tried to rationalize the persecution of the Huguenots as an effort by Louis XIV to break the alliances made against him. The *Political discourse* contextualized the persecution as part of Louis XIV’s efforts to establish a universal monarchy.⁹⁷ The author argued that the persecution of the Huguenots had nothing to do with religion, but “stems from a

⁹² Across the Channel, the French ambassador to England convinced James II that the *Plaintes des protestans* should be burned by a public executioner. When the Lord Chancellor protested that the work dealt with foreign matters and did not harm the peace in the realm, James II replied that sovereigns had a common duty to protect each other against libel. The ritual burning caused discontent among the population, who regarded it as proof that their king did not condemn the persecution of Protestants; J. Lingard, *A history of England from the first invasion by the Romans*, vol. 14 (Paris, 1831), p. 97.

⁹³ *Négociations de Mons. Le Comte d’Avaux en Hollande depuis 1679, jusqu’en 1688*, vol. 4 (Paris: Durand and Pissot, 1704), pp. 130–131.

⁹⁴ Quotation taken from Van der Linden, “Predikanten in ballingschap,” p. 153.

⁹⁵ See Chapter 2.

⁹⁶ D.-A. Brueys, *Réponse aux plaintes des Protestans* (Paris: Sebastien Mabre-Cramoisy, 1686).

⁹⁷ The idea of Louis XIV aiming for universal monarchy had already been introduced in the Dutch Republic in 1668, with the influential *Le Bouclier d’état et de justice*; J. Klaitis, *Printed propaganda under Louis XIV: Absolute monarchy and public opinion* (Princeton, NJ, 2015), p. 88.

very delicate policy, and it requires using all the power of the mind to penetrate what its political purpose might be.”⁹⁸ The Revocation was intended to cause outrage among Europe’s Protestant powers and incite them to persecute their Catholic minorities in retaliation, which, in turn, would anger Europe’s Catholic princes.⁹⁹ By stirring up confessional hostility, Louis XIV hoped to realign Europe’s alliances across confessional lines, to his advantage.¹⁰⁰ In other words, the Sun King tried to once again divide Europe, which had moved beyond the dangerous maxim of confessional tribalism.

Pamphlets like the *Complaints of the Protestants* and the *Political discourse* formed the ideological foundation of the supraconfessional—yet eventually ineffective—Grand Alliance, which was founded in 1686 to thwart France’s plans. Although supraconfessional alliances were certainly not new, they were not considered unproblematic either; Emperor Leopold I had to consult with his theologians and search for a religious fiat before he engaged in an alliance with Protestant princes against a Catholic king.¹⁰¹ It was therefore an important strategy of legitimation to discredit Louis XIV’s quality as a Catholic prince, or indeed, as his title suggested, the “most Christian” of princes. A lively literature developed in which it was argued that Louis XIV was hiding his Machiavellian interests under a cloak of religion—an argument which had become part and parcel of practically every evaluation of the international religious politics of princes since the Protestant Reformation.¹⁰² During the Nine Years War, the image of the Sun King as an impious religious persecutor could easily be used to frame France’s foreign campaigns. The *French leopard’s deceit shown to the whole world*, an anonymous letter by a “Catholic gentleman” published in 1689 in Amsterdam, recounted the advancements of French troops in the Holy Roman Empire:

The war which [Louis XIV] has declared on the emperor and the Reich, and the inhumanity with which he persecutes the Catholic and clerical princes, can be ranked among the cruelest persecutions that God’s Church has suffered since it was first instituted.¹⁰³

⁹⁸ Anonymous, *Discours politique sur la reformation qui se fait aujourd’huy en France* (s.l.: s.n., 1685), pflf 12299, p. 3. For the Dutch translation see Anonymous, *Politick discours over de reformatie die tegenwoordig in Vrankrijk wort gepleegt* (s.l.: s.n., 1685), pflf 12300.

⁹⁹ Anonymous, *Discours politique*, pp. 4–5.

¹⁰⁰ The same argument is found in Anonymous, *De geest van Vrankryk, en de grond-regelen van Lodewyk de XIV. Aan Europa ontdekt* ([Vrystadt]: [Geeraard de Smeeder], 1688), pflf 12727.

¹⁰¹ A. C. Thompson, “The grand alliances,” *EGO* (2013), <https://d-nb.info/1043623442/34>.

¹⁰² See P. Bonnet, “La ‘Monarchie Universelle’ de Louis XIV. Une notion clé de la pensée politique, de Campanella à Montesquieu,” *Littératures classiques* 76 (2011), pp. 133–146.

¹⁰³ Anonymous, *Den Franssen luypaert sijn bedrogh by al de wereldt ten toon gestalt* (Amsterdam: H. de Jonge, 1689), pflf 13141; Claydon, “Protestantism, universal monarchy.”

The *Complaints of the Protestants* and the *Political discourse* thus provide striking examples of how pamphleteers deconfessionalized and reconfessionalized the Revocation to suit their desired audiences. As a Williamite propagandist, Jean Claude consciously constructed a condemnation of the Huguenot persecution on inclusive political norms, even though he had engaged in confessional polemic in France and had stirred up confessional polarization in England. On the one hand, this should remind us to be careful not to confuse opinionating print media with the prevalent public opinion of the society in which it circulated. On the other hand, it shows that the line between religion and politics did not necessarily become thinner, to be hotly debated in the public sphere.

To sum up, several opinion makers—at least one of them a leading intellectual and religious figure—developed rather complex interpretations of the persecutions which can be described as religiously impartial, but were nonetheless fully devoted to the old problem of Europe’s confessional divisions. Instead of dwelling on confessional truth claims, these authors brought questions of cruelty, bigotry, arbitrary government, and universal monarchy to the fore—the antonyms of a society based on human sociability. It is important to note that Protestants had a long history of associating these vices with Catholicism. Yet it is highly significant that several pamphleteers in the 1680s purposefully refrained from associating them with Catholicism in their argumentation. They had long been used to accusing Catholics of plans more sinister than doctrinal error alone. Now, they were detached from Catholicism altogether. The lines that divided Europe were being (re)negotiated.

We see a similar dynamic in questions about the Catholic majority in France. Although never becoming a major theme in pamphlet literature, the question of whether Louis XIV’s Catholic subjects had a shared responsibility in the persecutions was also a matter of public dispute. Historians have pointed out that many Huguenots stressed in their diaries that they had received help from Catholic acquaintances during their flight.¹⁰⁴ However, perhaps such iterations testify more to discussion than agreement among the Huguenots about the role played by their Catholic compatriots. The *Discovery of France’s intentions* expressed two divergent opinions on the matter. The pamphlet consists of three letters, two of them written by a pair of Huguenot refugees in London to a mutual acquaintance, an anonymous abbot in France.

The presumed author of the first letter was a young man who, according to the author of the second letter, was part of London’s libertine circles. The author angrily wondered how “a nation which is so rich in its multiplicity of people . . . is so devoid of honest men.”¹⁰⁵ None of the Catholics, he recalled, whatever their social background—noblemen, clergymen, peasants, marshals, ministers, or

¹⁰⁴ Van der Linden, *Experiencing exile*, pp. 163–166; Labrousse, “*Une foi, une loi, un roi?*,” p. 85.

¹⁰⁵ Anonymous, *Ontdeckinge van Vrankrycks oogmerken*, p. 5.

councilors advising the king—voiced their objections.¹⁰⁶ Because no one did, everybody was hence an accomplice to the persecutions—comparable to the concept of the “bystander” in Holocaust studies.¹⁰⁷ This argument is interesting because it presupposed a moral duty to help those wrongfully persecuted by the state. The idea that passivity equals complacency rings surprisingly modern in an age in which most resistance theory conceded little more than the right to protect one’s own life against the state.

The other refugee author in the *Discovery of France’s intentions*, by contrast, reassured the abbot that the libertine’s voice was not representative of all those who fled from France. He argued that everyone knew that there were innumerable honest people “of all sexes, conditions, and professions . . . who greatly pitied our sorrows” and helped the Huguenots hide or flee.¹⁰⁸ Indeed, only the converters and those who executed the court’s orders or encouraged the king, should be blamed for the persecution. Concerning the rest, one could only say that they did not have the courage to openly protest against what their hearts disapproved of.¹⁰⁹

Hosts

Having explored the Revocation literature published in the United Provinces we can ask ourselves the question of what contemporary Dutchmen and women could learn about the persecutions if they went to a bookshop and bought the latest pamphlets on the matter. They might read that this was all the clergy’s fault, or the French king’s, because he was the Antichrist or because he wanted to trick his European adversaries. They might also read translations of the pastoral letters from exiled clergy to the remaining Protestants in France, urging them, or rather warning them, not to convert. From yet another pamphlet, they might realize how difficult it was not to succumb, reading about the daily horrors experienced by the Huguenots in provinces such as Béarn and the Languedoc, whose families were robbed, beaten, and deprived of their sleep until their spirits were broken. If this Dutch person could get his or her hands on the print *Tyrannies against the Reformed in France* by the famous etcher Romeyn de Hooghe, he or she would see the destruction of the Reformed churches, how dragoons and priests hung children upside down, violated women or burned them at the stake, and how men were driven like cattle to the galleys (see Figure 6). In the middle of the print, consumers would also see the happy ending to this story: the arrival of the Huguenots in the Dutch Republic; the stadtholder and his wife welcoming the

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁰⁷ See C. Morina and K. Thijs (eds.), *Probing the limits of categorization: The bystander in Holocaust history* (New York, NY, 2019); R. A. Goldberg, “The bystander during the Holocaust,” *Utah Law Review* 4 (2017), pp. 649–659.

¹⁰⁸ Anonymous, *Ontdeckinge van Vrankrycks oogmerken*, p. 5.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 37.



Figure 6. Romeyn de Hooghe, *Tyrannies against the Reformed in France*, 1686, reproduced with permission from the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

refugees, supported by the Republic's dignitaries; Dutch men and women generously handing out food and money to the despaired newcomers; in the background a new church being built; a story that ends with a new beginning.¹¹⁰

This is where most stories ended, even though for the Dutch it was at this point that the persecution of the Huguenots changed from a foreign event into a domestic issue. Where did all the money come from and was it charity or investment? Were the refugees here to stay? What were the (desired) consequences of the Revocation for the Dutch Republic? These were pressing questions to which the pamphlets discussing the problem of mass conversion, the causes of the Revocation, or its international political significance failed to provide an answer. De Hooghe presented an idealistic picture of an overjoyed society welcoming the refugees, even though he realistically represented the arriving refugees as needy, initially requiring money rather than bringing it. For all the belief in the economic benefits of immigration, the sober reality was that the Huguenots often found it hard to make ends meet.¹¹¹ Of course, the Dutch were aware of this, as

¹¹⁰ R. de Hooghe, "Vervolging der protestanten in Frankrijk na de herroeping van het Edict van Nantes," Rijksmuseum, <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/collectie/RP-P-OB-55.182>.

¹¹¹ See Van der Linden, *Experiencing exile*, pp. 39–78.

they had to take care of the rising numbers of refugee paupers.¹¹² Already in February, the States of Groningen published a resolution stating that all exiles were to be interrogated, to guarantee that no Catholics pretending to be Reformed refugees would receive any money.¹¹³ Still, our hypothetical Dutch person would look in vain for images about the more practical ramifications of integration, and there were few pamphlets that discussed these matters.

Those that did, however, are telling. According to the *Extract from a letter written from Paris*, the influx of Huguenot refugees was not only encouraged and celebrated as an economic opportunity, but also gave rise to some concern among the Dutch population.¹¹⁴ The pamphlet—presenting itself as letter from a Huguenot in Paris to an exile—tried to dispel alleged concerns among the Dutch about an impending war with France and the refugees, whose loyalty to their exile home was questioned. The author argued that “the papists and some envious people” tried to make people believe that the refugees “are very pleased with their king and nation,” despise the Republic’s “aristocratic government,” and would return to France at the earliest opportunity.¹¹⁵ He countered these concerns with the classical narrative that the refugees in question were willing to leave everything for their faith and had no desire to return, that all peoples love their nations, and that the Dutch and French were the most similar among all of them. Indeed, the author contended “that in twenty or thirty years there will be little difference between the old and the new inhabitants of the Reformed Netherlands.”¹¹⁶

The *Extract from a letter* also suggests that there were concerns about the financial consequences of opening all gates to the refugees, to which the author replied by distinguishing three “classes” of refugees: those with enough possessions, income, and commercial opportunity, those who exercised enough diligence to make a decent living, and those who did not. The last category, however, could provide recruits for the army and navy, be used to populate old and new colonies, be given land, tax-cuts or “more privileges than to the natives of the country.”¹¹⁷ Between 1687 and 1689 the Dutch East India Company (VOC) indeed took a total of about 180 Huguenots to the Cape Colony.¹¹⁸ They had

¹¹² Ibid., p. 71.

¹¹³ L. Flugger, *Privilegien voor de Franse en andere gereformeerde vluchtelingen* (Groningen: S.n., 1686), pfl 12449.

¹¹⁴ Anonymous, *Extract van een brief*. The pamphlet is presumably a translation of Anonymous, *Extrait d'une lettre de mr. *** a monsr. *** réfugié à Amsterdam* (s.l.: s.n., 1688), pfl 12695.

¹¹⁵ Anonymous, *Extract van een brief*, p. 4. The hope to one day be able to return to France in fact remained widespread among exiled Huguenots throughout the first half of the eighteenth century. See Lachenicht, *Hugenotten in Europa*, pp. 223–230.

¹¹⁶ Anonymous, *Extract van een brief*, p. 5.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 6; for a comparative overview of privileges granted to the Huguenots see Lachenicht, *Hugenotten in Europa*, pp. 105–215.

¹¹⁸ For a good overview of imperial settlement projects involving the Huguenots see Stanwood, *The global Refuge*.

been recruited in main refugee centers in the United Provinces and Germany to work in the winegrowing industry and were offered free passage and citizenship.¹¹⁹ The VOC actively tried make the Huguenots integrate as quickly as possible by not allowing them to live in their own quarters.¹²⁰ In short, the *Extract from a letter* argued that the Dutch had nothing to worry about:

In one word, in such a well governed republic like Holland, a person who behaves honestly and who has a good desire to work is never useless If there are beggars, idlers and rascals, let them return: they are merely a burden to the state. But I am assured that they are very few in numbers.¹²¹

Besides commercial benefits, the author also appealed to confession: an increase in Protestants in the United Provinces would make its Catholic population relatively smaller.¹²² The *Extract from a letter* is the only pamphlet in which we find this argument and nothing points to this being part of the immigration policy of the civic authorities. However, it reflects a strategy prevalent among many early modern European rulers to demographically strengthen their confession in their domains by taking in co-religionist refugees.¹²³

Interestingly, there is no evidence that any of the Dutch concerns about the refugees which the *Extract from a letter* aimed to take away ever found their way to the printing presses—as they had in England some years earlier.¹²⁴ This absence of critical printed discussions about the Huguenots as a domestic issue corresponds with the dynamics of the Republic’s publicity culture; complaints about the accommodation of refugees or their (lack of) integration in the labor market could easily be interpreted as criticism of the authorities, which was rare to find in print in times of (relative) domestic concord. A minor exception is Professor Petrus Francius of the Athenaeum Illustre in Amsterdam. In a printed oration from 1686, he warned of the danger of a “spiritual annexation” by the Huguenots, which might lead to political subjugation by France.¹²⁵ However, since it was published in Latin it could hardly be regarded as libelous.¹²⁶

The main domestic tension caused by the influx of refugees fought out through the printing press was not between the Dutch and newcomers, but between Dutch

¹¹⁹ T. Wijsenbeek, “Identity lost: Huguenot refugees in the Dutch Republic and its former colonies in North America, 1650–1750. A comparison,” *South African Historical Journal* 59.1 (2007), pp. 87–88.

¹²⁰ A. Algra and H. Algra, *Dispereert niet. Twintig eeuwen historie van de Nederlanden*, vol. 5 (Franeker 1956), pp. 247–248; P. Denis, “The Cape Huguenots and their legacy in Apartheid South Africa,” in Van Ruymbeke and Sparks (eds.), *Memory and identity*, p. 285.

¹²¹ Anonymous, *Extract van een brief*, pp. 6–7.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹²³ S. Lachenicht, “Refugees and refugee protection in the early modern period,” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 30.2 (2016), pp. 269–270.

¹²⁴ See Chapter 2.

¹²⁵ G. C. Gibbs, “Some intellectual and political influences of the Huguenot emigrés in the United Provinces, c. 1680–1730,” *BMGN—Low Countries Historical Review* 90.2 (1975), p. 255.

¹²⁶ P. Francius, *Oratio de usu et praestantia linguae graecae* (Amsterdam: Joannes Rieuwertsz, 1686).

Protestants and Dutch Catholics. This was partly fueled by the religious and worldly authorities; following the Revocation, the synods insisted with renewed energy that placards defining the position of Catholics should strictly be adhered to.¹²⁷ The States General tried to renew the placards forbidding the exercise of the Catholic religion and issued several new laws forbidding Catholics to take certain offices.¹²⁸ Apostolic vicar Johannes van Neercassel claimed that he had to prevent Amsterdam's magistrates from expelling all the regular clergy, by promising that Catholics would no longer send money abroad and that the city's Catholic orders would only accept Dutchmen.¹²⁹

As had been the case during the Piedmont Easter, again the question of charity had given rise to interconfessional tensions. Van Neercassel urged Catholics in Holland to counter any accusations against their community by being especially generous during fundraisers for the refugees.¹³⁰ On December 7, 1685 he wrote to Rome that the Catholic churches would collect alms for the Huguenots and that the priests had urged their flock to be generous, "to aid the unfortunate as well as to assure the grace of the magistrates and to appease with their compassion the rage of the people."¹³¹ Two weeks later, the apostolic vicar wrote that the magistrates of Leiden had ordered the city's Catholics to double the charity they had raised for the exiles, believing they had contributed too little. Eventually, only the rich were required to contribute more. Their names and the amount of their almsgiving were reported to the civic authorities.¹³² Haarlem's Catholics ultimately raised more than one-third of the charity for the city's Huguenot refugees, even though they only constituted somewhere between one-eighth and one-quarter of the population.¹³³

Like Avaux, Van Neercassel singled out the printing press as a main instigator of public hostility, repeatedly mentioning that letters and printed relations pitted the Dutch Reformed against their Catholic countrymen. He argued that the refugees, and foremost Pierre Jurieu, were champions of persecution, who incited

¹²⁷ L. J. Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme in Noord-Nederland in de zestiende en zeventiende eeuw*, vol. 2 (Amsterdam, 1947), p. 266.

¹²⁸ The religiously moderate States of Holland, whose cities were home to sizable Catholic communities, thwarted this initiative; W. P. C. Knuttel, *De toestand der Nederlandsche katholieken ten tijde der Republiek* (The Hague, 1894), pp. 292–295.

¹²⁹ Van Gelder, *Getemperde vrijheid*, 134; Knuttel, *Toestand der Nederlandsche katholieken*, pp. 294–296.

¹³⁰ There is no evidence of Catholic expulsions from Zeeland. To what extent Catholics in Zeeland experienced popular violence is unclear; Knuttel, *Toestand der Nederlandsche katholieken*, p. 312.

¹³¹ Quotation taken from B. Neveu, "Les protestants français réfugiés aux Pays-Bas vus par un évêque catholique. Lettres de Jean de Neercassel à Louis-Paul Du Vaucel (1685–1686)," *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français* 113.1 (1967), p. 55.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 58.

¹³³ H. Bots, G. H. M. Posthumus Meyes, and F. Wieringa, *Vlucht naar de vrijheid. De Hugenoten en de Nederlanden* (Amsterdam, 1985), p. 72; J. W. Spaans, "Katholieken onder curatele. Katholieke armenzorg als ingang voor overheidsbemoeienis in Haarlem in de achttiende eeuw," *Trajecta* 3 (1994), p. 110.

Dutch Protestants to an “English fury against Catholics”—a reference to the recent Popish Plot in England.¹³⁴ In his correspondence with a French priest in Rome, the apostolic vicar sketched how this polarization could become dangerous, pointing out that “not a day goes by when new accounts are not spread about the cruelty of persecution to which the Reformed in France are subjected.”¹³⁵

It is incredibly difficult, if not impossible, to measure the influence of print media in the development of such popular sentiments, first of all because one cannot calculate how widely such anti-Catholic sentiments were actually supported. Second, we cannot retrieve the voices of those other great opinion makers, the ministers who preached to their congregations from the pulpit every Sunday, nor can we hear the myriad face-to-face discussions at home, in taverns, or in the streets. More importantly, it would be asking the wrong question, as none of the surviving pamphlets written in response to the Revocation ever called for violence against (Dutch) Catholics. Even Jurieu, although a staunch opponent of religious tolerance, never took this stance. Although his post-Revocation writings were firmly structured around confessional arguments, he refrained from demonizing Catholics, as he believed that the Catholic Church was still redeemable.¹³⁶ Moreover, William III’s consistent tolerationist stance toward Dutch Catholics must have had a moderating effect on Jurieu and other publishing pastors.¹³⁷ The most aggressively anti-Catholic pamphlets, as we have seen, directed their attacks at the clergy, the pope, the king, or the dragoons, not against common Catholics. Even if those who harassed Catholics in the street did so with such pamphlets in their hands it would not prove that the pamphlets were the main cause of aggression. Moreover, none of the anti-Catholic measures appear to have been officially legitimized by print media.

Of course, this does not mean that print media did not incite distrust. Pamphlets that focus on the suffering of the persecuted Reformed without accusing Catholics in general could nevertheless trigger old prejudices and anxieties about the Catholics living outside and within one’s community. But again, it appears to have been Dutch authors who were most devoted to framing the Revocation within an antagonistic confessional framework. For instance, the Dutch pastor Aemilius van Cuilemborgh from Heusden, a fortified town on the border of the predominantly Catholic Generality Lands, published songs about the persecution of the Huguenots that strongly centered around a sense of confessional conflict. Some parts of the text were quite straightforwardly hostile to Catholics in general:

¹³⁴ Gibbs, “Some intellectual and political influences,” p. 275.

¹³⁵ Neveu, “Les protestants français,” p. 56.

¹³⁶ Onnekink, “Models of an imagined community,” p. 210.

¹³⁷ See J. I. Israel, “William III and toleration,” in O. P. Grell and J. I. Israel (eds.), *From persecution to toleration: The Glorious Revolution and religion in England* (New York, NY and Oxford, 1991), pp. 129–170.

No regulation restrains their rage,
 And they are deaf to countless dismal plaints
 These are the marks since day and age,
 Of clinging to the Popish faith.¹³⁸

There were also more subtle, mundane discussions about what the Revocation meant or ought to mean for Catholics in the United Provinces. In 1688, the *Reason and proposal for the consolation of the poor French refugees* took up the argument that refugees were good for the economy to accuse Dutch Catholics of having contributed too little during the fundraisers for the refugees. The author proposed to tax Catholic inheritances six percent for a period of five years, to be invested in the poor relief of the Huguenots. He also argued for a tax in wax candles, which the Catholics used for Mass. These taxes would help the Huguenots prosper “just like the descendants of those who departed from the Spanish Netherlands and Germany and now comprise the main pillars of our stock exchange.”¹³⁹ Moreover, Catholics had equally benefited from the raised value of real estate, which the influx of refugees had brought about.¹⁴⁰ If we read between the lines, we see traces of concern and disappointment about the financial burden of the refugees. But rather than criticizing state and civic policy, frustration was deflected to the usual scapegoats.

These taxation proposals should be seen in the light of the changing legal position of Dutch Catholics in the second half of the seventeenth century. Local authorities increasingly decided that confessional minorities should take care of their own poor relief, which required them to organize themselves more openly as corporate bodies in society—leading to a clearer segmentation of religions.¹⁴¹ In other words, the organization of poor relief helped transform the Catholic community from a group that officially did not exist, to a discriminated but recognized confessional minority—not unlike the Huguenots had once been in France. The *Reason and proposition* strikingly illustrates that the institutional recognition of the Catholic community was a double-edged sword; their increased visibility gave a spin to old discussions about their civic status and reputation, a debate that was made topical by the Revocation. The pamphlet also sheds light on a problem; since poor relief was in principle organized within confessional communities, the Reformed in refugee centers were suddenly confronted with a particularly heavy burden. To make the other confessions chip in, they had to deconfessionalize the

¹³⁸ A. van Cuilemborgh, *Eerbiedige en vrymoedige aenspraeck aen den grooten Louis* (Dordrecht: Symon onder de Linde, 1687), p. 22.

¹³⁹ Anonymous, *Beweegreden en propositie tot soulaas der arme Franse vluchtelingen van de Gereformeerde religie* (Amsterdam: s.n., 1688), pfl 13039.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ See J. W. Spaans, “Religious policies in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic,” in Po-Chia Hsia and Van Nierop (eds.), *Calvinism and religious toleration*, pp. 72–86.

issue by arguing that the refugees were there for the welfare of the entire population.

The *Reason and proposition* became the object of discussion in another pamphlet, the *Dialogue on the taxes in Holland*, a conversation piece between a friar from Brabant, a Huguenot refugee, and a lawyer from The Hague who are traveling from Haarlem to Leiden on a towing barge.¹⁴² The friar complains about the proposed taxes on candles, arguing that it is not fair that Dutch Catholics have to pay for crimes committed by clergy in France. The lawyer responds that Dutch Catholics belong to the same brotherhood as their French co-religionists and without a doubt share their inclinations. He therefore considers it a good thing to make them bleed a little and argues that they should be happy that they are not held responsible for the persecutions.¹⁴³ The refugee adds that “they should clip their wings a little bit, to teach them how to live.”¹⁴⁴ The lawyer believes that it is mostly rich Catholics who will be hit by the taxes, to which the friar replies that he is not so sure. After all, surgeons and students too need candles.¹⁴⁵ The friar continues by arguing that Catholics already have to take care of their own poor, to which the lawyer replies that every confessional group does, including the Jews. Nevertheless, they all financially support the Huguenots. The lawyer sarcastically remarks that if Catholics have too many poor to take care of and if their orphans are too much of a burden that they can “give them to us; they will become good Reformed, without dragoons.”¹⁴⁶ Catholics, the lawyer asserts, should realize that the Huguenots are now their fellow citizens and that magistrates have the right to force people to financially support them if they do not do so freely. The friar then contends that making Catholics charge more is in violation of the Pacification of Ghent and the Union of Utrecht—the Dutch Republic’s *de facto* constitution. The advocate replies that the documents do not say this.¹⁴⁷

We cannot know to what extent Dutchmen and women or Huguenot refugees agreed with what they read in the *Dialogue on the taxes in Holland*. Yet the work does offer telling insight in the parameters of discussion about confessional and civic identity. The lawyer, for instance, insists that if Catholics were persecuted in the United Provinces like the Huguenots had been, there would have certainly

¹⁴² Anonymous, *Dialogue sur les impôts de Hollande* (Amsterdam: s.n., 1688), pfl 13040.

¹⁴³ *De Gemoederen van een Roomsche Catholyk, Remonstrant en een Protestant*, published in 1689 under the pseudonym Hater van Mijneed (Hater of Perjury), accuses Dutch Catholics of supporting the persecutions and hoping for a new French invasion; Anonymous, *De gemoederen van een Roomsche Catholyk, Remonstrant en een Protestant* (Amsterdam: [Hater van Mijneed], 1689), pfl 13292. The *Hollants, Engelants en aller protestanten aenstaende wee*, in turn, argued that the Catholics would be foolish to rejoice if William III failed to claim the throne; if James II and Louis XIV invaded the Republic, they would murder Protestant and Catholic alike, just like the Duke of Alba had done one century before. In other words, the two Catholic kings posed a national problem, not a religious one; Anonymous, *Hollants, Engelants en aller protestanten aenstaende wee* (Hellevoetsluis: S.n., 1688), pfl 13023.

¹⁴⁴ Anonymous, *Dialogue sur les impôts*, p. 6.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

been anti-Protestant reprisals in France. Upon this, the friar asks his travel companion whether he is not himself a Calvinist. The lawyer replies affirmatively, but he emphasizes that had he been a Catholic, he would still have seen no injustice in the taxation on candles for Catholics.¹⁴⁸ In other words, the lawyer makes a case for confessional solidarity. He does not openly argue for the truth of the Reformed religion, but he asserts that believers share at least some corporate responsibility for the actions of their co-religionists abroad. Whereas we may judge this as modern in a religious sense, it is decisively premodern in its approach to collective responsibility. Yet the pamphlet implicitly promoted what Willem Frijhoff has coined “the ecumenism of everyday relations.”¹⁴⁹ The men do not resolve their dispute by the time they arrive in Leiden, where a five-hour layover awaits them. The lawyer and the clergyman decide to continue their journey to The Hague together and embark on the next towing barge after a five-hour layover. The message was clear: disagreement did not stop them from civil conversation and companionship.

Another conversation pamphlet took an opposite stance and condemned the negative sentiments toward Dutch Catholics in the wake of the Revocation. The *Conversation between a Frenchman and a Hollander* from 1685 was probably published by a Dutch Catholic. The conversation begins with the 1672 French invasion of the United Provinces, with the Huguenot refugee sarcastically remarking that “when I was here during the last war, I reckoned that I would return, but I had no suspicion that I would be forced to do so as a refugee.”¹⁵⁰ Choosing religious fraternity over national hostility, the Dutchman argues that all Huguenot refugees are more than welcome to settle in the Dutch Republic. The Huguenot asks about the rumors he has heard, that, as a result of the Revocation, the Dutch have now begun to persecute their Catholics. The Dutchman denies the rumor, but argues that it would not be strange if the grievances of the Huguenots were taken out on the regular clergy, since it is widely believed that the latter are responsible for the persecutions.¹⁵¹

The Frenchman is surprised and argues that in France people think that Louis XIV is not driven by the clergy but by politics, repeating the *Political discourse’s* argument that the Sun King attempts to drive a confessional wedge between the alliances forged against him. He criticizes the plans to expel all non-Dutch clergy from the country, for it would anger the emperor, the electors of Cologne, the Palatinate, and Bavaria, which “would not be in in the interest of the fatherland.”¹⁵² The refugee adds that many Huguenot preachers believe that the

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁴⁹ W. Frijhoff, “Katholieke toekomstverwachting ten tijde van de Republiek. Structuur en grondlijnen tot een interpretatie,” *BMGN* 98.3 (1983), p. 435. See also W. Frijhoff, *Embodied belief: Ten essays on religious culture in Dutch history* (Hilversum, 2002), pp. 39–66.

¹⁵⁰ Anonymous, *Samenspraak tusschen een Fransman en een Hollander* (s.l.: s.n., 1685), pfl 12301.

¹⁵¹ Ibid. ¹⁵² Ibid.

Revocation was largely a response to the restrictions to the freedom Catholics enjoy in the Dutch Republic, including having to have their children baptized by Reformed pastors, not being allowed to freely practice their religion, and having to pay off “the officers of the cities” to be tolerated—a reference to the so-called recognition money Catholics had to pay to the civic judicial authorities to be left in peace.¹⁵³ The Huguenot claims that these restrictions are in violation of local agreements that had been made in cities, such as Amsterdam, and the sixteenth-century Pacification of Ghent and the Union of Utrecht.¹⁵⁴ We have seen that this argument was taken up by the clergyman in the *Dialogue on the taxes in Holland*, suggesting that the pamphlet positioned itself against the *Conversation between a Frenchman and a Hollander*.

The Hollander now begins to doubt whether it makes sense to persecute the regular clergy. He realizes that this will embitter Dutch Catholics, a sizable minority, who “take pride in their loyalty and helpfulness which they have always shown for the fatherland,” and are encouraged by the clergy to do so.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, he acknowledges that Catholics, including the clergy, “have always proven their great loyalty and devotion to the fatherland.” The Huguenot, in turn, remembers how Dutch Jesuits, risking their lives, had prevented French soldiers from setting fire to the cities of Nijmegen and Bodegraven. The Dutchman concludes that one could indeed not expect more from a Reformed patriot and that this is enough reason to let the clergy live in the Republic peacefully.

Conclusion

For believers throughout Europe, the confessional divide must have seemed as deep as ever after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The Huguenot crisis incited a broad and unprecedentedly diverse transnational debate in the Dutch press about how to confront religious difference, in Europe, in France, and in the United Provinces. Among many observers, there was an urgent sense that press coverage was crucial to confront the humanitarian crisis that unfolded in France, the consequences of which were acutely felt in many parts of Europe. As their hopes for reconciliation with Louis XIV withered away, many exiled pastors changed their strategy and turned to the Dutch presses to vehemently proclaim the superiority of the Reformed faith, hoping to keep their flocks in France from

¹⁵³ Ibid. For the paying of recognition money see C. Kooi, “Paying of the sheriff: Strategies of Catholic toleration in Golden Age Holland,” in Po-Chia Hsia and Van Nierop (eds.), *Calvinism and religious toleration*, pp. 87–101.

¹⁵⁴ Anonymous, *Samenspraak tusschen een Fransman en een Hollander*. Interestingly, the Union of Utrecht granted Catholics freedom of conscience, but not the freedom to openly practice their religion. See H. van Nierop, “Sewing the bailiff in a blanket: Catholics and the law in Holland,” in Po-Chia Hsia and Van Nierop, *Calvinism and religious toleration*, pp. 102–111.

¹⁵⁵ Anonymous, *Samenspraak tusschen een Fransman en een Hollander*.

conversion. The Dutch Republic thus witnessed an outpouring of stories about religious suffering, martyrdom, and divine providence.

But the state terror and mass displacement of the Huguenots gave rise to more questions than confessional rallying calls could answer. A considerable number of pamphleteers were severely skeptical about sectarian responses to the prohibition of the Reformed religion in France. Rather than entrenching themselves on one side of the confessional divide, they saw the need to bridge it. Next to those preaching to the quire, many pamphleteers employed print media to establish interconfessional dialogues, both real and imagined. Not everyone suddenly had equal access to the printing presses, but there was an urgent sense that the confessional divide needed to be discussed from a range of different angles. In print media, Huguenot refugees, French Catholics, Dutch clergymen, and authors claiming to be Amsterdam Jews tried to reason with each other about the foundation of domestic and international social and political order and negotiated the parameters of confessional and civic identity. While many of these pamphlets were full of suspicion, prejudice, and stereotyping, they acknowledged that Europe's problem with religious violence could not be solved by pointing to providence and stoke up confessional tribalism. Although many sensitive issues remained untouched, a true discussion culture developed, giving readers a strong impression that what was happening in France concerned all.

4

Selling the Last War of Religion

Within the comfort of exile, Jurieu and other pastors publicly admonished remaining Protestants in France to persevere and continue to profess the faith publicly, knowing that this was effectively a death sentence. For most Huguenots, leaving the security of property, family, and livelihood behind for an uncertain future in foreign lands—provided one did not get caught and end up in the galleys or prison—was hardly an option. This was certainly the case for the Huguenots of the Cévennes, a rugged mountain range in the south-east of the Central Massif. Most Cévenols were peasants, shepherds, and textile artisans, strongly bound to the remote lands they inhabited.¹ Only about five percent of them fled the realm to find religious freedom.² In 1685 the Cévennes had seen its share of dragonnades, but troops did not have to be quartered everywhere. Fear of the impending violence had led many communities to convert en masse, well before the dragoons had actually reached their hamlets.³

Isolation kept forced converts in place. But as smoothly as the “missionizing” may have appeared initially, distance also made the Catholicization of Cévennes a difficult process. In France’s rural areas, state supervision was relatively far away and most communities were religiously homogeneous. Having made their overt submission to the religion demanded by the king, old religious sentiments continued to smolder beneath the surface. In the first decades after the Revocation, the Cévennes became home to a series of millenarian movements; throughout the mountains, young people believed themselves to be possessed and prophesied about the coming deliverance, urging their followers to abjure the new faith and return to God.

In 1701, shortly after the outbreak of the War of the Spanish Succession, the region saw another prophetic wave. Dozens of Huguenot prophets sprang up in the mountain hamlets and began to preach about the imminent fall of the Antichrist.⁴ In 1702 the vigorous response of the authorities, who suspected a foreign plot, incited a remarkably violent uprising, which set the Cévennes on fire for the next three years. According to modern estimates, even at the revolt’s height

¹ C. Randall, *From a far country: Camisards and Huguenots in the Atlantic world* (Athens, GA, 2011), p. 13.

² P. Joutard, *La légende des Camisards. Une sensibilité au passé* (Paris, 1977), p. 25.

³ W. G. Monahan, *Let God arise: The war and rebellion of the Camisards* (Oxford, 2014), p. 18.

⁴ L. Laborie, “Who were the Camisards?,” *French Studies Bulletin* 32.120 (2011), p. 56.

there were never more than about three thousand active fighters.⁵ But the authorities, frustrated by the insurgents' guerrilla tactics and failing to distinguish them from civilians, took the drastic measure of depopulating entire areas.⁶ Hundreds of villages were burned to the ground and the civilian populations forced to emigrate. Children were often taken away to prevent any further recruiting.⁷

The so-called War of the Camisards (1702–1710) was the last war of religion that struck France. Compared to previous religious conflicts, the revolt, fought by inspired wool combers and baker's apprentices who believed that they heralded the apocalypse, was exceptionally sectarian.⁸ Moreover, it provides a striking example of the impact that the printed opinion which was produced in the United Provinces could have on other states. The insurgents built much of their religio-political worldview on Jurieu's *Accomplishment of the prophecies*, believing that William III heralded a new age in which Protestantism would finally triumph.⁹ Within the Refuge, Jurieu's prophecy was highly controversial.¹⁰ As we have seen in the previous chapter, a considerable number of pamphleteers had warned about the dangers of sectarian politics in the wake of the Revocation. But in the Cévennes the prophetic writings of the Refuge had clearly won the day.¹¹

The War of the Camisards thus had the potential to put respectable members of the Refuge in an awkward position. Openly supporting rebellious fanatics could raise eyebrows within both the Refuge and the host community.¹² At the same time, as soon as news about the 1702 revolt reached the Dutch Republic and England, different stakeholders began to see the civil war as an excellent

⁵ L. Laborie, *Enlightening enthusiasm: Prophecy and religious experience in early eighteenth-century England* (Manchester, 2015), p. 27.

⁶ Although the number of insurgents never reached more than 3,000 fighting men, the first royal commander-in-chief, the Marshall of Montrevel, believed that there were about 20,000 of them; *ibid.*

⁷ R. P. Gagg, *Kirche im Feuer. Das Leben der südfranzösischen Hugenottenkirche nach dem Todesurteil durch Ludwig XIV* (Zurich, 1961), p. 137.

⁸ David El Kenz and Claire Gantet have rightly argued that the revolt should be compared to that of the Anabaptists in Munster in the sixteenth century rather than the nobility-led Huguenot revolts in seventeenth-century France. It should also be noted, however, that the Camisards' military objective was remarkably sober for an apocalyptic war. They simply wanted Louis XIV to reinstate the Edict of Nantes. D. El Kenz and C. Gantet, *Guerres et paix de religion en Europe XVIe–XVIIe siècles* (Paris, 2008), p. 138; Monahan, *Let God arise*, p. 182.

⁹ Laborie, "Who were the Camisards?," p. 55.

¹⁰ Cottret, *The Huguenots in England*, pp. 224–225.

¹¹ Obviously, the French government offered a different analysis of the civil war. Analyzing the justifications surrounding the revolt, Chrystal Bernat asserts that for the Crown questions about the true faith were not so relevant. To the biblical and divine argumentation of the Protestants, the Catholic authorities responded with legal argumentation. To the authorities, the war proved that Calvinists were seditious and should therefore be eradicated from the realm. Indirectly, a war against one's sovereign was a war against God's order, but the question of lèse-majesté was dominant; C. Bernat, "Guerres au nom de Dieu. Justifications sourdes de la violence et légitimations fratricides au tournant du Grand Siècle," in A. Encrevé, R. Fabre, and C. Peneau (eds.), *Guerre juste, juste guerre. Les justifications religieuses et profanes de la guerre de l'antiquité aux XXIe siècle* (Paris, 2013), pp. 201–220.

¹² L. Laborie, "Huguenot propaganda and the millenarian legacy of the *Désert* in the Refuge," *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society* 29.5 (2012), pp. 640–654; Cottret, *The Huguenots in England*, 265–266.

opportunity to strike a fatal blow at France from the inside. As this chapter will explore, they employed print media to advocate the Camisard cause and steer toward a military intervention. At some point, secret plans were indeed made in England and the Dutch Republic to raise money to supply the insurgents with weapons and ammunition and to invade the Languedoc with an army of Huguenot exiles—an idea inspired by the so-called “Glorious Return” of 1689, during which a corps of Waldensian exiles managed to retake their valleys in Piedmont with military support from William III.¹³

This raises the question as to whether Queen Anne’s government and the States General were swayed by public opinion. As discussed in Chapter 1, early modern authorities were usually very ill-disposed toward openly supporting those who took up arms against their sovereign. In 1655, the Dutch authorities had made clear that insurgents could not count on solidarity. Moreover, Dutch printers may have produced much of the Camisards’ ideological ammunition, but to many Reformed people, news about the vanguard of the apocalypse must have felt outlandish. In Chapter 1 we have seen that the Waldensians called for help abroad with a religiously neutral story about their fate, which was recast as a religious narrative by Dutch pamphleteers. We will see that with the Camisards it was largely the other way around.

Exploring the relation between press coverage and military intervention—as different degrees of transnational engagement—this chapter will, first, analyze how the printed debate surrounding the prophetic movements of the 1680s shaped the debate about the War of the Camisards. Secondly, it will explore the dynamics of the propaganda campaign surrounding the civil war, and compare it with the other printed news available to interested readers. Finally, this chapter asks if and why confessional argumentation fell out of favor during the conflict, and what was offered instead.

The Anticipation of Fake News

To understand the foreign coverage of the War of the Camisards, we first have to go back to 1686, when Pierre Jurieu first kindled interest in the fate of the remaining Huguenots in Southern France. Through his pastoral letters, he shared with the world reports from Huguenots in Orthez, who had heard the angelic singing of psalms over a long period of time. In 1688, this miracle was followed by reports of a prophetic movement which had emerged in the Cévennes, where

¹³ M. Glozier, “Schomberg, Miremont, and the Huguenot Invasions of France,” in Onnekink (ed.), *War and religion after Westphalia*, pp. 121–154; Monahan, *Let God arise*; G. Gonnet, “La ‘Glorieuse Rentrée,’” *Bulletin de la Société de l’Histoire du Protestantisme Français* 135 (1989), pp. 437–441.

children miraculously entered a trance-like state and preached in French, a language that they had never learned to speak.

Such reports were extremely controversial. At the end of the seventeenth century, miracles were under siege. The question of whether God worked through miracles had turned into a main point of contention that widened the gap between the increasingly rationally oriented educated members of the Refuge and the Huguenots remaining in France.¹⁴ Pierre Bayle, for one, argued that miracles were the product not only of erroneous theological reasoning, but also of the corrupting force of long-distance communication. In his *Nouvelles de la République de Lettres*, he observed that the number of miracles tends to increase the further one is away from them in time and space.

Jurieu clearly reckoned with such criticism; the pastoral letters reporting on miracles were largely structured as a vindication. Taking up Bayle's gauntlet, Jurieu tried to develop a systematic method for establishing the truth in long-distance communication. Evidence was based on "many declarations and reports of wise, enlightened, learned, intelligent [people], not superstitious, not prejudiced."¹⁵ These accounts were sent to "men of letters," who had in turn asked critical questions, which were answered on the basis of careful empirical observation. Moreover, the absence of refutations from local observers guaranteed that the sources were, in fact, credible:

Are there not everywhere those minds who honor themselves by calling into question and ridiculing all events of an extraordinary character? Who even doubt that there are in that very province these strong-minded people who do all they can to call into question what they themselves want to doubt? If we see one letter from one of these gentlemen it is enough to ruin the testimonies of one hundred wise and enlightened persons, who say, we have seen and heard it.¹⁶

For Jurieu, the message of the miracles was clear. He admonished his readers to praise God openly in the presence of the persecutors.¹⁷ Other, perhaps more comforting interpretations, were left undiscussed. It is here that Jurieu inadvertently betrayed what must have caused him to believe the miraculous stories; writing about it in the same year as the publication of his *Accomplishment of the prophecies*, he must have felt that the strange tidings backed his prophecy. He refrained from explicitly positioning the news in his larger eschatological framework, but it made him come to the same conclusions; clearly, God had put forth a call to (spiritual) arms.

What the exiled pastor did not acknowledge, was that the prophetic movements in the Cévennes had clearly been inspired, consciously or unconsciously, by his

¹⁴ Cottret, *The Huguenots in England*, p. 265.

¹⁵ Jurieu, "III. Lettre pastorale," pp. 65–66.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 67. ¹⁷ Jurieu, "XVII. Lettre pastorale," p. 168.

own writings. Jurieu's letters had a remarkably large readership, not only within the Refuge, but also among the *nouveaux convertis* in France. Through exiled ministers, he managed to reach many remaining Huguenot communities in France, to whom his letters were addressed and who provided him with input. Jurieu's distributor smuggled the letters from Rotterdam to Rouen in casks of dried herring, whence they were shipped and sold in Paris. Thanks to the pastor, refugee printer Abraham Acher had managed to get a 16 percent market share in the Rotterdam book trade. Jurieu's writings were so successful that people in the French capital believed that Acher paid the pastor to provide a steady supply of manuscripts.¹⁸ Seeing how this dominant voice of the Refuge wrote about and supported the miraculous tidings from the rural south of France must have greatly reassured the remaining Huguenots; although they lived in the periphery of the kingdom of France they simultaneously stood right at its center, with Protestant Europe's eyes fixed on them.¹⁹

Criticism of Jurieu's mixing of prophesying and journalism in his well-oiled printing business presents evidence of an international audience that was becoming increasingly sensitized and suspicious to the ways in which opinion makers such as Jurieu used the printing press to move governments and their people into action. Observers came to expect that the reports they read about persecution and prophecy were intimately linked to international political considerations and interventionism. Indeed, several pamphleteers realized that miraculous stories from the Cévennes were not only amplified across distance, as Bayle observed, but that press coverage might itself also engender new miraculous stories.

A published letter from a Huguenot exile to a priest, for one, claimed that the reports about the miracles were nothing more than a prop for Jurieu's political ideas: his outrageous defense of popular sovereignty and the right of subjects to offer their loyalty to a different ruler. Through wishful thinking, human passions mixed with religious zeal, leading people to falsely assume that their designs corresponded with providence.²⁰ People were only susceptible to miracles at certain moments in time. As such, the author continued, William III's campaign in England could not have succeeded without the help of several "miracles." Now that the stadtholder had set his sights on France, Jurieu took up the miracles in the Cévennes out of political necessity.²¹

¹⁸ Van der Linden, *Experiencing exile*, pp. 60–61.

¹⁹ Other trustful accounts are Anonymous, *Pertinent verhaal van de propheet, die in Vrankryk is opgestaan; waar in den naukeurigen lezer kan sien dat God geen aanemer van persoonen en is, want sy van kints-gebeente altyd de schapen gehoeydt heeft; gelyck u hier in 't brede wordt verhaaldt* (Amsterdam: Wed. Adriaan van Gaasbeck, 1688), pfl 12675; Anonymous, *Naukeurig verhaal en aanmerkingen, over de nieuwe en zeldzame propheten die zigh opdoen in't Delphinaat in Vrankryk* (Rotterdam: Barent Bos, 1689), pfl 13078.

²⁰ Anonymous, *Antwoort van een hugenot aen een roomsch priester over het subject van de hedendaegse propheten in Vrankrijck* (The Hague: Barent Beeck, 1689), pfl 13080, p. 9.

²¹ Anonymous, *Antwoort van een hugenot aen een roomsch priester over het subject van de hedendaegse propheten in Vrankrijck* (The Hague: Barent Beeck, 1689), pfl 13080.

This association between Jurieu and William III was not spurious, since the pastor was closely connected to Orangist networks, which did indeed also link back to the Cévennes. Most notably, Jurieu was a friend of the Cévenol preachers François Vivens and Claude Brousson who had gone into exile in the United Provinces, from where they continued their efforts to organize Huguenot armed resistance in France under the patronage of William III.²² The author of the *Answer from a Huguenot* finally exhorted the priest to be careful with the letter, fearing that if his identity became public the people would hold him for a dangerous unbeliever and inform the authorities that he was an enemy of the state.²³

In France, critical voices went a step further and actually argued that the stories were the product of a foreign plot. In 1689, Esprit Fléchier, bishop of Nîmes—the nearest big city to the Cévennes—wrote to Charles de Saint-Maure, Duke of Montausier, asserting that there was no doubt that the prophetic movement in the Cévennes had been fabricated in Geneva. The bishop claimed that a certain glassblower, Monsieur du Verre, had started to teach boys and girls in the Cévennes the art of prophecy. In 1692, Catholic convert David-Augustin de Brueys made the story of the glassblower public in his *History of fanaticism*, and, in fact, traced the origins of the movement back to Jurieu, who had first excited the malcontents in France with his *Accomplishment of the prophecies*.²⁴ He described how du Verre taught the children psalms and parts of the Book of Revelation, as well as how to control and move their bodies in ways that would impress gullible people.²⁵

Jurieu would find an unlikely defender in Pierre Bayle. In his 1702 *Historical and critical dictionary*, Jurieu's old rival argued that Brueys "should never have insinuated without decent evidence that [Jurieu] had a soul as black as to suggest such a plan."²⁶ He was probably right. There is no evidence to suggest that the prophetic movements were concerted by exiled Protestants or the Reformed communities in Geneva. Indeed, Geneva's magistrates got the consent of the city's religious leadership to prohibit the movement in the city.

After the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, refugees had generated an international public sphere in which everything concerning the Reformed in France had become deeply politicized. People engaging with this public sphere had long

²² Both Vivens and Brousson returned to France in disguise, where they had to pay the ultimate price for the Huguenot cause. In 1692 Vivens died in a skirmish in the mountains. Brousson was broken on the wheel as a rebel in 1698; W. C. Utt and B. E. Strayer, *The bellicose dove: Claude Brousson and Huguenot resistance to Louis XIV, 1647–1698* (Eastbourne, 2007); E. Gaidan, "Le Prédicant François Vivens. Sa Mort d'Après un Témoin (1687–1692)," *Bulletin historique et littéraire* 40.9 (1891), pp. 479–481.

²³ Anonymous, *Antwoort van een Hugenot*.

²⁴ C. Blanc, "Genève et les origines du mouvement prophétique en Dauphiné et dans les Cévennes," *Revue d'histoire suisse* 23.2 (1943), p. 236.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

learned not to take all reports at face value. They had become accustomed to seeing (foreign) political agendas behind news about miracles and dissident movements. Because local conflicts were influenced by foreign ideas, they were quickly regarded as the product of foreign meddling. Observers were aware that people from different sides were consistently targeting their attention through the printing press, making them consume the news with a critical eye. Yet during the War of the Camisards, this did not lead pamphleteers to conjure up stories about miracles proving the truth of the Reformed religion, as Jurieu's critics had argued. On the contrary, it led them to filter out the millenarian worldview of its belligerents, as will become clear in the next section.

Assuming the Voice of the Camisards

Eight years after he had written his last pastoral letter, Jurieu's long desired revolt finally broke out. On July 24, 1702, a group of Cévenol Huguenots marched to the house of the François de Langlade, Abbé of Chayla, Archpriest of the Cévennes and a fervent persecutor of the region's religious dissidents, to free some imprisoned religious dissidents. In the act, they caught the priest, dragged him to a nearby bridge, and stabbed him to death.²⁷ The lynching set the Cévennes on fire for the next three years.

It is difficult to determine when Jurieu precisely found out about it, but it did not take long before the news about Chayla's murder was reported in Dutch newspapers. On August 17, 1702, the *Amsterdamse Courant* reported rumors from Paris six days earlier.²⁸ It provided correct details about Chayla's notoriety as a missionary, yet crucial details about the murder were lacking and some information was incorrect. The newspaper did not mention that the crowd had come to the house to demand the liberation of prisoners and that a skirmish had taken place. Indeed, no context about religious or political unrest was provided, apart from an unfounded detail that the murderers had offered to spare the priest's life if he would convert. This suggests that the report was based on Catholic sources; French religious leaders immediately began to hail Chayla as a martyr.²⁹ The author of the report, aware that the story might not be entirely correct, cautiously stated that it may be "overly passionate."³⁰

There is an irony to the relation between the Dutch press and the War of the Camisards. While publishers in the Republic had been partly responsible for its outbreak, Dutch journalists obtained little reliable information about the revolt from beginning to end. Shreds of (often conflicting) news came from different sources in Paris, Basel, Montpellier, Livorno, Geneva, Turin, or London. In June

²⁷ Monahan, *Let God arise*, pp. 56–63.

²⁸ *Amsterdamse Courant*, August 17, 1702.

²⁹ Monahan, *Let God arise*, p. 66.

³⁰ *Amsterdamse Courant*, August 17, 1702.

1703, the political monthly *Mercure historique et politique contenant l'état présent de l'Europe*—edited by the Huguenot minister and exile Jean de la Brune (?–1743?) and published by Henri van Bulderen (1683–1713) in The Hague—tellingly published an anonymous letter complaining about the scarcity of reports:³¹

So far it has been rather difficult to learn about the truth of what is happening in the Cévennes . . . There is something strange and very surprising about the whole affair, which has lasted for almost a year.³²

Opinionating Dutch periodicals, which heavily relied on newspapers as their sources, had the same problem.³³ Andries van Damme and Daniel van den Dalen's popular news digest, the *Europische Mercurius*, which was widely read by the political and economic elites of the early eighteenth-century Dutch Republic, repeatedly published conflicting accounts. For instance, in their very first report, dated January 1703, the periodical stated that the revolt was waged by people of both confessions over taxation.³⁴ It also reported, however, that the Camisards had set a church on fire and had killed at least fifty priests, concluding that "it is impossible to express what evils they commit every day."³⁵ One month later, the *Europische Mercurius* summarized it as follows:

People spoke very differently about these persons, because some presented them as rascals and villains, who did nothing but pillage, kill, destroy, and burn; who violated daughters and wives; and finally, who passed through no place without leaving marks of their cruelty and godlessness. Others, on the contrary, asserted that they were good people, who fought the war with all the restraint that one can have; who, admittedly, pillaged the Roman churches and set them on fire; and gave no quarter to priests, because they regarded them as their main enemy, but who, apart from that, caused no disturbances, and did no harm to those who did not present themselves in arms to fight them.³⁶

For those curious news consumers who tried to make sense of the bits and pieces of information coming from newspapers, the publication of the *State and*

³¹ A. Juillard, "Jean de la Brune (?–1743?)," in Mercier-Faivre and Reynaud (eds.), *Dictionnaire des journalistes*, <http://dictionnaire-journalistes.gazettes18e.fr/journaliste/442-jean-de-la-font>.

³² Anonymous, *Mercure historique et politique concernant l'état présent de l'Europe, ce qui se passe dans toutes les Cours*, vol. 3 (The Hague: Henri van Bulderen, 1703), p. 639.

³³ See J. W. Koopmans, *Het nieuws verbeeld. Oorlog en vrede in de titelprenten van de Europische Mercurius* (Amsterdam, 2022).

³⁴ *Europische mercurius, behelzende al het voornaamste 't geen, zo omtrent de zaaken van staat als oorlog, in alle de koningryken en landen van Europa, en deels ook zelfs in verscheidenen gewesten van d'andere deelen der weereld, is voorgevallen*, vol. 14, pt. 1. A. van Damme (ed.) (Leiden, Amsterdam: Daniel van den Dalen and Andries van Damme, 1703), p. 46; for an introduction to the *Europische Mercurius* see Koopmans, *Early modern media*, pp. 33–56.

³⁵ *Europische mercurius, behelzende al het voornaamste 't geen*, p. 47.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

description of the Cevennes concerning what is currently happening there at an unknown location in February 1703 must have come as a pleasant surprise.³⁷ The pamphlet offered a short description of the region's geography, which it presented as ideal for asymmetric warfare, as well as the martial abilities and religious identity of its inhabitants. It also briefly stated that providence had now "placed arms into the hands of the Reformed of the Cevennes" but offered little information about the actual conflict.³⁸

In March, however, the *State and description* was followed by a detailed Camisard manifesto. The *Manifesto of the inhabitants of the Cevennes for taking up arms*, first published in Amsterdam, was late but successful.³⁹ Much remains unclear about the origins and spread of the manifesto, but before long a significant number of editions from different publishers in Amsterdam, The Hague, Berlin, and London circulated in Europe (see Figure 7).⁴⁰ Charles-Joseph de la Baume (1644–1715), one of the first historians to write a contemporary history about the revolt from a Catholic perspective, judged the work to have been

perfectly well written but very dangerous and very fit to seduce the feeble-minded and the badly converted nouveaux convertis... [describing] very vividly and eloquently the cruelties that they pretend we have committed.⁴¹

³⁷ Anonymous, *Etat & description des Sévennes par rapport à ce qui s'y passé aujourd'hui* (s.l., s.n., 1703). This pamphlet was also printed in The Hague, Berlin, and London. See Laborie, "Huguenot propaganda and the millenarian legacy," p. 643. Some editions included a detailed map of the region. See for instance, Anonymous, *Staat en beschryvinge der Sevennes, ten opsigt van het gene hedensdaags aldaar is voorvallende* (Amsterdam: Weduwe J. van Dyck, 1703), pft 571.

³⁸ Anonymous, *Etat & description*, p. 7.

³⁹ Anonymous, *Manifeste des habitans des Sevennes sur leur prise d'armes/Manifest der Völcker und Einwohner in der Landschafft Sevennen warum sie die Waffen ergriffen* (Amsterdam: s.n., 1703).

⁴⁰ This included at least four editions based on the same translation in Dutch: Anonymous, *Manifest van het volk in de Sevennes, wegens het opvatten der wapenen tegens den koning van Vrankryk* (s.l., s.n. 1703), pft 14918; Anonymous, *Manifeste van die in de Sevennes wegens het opvatten der wapenen tegens den koning van Vrankryk* (The Hague: Meyndert Uytwerf, 1703); Anonymous, *Manifest van het volk in de Sevennes, wegens het opvatten der wapenen tegens den koning van Vrankryk, mitsgaders haar ordinaris gebed* (The Hague: Meyndert Utwerf, 1703), pft 14920; Anonymous, *Manifest van het volk in de Sevennes, wegens het opvatten der wapenen tegens de Koning van Vrankryk, beneffens desselfs gebed* (s.l.: s.n., 1703), pft 14919. Both in Amsterdam and Berlin editions were published that combined the French original with a German translation. They are not copies, as both translations are different: Anonymous, *Manifeste des habitans des Sevennes sur leur prise d'armes/Manifest der Völcker und Einwohner in der Landschafft Sevennen warum sie die Waffen ergriffen* (Amsterdam: s.n., 1703); Anonymous, *Manifeste des peuples des Sevennes sur leur prise d'armes, en françois et allemand* (Berlin: Arnaud du Sarrat, 1703). Another German edition was published by H. F. Hoffmann: Anonymous, *Sonderbahres und merckwürdiges Manifest der Einwohner in den Sevennischen Thälern der Französischen Provinz Languedoc darin die ihre triffige und gar wichtige Ursachen oder Bewegungen anführen und entdecken/warum sie anjetzo die Waffen ergriffen* (Berlin: H. F. Hoffmann, 1703). An English translation was published by Joseph Downing: Anonymous, *The manifesto of the Cevennois shewing the true reasons which have constrained the inhabitants of the Cévennes to take up arms, dedicated to my lord the Dauphine* (London: Joseph Downing, 1703).

⁴¹ F. Puaux, "Le 'Manifeste des habitans des Sévennes' sur leur prise d'armes," *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français* 61.4 (1912), pp. 338–351.

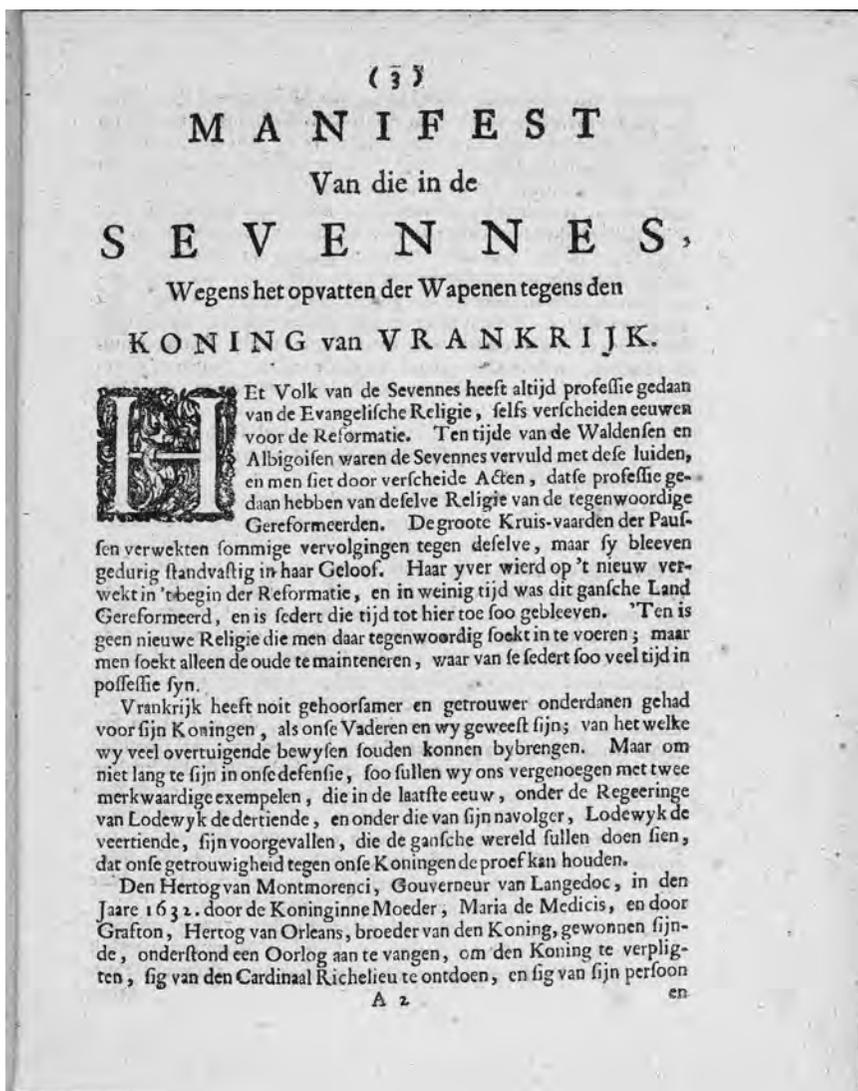


Figure 7. First page of *Manifesto of the inhabitants of the Cévennes*, 1703, Dutch translation, reproduced with permission from the Royal Library, The Hague.

Presented as a manifesto, the work purported to speak with the voice of the insurgents and was accordingly published anonymously. As the prominent historian Antoine Court (1695–1760) already remarked in his monumental *History of the troubles of the Cévennes*, it is very unlikely that it had indeed been written by a Camisard; the author of the manifesto made mistakes about details of the revolt, which cannot be explained as the conscious rewriting of history for propaganda

reasons. Instead, the work was probably written by one of the many émigré pastors who had settled in England or the Dutch Republic some two decades earlier.⁴²

By the early eighteenth century, the relation between the refugees and their host societies had become characterized by disappointment. Many refugee ministers lived in poverty and no longer believed that their exile would one day come to an end.⁴³ The War of the Camisards must have offered a last glimmer of hope that Louis XIV would be defeated and forced to restore Protestant worship in France after all, allowing the refugees to go home. In any case, the author of the manifesto was well acquainted with the literature of the Refuge; the work was inspired by Jean Claude's *Complaints of the Protestants*—one of William III's pieces of propaganda against Louis XIV—from which it borrowed several passages.⁴⁴

The manifesto appeared around the same time that the Cévennes were first discussed within diplomatic networks. The Dutch ambassador to England, Marinus van Vrijbergen, first brought up the possibility of support for the Camisards to Grand Pensionary Anthonie Heinsius on February 20, 1703, after having consulted with Lord Treasurer Sidney Godolphin and John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, commander of the allied forces.⁴⁵ However, it is unlikely that the pamphlet came from within the alliance's inner diplomatic circles. On March 20, van Vrijbergen emphasized to Heinsius that secrecy about the plans for military support was vital. He told his master that Godolphin would send two Huguenots to the region to inform the Camisards about their plans, but they would not meet with the Grand Pensionary on their way, "because the secrecy is so general and absolute," that they did not want to give the slightest exception to it.⁴⁶ The author of the manifesto, by contrast, clearly wanted to stir up the alliance's political centers. Stakeholders engaged in public diplomacy to influence the political authorities. There was little reason for those already pulling the strings to turn to print media.

That there was so little publicly available information about the War of the Camisards had a crucial advantage; it gave the author ample opportunity to present a positive image of the insurgents, unrestrained by potentially inconvenient facts about prophecy and atrocity. Nevertheless, by justifying a religious minority's revolt against a rightful sovereign for a general audience, the author was skating on thin ice. In order not to alienate potential allies, the writer of the manifesto steered away from any form of group identification that could spark

⁴² A. Court, *Histoire des troubles des Cévennes, ou de la guerre des Camisars, sous le regne de Louis le Grand*, vol. 1, bk III (Villefranche: Pierre Chretien, 1760), p. 283.

⁴³ See van der Linden, *Experiencing exile*, pp. 131–159.

⁴⁴ See Chapter 3; Puaux, "Manifeste des habitans," p. 339.

⁴⁵ Marinus van Vrijbergen to Anthonie Heinsius, February 20, 1703, in A. Veenendaal (ed.), *Briefwisseling Anthonie Heinsius 1702–1720*, vol. 2 (The Hague, 1978), pp. 76–77.

⁴⁶ Vrijbergen to Heinsius, March 20, 1703, in *ibid.*, p. 114.

controversy, most notably the question of prophecy. It is possible that the author did not know about the most recent prophetic outbreaks which had caused the initial clash with the authorities. But his failure to mention the Cévennes' rich history of prophetic movements that had caused such a stir in the late 1680s must have been an intentional omission.

Instead, the author described the Cévenol Huguenots as proto-Calvinists—just as the Waldensians were considered to have been—who had inhabited the region and had preached the Reformed faith for centuries.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, the manifesto was not clearly structured around confessional truth claims. The author aimed for his readers to religiously identify with the insurgents, but he was careful not to draw the conflict along confessional lines. This is not to say that the pamphlet presented a fully secular understanding of the war; the author argued that divine providence led the Cévenols to take up arms for protection against the punitive expedition sent to the region following the lynching of Chayla. It did not, however, take the form of what Alexandra Walsham has identified as “anti-Catholic Providentialism,” an act of divine intervention for the true faith.⁴⁸ Instead, providence was linked to the confessionally neutral right to counter violence with violence, “being a law of nature, confirmed by the laws of God and men.”⁴⁹ In other words, the conflict was fought with divine grace, but it was not a war of religion:

We may modestly ascertain that here is a tyrannical government, a military government, which is not regulated by justice, reason, or even humanity, and which all upright Frenchmen are obliged to oppose until peace and justice are fully restored in the kingdom.⁵⁰ It is to this task that we call upon our compatriots. For it is not a matter of religion alone, but a law of nature, it is a right common to all the nations and religions of the world to oppose the violence of those who without cause rob us of our goods and ruin our homes and our families.⁵¹

The manifesto concluded with a direct appeal to its proposed diverse and multi-confessional readership, asking “all kings, princes, lords, states, and peoples, and all Christian men in general, our neighbors and compatriots to oppose such an unjust domination, to which all of Europe will have to bow if this violence and barbarity is not stopped.”⁵² In other words, governments that refused to respect

⁴⁷ Anonymous, “Manifeste des habitants des Cévennes sur leur prise d’armes,” transcription in H. Scheurleer (ed.), *Mémoires pour servir à l’histoire du XVIII^e siècle contenant les négociations, traités, résolutions et autres documens authentiques concernant l’affaires d’état*, vol. 2 (The Hague: Henri Scheurleer, 1725), p. 527; for the narrative of proto-Calvinism, see Chapter 1.

⁴⁸ A. Walsham, *Providence in early modern England* (Oxford, 1999), p. 280.

⁴⁹ Anonymous, *Manifeste des habitants*, p. 530.

⁵⁰ This part is borrowed from Claude’s *Plaintes des protestans*.

⁵¹ Anonymous, *Manifeste des habitants*, p. 530. ⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 533.

justice, reason, and humanity with regard to their subjects—which every Christian should respect—were a threat to the entire social order, regardless of territorial borders, and thus required an international political response. The political norm of sovereignty was thereby overruled. This confessionally neutral approach shows that although the author’s intended readership was primarily Protestant, he took into account the larger European picture; the interconfessional alliance waging war against France and Catholic princes would not be eager to support an anti-Catholic revolt. In fact, Jurieu had stressed something similar when he wrote to Heinsius that

the interest which the powers of Europe of another religion have in this affair is so palpable, and you will have understood it so well, that it would be a waste of time to present it to you.⁵³

After turning from interconfessional dialogue to full-fledged prophesying and militant anti-Catholicism, the pastor had no qualms about making a reverse move once the political circumstances required him to do so. To emphasize that the conflict was not of a confessional nature, the author of the manifesto made the unfounded claim that Catholic Cévenols supported the Camisard cause and had joined forces with their Protestant neighbors to resist the heavy taxes levied by the Sun King.⁵⁴

Dutch periodicals suggest that this strategy to deconfessionalize the narrative had some success. Whereas before, the *Europische Mercurius* had been undecided about the religious fanaticism and violence of the insurgents, in March it largely adopted the perspective of the manifesto, which they believed to have been written by the insurgents themselves. The editors wrote that, apart from pillaging churches and cloisters, the insurgents did little harm to those who did not resist them, and that many Catholics had joined their cause against heavy taxation.⁵⁵ One can observe a similar shift, albeit with some delay, in Gerrit van Spaan’s low-brow *Rotterdamsche wekelijkse markdaagsche boere kourier* (Rotterdam weekly market day peasant courier), which catered to “curious peasants.”⁵⁶ Whereas in the beginning of April, the author still argued that the Camisards subjected priests to torture or “hang[ed] them while warm,”⁵⁷ two weeks later, the *Boere kourier*

⁵³ Pierre Jurieu to Anthonie Heinsius, November 20, 1703, transcription in Knetsch, *Pierre Jurieu*, p. 446.

⁵⁴ Anonymous, *Manifeste des habitants*, pp. 531–532.

⁵⁵ *Europische Mercurius*, 1703, pp. 251–252.

⁵⁶ P. A. de Boer, “Een bakker en zijn nieuwsblad. Gerrit van Spaans Boere Kourier,” *Rotterdams Jaarboekje* 6 (1988), pp. 193–215; R. van Vliet, “Rotterdamsche wekelijkse markdaagsche boere kourier,” in R. van Vliet (ed.), *Encyclopedie Nederlandstalige Tijdschriften. Nederlandse periodieken tot aanvang Koninkrijk der Nederlanden (tot 1815)*, <https://www.ent1815.nl/r/rotterdamsche-wekelijkse-markdaagsche-boere-kourier-1703-1704/>.

⁵⁷ G. van Spaans, *Rotterdamsche wekelijkse markdaagsche boere kourier*, April 10, 1703.

reported that this story turned out to be false; it had been spread to make the Camisards hated, even though many Catholics had joined them, “like they had joined the Beggars in Holland in former times.”⁵⁸

In reality, the War of the Camisards entailed particularly brutal interconfessional violence.⁵⁹ Right from the start, targeted attacks on their villages prompted local Catholics to organize their own militias. Around the time of the publication of the *True reasons*, several independent Catholic militias, styling themselves the “White Camisards”—a contrast to the black smocks worn by their enemies—“Cadets of the Cross,” or “Florentines,” had begun to carry out raids of their own. Until 1705, Camisards and Cadets of the Cross would continue to pillage and massacre each other’s communities, quite independently from the war fought against the Crown.⁶⁰

Nonetheless, the author of the pamphlet may have treasured real hope that his work would actually inspire Catholic Frenchmen to take up arms against their king—another decisive reason to defend the revolt in confessionally neutral terms. For over a decade, the London-based émigré Armand de Bourbon (1655–1732), Marquis of Miremont, had tried to make foreign powers aware of the “universal discontent” over taxation experienced by Occitan subjects of both faiths.⁶¹ Miremont had worked hard to convince the Protestant courts that they should support the Camisards.⁶² It is therefore not implausible that Miremont was also the author or patron of the pamphlet. As soon as they began to consider an intervention, London and The Hague accepted him as the man to lead the armed invasion in the Languedoc. From London, the marquis actively tried to deconfessionalize the conflict. In the summer of 1703, Miremont’s secretary David Flotard managed to enter the Cévennes with letters of credence, disguised as a merchant, and meet with the Camisards’ main prophet-commanders, Jean Cavalier and Roland Laporte. Apart from his letters of credence from both Queen Anne and the States General, Flotard also carried a letter from Miremont bidding the Camisards to act prudently and refrain from setting churches on fire and killing priests, which, as we have seen, inconveniently reached news media such as the *Europische Mercurius*.⁶³ The war had to conform to the public image which the exiled advocates of the Camisard cause had created to spur the governments joined in the Grand Alliance to intervene.

⁵⁸ Ibid., April 24, 1703 and October 30, 1703.

⁵⁹ See C. Bernat, “La Guerre des Cévennes. Un Conflit Trilatéral?,” *Bulletin de la Société de l’Histoire du Protestantisme Français* 148.3 (2002), pp. 461–507.

⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 465–474.

⁶¹ E. Le Roy Ladurie, *The peasants of Languedoc* (Urbana and Chicago, IL, 1974), p. 273.

⁶² Laborie, “Huguenot propaganda,” p. 653.

⁶³ H. Dubled, “Les protestants français et l’étranger dans le Midi de 1685 à 1710. Pour répondre à une vieille accusation,” *Annales du Midi. Revue archéologique, historique et philologique de la France méridionale* 191 (1990), p. 444; Monahan, *Let God arise*, p. 161.

Selling Intervention

Calls for restraint to avert the harmful image of a fanatical war of religion did not solve the second problem concerning the War of the Camisards; there was no denying that they were in open war with their monarch. The norm of sovereignty remained a major issue for advocates of intervention. In fact, the question of sovereignty had already been used in a pamphlet addressed to the Camisards, which urged them to lay down their weapons. Written in the genre of the pastoral letters, the anonymous *Letter from M. ** Pr. Fr. to the Protestants rising up in the Cévennes* purported to speak with the voice of an exiled minister. The alleged pastor approached the Camisards as fellow members of the true religion, but subsequently asked them a critical question:

Does the spirit of God inspire such cruelty? Does the true religion compel its followers to inhumane actions?⁶⁴

Side by side with the reprimands based on confessional truth, the author engaged with the norms of sovereignty and rule of law, reminding the insurgents that nobody had “given them the right of the sword”:⁶⁵

Roman law condemns as criminals of lèse-majesté those who take up arms, recruit soldiers, and spill the blood of their fellow citizens, without the commandment of the prince.⁶⁶

In short, the Camisards violated Roman law, divine law, and the law of nations, on which “the security of civil society and the peace of mankind depends.”⁶⁷ Although the pamphlet had probably been produced by the French authorities, it made an argument to which many governments—always watchful for the threat of rebellion in their own territories—were susceptible. Although the idea of supporting a fifth column in France had found its way into Europe’s inner political and diplomatic circles by the spring of 1703, not everybody was convinced by the justification laid out in the *True reasons*. In England the idea of aiding rebels against their legitimate monarch sparked controversy. Several members of the queen’s Privy Council regarded it as unethical and believed that support for the Camisards would provide fuel to those who disputed the legitimacy of Anne’s rule.⁶⁸

At the request of Miremont, Abel Boyer (1667–1729) intervened in this debate by writing another defense of the Camisard cause.⁶⁹ Boyer was a native of the

⁶⁴ Anonymous, *Lettre de M. ** Pr. Fr. aux religionnaires révoltez des Cévennes* (s.l.: s.n., 1704), p. 2.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁶⁸ Monahan, *Let God arise*, pp. 160–161.

⁶⁹ Laborie, “Huguenot propaganda,” p. 643.

Upper Languedoc who had studied theology at the Academy of Puylaurens. When the academy was shut down in 1685, he fled to the Dutch Republic. Recommended by Pierre Bayle to Gilbert Burnet, bishop of Salisbury and advisor to William III, Boyer moved to England in 1689. There he quickly made a career as a contemporary historian and tutor to Prince William, Duke of Gloucester at the English court.⁷⁰ Miremont's secretary David Flotard, who had come back from the Cévennes with reports about the Camisards, provided Boyer with material. This included the exact location where the invasion should take place on the coast of the Languedoc. Boyer refrained from including that last detail in the pamphlet, to prevent the French from fortifying it.⁷¹ The exile theologian finished *The lawfulness, glory and advantage of giving immediate and effectual relief to the Protestants in the Cevennes* on April 11, 1703. That same month it was published in three editions by John Nutt (1665–1716), a trade publisher near Stationers' Hall, in London.⁷² Shortly afterwards, the original was followed by a French translation published by London-based exile printer Paul Vaillant and a Dutch translation by François van der Plaats in Amsterdam.⁷³ Aiming to neutralize the Privy Council's reservations, the *Lawfulness, glory and advantage* provided a twenty-seven-page justification for military intervention.

This was an extremely sensitive question. Governments often supported foreign insurgents, but they usually did so in secret, avoiding the pitfalls of a public apology. As discussed in Chapter 1, most political philosophers provided subjects with only a very limited legal framework to defend themselves against kings who raised their swords against them. Revolts were thus hard to defend. Justifying a foreign intervention was easier.⁷⁴ As discussed, Grotius had argued that rulers had a duty to intervene against the oppression of foreign subjects, especially if they

⁷⁰ G. C. Gibbs, "The contribution of Abel Boyer to contemporary history in England in the early eighteenth century," in A. Duke and C. Tamse (eds.), *Clio's mirror: Historiography in Britain and the Netherlands* (Zutphen, 1985), pp. 87–108; G. C. Gibbs, "Boyer, Abel (1667?–1729), lexicographer and journalist," in L. Goldman (ed.), *Oxford dictionary of national biography* (2008), <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/3122>.

⁷¹ Papers of Charles Spencer, 3rd Earl of Sunderland, The Blenheim Papers, Additional Manuscripts, inv. no. 61648, folios 98–99, British Library; I want to thank Lionel Laborie for kindly sharing this source with me.

⁷² J. D. Gordan, "John Nutt: Trade publisher and printer 'in the Savoy,'" *The Library* 15.3 (2014), pp. 243–260.

⁷³ [A. Boyer], *La nécessité de donner un prompt & puissant secours aux Protestans des Cevennes, ou l'on fait voir la justice, la gloire & l'avantage de cette entreprise, & les moyens d'y reussir* (London: F. Vaillant, 1703); [A. Boyer], *Korte en klare aanwysing van de noodzaakelyke middelen omme de Protestanten in de Sevennes spoedig te kunnen helpen, en haar te ontlasten van de verdrukking die dezelve onder de tegenwoordige Regering des Fransen Konings moeten ondergaan. Nevens een korte beschryving van het zelve Landschap, en den tegenwoordigen staat* (Amsterdam: François van der Plaats, 1703).

⁷⁴ Only in the second half of the eighteenth century would the idea develop that states could do whatever they wanted within their borders and that foreign states should in no way intervene or judge their policy; Krasner, "Rethinking the sovereign state model," p. 20.

were persecuted for their religion.⁷⁵ Boyer indeed based his justification on Grotius but consequently failed to justify the fact that the Camisards had themselves taken up arms. He quoted the legal philosopher, arguing that “subjects are not bound to obey the magistrate, when he decrees anything contrary either to the law of nature or of God.”⁷⁶ Yet he added that “it is not lawful for subjects to take up arms.”⁷⁷ In the end, he relied on Grotius’ assertion “that others may . . . take up arms for them.”⁷⁸

In his effort to translate the fate of the Camisards to his English readership and divert attention from the issue of rebellion, Boyer departed from the confessionally neutral justification employed by the *Manifesto* and returned to questions of confessional truth. He argued that all Protestants should support the Camisards, as they were fighting the very same battle the English had fought against the “popish pretender” James II in 1688. Moreover, the author did not shy away from claiming that “God Almighty had vouchsafed to illuminate this people with the truth of the Gospel.”⁷⁹ As for the question of intervention, Boyer harked back to the wars of religion and reminded his readers that Elizabeth I devoted much of her reign to aiding Protestants in France and the Netherlands. James I, on the other hand, would forever carry the stain of having allowed the Protestant religion to be rooted out in Bohemia and the Palatinate, a reference to the early stages of the Thirty Years War.⁸⁰ In other words, history showed that the principle of sovereignty should not overrule a ruler’s responsibilities to the survival of the true faith. Where the author of the manifesto had explicitly stated that the Camisards did not fight a war of religion, Boyer saw the need to introduce militant Protestant ideas and appeals to religious truth.⁸¹ Confessional memory and superiority were invoked to overshadow the problem of revolt.

To Hearten and Inspire

The *Lawfulness, glory and advantage* offers compelling insight into the complex and contested role of public opinion in political discourse at the turn of the eighteenth century. The pamphlet intervened in an ongoing debate in the highest

⁷⁵ R. J. Vincent, “Grotius, human rights, and intervention,” in H. Bull, B. Kingsbury, and A. Roberts (eds.), *Hugo Grotius and international relations* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 241–256. Pufendorf held a similar view, albeit from a more confessionally partisan position. Initially a firm opponent of foreign intervention, the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685) made him reconsider and favor a more interventionist policy for the survival of Protestantism; R. Tuck, *The rights of war and peace: Political thought and the international order from Grotius to Kant* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 158–163.

⁷⁶ [A. Boyer], *The lawfulness, glory, and advantage, of giving immediate and effectual relief to the Protestants in the Cevennes* (London: J. Nutt, 1703), p. 6.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁸¹ Another anonymous pamphlet provided an extensive analogy with English support for the Duke of Rohan: Anonymous, *L’Europe esclave si les Cevenois ne sont promptement secourus* (Liège: Boanerge l’Utile, 1704).

circles of government. Miremont had access to these circles, but used publicity to put pressure on them. The work communicated with different publics, thereby creating a written—if not physical—link between them: as stated in the preface, the *Lawfulness, glory and advantage* was dedicated to Queen Anne and her Privy Council, praising them with references to providence and glory.⁸² Furthermore, Boyer appealed to the English people, reminding them of their religious and patriotic duty to show solidarity with the Camisards.⁸³

At the close of his argument, Boyer referred to the strategy of publicity itself; after pleading for a military invasion by the English fleet to support the Cévenols, he predicted that cautious people would warn about the dangers of making interventionist plans public. The author responded to this reservation by arguing that the Camisards would receive new “spirit and vigour” upon finding out that foreign powers were willing to help them.⁸⁴ Indeed, he believed that his pamphlet—or information about it—would find its way across the French borders and encourage Protestants in the provinces around the Cévennes to also rise up and “shake off their yoke.”⁸⁵

Yet the author had taken a risk. On April 25, Boyer had to appear before Daniel Finch, Lord President of the Privy Council. Finch was unhappy about the passage on page 5, where Boyer argued that the “true Englishman . . . would cheerfully contribute toward the support of the Cevenois.” People in London’s coffeehouses, the Lord President reminded the pamphleteer, talked about the Camisards as rebels against their lawful prince. Inciting them to support rebels was a grave matter. Finch reprimanded the Huguenot for having stirred up public opinion rather than having gone to the government first, and reminded him that he would have been broken on the wheel had he published the pamphlet in France.⁸⁶ This does not mean that the Lord President was against intervention. Finch had been in contact with Miremont about the possibilities of a military intervention since February, and by mid-April—around the same time that the pamphlet must actually have been published—van Vrijbergen could report to Heinsius that Anne was planning to send weapons, money, and marines to the Mediterranean.⁸⁷ But the English court did not like to be told in front of the people what policy to pursue. Moreover, the council clearly favored the strategic merits of an unexpected strike over boosting the Camisards’ morale with publicity. Boyer had to defend himself by emphasizing that he had not revealed the location of the invasion.⁸⁸

⁸² Ibid., pp. 3–4.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 5.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 24.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 12.

⁸⁶ British Library, Additional Manuscripts, 61648, folios 98–99; I want to express my gratitude to Lionel Laborie for kindly sharing this source with me.

⁸⁷ Letter from Marinus van Vrijbergen to Anthonie Heinsius, April 17, 1703, in Veenendaal (ed.), *Briefwisseling van Anthonie Heinsius, 1702–1720*, vol. 2, p. 162.

⁸⁸ British Library, Additional Manuscripts, 61648, folios 98–99.

Dutch advocates of the Camisard cause were similarly vexed by the two dilemmas discussed above: secrecy versus publicity, on the one hand, and confessional solidarity versus confessional neutrality, on the other. The engagement of Jacob Surendonck (1647–1729) is a case in point. Surendonck held a powerful position in the United Provinces' political center, formally as advocate at the Court of Holland, and informally as a friend and advisor of Heinsius.⁸⁹ Like many of his contemporaries, Surendonck's perspective on European politics was marked by the fear of French universal monarchy and the belief that the Protestant religion was beleaguered. As such, he devoted much of his career to advising on military endeavors against Louis XIV—he also tried and failed to become secretary of war after the death of William III.⁹⁰

Ever since the Nine Years War Surendonck had incessantly tried to convince the stadtholder-king, his wife Mary Stuart, and Heinsius of the merits of a military invasion from the sea, believing that the Sun King would quickly be defeated if he were forced to fight on his own soil.⁹¹ During the War of the Camisards he insisted that a publicity campaign in France was the key to a successful invasion. In a letter from June 1704 to the Grand Pensionary, pensionary of Amsterdam Willem Buys, and pensionary of Gouda Bruno van der Dussen, Surendonck stressed that shortly before the invasion two “eloquent and moving” pamphlets should be disseminated widely throughout France, “one in the name of the repressed French nation in general and the other in the name of the Protestants.”⁹²

The Land's Advocate also had his eye on international public opinion when he tried to raise money for charity for the Camisards in the Dutch Republic. In the beginning of May 1703 Surendonck sent requests to several administrative bodies, including the Council of Amsterdam and one of the city's burgomasters, to organize collections for the Huguenots in the Cévennes.⁹³ Believing that secret efforts to aid the Camisards were insufficient, he argued that a Dutch charity campaign would send an important public message abroad: open support would

⁸⁹ M. Claessens, “Inventaris van het archief van Jacob Surendonck” (1991), p. 8, Nationaal Archief, The Hague.

⁹⁰ Missive van Jacob Surendonck aan Anthonie Heinsius met “Consideration” memorie houdende een voorstel om een secretaris van oorlog te benoemen, August 21, 1702, Familiearchief Surendonck 3.20.57, inv. no. 94, Nationaal Archief, The Hague.

⁹¹ See all letters in Familiearchief Surendonck, section b.2 “Vlootexpedities,” Nationaal Archief, The Hague.

⁹² Missiven van Jacob Surendonck aan Anthonie Heinsius, van Willem Buijs, pensionaris van Amsterdam, Bruno van der Dussen, pensionaris van Gouda, en [N.N.] Haack, June 30, 1704, Familiearchief Surendonck 3.20.57, inv. no. 235; see also Missive van Jacob Surendonck aan Anthonie Heinsius, waarin hij voorstelt via Vlaanderen en Artois met ondersteuning van de vloot een inval in Frankrijk te doen, July 11, 1708, Familiearchief Surendonck 3.20.57, inv. no. 138; and Missive van Jacob Surendonck aan Isaac van Hoornbeek, pensionaris van Rotterdam, betreffende het zenden van een expeditie naar Languedoc en Dauphine, April 1, 1705, Familiearchief Surendonck 3.20.57, inv. no. 238, Nationaal Archief, The Hague.

⁹³ Missiven van Jacob Surendonck aan het stadsbestuur en aan Johannes Hudde, burgemeester van Amsterdam, betreffende een collecte voor de Camisards in de Chevennes, May 5, 1703, Familiearchief Surendonck 3.20.57, inv. no. 221, Nationaal Archief, The Hague.

provide an example to the English—he surely knew about the Privy Council’s doubt—bolster the insurgents in the Cévennes, and inspire other Protestants in France to rise up against Louis XIV.⁹⁴

Surendonck’s archive contains several versions of a seven-page manuscript, the *Further remarks on the planned assistance and fundraising in the Seven Provinces for our coreligionists in the Cévennes*, in which he provided an elaborate justification for such support.⁹⁵ It discussed why the Camisards had the right to resist, why the laws of war allowed the United Provinces to support a rebellion, and why it was a Christian duty to do so. We do not know whether the *Further remarks* was supposed to remain a manuscript for limited circulation or whether it was meant for publication to accompany the proposed collections. In any case, both the military expedition and the fundraising ultimately failed. England and the United Provinces disagreed over the distribution of resources. Only two ships set sail to the Occitan coast, where they were immediately fired at by the French army. Forewarned by the circulation of pamphlets, royal troops had been expecting the enemy since March.⁹⁶ Afterwards, things kept spiraling downwards. In July 1704 the Swiss declared to the French ambassador that they would not let any of their subjects assist the Camisards as mercenaries, much to the irritation of extraordinary ambassador to the Savoyard court, Richard Hill. The ambassador complained to Secretary of State Charles Hedge that

at the same time these filthy long beards do not hinder the French King from employing his Swiss for the destruction of the Cevennois.⁹⁷

Disillusioned about the efforts to properly steer events in the Cévennes, he concluded in the same letter that “there is a great difference between the zeal of a Camisard in the coffee-houses of London, and on the frontiers of Languedoc.”⁹⁸ Transnational solidarity was first and foremost found in print media, not on the battlefield.

Dutch fundraising was also a disappointment. Like their English colleagues the Dutch authorities remained cautious with regards to public support. Rather than starting a new charity campaign, the States General used funds raised for the Huguenots in 1699, which did little to support the revolt.⁹⁹ On the contrary: in

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ J. Surendonck, “Nadere Remarques,” 1703, Familiearchief Surendonck 3.20.57, inv. no. 222, Nationaal Archief, The Hague.

⁹⁶ Laborie, “Huguenot propaganda,” p. 644.

⁹⁷ Letter from Richard Hill to Charles Hedges, July 15, 1704, in W. Blackley (ed.), *Diplomatic correspondence*, vol. 2 (London: J. Murray, 1845), p. 386.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 386.

⁹⁹ Resolutien Staten Generaal de finantien rakende, 1704, Archief van mr. C. de Jonge van Ellemeet, 1570–1798 1.10.50, inv. no. 51, Nationaal Archief, The Hague; I am indebted to Erica Boersma for bringing this source to my attention.

January 1705 Richard Hill wrote the Lord Treasurer stating that the States General had sent eight thousand guilders to Geneva for the Camisards, but that it was used for the sustenance of incoming refugees:

I fear we are doing the Mareschal de Villar's business, and disarming his enemies. I am sure we do not do our own; for one Camisard in the Cévennes is worth a 100 of them out of France.¹⁰⁰

After all the money was spent in 1705, the States General finally asked the individual provinces to raise a total of one hundred thousand guilders for the relief of the Camisards. However, they explicitly requested that the matter be dealt with discreetly.¹⁰¹ On all fronts, the press had failed as a humanitarian tool in the eyes of political officeholders.

Conclusion

During World War II a song was sung among the Maquis, guerrilla bands of resistance fighters in the French countryside:

The fierce children of the Cévennes,
 Recusants and Maquisards
 Show that they have in their veins,
 The pure blood of the Camisards.¹⁰²

Through the Maquis' singing, the lasting memory of the War of the Camisards echoed in the mountains of the Cévennes. A war fought 250 years earlier pre-mediated their struggle.¹⁰³ The Camisards did not provide a source of inspiration for French resistance fighters only. In 1940, J. Marmelstein (1901–1956), who would later join the Dutch resistance to Nazi occupation, published an article about the War of the Camisards in the Dutch Reformed journal *Stemmen des Tijds*. He concluded with considerable praise for the warrior-prophets:

The prophecy of the Camisards was an awakening, which was willed by God and driven by God, in which He gave to the simple and illiterate the task, in a deadly

¹⁰⁰ Letter from Richard Hill to Sidney Godolphin, January 30, 1705, in Blackley (ed.), *Diplomatic correspondence*, vol. 2, pp. 490–491.

¹⁰¹ Resolutie van de Staten-Generaal inzake een omslag over de provincies tot het bijeenbrengen van f. 100.000 ten behoeve van de Camisards, February 26, 1705, Familiearchief Surendonck 3.20.57, inv. no. 223, Nationaal Archief, The Hague.

¹⁰² Quotation from Joutard, *Légende des Camisards*, p. 269.

¹⁰³ For the concept of "premediation" see Chapter 1.

age of immense oppression and devoid of shepherds, to save His hitherto so flourishing congregation from a radical demise.¹⁰⁴

Many contemporary observers had been more hesitant about the role that should be assigned to God in the course of events. International press coverage of prophecy and revolt in the Cévennes reflected a rapidly evolving sense among early modern news consumers that (fake) news was a powerful political instrument in an increasingly interconnected media landscape. Observers realized that it could be used as a weapon to which people within and outside government circles had access, and that it could destabilize international relations by persuading, polarizing, and mobilizing international audiences as well as their governments.

Within this context, even people like Jurieu, who wanted to convince Protestants that the miracles in the Cévennes heralded a new age, first had to provide a systematic analysis of how truth could be distilled from long-distance communication. Opponents who claimed that the stories had been fabricated in Geneva, that they served to lubricate William III's political objectives, or that it was not safe to publicly dismiss them as myths, showed a similar awareness of the political power of the printing press.

In earlier chapters, we have seen that publicity for persecution depended on the willingness of the persecuted to make their cause known abroad and the extent to which the secular authorities on site were well-disposed toward printed advocacy. Publicity for the Camisard cause was largely generated by an intermediary group, most notably, albeit not exclusively, Huguenot exiles, who operated at a level between these two decisive actors. They worked in the vicinity of the authorities in question, and managed the news to raise awareness for the Camisard cause and extend their political agency.

Still, they resorted to the print media because they failed to steer foreign politics more directly. Pamphleteering was ultimately far from a reliable tool to steer foreign policy. In their advocacy for intervention, authors were walking a tight-rope in two respects. First of all, like all pamphleteers hoping to steer international politics during earlier religious conflicts, they had to appeal to audiences across the religious divide and thus downplay claims to confessional truth—even though this was paramount in the self-styling of the insurgents. Yet appeals to confessional truth and solidarity also proved useful to trump concerns about supporting insurgents. In their efforts to legitimize an intervention in the Cévennes, pamphleteers thus had to steer a middle course between appeals to confessional solidarity and supraconfessional solidarity, the latter based on arguments of rule of law,

¹⁰⁴ Quotation by Knetsch, *Pierre Jurieu*, p. 370.

Description of "Convolut met nalatenschap dr. J. W. Marmelstein (1882–1956)," Zwiggelaar Auctions, auctioned on March 28, 2011, <https://www.zwiggelaarauctions.nl/index.php?p=a&select=8,70,3955>.

reason, and humanity. Secondly, the authorities considering an intervention were set on secrecy, for military reasons and to avert public judgment about their course of action. Publicity could thus cause irritation among the very governments which advocates were hoping to mobilize.

Directed at multiple audiences, pamphlets were devised as multidirectional means of communication between the insurgents and the people that were supposed to support them. Moreover, they served to make (potential) insurgents aware of the fact that there was foreign interest in their struggle. These were attempts to establish a form of (imagined) contact between foreign insurgent and political elite, which decisively went beyond one-directional propaganda. And although the War of the Camisards to a considerable extent became a propaganda war, it was not fought out between the French Crown and the Camisards. Instead, it was waged by those who believed that the presses could change the course of events against those who preferred secrecy.

Between Eschatology and Enlightenment

Two weeks before Christmas 1724, burgomaster Johann Gottfried Rösner of the Polish city of Toruń, was executed together with nine of his fellow Lutheran citizens. The men were punished in the wake of a riot, the escalation of a conflict between the city's Jesuit students and Lutheran citizens, which had disrupted Toruń in the preceding summer. During the tumult, a Lutheran crowd had vandalized the Jesuit school. After the riot, the Jesuits took proceedings against the city to the royal Assessorial Court, which thereupon sent an all-Catholic research commission to the confessionally mixed city to investigate the matter.¹ The civic authorities were found guilty, a verdict confirmed by the Sejm. Toruń was occupied by royal troops to make sure that the sentences were carried out. Rösner was convicted for having forsaken his duties to keep the public peace in failing to prevent or quell the riot. The other convicts were executed as participants in the tumult. Extra harsh punishments were designed for those who had engaged in iconoclasm. The city's Lutherans were also punished collectively; they had to hand over their main church to the Benedictines, pay a large sum of money to the Jesuits, and the city government, hitherto fully Lutheran, was to become 50 percent Catholic.²

That a local riot turned into a matter of national concern was the result of clever lobbying. Looking for justice, the Jesuits had drawn up an account of events in Latin, accusing the magistrates of being responsible for the iconoclasm. This document was disseminated among the Polish nobility shortly after the riot. Through their mediation, the case was taken higher up, to predominantly Catholic authorities. The Toruń authorities subsequently turned it into a matter of international concern by publishing an account of their own, which was picked up by the Prussian court. Like Gdansk and Elbląg, Toruń was a Royal Prussian city. An old and complex constitutional settlement within the Commonwealth granted Royal Prussia a significant degree of autonomy from the rest of the realm. At the time of the tumult the cities had been engaged in a long struggle to protect their privileges against the centralizing policies of the monarchy.³ Neighboring

¹ The Royal Assessorial Court was one of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth's three royal courts in Warsaw. D. Stone, *The Polish-Lithuanian state, 1386–1795* (Seattle, 2001), p. 188.

² For a detailed reconstruction see F. Jacobi, *Das Thorner Blutgericht 1724* (Halle, 1896).

³ J. Miller, *Urban societies in East-Central Europe, 1500–1700* (Abingdon, 2008), pp. 179–180; for an extensive study of Royal Prussia see K. Friedrich, *The other Prussia: Royal Prussia, Poland, and liberty, 1569–1772* (Cambridge, 2009).

Brandenburg-Prussia had long served as a protector to the Royal Prussian cities, for whom they had interceded with the Polish Crown on numerous occasions.⁴

In the early months of 1725, the so-called “Bloodbath of Toruń” became a European scandal. By the end of the year, over one hundred pamphlets had flowed from the presses in the Holy Roman Empire, the United Provinces, and Britain.⁵ As a cause célèbre, the Tumult of Toruń became a milestone in the changing perception of Poland among Western Europeans.⁶ Once famed for their religious forbearance, the Poles slowly came to be seen as a backward and bigoted nation, a negative example in Enlightenment debates on toleration. Voltaire, for one, referred to the executions in Toruń in his praise for the First Partition of Poland by Prussia, Austria, and Russia in 1772, which he regarded as a decisive victory for religious tolerance.⁷ The enduring negative imprint Toruń made on the image of Poland and the Poles explains why the episode remained the subject of a historiographical trench war between German and Polish scholars for more than two centuries.⁸ The nadir of this politicized historiography came in 1939, when Gotthold Rhode—who would become a renowned professor of Eastern European history after World War II—equated the Prussian intercessions with the “protection” of German minorities, so as to legitimize the Nazi struggle against “Polendom.”⁹ In 1982, Rhode revisited the Tumult of Toruń to conclude that the event had such a profound echo in the 1720s because “the European ‘Zeitgeist’ had turned away from the world of fanatical religious wars and steered toward the Enlightenment.”¹⁰

Reflecting broader historiographical developments, recent research has criticized the Enlightenment narrative and instead singled out reactions to the

⁴ G. Rhode, *Brandenburg-Preussen und die Protestanten in Polen 1640–1740. Ein Jahrbuch preussischer Schutzpolitik für eine unterdrückte Minderheit* (Leipzig, 1941).

⁵ For a comprehensive, albeit not exhaustive, overview of contemporary publications about Toruń see H. Baranowski, *Bibliografia miasta Torunia* (Poznań, 1972).

⁶ See B. E. Cieszyńska, “Between ‘incidents of intolerance’ and ‘massacre’: British interpretations of the early modern Polish religious persecution,” *Revista Lusófona de Ciência das Religiões* 8.15 (2009), pp. 269–282; M. Schulze Wessel, “Religiöse Intoleranz, grenzüberschreitende Kommunikation und die politische Geographie Ostmitteleuropas im 18. Jahrhundert,” in J. Requate and M. Schulze Wessel (eds.), *Europäische Öffentlichkeit. Transnationale Kommunikation seit dem 18. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main, 2002), pp. 75–76.

⁷ Schulze Wessel, “Religiöse Intoleranz,” p. 77.

⁸ See M. Thomsen, “Der Thorner Tumult 1724 als Gegenstand des deutsch-polnischen Nationalitätenkonflikts. Zur Kontroverse zwischen Franz Jacobi und Stanisław Kujot Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts,” *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 57 (2009), pp. 293–314.

⁹ After his defense the author volunteered to work as a translator, a role in which he remained for the remainder of the war. The most detailed study of Prussian intercession up to today thus bears a Nazi stamp—which was literally the case in the copy that I consulted in Mainz. See also C. Motsch, *Grenzesellschaft und frühmoderner Staat. Die Starostei Draheim zwischen Hinterpommern, der Neumark und Großpolen (1575–1895)* (Göttingen, 2011), p. 30; E. Eckert, *Zwischen Ostforschung und Osteuropahistorie. Zur Biographie des Historikers Gotthold Rhode (1916–1990)* (Osnabrück, 2012).

¹⁰ G. Rhode, “Vom Königlichen Preußen zur preußischen Provinz Westpreußen (1466–1772),” in R. Riemenschneider (ed.), *Schlesien und Pommern in den deutsch-polnischen Beziehungen vom 16. bis 18. Jahrhundert* (Braunschweig, 1982), p. 61.

crackdown as proof that Europeans still perceived international politics through a confessional lens.¹¹ Stressing the difference between motivation and legitimation, some scholars have insisted that interventionist policies were dictated by reason of state but propagated with recourse to confession.¹² They sketch a media landscape reminiscent of Habermas' ideal type of a representative public sphere, where print media were closely interwoven with the respective political centers.¹³

As we have seen throughout this study, printed opinion surrounding persecutions did indeed often originate close to political centers. But it has become clear that regarding the printing press as mainly a tool of governments fails to do justice to the complex relation between politics and pamphlets. This chapter advances the argument that pamphleteers seized upon state-authorized public outrage over religious persecution to communicate and justify contested political norms. This also raises the question whether the execution of ten Lutherans in Poland-Lithuania caused such a commotion because Protestants throughout Europe read a similar story, or because they all saw something different in Toruń. The chapter argues that printed expressions of transnational solidarity with victims of persecution became ever more present precisely because it was a major theme in both confessional and Enlightenment perceptions of European politics. To evaluate the relative importance of these perceptions, the chapter concludes by comparing international responses to the Tumult of Toruń with those to the expulsion of the Jews from Prague in 1744.

The Tumult

The Tumult of Toruń has mostly been studied as an isolated case, but it should be understood as an instance of broader developments in Poland-Lithuania's Counter-Reformation and the decreasing religious toleration that was its consequence. While some Protestant states in Western Europe increasingly adopted legislation for religious pluriformity by the turn of the eighteenth century,

¹¹ Thompson, *Britain, Hanover*, pp. 97–132

¹² P. Milton, "Debates on intervention against religious persecution in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth: European reactions to the Tumult of Thorn, 1724–1726," *European History Quarterly* 47.3 (2017), pp. 405–436; Schulze Wessel, "Religiöse Intoleranz"; M. Schulze Wessel, "Die Bedeutung 'europäischer Öffentlichkeit' für die transnationale Kommunikation religiöser Minderheiten im 18. Jahrhundert," in A. Ranft (ed.), *Der Hofstag in Quedlinburg 973. Von den historischen Wurzeln zum Neuen Europa* (Berlin, 2006), pp. 163–173; Friedrich, *The other Prussia*, p. 187.

¹³ Patrick Milton most notably characterized the public sphere surrounding Toruń as predominantly "that of the princes and diplomats (along with the political nation of stakeholders), who largely constituted both the authors of and the audiences of printed material"; Milton, "Debates on intervention," p. 408.

Poland-Lithuania made somewhat of a reverse move. The realm had once been renowned in Europe for its religious coexistence.¹⁴ In the course of the seventeenth century, however, new narratives emerged, which firmly linked being part of the *szlachta*, the large noble class that dominated Polish politics, with Catholicism.¹⁵ Catholic Poles started to reclaim churches that had been ceded to Lutherans, while the Sejm forbade Catholics to convert and decided that Protestants could no longer be ennobled.¹⁶ By the end of the seventeenth century, most of the *szlachta* had returned to the Catholic fold.

The decrease in religious tolerance was closely connected with international politics. The destructive Swedish invasions of Poland-Lithuania in the 1650s were remembered as attacks not only on Poland but also on Catholicism.¹⁷ Prussian and Russian appeals to solidarity with religious dissidents—Lutheran and Orthodox—in an effort to steer the Commonwealth's domestic politics added fuel to the flames; the first legal restrictions passed by the Sejm in 1717 against Protestants holding national public office were underpinned by the wish to safeguard sovereignty against foreign interference through a fifth column.¹⁸

Whereas Lutherans throughout the Commonwealth found themselves increasingly discriminated against, they remained socially and politically dominant in the merchant cities of Royal Prussia. Toruń was religiously and socially divided between a German merchant class of Lutherans, who held a firm grip on the city's administration, and a significantly poorer Catholic Polish community, with both groups making up about 50 percent of the city's population.¹⁹ Since the Swedish occupation of the city during the Great Northern War (1700–1721) especially, religious tensions within the city had been running high.²⁰ In short, (perceived) foreign confessional allegiances lay at the heart of civic unrest in Toruń well before it created international outrage.

¹⁴ M. G. Müller, "Toleration in Eastern Europe: The dissident question in eighteenth-century Poland-Lithuania," in O. P. Grell and R. Porter (eds.), *Toleration in Enlightenment Europe* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 218.

¹⁵ M. Teter, *Jews and heretics in Catholic Poland: A beleaguered church in the post-Reformation era* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 52–58.

¹⁶ B. Porter, "The Catholic nation: Religion, identity, and the narratives of Polish history," *Slavic and East European Journal* 45.2 (2001), p. 292.

¹⁷ Teter, *Jews and heretics*, p. 53.

¹⁸ M. G. Müller, "Die polnische 'Dissidenten-Frage' im 18. Jahrhundert. Anmerkungen zum Verhältnis von religiöser Toleranz und Politik in Polen-Lithauen im Zeitalter der Aufklärung," in E. Donnert (ed.), *Europa in der Frühen Neuzeit. Festschrift für Günter Mühlplfordt*, vol. 5 (Weimar, Cologne, and Vienna, 1999), pp. 456–457; see also Müller, "Toleration in Eastern Europe," pp. 212–229.

¹⁹ S. Salmonowicz, "The Torun uproar of 1724," *Acta Poloniae Historica* 47 (1983), pp. 69–70; M. Thomsen, "Das Betrübte Thorn. Jablonski und der Thorner Tumult von 1724," in J. Bahlcke and W. Korthaase (eds.), *Daniel Ernst Jablonski. Religion, Wissenschaft und Politik um 1700* (Wiesbaden, 2008), p. 227.

²⁰ Salmonowicz, "The Torun uproar," p. 70.

Royal Public Diplomacy

From the very beginning, foreign intervention for the sake of Toruń's Lutherans included a public strategy. In December 1724 the kings of Great Britain, Sweden, and Denmark received a letter from Frederick William I. The Prussian king urged his fellow monarchs to get involved in the matter of Toruń, insisting that the Protestant religion in all of Poland-Lithuania was under threat.²¹ Since the executions had not yet been carried out, the Protestant kings thereupon sent letters of intercession to Augustus II of Poland, insisting that the death sentences be reversed. After this had proved unsuccessful, they pleaded for the maintenance of Toruń's old political privileges. While sent through diplomatic channels, the royal letters were not treated as "classified." They were all published, thus serving not only as diplomatic pressure, but also as a public stance on the issue by the respective courts.²²

Finding their way to European newspapers shortly after the executions had taken place, the royal letters of intercession were among the first foreign works of public opinion on Toruń. In most newspapers—with their otherwise brief reports on a wide variety of subjects—the letters of intercession were published in full, so granting a disproportionate amount of space to the Toruń episode.²³ The letters became some of the most important sources for other printed news media about Toruń, included in nearly every publication that provided a reconstruction of events.

The royal letters of intercession intentionally exposed royal communication to the scrutiny of the international public eye, thus invoking a third actor to be reckoned with. In doing so, the monarchs reframed the Toruń affair as not only unjust in and of itself. They also identified the failure to respond to their pleas as an insult to themselves. Frederick William I's letter to Peter I of Russia from January 9, 1725 illustrates this well.²⁴ In this letter, the Prussian king deplored that

²¹ The States General received no such letter, which suggests that the Prussian king, at first, regarded intercession to be a royal affair. In August 1725, Prussia, Great Britain, and France agreed to put renewed pressure on Augustus II of Poland. This time, they did invite the States General to get involved: Letter from ambassador Carel Rumpf to the States General, August 14, 1725, *Archieven van de legaties in Zweden, Pruisen, Polen en Saksen, 1674–1810* 1.02.07, Nationaal Archief, The Hague.

²² On February 6, 1725, Carel Rumpf, Dutch ambassador to the courts of Berlin and Warsaw, reported to the States General that the intercession letters were being prepared for publication; Letter from Rumpf to the States General, February 6, 1725, *Archieven van de legaties in Zweden, Pruisen, Polen en Saksen, 1674–1810* 1.02.07, Nationaal Archief, The Hague; the *Amsterdamse Courant* reported from London that George I would only allow his letter to Augustus II of Poland to be published after he received a response, confirming that the letter was intended to have a second public life: *Amsterdamse Courant*, February 17, 1725, from London February 9, 1725.

²³ See, for instance, *Amsterdamse Courant*, January 6, 1725, February 13, 1725; 's *Gravenhaegse Courant*, January 17, 1725; *Leydse Courant*, February 12, 1725.

²⁴ It is not clear whether the czar ever came to read it as he died on February 8.

the “Polish side” hastened the execution, thereby showing “a public contempt for [our] intercessions in front of the entire world.”²⁵ George I of Great Britain actively tried to manage the public effect of his letter, only allowing it to be published after he had received a response from Augustus II of Poland.²⁶ Augustus II, in turn, asked George I to recall his envoy Edward Finch, after the ambassador’s plea with the Evangelical Corps in Regensburg concerning Toruń had been published. Polish notables regarded the plea as a public insult to their nation and demanded the ambassador’s resignation.²⁷

Joint royal engagement in public diplomacy against a fellow king with whom they were not at war was not a common practice. In Chapter 2 we have seen the unwillingness of the Dutch authorities to protest against Louis XIV’s religious policy. Even James II of England, who had actively promoted his image as a protector of the Huguenots, refused to issue a public condemnation when requested.²⁸ The intercession letters therefore must have made a considerable impression upon Europe’s news-reading public. Moreover, the letters encouraged “bystanders” to speak out against Toruń; in Frederick William I’s first letter, he offered a “brotherly” warning to Augustus II of Poland-Lithuania that “all reasonable men” will understand that the accused had been executed “not for the love of justice, but because of the deceits and tricks of the Jesuits and an implacable hatred for [the Protestant] Religion.”²⁹ In a second letter, sent shortly after the executions, Frederick William I admonished Augustus II to take into consideration the international public perception of events:³⁰

We . . . do [not] doubt that your majesty . . . has been informed about the feelings to which this case has given rise, in all of the reasonable world, regardless of religion, concerning the justice and Christianity of those who were involved in this . . . conviction and its execution.³¹

Taking a similar stance, Frederick IV of Denmark warned Augustus II in a letter of intercession not to let his reputation be clouded by allowing such executions

²⁵ Quoted from Dutch translation (original in Latin) in the *Amsterdamse Courant*, February 13, 1725.

²⁶ *Amsterdamse Courant*, February 17, 1725.

²⁷ Copie de la lettre de mr. le genl. maj. de Schwerin à mgr. le Primas, July 10, 1725, Bijlagen bij brieven aan de Staten-Generaal, 1725, Archieven van de legaties in Zweden, Pruisen, Polen en Saksen, 1674–1810 1.02.07, inv. no. 255, Nationaal Archief, The Hague.

²⁸ Dunan-Page, “Dragonnade du Poitou,” pp. 6–7.

²⁹ Full transcription in [J.-F. Bion], *Getrouw en naauwkeurig verhaal van ’t schrikkelyk Treurspel onlangs uytgevoert tot Thorn, in Pools Pruyssen, door het overleg en aanstoken der Jesuiten* (Amsterdam: Johannes de Ruyter, 1725), p. 64.

³⁰ The king of Sweden makes a similar reference to the “reasonable world” in his letter to the king of Poland-Lithuania of January 9, 1725.

³¹ Quoted from Dutch translation in the *Amsterdamse Courant*, February 13, 1725, report from London, February 6, 1725.

within his realm.³² George I of Great Britain, in turn, stressed to the Polish king that not only he, but the entire English nation, was moved by the executions.³³ Indeed, the interceding monarchs not only ensured, but also emphasized, that the whole world was watching and judging.

The monarchs justified their intercessions with reference to two strands of international law. On the one hand, they referred to positive international law by reminding the Polish king that they were guarantors of the Peace of Oliva, the 1660 treaty between Sweden, Poland-Lithuania, Brandenburg-Prussia, and the emperor, which ended the Second Northern War.³⁴ The second article of the treaty protected the autonomy of the Royal Prussian cities, stipulating that they would retain all the rights and privileges they had had before the war. The interceding powers regarded this article to have been breached when Toruń was forced to appoint Catholic magistrates. As such, this became the main legal justification for foreign intervention in the affair. Ambassador Finch added humanity as a justification for George I of Great Britain to act, declaring that

the king, my master, will take no measures other than those that his conscience, his honor, and his feelings of humanity will instill upon him, and will be enough to soothe the spirit of the English nation, which shouts with one voice for justice or vengeance!³⁵

But the royal intercessions were not entirely devoid of confessional argumentation. Frederick William I also claimed that “it would conform to divine law and the natural right of peoples” if the Protestant powers made their “Catholic subjects feel some of what . . . the poor Evangelicals . . . had to suffer.”³⁶ As we have seen in Chapter 3, a Dutch pamphleteer made a similar argument in the wake of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The Prussian king’s letter thus offers an interesting negotiation of the norms of sovereignty, rule of law, and confessional solidarity. In his view, Augustus II’s sovereignty did not take precedence over Frederick William I’s right to pursue a policy of confessional solidarity, which he regarded as supported by natural law. Following this argument, the Prussian king

³² Letter from the king of Denmark to the king of Poland-Lithuania; Dutch translation of Latin original in *’s Gravenhaegse Courant*, January 17, 1725, report from Frankfurt am Main, January 11, 1725.

³³ Thompson, *Britain, Hanover*, p. 106.

³⁴ See R. Frost, *After the Deluge: Poland-Lithuania and the Second Northern War, 1655–1660* (Cambridge, 1993); M. D. Evans, *Religious liberty and international law in Europe* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 55.

³⁵ Dutch translation in the *’s Gravenhaegse Courant*, March 7, 1725, report from Dresden, February 27, 1725.

³⁶ Letter from Frederick William I to Augustus II, January 9, 1725, in D. Giegert (ed.), *Der reisende Gerbergeselle oder Reisebeschreibung eines auf der Wanderschaft begriffenen Weisgerbergesellens* (Legnica: David Giegert, 1725), pp. 243–244.

was not permitted to breach the sovereignty of Poland-Lithuania, but he did have the right to punish the co-religionists of Augustus II within the bounds of his own territorial sovereignty. Indeed, while emphasizing confessional neutrality by arguing that the injustice of Toruń would be self-evident to all “reasonable” people, regardless of religion, religious solidarity nevertheless gave him the natural right to pick sides.

A Cause Célèbre

Compared to the scope of the other instances of religious persecution investigated in this study, Toruń was a strikingly minor episode. Royal public diplomacy and the somewhat ambiguous religious interpretation of events provided by the Protestant monarchs were two factors that help explain why the Tumult of Toruń nevertheless received such unprecedented international public attention. Another factor was the nature of the alleged persecution. The letters of intercession were directed at Augustus II with a request to intervene in his domestic politics, but few opinion makers identified him as the instigator of the persecutions. Toruń was first and foremost regarded as a Jesuit issue. A shared repertoire of anti-Jesuit literature therefore premediated the news. The breach of the city’s autonomy nourished the widely shared narrative in Europe that the Jesuits were a severe threat to sovereignty.³⁷

Part of what made anti-Jesuit conspiracies so tenacious was that they did not depend on an anti-Catholic mindset. In the latter half of the seventeenth century, they had become prevalent among non-Protestant parties as well. The Jansenists developed a lively anti-Jesuit literature and several European governments—including Catholic ones—began to regard the Jesuits as a fifth column.³⁸ Different types of Enlightenment thinkers, in turn, singled out the Jesuits as prototypes of irrational religious fanaticism and readily adopted accusations that they had an insatiable lust for power. In the words of Richard van Dülmen, “as different as the respective Enlightenment currents were, they were united in their opposition against the Society of Jesus.”³⁹ By the eighteenth century this diffusion of anti-Jesuit thought increasingly pushed adherents into a corner.

³⁷ S. Pavone, “The history of anti-Jesuitism: National and global dimensions,” in T. Banchoff and J. Casanova (eds.), *The Jesuits and globalization: Historical legacies and contemporary challenges* (Washington, DC, 2016), p. 111; P. Burke, “The black legend of the Jesuits: An essay in the history of social stereotypes,” in S. Ditchfield (ed.), *Christianity and community in the West: Essays for John Bossy* (Aldershot, 2001), pp. 165–182; H. E. Braun, “Jesuits as counsellors in the early modern world: Introduction,” *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 4 (2017), pp. 175–185.

³⁸ Pavone, “History of anti-Jesuitism,” p. 113.

³⁹ R. van Dülmen, “Antijesuitismus und katholische Aufklärung in Deutschland,” *Historisches Jahrbuch* 1989 (1969), p. 52.

Ultimately, the Jesuit Order was suppressed by several governments—including the papacy—in the second half of the eighteenth century.⁴⁰

By the early eighteenth century, people of very different religious and political outlooks associated the Jesuits with a set of common evils, ranging from theological error, bigotry, and intolerance to greed for power and foreign disruption of civic order. Toruń could serve as a smoking gun for all such conspiracy theories. Moreover, that a Protestant civic government had been toppled by a fifth column, reinforced the idea of the Jesuits as an internal threat. As such, Toruń blurred the lines between foreign politics and domestic social order to a greater extent than the other cases of religious persecution discussed in the preceding chapters had done. Concerted monarchical intervention in a minor incident was seized upon as evidence to feed a particularly widespread and flexible conspiracy theory that suggested that the social order was vulnerable.

This allowed the Tumult of Toruń to receive so much attention that print media soon began to discuss that public attention in its own right. On January 4, 1725, the *Amsterdamse Courant* reported that news about Toruń made all Protestants in England shudder and that the people in Leipzig were devastated by what had happened.⁴¹ Five days later it reported that

the matter of Toruń has become the object of discourse in all good company. They wait impatiently for German letters, to learn about the further developments surrounding the case.⁴²

On January 12, the *'s Gravenhaegse Courant* included a similar report from Frankfurt, saying that people talked almost exclusively about Toruń. A day later the *Oprechte Haerlemsche Courant* added that this had already led to brawls between Catholics and Protestants in the free imperial city.⁴³ On January 24, the *Leydse Courant* reported that English Catholics, “as immoderate as they are, appear to feel ashamed and avoid hearing about it as much as possible.”⁴⁴ On January 27, the *Oprechte Haerlemsche Courant* reported that

the tragedy of Thorn, staged by the Jesuits, creates a lot of rumor in all of Europe and is regarded as a case the like of which has not been heard of in several centuries.⁴⁵

On January 30, the *Amsterdamse Courant* reported that there was no lack of writers who make it their business

⁴⁰ C. Vogel, *Der Untergang der Gesellschaft Jesu als europäisches Medienereignis (1758–1773). Publizistische Debatten im Spannungsfeld von Aufklärung und Gegenklärung* (Mainz, 2006).

⁴¹ *Amsterdamse Courant*, January 4, 1725.

⁴² *Amsterdamse Courant*, January 9, 1725.

⁴³ *'s Gravenhaegse Courant*, January 12, 1725.

⁴⁴ *Leydse Courant*, January 24, 1725. The *Amsterdamse Courant* reported the same one day later.

⁴⁵ *Oprechte Haerlemsche Courant*, January 27, 1725.

to demonstrate the necessity to curb the spirit of persecution and the rage of the disciples of Loyola. These writings, in which popery is painted in the blackest of colors, do not fail to make a lively impression, either in the minds of the common people, or among persons of the highest ranks.⁴⁶

Four days later, the *Amsterdamse Courant* reported that several Protestant powers had begun to carry out reprisals because of Toruń, while on February 6, the *Oprechte Haerlemsche Courant* claimed that in Hanover Roman Catholics had been told to leave the city before the 25th.⁴⁷

Newspapers also mentioned the publication of pamphlets in different countries. The *'s Gravenhaegse Courant*, for instance, wrote on February 28 that a pamphlet had been published in London, written in a style both “emphatic and moving.”⁴⁸ On March 16, the *Leydse Courant* recounted from Warsaw that one Polish prince

could not keep in check his irritation about the tidings about the matter of Toruń, which one finds reported in Dutch, German, and French newspapers.⁴⁹

One series of pamphlets, presenting a fictional conversation between the deceased Rösner and Luther, narrated that even the people in the realm of the dead—both Protestant and Catholic—were anxiously awaiting news about Toruń.⁵⁰ The 1726 edition of the *Europische Mercurius* devoted its frontispiece to the executions. In the print, a Jesuit pulls away a curtain, revealing the dismemberment of a headless body, with several other decapitated corpses in front of the scaffold.⁵¹ The issue also introduced yet another report about the matter in almost apologetic terms, stating that “as soon as the reader sees the name Poland, he will realize that we will again speak of the poor Thorners.”⁵²

In short, royal attention may have made the story big, but it set something in motion that, at least in the Dutch Republic, cannot adequately be described as a public sphere of “princes and diplomats.” Indeed, one of the principal works on Toruń originating in Prussia’s government circles, court preacher Daniel Ernst Jablonski’s *The distressed city of Thorn*, appears not to have been translated into

⁴⁶ *Amsterdamse Courant*, January 30, 1725.

⁴⁷ *Amsterdamse Courant*, February 3, 1725; *Oprechte Haerlemsche Courant*, February 6, 1725.

⁴⁸ *'s Gravenhaegse Courant*, February 28, 1725. ⁴⁹ *Leydse Courant*, March 16, 1725.

⁵⁰ Anonymous, *De onschuldige bloetdruypende voetstappen op de eerste aankomste van de hr. Johann Gottfried Rösner* (Amsterdam 1725), pfl 16645; Anonymous, *Nieuw aangekomen en noodig vervolgt tot de in het ryk der dooden gehouden t'samenspraak tusschen den heer Johann Gottfried Rösner . . . en dr. Martinus Lutherus* (Amsterdam: Johannes de Ruyter, 1725), pfl 16646; Anonymous, *De derde afzending van de, in het ryk der dooden gehoudene samenspraak tusschen den onthalsden hr. Johann Gottfried Rösner . . . en dr. Martinus Lutherus* (Amsterdam: Johannes de Ruyter, 1725), pfl 16647; these pamphlets are translated from German originals.

⁵¹ *Europische Mercurius*, vol. 36, pt 1. L. Arminius (ed.) (Amsterdam, 1725). For an extensive description of the frontispiece see Koopmans, *Early modern media and the news*, pp. 95–96.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 77.

Dutch at all.⁵³ The only edition published in the United Provinces that could be traced was in French.⁵⁴ Whether or not they were encouraged to do so by their governments, Europeans were all looking at Toruń, which they found wildly interesting in and of itself. But did they see the same thing?

Visions of Religious War

As usual, several Dutch opinion makers expressed their views on Toruń in the language of confessional truth. The allegorical print *The bloodthirst of the Jesuits revealed in the suppression of the Polish Church* is a case in point (Figure 8). It presents pope, cardinal, and bishop—allegorized as the three-headed beast Cerberus—holding the banner of the Inquisition, alongside a Jesuit perpetrator, who is struck down by God. Next to the Jesuits are the clergy, presented as bats, “devils incarnate,” taunting the truth throughout the world. Reference is also made to the international legal aspect of the conflict, as the Jesuit tramples upon the Treaty of Oliva, but the focus is clearly on the absolute evil of the Catholic Church. Appropriating this Catholic threat, the image also makes reference to Dutch history. A portrait of William of Orange, assassinated by a Catholic in 1584, not far from the severed heads of the convicts of Toruń, underlines a continuum, suggesting that they were killed by the same malefactor.⁵⁵

In Amsterdam, publisher Johannes van Leeuwen had some success with the production of warmongering pamphlets, written by an anonymous author who was simply referred to as a “lover of the Protestant religion.” The pamphlet series strikingly lacked nuance, presenting its readership with a salvo of exaggerated historical examples of Catholic cruelty. The author wondered whether the “Roman Beast has not plunged around in Christian martyrs’ blood for long enough.”⁵⁶ He revisited the cruel treatment of indigenous Americans, described in detail how children were roasted and human flesh was eaten during the Saint Bartholomew’s Day Massacre, how the “choir harpies” had been responsible for the Thirty Years War, and how the Inquisition under Alba in the Low Countries had been responsible for 150,000 deaths—a wild overestimation.⁵⁷

The “lover of the Protestant religion” also sneered at the Catholic image cult, accused the Jesuits of being rapists, and made the claim that they had tried to raise

⁵³ D. Jablonski, *Das betrübte Thorn, oder die Geschichte so sich zu Thorn von dem 11. Jul. 1724. biss auf gegenwärtige Zeit zugetragen* (Berlin: Ambrosius Haude, 1725).

⁵⁴ D. Jablonski, *Thorn affligée ou relation de ce qui s’est passé dans cette ville depuis le 16. Juillet 1724* (Amsterdam: Pierre Humbert, 1726).

⁵⁵ Anonymous, *De bloeddorst der Jesuiten, vertoond in het onderdrukken der Poolse kerk* (s.l.: s.n., 1725), pfl 16651; Orange’s assassin, Balthasar Gérard, was commonly associated with the Jesuits; G. van den Bosch, “Jesuits in the Low Countries (1542–1773): A historiographical essay,” in R. Maryks (ed.), *Jesuit Historiography Online* (2016), http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2468-7723_jho_COM_192551.

⁵⁶ Anonymous, *Lauwerkranen, gevlogten om het hoofd der godzalige martelaren, door de woede der jesuiten omgebracht binnen Thoorn* (Amsterdam: Johannes van Leeuwen, 1725), pfl 16648, p. 3.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 5.



Figure 8. Pieter van den Berge (attributed to), *The bloodthirst of the Jesuits, revealed in the oppression of the Polish Church*, 1724–1726, reproduced with permission from the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

an army of 60,000 Tartars, who were commonly associated with Satan, irreligion, and invasion, against the Protestant powers.⁵⁸ This anti-Catholicism came with a political agenda. In the *Address to the Protestant powers for the protection of their*

⁵⁸ Anonymous, *De Jesuiten, en verdere roomse geestelyken, in hun eigen aard en wezen ontdekt, en ten toon gesteld op het Toornse moordschavot* (Amsterdam: Johannes van Leeuwen, 1725), p1ft 16650, p. 11; see for instance E. B. Song, *Dominion undeserved: Milton and the perils of Creation* (Ithaca, NY

oppressed coreligionists in Poland, the author praised the “heroes who guard the Dutch garden,” but simultaneously admonished them to action:

Awake from your slumbers, before the furious altar beast fires at your borders too, and let the same spirit which has admonished so many kings to vindictiveness, move your soul, to save the wretched subjects from their sorrows and grievous state.⁵⁹

The pamphleteer directly urged Dutch regents to join in the common cause directed by Europe’s Protestant kings. Such admonishments to the authorities were not common, but the author must have felt strengthened by the activism of other Protestant powers, which was so widely discussed in the news.

In the *Excellent remarks about the bloodbath of Thorn*, a conversation pamphlet in the same series, the prospect of an apocalyptic war was further elaborated upon. The discussants, going by the names of Theophilus and Philometor, marvel at how a small spark, in comparison to other executions, could ignite such a great fire that even Protestant princes paid attention to it.⁶⁰ They felt that a “war between the Antichrist and God’s people [which] will shake and stir all of Europe” was nigh, as providence clearly steered in this direction. After all, the Treaty of Oliva was signed by more powers than any other treaty in history. And since the war was prophesied in the Book of Revelation, there was no chance that the parties would manage to settle the dispute. Yet the *Excellent remarks* was more than a prediction or a work on prophecy; it also admonished the reader. Theophilus and Philometor express their uncertainty about a victory, because the Protestant world is in bad shape.⁶¹ Hence, they argue that the best way for a prince to fight the Antichrist in the impending war is to purge his own lands and territories from cruelties and injustices, and be guided by God in all his deeds. “Princes and potentates” should therefore commit themselves to “a personal and a popular Reformation” within their realms.⁶² The conversation ends with a firm rejection of the “openly profane and . . . the feigned adherents of Christ.”⁶³

Using Toruń for a call to religious purification, the author drew on a Dutch theological tradition often referred to as the “Further Reformation” (*Nadere Reformatie*), a pietistic movement aimed at disciplining and moralizing

and London, 2013), p. 31; G. Hang, “Jews, Saracens, ‘Black men’, Tartars: England in a world of racial difference,” in P. Brown (ed.), *A companion to medieval English literature and culture, c. 1350–c. 1500* (Hoboken, NJ, 2007), pp. 247–269.

⁵⁹ Anonymous, *Aanspraak aan de protestantsse mogentheden, tot bescherming van hunne onderdrukte geloofsgenoten in Polen, en de elendige ingezetenen van de stad Thoorn* (Johannes van Leeuwen: Amsterdam, 1725), pfl 16649, p. 5.

⁶⁰ Anonymous, *Uitgeleze aanmerkingen over het Thornse bloedblad, of bedenkingen over de schrikkelijke gevolgen van ’t onderdrukken der Protestanten in Polen* (Amsterdam: Johannes van Leeuwen, 1725), pfl 769.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

believers into living more godly lifestyles. Whereas the “first Reformation” had concentrated on purifying religious dogma, this “second Reformation” aimed at purifying the inner religion of the adherents of the true religion.⁶⁴ To improve the spirituality and morality of the people, the “Further Reformation” also called for a struggle against pretended religiosity and pseudo-piety—an important exponent of which was Roman Catholicism.⁶⁵ “Further Reformation” polemic often interpreted contemporary Dutch history in providential terms. The author expanded upon this theme by interpreting Toruń as the herald of what would befall the Dutch Republic if the country persisted in its sinfulness.⁶⁶ These pamphlets still presented foreign news in a framework of confessional antagonism and impending holy war.

Yet at the same time, the author of the series also spoke a different language; he combined this militant sectarian defense of Protestantism—“the pure faith”—and anti-Catholicism with an ode to the religious toleration and the magistrates of Amsterdam.⁶⁷ He praised the city’s four burgomasters for keeping Amsterdam safe from tyrants and allowing the people to “sleep under the shade of . . . [their] wisdom.”⁶⁸ In response to the accusation in the Jesuit indictment that Catholics were repressed in the Dutch Republic, the author gave the following answer:

But fiend, where is the evidence of the coercion of souls, wherever the seven provinces place the hat of liberty onto the country’s sharpened spear, and following ancient law leave all to live in their own religion . . . Oh, loyal fathers of the worthy fatherland! Witness our city on the Amstel [Amsterdam], whose extensive borders contain innumerable souls within its exalted walls. There, freedom lives, which outlasts the centuries. There the great [burgomaster] Trip keeps watch over the rudder of government.⁶⁹

We have seen throughout the preceding chapters that confessional perspectives on events were common among Dutch pamphleteers. Still, we should be careful not to stick national labels on these different outlooks. The author’s colorful interweaving of providence, warmongering, patriotism, and celebrations of tolerance was not found in any other work on the Tumult of Toruń. The individual parts, however, were far from unique. Other Dutch authors were similarly eager to integrate the fate of Poland’s Protestants into a patriotic narrative, albeit without

⁶⁴ For an introduction to the *Nadere Reformatie* see F. A. van Lieburg, “From pure church to pious culture: The further Reformation in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic,” in W. F. Graham (ed.), *Later Calvinism: International perspectives* (Kirksville, MO, 1994), pp. 409–429.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 414.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 418; J. W. Spaans, *Graphic satire and religious change: The Dutch Republic 1676–1707* (Leiden and Boston, MA, 2014), p. 1; J. van Eijnatten, *Liberty and concord in the United Provinces: Religious toleration and the public in the eighteenth-century Netherlands* (Leiden and Boston, MA, 2003), pp. 191–200.

⁶⁷ Anonymous, *Aanspraak aan de protestantse*, p. 6.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

the militant confessional argumentation. The poet Willem van Swaanenburg (1679–1728), founder of one of the earliest Dutch periodicals, devoted an issue of his satirical weekly, the *Arlequin distelateur*, to Toruń.⁷⁰ Breaking with his habit of poking fun at the news, the author regarded the situation as too grave to be taken lightly:

I cannot deal with this matter in a harlequinistic way, without sinning against the duty of humanity, which all good patriots, even among the Catholics, passionately embrace, abominating the dregs of the cruel clerics, who . . . like children's executioners twisted the knife in the heart of their burgomaster.⁷¹

Drawing on Dutch history, the poet invoked the death of the Catholic Lamoral, Count of Egmont, one of the political martyrs of the Dutch Revolt, to remind readers of the consequences of discord and tyranny. The matter of Toruń thus offered a mirror, a topical reminder of the state of the Dutch Republic and its national past:

Kneel my Batavians, kneel for the maker of the stars when you think about your country's fathers, because here [in the Dutch Republic] mercy and justice are united to such an extent that one never meets the one virtue without the other. One folio would be too small to sketch the glory of the Dutch Gods, and a ream of paper would not suffice to begin embroidering the glory of the princes of the Amstel with letters.⁷²

Van Swaanenburg pointed to the difference between the Jesuits and the “Evangelicals of the Reformed religion and the governors of the United Provinces,” who had created a paradise within the walls of Amsterdam for the glory of God and the Commonwealth. However, he concluded by insisting that people of all religions contributed to the welfare of their fatherland.⁷³ Toruń should remind the reader of the value of religious tolerance. This emphasis is noteworthy as many Dutch pamphlets examined in this study used foreign persecutions to plea for curtailing Catholic rights in the United Provinces.

Another well-known pioneer of the Dutch periodical, Jacob Campo Weyerman (1677–1747), provided a narrative that was neither patriotic nor confessional. In his weekly *Dissector of disasters* he gave an allegorical representation of the Jesuit as the Beast, a monster which looks like a man, but feels like a snake. In another issue of the *Dissector of disasters*, Weyerman followed English conspiracy theories, arguing that the Jesuits had devised Toruń to “drill into the grassy meadows of

⁷⁰ [W. van Swaanenburg], *Arlequin distelateur*, vol. 4, February 22, 1725 (Amsterdam: Weduwe A. van Aaltwyk, 1725).

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

Albion.”⁷⁴ The author began his perspective on events with a proverb by Lucretius, *tantum religio potuit suadere malorum* (“so much evil could religion induce”), from his Epicurean didactical poem *De rerum natura*, written in defense of materialism and against superstition.⁷⁵

He thus suggested that what happened in Toruń was a human tragedy, caused by too much religious drive rather than by an anti-religion devised by the Antichrist. Accordingly, he did not use confessional arguments. Weyerman also predicted that Europe might lapse into religious war once again, but the problem and solution lay in international relations, not the heavens. He ended his piece by asking Bellona, the Goddess of War, to forever close the temple of Janus—its gates were open at times of war—bringing the states in a stable balance of power, so that “the power of a greater [state] will never be a thorn in the eye of a lesser, nor enable the more powerful to violently engage with the states of a weaker prince.”⁷⁶

Irenicism

The two strands of thought expressed by Swaanenburg and Weyerman, respectively understanding Toruń within the frameworks of religious tolerance and international politics, merged in another religio-political discussion, which increasingly preoccupied Protestant Europe in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. It revolved around irenicism, an ideology concerned with the (re)unification of Protestantism or Western Christendom in general.⁷⁷

By the second half of the seventeenth century, an increasing number of political and religious thinkers began to realize that both war and theological dogmatism had done little to reestablish unity within the Church.⁷⁸ Throughout Europe, both influential figures such as Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and the popular press made an effort to emphasize a basic common Protestant ground;⁷⁹ from a theological viewpoint, advocates of Reformed irenicism argued that all Protestants agreed in the fundamental articles of the faith. Moreover, they had a common enemy:

⁷⁴ J. Weyerman, *Den ontleeder der gebreeken*, vol. 2, issue 27, April 16, 1725 (Amsterdam: Hendrik Bosch, 1726), p. 215.

⁷⁵ Quotation taken from B. Farrington, *Science and politics in the ancient world* (London, 1965), p. 178.

⁷⁶ J. Weyerman, *Den ontleeder der gebreeken*, vol. 2, issue 28, April 23, 1725 (Amsterdam: Hendrik Bosch, 1726), p. 220.

⁷⁷ Van Eijnatten, *Liberty and concord*, pp. 5–6.

⁷⁸ See H. Duchhardt and G. May von Zabern, *Union–Konversion–Toleranz. Dimensionen der Annäherung zwischen den christlichen Konfessionen im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 2009).

⁷⁹ See, for instance, Anonymous, Translaat. *Christiani Fratelli onpartydige minnelijke missive aan een . . . vriend, wegens de vereenighing der twee protestantsche religien, namentlijk . . . de Evangelische Luythersche en de Evangelische Gereformeerde* (The Hague: Jacobus Scheltus II, 1725), pfl. 16668. This pamphlet was a Dutch translation of a German original from Regensburg, which was published in the same year as most pamphlets on Toruń. It was published by *landsdrukker* Jacobus Scheltus.

international Catholicism.⁸⁰ The threat of the ultimate confessional other made a religious ideal into a political necessity for survival. The Tumult of Toruń provided an excellent example of the pressing need for religious reconciliation. It clearly showed that Europe had not moved beyond the horrors of Catholic persecution. Moreover, as we have seen, the Jesuit enemy was not considered to be a faraway evil, but a fifth column that had infiltrated all of Europe.

Despite their projects of rapprochement, irenicists were not a homogeneous group. Their thoughts were shaped by their own confessional backgrounds and the political situations of their home countries. But since publishers, ever hungry for new material on Toruń, were eager to translate works of public opinion, readers all over Europe were now repeatedly confronted with different irenicist ideas from different regions. An important transnational irenicist voice with regard to Toruń was that of Jean-François Bion, whom we met in the Introduction of this book. In 1725 London printer J. Roberts published Bion's *Faithful and exact narrative of the horrid tragedy lately acted at Thorn*, which was soon translated into French and Dutch by Amsterdam printer Johannes de Ruyter. In the pamphlet, Bion argued that the British king should put himself at the head of the Protestant powers in Europe, "following, with some changes, the wise measures of Oliver Cromwell, for the sake of peace in the North."⁸¹ According to Bion, Toruń should be a wakeup call:

The tragedy and the murders committed in Thorn . . . shout out loudly and wake all Protestants, from whatever strand they may be, to set aside their mutual trifling, hate, pride, and unnecessary contentions, to unite in their hearts, to strengthen the hands of their respective princes against an implacable, restless, and powerful enemy, who aims at nothing but the complete destruction of the Protestant name. . . . Therefore, let the Lutherans in Germany, Sweden, and Denmark, most of whom before looked upon the persecutions of the Huguenots in France with dry eyes, learn to show brotherly pity for the so-called Calvinists, and grant them the same freedoms that the Calvinists allow the Lutherans. Let the Calvinists in Switzerland cease some of their strictness against the Arminians; let the Presbyterians of Scotland bear with the Episcopal Church of England. . . . In one word, let all Protestants look upon the moderation, wisdom, and other Christian virtues of the Church of England, because, as it is the mightiest bulwark of the Reformation against popery, it has also shown in all important cases a common charity and a motherly interest in the various members of the Protestant body.⁸²

⁸⁰ Van Eijnatten, *Liberty and concord*, pp. 117–119.

⁸¹ Bion, *Getrouw en naauwkeurig verhaal*, p. 32. I only had access to the Dutch version of this pamphlet.

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 38–39.

In another pamphlet, the *Exact and impartial account*, Bion went a step further, and called the Protestant world to arms:

The great union, the cordial love which reigns among you [Protestants] today, are so many voices of divine providence, which cry out to you, march, fight, I will be with you, and I will bring terror wherever your banners appear.⁸³

Bion's approach shows that irenicism should not be conflated with religious moderation. But not all irenicists adopted this militant view of the Tumult of Toruń. In fact, in the *Exact and impartial account*, Bion, or his anonymous publisher, also integrally incorporated two articles from the *London Journal*—a government newspaper that was published between 1720 and 1731. In these two articles, the Whig pamphleteer and famous latitudinarian Benjamin Hoadly, bishop of Hereford, presented the Tumult of Toruń as a lesson for Britain after the 1715 Jacobite Rising—which was widely perceived as a Catholic invasion and had fueled anti-Catholic sentiments.⁸⁴ Hoadly had long earned his credentials as an anti-Jacobite polemicist, but held the extremely controversial belief that the Church was a spiritual community rather than a worldly institution, and that the state therefore had no right to privilege the Church of England and act against Catholics or any other religious dissenters. Instead, he consistently urged people to be passionate against Jacobitism out of patriotism, not religion.⁸⁵

In these two articles, Hoadly—writing under the pseudonym of Britannicus—used the Tumult of Toruń to defend this position. He warned that nothing was more observable in human nature, “than the forgetfulness and insensibility of the greatest evils” that are committed against men, as soon as some distance of time and place has intervened. He argued that providence kept Protestants vigilant against danger:

It pleases providence . . . to permit appearances and facts, which may either keep us awake [or] rouse us from a sleep, which if it continues, must be a sleep unto death, and destruction. . . . I have enthusiasm enough to lead me to interpret what has pass'd abroad at Thorn, in some such manner as this. The Protestant world seems to be in a lethargy. . . . and [Thorn is] flagrant proof of what all are to expect, where-ever the same powers, and the same malice, can prevail. And if

⁸³ J.-F. Bion, *Narré exact et impartial de ce qui concerne la sanglante Tragedie de Thorn* (Amsterdam: s.n., 1725), p. 69.

⁸⁴ D. Szechi, *1715: The Great Jacobite Rebellion* (New Haven, CT, 2006); C. D. A. Leighton, *Catholicism in a Protestant kingdom: A study of the Irish ancient régime* (Basingstoke, 1994), pp. 99–100.

⁸⁵ Hoadly's defense of this theological position had sparked the 1716 Bangorian Controversy, described as “the most bitterly fought ideological battle of eighteenth-century England.” See A. Starkie, *The Church of England and the Bangorian controversy, 1716–1721* (Woodbridge, 2007).

men will not be rous'd by such terrors as these, they have nothing to blame but their own wilful and mad stupidity.⁸⁶

Hoadly argued that the matter of Toruń should awaken English Protestants to the danger of Jacobitism, which would bring popish cruelty back home. He stated that “every advance of the power of bigotry abroad, threatens us with a popish pretender at home; and together with him, all the train of his attendants, superstition and cruelty.”⁸⁷ It should thus make Britons think twice about the issues they had with their government, a sneer against the Tories who had lost political power with the Hanoverian succession.

While Hoadly referred to providence, he did not perceive it as operating within a bilateral world divided between a true and a false religion. He asserted that not all Catholics were bigots, as some of them held on to their “natural or religious humanity” and “the bias of their good nature.”⁸⁸ Still, as a body, Catholics formed a great threat to “all who value any rights, whether religious or civil.”⁸⁹ Therefore, “every soul that has a feeling of what the freedom of social creatures, and the happiness of rational creatures . . . mean,” should be worried when the Jesuits gain ground.⁹⁰

It is our concern, from the highest to the lowest, from the prince upon the throne, to the meanest of his subjects . . . ; every church, and every man, whether orthodox or heretical, whether regular or irregular, is intimately concern'd in this affair. Nay, abstractedly from all considerations of religion; every man who has the least sense of civil liberty, the least regard to the happiness of himself or his fellow creatures in humane society, must think himself interested in it.⁹¹

At first glance, Hoadly appears to have sketched a confessional perception of events, combining references to providence with a clear stance against Catholic rule. However, Catholicism was identified as a political threat rather than a religious error. More importantly, bigotry was rooted in social life rather than in the essential evil of a specific religion. The bishop therefore admonished his readers to not only pity the people of Toruń, but contemplate what laid at the foundation of such cruelty. He urged them to “abhor and fly from the first motions, the least beginnings, of that temper in [oneself].”⁹² The mutual condemnation on account of religious differences, hard judgments of private men against

⁸⁶ Letter from Britannicus, *London Journal*, January 2, 1725, in J. Hoadly (ed.), *The works of Benjamin Hoadly, D.D., successively Bishop of Bangor, Hereford, Salisbury, and Winchester*, vol. 3 (London, 1773), p. 367.

⁸⁷ Letter from Britannicus, *London Journal*, January 9, 1725, in Hoadly (ed.), *The works of Benjamin Hoadly*, vol. 3, p. 371.

⁸⁸ Letter from Britannicus, *London Journal*, January 2, 1725, p. 368.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 369.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Letter from Britannicus, *London Journal*, January 9, 1725, p. 372.

one another, “the violence of words,” the refusal of friendship, and calling upon the secular authorities to hurt one another were all “motions of the same spirit [as] the outrage of persecution.”⁹³ Step by step, society could lapse into forms of violence that could “not have been borne by any humane mind”.⁹⁴

First, it was only a mental uneasiness at those who differ’d. Then it proceeded to verbal declarations, at which it stop’d but a short time. For when it was once come to hard words, it was natural to proceed to blows, almost as soon as the balance of power weigh’d on one side more than the other. Moderate penalties were the first essays; but when they had no other effect, but to provoke the spirits of opposers; punishments too great for humane nature easily to think of, succeeded in their place. And upon these now the popish interest rests itself.⁹⁵

Religious hatred led to gradual shifts in human sociability, that could ultimately lead to a society that ran counter to human nature. Protestants had a stronger sense of the duties of “love and forbearance,” but they should remain charitable and not give bigots an excuse for their behavior, which runs counter to God, nature, reason, and revelation.⁹⁶ As such, Toruń became a reminder of the necessity of forbearance and human sociability.

Foreign Narratives

Above, we have seen that if a Dutch person wished to form an opinion about Toruń, he or she could choose from a variety of interpretations, many of which spoke about an imminent war of religion: The person in question could buy printed works that told him or her that providence had led Europe’s Protestant princes to act in unison against the executions, and that it was only a matter of time before a holy war would break out; they could read a pamphlet which argued that Protestants should lay aside their petty differences and raise their banners against the Catholic Church; in the same work he or she could learn that providence did not call for war, but for tolerance, emphasizing that Protestants should remain vigilant toward the bigotry of their government as well as their own potential intolerance against religious dissidents; finally, they could buy newspapers that expressed concern about an impending war of religion, which, however, would not be caused by providence but by human fanaticism.

There were also many printed works about Toruń that the Dutch would not have been able to read in their native language. Dutch printing presses produced some foreign adaptations to cover Toruń, but the question remains to what extent

⁹³ Ibid., p. 373.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

they were reflective of a larger European debate. To answer this question, this section will explore the main printed works in Europe that appear not to have made it to the presses of the Republic.⁹⁷

Let us first return to Jablonski, the central figure in Prussia's "propaganda machine," whose work could, in fact, be found in Dutch bookshops, albeit in French. The Prussian court preacher too was a devoted irenicist and a prominent figure in the early eighteenth-century Enlightenment.⁹⁸ Apart from being a man of science, Jablonski had long been a fervent supporter of the Protestant cause.⁹⁹ The court preacher published *The distressed city of Thorn* in the early months of 1725. There is no evidence that the work was published on the king's initiative, but Jablonski's proximity to the court makes it likely that he received some sort of royal fiat. Some historians regard *The distressed city of Thorn* as a "programmatically engaged pamphlet against Catholicism in general, and the Jesuits in particular."¹⁰⁰ By contrast, I would argue that the court preacher consciously refrained from writing an anti-Catholic pamphlet. Instead, Jablonski presented a non-confessional perspective on Toruń, taking an argumentative strategy focused on humanity and reason. Accordingly, he identified the Jesuit Order as the root of all problems rather than the Catholic Church in general.

Not only did the Jesuits initiate a period of renewed religious tension, they also damaged the city's autonomy. Because the Order attained protection from the Sejm, they made the city accountable to the Commonwealth's tribunal, and therewith to the Catholic nobility and clergy.¹⁰¹ Jablonski used secular arguments against the Jesuits, stressing that they had a history of clashing with authorities, both Catholic and Protestant, both worldly and religious. He concluded that "wherever the Jesuits arrive, stench and confusion inseparably accompany them, whereas peace and rest are exiled."¹⁰²

To be sure, in Jablonski's understanding of events, confessional animosity played a significant role. The court preacher deemed it likely that "embitterment against the religion" was the real motive behind the executions and that the "destruction of the Evangelical religion in Poland" had been the main goal.¹⁰³ The Jesuits could be so militant only because they found a willing ear among the common people. The latter were easy to mislead, as they were drowned in superstition and biased against so-called heretics.¹⁰⁴ Yet the preacher reminded

⁹⁷ This does not, of course, rule out that some copies nevertheless circulated in the Dutch Republic among people who read German or English.

⁹⁸ For extensive discussions on Jablonski see Bahlcke and Korthaase (eds.), *Daniel Ernst Jablonski*.

⁹⁹ Jablonski used his position as court preacher to engage in activism for the Protestants in Poland-Lithuania and Bohemia. He also served as bishop of the Bohemian Brethren; I. Modrow, "Daniel Ernst Jablonski, Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf und die Herrnhuter Brüdergemeinde," in Bahlcke and Korthaase, eds., *Daniel Ernst Jablonski*, p. 336.

¹⁰⁰ Thomsen, "Betäubte Thorn," p. 244.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 18–26.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

¹⁰¹ Jablonski, *Das betäubte Thorn*, p. 16.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

his readers that the executions were criticized by Catholics who understood that they “do harm to all worldly and Godly laws”:¹⁰⁵

It is not to be doubted that such inhumane cruelty generally excites shock and disgust in human nature. Therefore, [the executions] will have aroused a just disapproval and indignation among all rational Catholics, but a Christian pity and lamentation among the Evangelicals.¹⁰⁶

Indeed, human nature sufficed for Catholics to pity the persecuted in Toruń. For Jablonski, the antonym of religious bias was not the truth of the Protestant religion; it was a civilized society based on reason, legal justice, and benevolent human nature. Interestingly, despite its largely non-confessional message, *The distressed city of Thorn* did praise the convicts as martyrs, as they could have saved themselves by converting. Most early modern Europeans agreed that people could only become martyrs if they died for the true religion. However, Jablonski refrained from praising the martyrs of Thorn with explicit references to confessional truth.

Writing in the service of the monarch who had initiated concerted humanitarian engagement with Toruń, Jablonski never mentioned the possibility of a war of religion. Instead, he expressed hope that the royal letters of intercession would lead reasonable Poles to understand that the case of Toruń was not an internal matter, and that it was in the best interest of their fatherland to take a milder stance. In that way, all subjects could live together in mutual trust.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, it should be noted that although Jablonski was a proactive irenicist, he did not use Toruń to speak out for religious unification, like Bion did.¹⁰⁸ The court preacher’s non-confessional approach fits within a larger pattern that we have seen throughout this study; when supporting Protestant minorities, governments were usually careful not to alienate Catholic monarchs and thus preferred to condemn persecution on the basis of confessionally neutral normative principles.

This is not to say that only pamphleteers from government circles tried to deconfessionalize the conflict. Other German pamphleteers actually went a step further. A case in point is the Leipzig-based publisher David Faßmann, who devoted an issue of his immensely popular conversation piece periodical *Extraordinary conversations in the realm of the dead* to Toruń—not long before becoming an historian at the Prussian court. In the *Extraordinaires Gespräche*, he had the executed burgomaster Rösner converse with Ignatius of Loyola,

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 95. ¹⁰⁶ Ibid., pp. 94–95. ¹⁰⁷ Ibid., pp. 102–103.

¹⁰⁸ A. Schunka, “Irenicism and the challenges of conversion in the early eighteenth century,” in D. M. Luebke, J. Poley, D. C. Ryan, and D. W. Sabean (eds.), *Conversion and the politics of religion in early modern Germany* (New York, NY and Oxford, 2012), p. 103.

the founder of the Society of Jesus.¹⁰⁹ In the preface, Faßmann pointed out that he wanted to give an impartial account. Yet he warned Catholics that if they felt that their thoughts were not adequately represented, they should remind themselves that the author was a Lutheran. To Lutherans who might accuse him of not being “zealous and passionate” enough, he pointed out in advance that their desire to shame and revile was unchristian, and that both parties should be heard.¹¹⁰ In their conversation about Toruń, Loyola aptly counters many of Rösner’s accusations, who represents the outrage of the Protestant world. In another piece, Faßmann argued that the whole world was astonished by Toruń, but that all writers who took up the pen in anger should have set their emotions aside, as to prevent irrational curses, admonishments, and untruths from being spread.¹¹¹

Faßmann’s conversation pieces debunked many Jesuit conspiracy theories, including the historical accusation of regicide, and reevaluated Toruń’s wider significance. Pleading for tolerance, he saw the limited toleration of Catholics in Protestant lands as one of the causes behind the persecution.¹¹² Faßmann made Loyola convincingly argue that the Jesuits did not seek worldly pleasure or power, but rather gave it up to serve people.¹¹³ Rösner finally concludes that whereas he still believes Loyola to be a fantastical melancholic, he no longer regards him as an impostor. Instead, he considers him a devout man who did many good works for Christendom, while nevertheless expressing excessive zeal against presumed heretics.¹¹⁴ In a nutshell, Faßmann presented the Jesuits as erroneous, but not without good intentions.

It is important to keep in mind that despite his call for the emancipation of Catholics, Faßmann was in other respects a poor champion of religious toleration. He took several opportunities in later issues of the *Extraordinary conversations* to vilify Jews, most notably by celebrating the execution of the court Jew Joseph Süß Oppenheimer in 1738.¹¹⁵ Given the vast audiences he reached, Faßmann’s appeals to cross-confessional understanding should not be underestimated, but neither should the severe limitations to these appeals.

¹⁰⁹ S. Dreyfürst, *Stimmen aus dem Jenseits. David Fassmanns historisch-politisches Journal “Gespräche in dem Reiche derer Todten” (1718–1740)* (Berlin, 2014).

¹¹⁰ D. Faßmann, *Extraordinaires Gespräche in dem Reiche derer Todten, bestehende in einer entreeue zwischen dem Thornischen Ober-Präsidenten Roessner... und... Ignatio von Loyola* (s.l.: s.n., 1725), p. 2.

¹¹¹ D. Faßmann, *Apologie des angetasteten extraordinaires Gesprächs in dem Reiche derer Todten* (s.l.: s.n., 1725). This apology was written in defense of his conversation piece after an angry reply that could not be retrieved. Anonymous, *Schreiben eines Preussen an seinen Freund in Teutschland* (s.l.: s.n., 1725).

¹¹² Faßmann, *Extraordinaires Gespräche*, p. 5.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 10–11.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 210–211.

¹¹⁵ Y. Mintzker, *The many deaths of Jew Süß: The notorious trial and execution of an eighteenth-century court Jew* (Princeton, NJ, 2017), pp. 231–279.

Calls for moderation could also be heard from opinion makers close to the fire. Theophilo Theodor, a pamphleteer from the Polish-Prussian city of Elbląg, some 160 kilometers north of Toruń, called for caution in *The mistreated city of Thorn in Polish Prussia*. He warned that the rules set out by international law should not be confused with prudent foreign policy, pointing to the complexities of a foreign intervention to restore the Peace of Oliva:

Although according to the law of nations, every state that has been insulted has a *jus belli* . . . equity and prudence require one to take the cautious road first and gain as much satisfaction as possible in a friendly way. . . . Those who already see the flashing of fire and sword in Poland because of this affair thus go too far in their judgment.¹¹⁶

In short, following the rule of law could go against reason of state. Some well-read dialogues published on the matter also aimed to provide a more moderate representation of events. In a series of three conversation pieces from Leipzig, the deceased Luther and Rösner discuss how Catholic processions in biconfessional cities often led to unrest, like it had in Toruń, as Catholics were irritated by the non-participant onlookers and the authorities failed to curtail the curious commoners' lust for spectacle.¹¹⁷ Luther criticizes the Protestant spectators for indulging in the voyeuristic curiosity, while showing respect for the zeal of the processioners.¹¹⁸

On the other side of the confessional divide, a Catholic publisher pointed out that many Protestant opinion makers, living too far away to be adequately informed, made wild and unfounded claims against respected royal courts and foreign governments.¹¹⁹ Johann Franz Hanck from Stadt am Hoff, near the Imperial Diet in Regensburg, published a number of works by the Jesuit theologian Gottfried Hannenberg, alias Theologus Polonus, who expressed his concerns in several pamphlets:

Directly after the Thornish execution, an almost countless number of defamations, lampoons, and libels have been published and continue to come to light . . . in which a call to arms is incessantly promoted, a bloody war desired, sought for, and promised . . . to the Republic of Poland. The Protestants are . . .

¹¹⁶ T. Theodor, *Das mißhandelnde Thoren im pohlischen Preußen oder historische Erzählung von dem am 18. Sept. 1724 auf Veranlassung der Jesuiten . . . erregten Tumult, und der darauf erfolgten Anklage* (Elbingen: Ehregott Elias, 1725), pp. 70, 73–74.

¹¹⁷ Anonymous, *De onschuldige bloetdruypende voetstappen op eerste aankomste van de hr. Johann. Gottfried Rösner*, pp. 8–9.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 9–10.

¹¹⁹ See, for instance, Anonymous, *Literae ab amico e civitate regia polonica Torunensi Rastadium missae in causa tumultus ibidem excitati* (s.l.: s.n., 1725).

incited to hostile indignation and to take up arms against Poland, indeed, against all Catholics.¹²⁰

In another pamphlet, Hannenberg argued that Protestant authorities should chastise the authors of such works for disturbing public harmony and embittering the hearts of Christians against one another.¹²¹ The author also provided a legal argument against the public defamations by arguing that they went against article 35 of chapter 2 of the Treaty of Oliva. Protestant magistrates and cities allowed the publication of works that presented Toruń as an offended party to the treaty. However, Toruń was not a party, in contrast to Poland, which was hence insulted.¹²²

One noteworthy Protestant opinion maker who provided the kind of militant account that Hannenberg criticized, was the Presbyterian minister Charles Owen, from Warrington, Cheshire. Owen came up with a rather radical solution to the continent's incessant religious conflicts: Europe's states should once and for all exchange their religious minorities. In his *Alarm to Protestant princes and people*, which saw at least two editions, Owen argued that the current might of the Protestant world was the only reason why a war of religion had not yet broken out.¹²³ Instead, Catholics resorted to persecuting and massacring Protestants in their own dominions, while they were allowed to live undisturbed in Protestant lands. They would, however, turn violent as soon as they had the power to do so, because their "zeal for the church sanctifies all cruelties and solves all doubts and compunctions, that may arise from unextinguish'd humanity in the conscience."¹²⁴

Summarizing, Catholic zeal went against benevolent human nature. The author believed that the Protestant world should no longer look up at the sky, "and summon in the aids of heaven," as they had not received an answer. The letters of intercession were equally doomed to fail, because "the wolf having got the sheep into his paw is not to be harangu'd out of his prey . . . by the eloquence of royal mediators."¹²⁵ Instead, it was time to take action:

If we had banish'd those bloody assassiators, root and branch, into Tartary,
Siberia, or any where beyond the tropicks, to cool their thirst after human blood,

¹²⁰ [G. Hannenberg], *Die wichtige Frage, ob das wider die Thorner A. 1724 zu Warschau gefällte Urtheil oder der Protestanten dagegen aussfliegende despotische Schriften dem Olivischen Frieden widerstreben?* (Stadt am Hoff, 1725).

¹²¹ [G. Hannenberg], *Authentische Nachricht von der zu Thoren erregten- und nach Erforderung der Gerechtigkeit gestrafften Aufruhr* (Stadt am Hoff, 1725).

¹²² [Hannenberg], *Wichtige Frage*.

¹²³ C. Owen, *An alarm to Protestant princes and people, who are all struck at in the Popish cruelties at Thorn* (London: Eman. Matthews, 1725); C. Owen, *An alarm to Protestant princes . . . second edition* (Dublin: J. Watts, 1725); I have consulted the second edition.

¹²⁴ Owen, *An alarm to Protestant princes . . . second edition*, pp. 14–15.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

no nation could have tax'd us with injustice. . . . Yet they live, they live in England, live in profound tranquility, live in the undisturb'd exercise of their superstitions, live under the protection of a government to which they deny allegiance and affection. . . . These are serpents in our bosom, and yet to rid the nation of these dangerous creatures, and plant in their room a colony of French or German refugees, might perhaps be interpreted an act of severity.¹²⁶

Owen emphasized that one should be wary not to copy the “gloomy original.” Persecuting Catholics within one’s midst would effectively make the foreign cruelties stop, but it would also “lay waste [to] human nature.”¹²⁷ Protestants should therefore “root out popery from their dominions, and . . . have but one religion with its various subordinations and subdivisions,” without resorting to violence.¹²⁸ Catholics should be allowed to take their belongings and leave in peace. In fact, Owen regarded it as feasible that Europe’s Protestant and Catholic states would mutually agree upon an exchange of religious minorities:

Let Papists, who are scattered among Protestants, be pronounced aliens, but have liberty to sell their estates, and transplant themselves into Popish dominions, taking with them bag and baggage; and let Protestants residing among Papists be allow'd the same privilege, *viz.* of converting their effects and estates into portable effects, and of retiring with them into Protestant climates.¹²⁹

Before such an international exchange could be realized, Protestants should start banishing equal numbers of Catholics to retaliate against Protestant expulsions:

Does the King of Poland say, I will have no Protestant in my kingdom? Let another potentate say, and I will have no Papist in my dominions.¹³⁰

Owen thus expanded on a theme already thematized in his monarch’s letter of intercession. But what justified this “eye for an eye” mentality? The *Alarm to Protestant princes and people* referred to the *Lex talionis*—the Roman law of retaliation—and tried to make it applicable to international law. The author granted that retaliation should normally be directed at the offending person in question, but “in the want of such opportunity, [one] may substitute equivalents, and such as are generally allowed by confederacies, alliances, and leagues, as well as laws of war.”¹³¹ Whereas “private Christians” should not take matters into their own hands, princes “are born to assert and maintain the liberties of mankind”.¹³²

¹²⁶ Ibid., pp. 7, 11–12.

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 17.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 18.

¹²⁹ Ibid., p. 19.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 21.

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 20.

¹³² Ibid., p. 22.

Such, says Grotius, who have equal power with kings, have a power . . . to punish . . . others who inhumanly violate the law of nature and nations . . . ; hence it is, that the chastisement of publick oppressors, has been always counted a kindness to mankind, and a generous regard to the rights of human nature.¹³³ Thus, we see that in case of tyranny, whether open or private, punitive power has (by the light and law of nature) extended itself further than federal jurisdiction, and that remarkable oppressors of mankind have been (and may be) chastis'd by those who have no legal dominion over them, . . . [as princes], besides the care of their own kingdom, have lying upon them the care of human society: Hence it is, that the powers of the earth enter into alliances and leagues to guard men against the oppression of their own governors and others.¹³⁴

The sovereign right or duty to intervene against tyranny abroad had also been invoked to support the Camisards, some twenty years earlier.¹³⁵ But Owen's appeal to confessional solidarity was much starker; if Protestants were persecuted abroad, monarchs should respond to it with the persecution of Catholics at home. On the one hand, this presents a compelling argument against absolute sovereignty. Evidently, rulers cannot do with their subjects as they wish, because the latter are bound to other sovereigns by confessional ties, who can act as their protectors. On the other hand, sovereignty is reified, as rulers have the right to make their own subjects suffer to punish the behavior of foreign sovereigns.

Finally, reason also comes into play as a political norm in the form of prudence. Owen supported his claim that sovereign princes had so much power beyond their territories by a rather restrictive definition of the state. He argued that "the partition of the earth into distinct states, [was] only a human prudential constitution" and that "governments are there for the good of society, not [the] pleasure of princes."¹³⁶ The real divisions in Europe were not constituted by states, but by confession:

Divide Europe into Protestant and Papist, and in this situation, and view, the two denominations are declared enemies, and always have been in a state of war since the Reformation; so that when one commits hostilities on the other, why should not the injur'd party make reprisals upon the invader, in case he refuses to make satisfaction in an amicable way? This Protestant alliance and union should produce such intimacy and conformity between confederated Protestants, as that it may be said, he that touches one, toucheth the other also.¹³⁷

It should be noted that although Owen approached Europe as defined by confessional strife, he hardly wrote in terms of confessional truth. Of course, the idea

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 23.

¹³⁵ See Chapter 4.

¹³⁶ Owen, *An alarm to Protestant princes . . . second edition*, p. 24.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

that Catholic zeal infringes upon human's benevolent nature is a clear qualitative distinction. Yet the proposed reshuffling of Europe's map was not presented as a godly duty, nor was it backed by divine providence or scriptural truth. Instead, Owen argued that the Protestant world was strong because of its naval power. In that same vein, Italy was harmless because it was home to nothing but "painters and eunuchs" and Venice was "more wedded to the Sea than to Rome [and] dreads nothing so much as a Turk and bad Markets."¹³⁸ Owen therefore believed that "skirmishes about religion may happen among opposite powers but [that there will be no] universal religious war."¹³⁹

If we compare Owen's *Alarm to Protestant princes and people* with the Dutch pamphlets by the "Lover of the Protestant religion" an interesting contrast appears. Whereas the "Lover of the Protestant religion" looked at the heavens and saw signs of providence and impending religious war, Owen looked down and used secular argumentation to show that religious war was unlikely. At the same time, the "Lover of the Protestant religion" pointed to the value of religious toleration, Catholics included, whereas Owen made a radical call for confessional homogeneity. This shows that interventionist arguments based on confessional truth were not necessarily more hostile to the confessional other—in this case Catholics—than calls for confessional solidarity without religious truth claims.

The Last Expulsion

So far, this chapter has shown that the prospect of foreign intervention in a small city in Poland-Lithuania gave rise to a remarkably versatile range of printed opinion throughout Protestant Europe. This is a clear indicator that many contemporaries still viewed Europe's political landscape as starkly divided between confessional lines and remained highly sensitive to instances of religious persecution. Can we also conclude from the intense public attention for Toruń that Protestant Europeans still looked at international politics through a lens of militant religious righteousness? Some certainly did, but it is significant that many authors resolutely refrained from approaching the religious identity of the persecuted as decisive in whether an intervention was justified. Indeed, even those who presented a virulently anti-Catholic perspective did not always frame the event in the language of martyrdom and confessional truth. Pamphleteers knew how to vilify the persecutor without sanctifying the victim.

To gauge the extent to which humanitarian action and public outrage still depended on a sense of confessional brotherhood, the remainder of this chapter shifts focus to the last mass persecution of religious minorities in early modern

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 30.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 31.

Europe: the expulsion of the Bohemian Jews.¹⁴⁰ Shortly before Christmas 1744 the zealously Catholic Maria Theresia (1717–1780), Queen of Bohemia and later Empress of the Holy Roman Empire, decreed that all Jews were to leave Prague within a month and remove themselves entirely from Bohemia within six months. The expulsion followed accusations that the Jews had collaborated with the Prussians, who had occupied the city in the recent past. Around 13,000 people—Europe’s largest Ashkenazi community—were forced to leave their homes, while the 40,000 Jews who lived outside the city began to prepare their imminent exile.¹⁴¹

Not unlike the Waldensians and the Huguenots, Prague’s Ashkenazi community leaders made sustained efforts to reverse their fate by garnering international attention.¹⁴² *Shtadlanim* (spokesmen) sent letters to Jewish communities abroad with requests to plead with their local Christian authorities to intercede. This created an impressive snowball effect; influential community leaders and court Jews across Europe mobilized their international networks, writing to other communities with requests to aid their distressed brethren in the faith.¹⁴³ The most prominent among them, the court Jew Wolf Wertheimer (1681–1765), planned a tightly orchestrated campaign, sending letter templates to the Jewish communities of Venice, Warsaw, Amsterdam, and many others.¹⁴⁴ The receivers would present these precisely dictated letters of intercession to their governments, who, in turn, were to send them to Maria Theresia in their name. Wertheimer even addressed draft letters to the Holy See, in which he effectively spoke with the pope’s voice, admonishing the empress for unlawfully punishing innocent people.¹⁴⁵

Within months, Maria Theresia had received a flood of protests ranging from the kings of Great Britain, Denmark, and Poland, to the Sublime Porte in Istanbul and the merchant guilds of Amsterdam, Hamburg, Leipzig, and London, more than the king of Poland had received surrounding Toruń.¹⁴⁶ While unsuccessful—Maria Theresia would only revoke the edict in 1748 to appease the Bohemian

¹⁴⁰ B. Stollberg-Rillinger, *Maria Theresia. Die Kaiserin in Ihrer Zeit* (Munich, 2017), p. 639.

¹⁴¹ W. S. Plaggenborg, “Maria Theresia und die Böhmisches Juden,” *Bohemia. Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kultur der Böhmisches Länder* 39.1 (1998), 1. The 20,000 Jews living in Moravia were also banished; L. Kochan, *The making of Western Jewry 1600–1819* (Basingstoke, 2004), p. 170; Stollberg-Rillinger, *Maria Theresia*, p. 637.

¹⁴² M. Thulin, “Von der Shtadlanut zur Diplomatie jüdischer Fragen,” in M. Thulin (ed.), *Konvergenzen. Beiträge von Doktorandinnen und Doktoranden des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts* (Leipzig, 2014), pp. 73–76; M. Thulin and B. Siegel, “Introduction: Transformations and intersections of *shtadlanut* and *tzedakah* in the early modern and modern period,” *Jewish Culture and History* 19.1 (2018), p. 2.

¹⁴³ S. Avineri, “Prague 1744—Lake Success 1947: Statecraft without a state,” *Jewish Studies at the Central European University* 4 (2005), pp. 8–9.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 11–14.

¹⁴⁵ Guesnet, “Textures of intercession: Rescue efforts for the Jews of Prague,” in D. Deiner (ed.), *Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts* (Göttingen, 2005), pp. 368–369.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 368.

Estates—the intercession efforts were so massive in scope that this case has often been considered a landmark in Jewish diplomatic agency.¹⁴⁷

There are clear similarities between the intercessions of 1724–1725 and 1745. On both occasions, intercessors reminded the monarchs in question that the world was looking and that the persecution would be a stain on their international reputation. Barthold Douma van Burmania, the Dutch ambassador who interceded for the Jews at the Viennese court, hence argued that

In my opinion the first question is whether the case is equitable or not. . . . If yes, the case will justify itself . . . without the queen having to fear any persecution of her allies and other powers. If not, her Majesty will not be able, despite all her supreme power, to avert the bad impression, reflections and consequences of a case like this. . . . Sovereigns, say what you like, are accountable for their deeds to God and to man, even more than others.¹⁴⁸

The emphasis on reputation management also guided Jewish efforts to influence press coverage of the persecution. As Catherine Arnold has shown, Jewish community leaders leaked diplomatic dispatches to Dutch newspapers, making sure that the queen was not only rebuked within secret diplomatic channels, but also in front of the world.¹⁴⁹ Such interventions were not superfluous, judging from the fact that some Dutch newspapers had initially given Maria Theresia the benefit of the doubt. The *Leydse Courant*, most notably, reported Maria Theresia's decision within two weeks stating that whereas "it is not yet clear why [she expels the Jews] she must have a good reason since there is no place in the world where the Jews have so many privileges."¹⁵⁰

By leaking information to newspapers, the persecuted and their allies managed to keep their predicament on international agendas. However, this appears to have been their only press strategy in a campaign that was otherwise characterized by absolute discretion.¹⁵¹ While exhorting foreign governments to reprimand his own queen, Wertheimer repeatedly insisted on the importance of secrecy to his

¹⁴⁷ F. Guesnet, "Negotiating under duress: The expulsion of Salzburg Protestants (1732) and the Jews of Prague (1744)," in F. Guesnet, C. Laborde, and L. Lee (eds.), *Negotiating religion: Cross-disciplinary perspectives* (Abingdon, 2017), p. 59; J. Dekel-Chen, "Philanthropy, diplomacy, and Jewish internationalism," in M. B. Hart and T. Michels (eds.), *The Cambridge history of Judaism*, vol. 8: *The Modern World 1815–2000* (Cambridge, 2017), pp. 477–504; Thulin, "Von der Shtadlanut zur Diplomatie."

¹⁴⁸ Cited in I. Prins, "Een Hollandsche interventie ten behoeve van Oostenrijksche Joden," *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 30 (1915), p. 78.

¹⁴⁹ C. Arnold, "The newspapers of Holland make a great noise: International newspapers and humanitarian culture in Britain and Europe, 1715–1745," in D. R. de Boer and G. H. Janssen (eds.), *Refugee politics in early modern Europe* (London, forthcoming).

¹⁵⁰ *Leydse Courant*, January 1, 1745.

¹⁵¹ Guesnet, "Negotiating under duress."

correspondents.¹⁵² For other allies of the Bohemian Jews, employing the printing press would not have been a logical move either. The Sephardic and Ashkenazi communities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and The Hague gained direct access to the States General and immediately convinced them to intercede with sound economic argumentation.¹⁵³ Generating public debate would probably have constituted little more than an unnecessary and potentially dangerous detour. The same went for most foreign courts. Through their networks, Jewish community leaders had impressively managed to mobilize Europe's political centers without recourse to the blunt blows of public opinion.

The interceding authorities had to be careful too. In the 1720s, they had interceded with a relatively weak monarch whom they accused of idleness in the face of injustice. This time, they asked a powerful ally to reverse her policy in the midst of a war that held most of Europe in its grip. Proudly presenting themselves as guardians of the foreign oppressed through print—as the States General and Protestant monarchs had respectively done in 1655 and 1725—would serve little political purpose. Worse, it could backfire. The strategy of warning the queen that the expulsion would damage her reputation would be hampered by publicly contributing to her defamation. Unlike in 1725, the intercessors probably reckoned with the fact that if one professes to help a monarch save face, one has to do so discreetly, not in front of the world.¹⁵⁴

Without the incentive of the persecuted and their immediate allies, the Dutch press remained largely silent about the expulsion of the Bohemian Jews. No pamphlets appear to have been published on the matter in the Dutch Republic. Dutch periodicals too hardly paid attention to the persecution. The *Europische Mercurius*—which had tirelessly discussed Toruń in the 1720s—offered little more than the factual coverage provided by newspapers.¹⁵⁵ While caution on the side of the intercessors goes a long way in explaining this silence, it also appears that publishers failed to see an obvious angle from which to appropriate the news. The

¹⁵² M. Thulin, "Jewish families as intercessors and patrons. The case of the Wertheimer family in the eighteenth century," *Jewish Culture and History* 19.1 (2018), 46; Guesnet, "Textures of intercession," pp. 372–374.

¹⁵³ *Nederlandsch gedenboek of Europische Mercurius, eerste deel van 't jaar 1745*, vol. 56, B. Van Gerrevink (ed.) (Amsterdam: By d'erven van J. Ratelband en Compagnie, 1746), pp. 89–90; Prins, "Een Hollandsche interventie ten behoeve van Oostenrijksche Joden," p. 72; Avineri, "Prague 1744," p. 10.

¹⁵⁴ Accordingly, the first public evaluation of the queen appears to have been not a defamation, but an indirect, albeit perhaps somewhat ironic, celebration. On May 25, a medal was coined commemorating the supposed revocation of the expulsion on May 15. On the one side it shows Queen Maria Theresia sitting upon her throne, flanked by the female personifications of justice and charity. The Book of Samuel is loosely quoted in Latin "Let not the queen impute anything unto his servant." On the other, we see the Jewish temple, decorated with the weapons of Poland, Sweden, England, and the United Provinces. Although probably minted with Jewish consumers in mind, the medals were widely advertised; an advertisement in the *Leydse Courant* notified readers that they could order it for 15 guilders in Haarlem, Amsterdam, Leiden, Rotterdam, and Dordrecht. The minters had, however, rejoiced too soon; A. Polak, *Joodse penningen in de Nederlanden* (Amsterdam, 1958), p. 9; *Leydse Courant*, October 20, 1745.

¹⁵⁵ *Nederlandsch gedenboek of Europische Mercurius*, ed. Gerrevink, pp. 50–51.

story of Toruń was easy to frame as another chapter in Europe's never-ending confessional trench war. The case of the Bohemian Jews was more difficult to translate into a grand narrative that connected distant violence with local religious-political circumstances. The striking disinterest in the Bohemian Jews suggests that confessional identification remained an implicit prerequisite for moral outrage, even among authors who rejected persecution without recourse to religious truth claims.

The *Journal Universel*, the only Dutch periodical to extensively dwell on the matter, accordingly framed the news in a familiar narrative. Pierre Quesnel (1695?–1774), the journal's editor, was a militant Jansenist who had fled persecution in France in 1743.¹⁵⁶ He appropriated the expulsion to provide a typical story about the never-ending intolerance of Catholic rulers:

This unfortunate people found . . . no consolation . . . in Catholic courts . . . They solely owe their resurrection to the heterodox powers which, by their charitable actions, have continued to show the whole Christian world that the first Religion, the first laws, the first virtues must be humanity, commiseration, love for one's neighbor, wherever he may be; that within Jesus Christ there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile, all men, all Christians must, by the example of their divine Master, love each other without distinction. Why have these precepts been practiced so badly for so many centuries in our communion? Why this contempt, this aversion, this species of horror for all those who are not [like us]? Ask our prelates, our priests, our monks, our parents who inspire us with all these beautiful sentiments from our most tender age, and which reason has so much difficulty in rectifying thereafter.¹⁵⁷

The question of Prague's Jews thus became an occasion to once again discuss the old conflict between Protestant forbearance and Catholic intolerance, albeit by a man who was theologically somewhat stuck in the middle and used this dispute in defense of Jansenism. Indeed, Quesnel concluded that this was the same line of thinking that led to the 1713 promulgation of *Unigenitus*, a doctrinal constitution devised by Paris and Rome as a final blow against the Jansenists in France.¹⁵⁸ For him, the inhumanity of the persecution of Prague's Jews was a story worth telling, because he was part of that story. The Bohemian Jews and his religious group had become victims of the same malice.

¹⁵⁶ F. Moreau, "Pierre Quesnel (1695?–1774)," in *Dictionnaire des Journalistes 1600–1789* (1991, 2005), <http://dictionnaire-journalistes.gazettes18e.fr/journaliste/662-pierre-quesnel>; J. Merrick, "Conscience and citizenship in eighteenth-century France," *Eighteenth Century Studies* 21.1 (1987), pp. 48–70.

¹⁵⁷ *Journal Universel*, pp. 360–361.

¹⁵⁸ J. Merrick, "'Disputes over words' and constitutional conflict in France, 1730–1732," *French Historical Studies* 14.4 (1986), 497.

Conclusion

Publicity played a significant role in the interventionist strategies of Europe's Protestant powers in response to the Tumult of Toruń. The kings who protested against the sentences elevated the "reasonable" public to judges in the conflict. Publicity not only functioned to inform audiences, but also to involve them. The press added gravity to the intercessions by putting royal reputations on the line. By doing so, the intervening governments set the precedent for an international discussion about how to confront the Toruń persecution that quickly went beyond justifying foreign policy. European observers were not only astonished by the executions, they also marveled at the printed backlash itself. Aware of the fact that all over Europe people had their eyes glued to the events in the Polish-Prussian city, press coverage of Toruń quickly began to take on a life of its own. For many pamphleteers, the "Bloodbath of Toruń" hence became a topical example in the greater narrative they wanted to tell, a broader story about the international religio-political landscape that could differ widely from the course of action taken by Europe's governments.

Their differences aside, almost all pamphleteers believed that Toruń provided a lesson for how Europeans of different confessions ought to relate to one another, and that this should be reflected in international politics. Not all pamphleteers called for a military intervention in the Commonwealth, but there was a pronounced sense that readers played a role in solving Europe's age-old struggle with religious persecution. Even if Toruń could no longer be saved, pamphlets propagated that (international) society could be changed for the better and that future crises could be averted, be it through confessional warfare, a great exchange of minorities, personal piety, or a humane attitude toward deviant minds.

Still, the European outrage over Toruń exemplifies that the Enlightenment did not alleviate Protestant concerns about the confessional divide. Ten people were executed in a city which many pamphleteers had probably never even heard of before they read the news, and yet cries echoed throughout Europe that religious war was inevitable, that common Catholics should be banished from England, and that Protestants should finally lay aside their squabbles in the face of an existential threat. This is all the more striking if we remind ourselves that one of the consequences of the Tumult was that the city's government was no longer exclusive to members of one religion. In other words, it partly constituted the emancipation of a marginalized confessional community. Tellingly, there were no pamphlets that acknowledged this *increase* in religious toleration. The silence over the Bohemian Jews provides further evidence that while many pamphleteers had become accustomed to crying out against instances of persecution in universalist terms, they restricted such outrage to religious kin. People recognized that religious persecution was fundamentally inhumane, but this was not enough to mobilize them against all instances of religious violence.

Conclusion

Beyond the Confessional Divide

In his 1755 *On the origin of inequality*, Jean-Jacques Rousseau observed that our sense of pity, although an innate human property, ultimately hinges on our ability to recognize something of ourselves in another.¹ Nowadays, social psychologists would refer to this principle in terms of “social proximity” or “psychological distance.”² When studying the history of humanitarianism, historians usually trace the origins of our capacity to commiserate with strangers to the world Rousseau inhabited. Samuel Moyn aptly summarized the historiographical consensus in a recent article, stating that in the late eighteenth century “a new ‘humanitarian narrative’ . . . presented the violation of individual bodies before a new kind of fellow-feeling spectator, and new media of the period schooled him in a new cultural program in regarding the pain of others.”³

Pre-Enlightenment Europeans, by contrast and implication, suffer a much worse reputation with regards to their ability to sympathize with the plight of strangers. A self-congratulatory narrative created by eighteenth-century philosophers is still told today, about how they ended a barbarous age of religious fanaticism, during which cruelty, intolerance, and tribalism reigned supreme. Europeans had to stop looking through a confessional prism before they could see the world through humanitarian eyes. Of course, there is something to be said for this rupture-oriented periodization in the history of human compassion. There is no doubt that eighteenth-century abolitionists engaged in something revolutionary when they orchestrated their impressive media campaigns trying to rid the Atlantic of human bondage, an institution that had received virtually no criticism from previous generations.

But the craft of employing the printing press as a tool to alleviate distant suffering has a longer history, one that employs motifs we typically associate with the Enlightenment, but which takes us deep into Europe’s age of confessional strife. Indeed, the rise of humanitarianism was not caused by a cooling down of religious tensions, as historians often argue. On the contrary, religious conflict

¹ J.-J. Rousseau, *On the origin of inequality*, trans. G. D. H. Cole (New York, NY, 2005), pp. 52–53.

² K. H. Kwon, M. Chadha, and K. Pellizzaro, “Proximity and terrorism news in social media: A construal-level theoretical approach to networked framing of terrorism in Twitter,” *Mass Communication and Society* 20.6 (2017), pp. 880–882.

³ Moyn, “Human rights and humanitarianization,” p. 35.

offered extremely fertile ground for people to develop new forms of long-distance solidarity. This study has shown, however, that as the press became an important medium through which to express concern with foreign suffering, early modern humanitarianism transcended the strict confessional parameters within which it had emerged.

Understanding this dynamic and gauging the reach and limitations of early modern humanitarianism begins with focusing on the strategies of the persecuted. We have seen that the first stretches of the road to transnational engagement were often paved by the persecuted themselves. For them, drawing attention to their predicament through print was not a matter of course but a strategic decision. They would not always decide to publicize their sufferings, even if they had the means. The main priority of subjects who had fallen from their sovereign's grace was to find their way back to living under his or her protection under acceptable conditions. Turning to foreign printing presses only became a viable option when it served this purpose, and was usually preceded by sustained attempts to reason with one's ruler.

When they engaged in public diplomacy through the Dutch presses in order to draw attention to their cause, persecuted minorities and their advocates had to navigate a complex political landscape, marked by religious tension, volatile alliances, and incessant warfare. As opinion makers, they could have a profound impact on international relations by raising public awareness, calling out rulers, and pressuring others to intervene. But they had to think carefully about the audiences they hoped to reach as well as those they would inescapably reach due to the press' public nature. Often, raising concern about one's predicament without alienating Catholics was the safest strategy to attract foreign aid. A deep sense of confessional commitment certainly pervaded domestic politics and international relations, but it did not often trump the desire to maintain religious peace.

Following this logic, the Waldensians refrained from framing their predicament in stark confessional terms, for fear of losing support across the confessional divide. Many Huguenot opinion makers too played a confessionally neutral card to convince Catholic audiences that their treatment was unreasonable, unjust, and inhumane. And advocates of the Camisards played down the extreme sectarian violence that characterized the war which they tried to persuade foreign powers to intervene in, in order not to estrange potential Catholic allies within and outside France. In the century discussed in this study, a diverse group of opinion makers, including Waldensian refugees, French ministers, Dutch officeholders, and many others, all sought access to the printing press to mobilize audiences against episodes of religious persecution, experimenting with inclusive languages of compassion based on the rule of law, reason, and a sense of common humanity. Their Catholic opponents too, while trying to counter their claims, often followed suit and used strikingly similar lines of argumentation.

Historians often approach the public employment of political norms with suspicion. Making a sharp divide between motivation and legitimation, they argue that princes, rebels, and other operators of the printing press simply used the arguments they believed could convince the greatest number of people. Yet, in the effort to understand how print media shaped a humanitarian culture, whether or not the opinion makers employing these languages were truly motivated by them is of secondary importance. More important is that they helped spread a shared normative repertoire of concern with distant communities, both within one's religious and political community, and across confessional and political divides.

This study has shown how through the printing press victims of persecution and their advocates repeatedly managed to pressure sovereigns and their supporters into publicly justifying their persecutory policies beyond bold confessional triumphalism. They made them answer whether their actions had also been humane, reasonable, and according to the rule of law. When the exile Pierre Jurieu developed a universalized image of the human psyche and human religiosity—applicable to Jews, Muslims, and Protestants alike—to defy the policy of persecution as both unreasonable and inhumane, he certainly believed that the Reformed religion was the only true religion; the pastor extensively defended confessional truth claims in other works. Yet this does not make his universalizing arguments about human nature, reason, and empathy insincere or less impactful. Humanitarianism ultimately depends on tactics of reaching out despite differences in beliefs and culture.

Solidarity Before Modernity

The history of humanitarianism and the press thus invites us to reconsider the rhetoric of solidarity before modernity. Early modernists have presented contradictory conclusions about Europe as a continent where religious tolerance dominated everyday life, but where deep confessional antagonism prevailed as an ideology. Investigating the people who resisted religious violence on an ad hoc basis by seeking cross-confessional support sheds a new light on how this antagonism was partially overcome in a public sphere situated between everyday relations and the abstract realm of ideas.

This is not to suggest that a reconstruction of long-distance advocacy provides a linear history of political secularization. As this study has demonstrated, not all publications surrounding confessional violence aimed to transcend the confessional divide. Different opinion makers adjusted their argumentation depending on their audiences. This meant that throughout the period discussed in this book, news consumers could buy in their bookshops extremely militant confessional interpretations of foreign persecutions alongside more worldly reports. Whether

the language of humanity, reason, rule of law, or religious truth took precedence depended on the (imagined) discursive field in which the author took part, and secondly, on whom the writer was trying to convince. It mattered whether one's intended public consisted of Dutch Protestants, all the ambassadors within a desired or actual alliance, or all Europeans of all possible sorts.

Dutch pamphleteers in particular often used such news to discuss domestic religio-political conflicts, leading them to reconfessionalize narratives of persecution. We have seen that to some extent, victims of religious violence depended on such a confessional reframing for their cause to gain public momentum. The rise of one political language does not necessitate the fall of another, as historians of secularization have often assumed. That news of persecution led to days of prayer for co-religionists, interconfessional brawls in Dutch ports, and anti-Catholic political measures clearly indicates that many people readily interpreted events through a sectarian prism, even if the pamphlets which the persecuted had disseminated did not invite them to do so. This also goes a long way toward explaining why Jews, Anabaptists, and Catholics did not have easy access to the Dutch press to raise concern for their persecuted brethren in the faith, despite the prevalence of inclusive languages of compassion.

By studying the history of humanitarian engagement, this book has argued that it is important to keep in mind that the fostering of shared normative repertoires across confessions did not always cause religious communities to become less divided. Through the press, people also developed secular markers of confessional distinction. Instead of quarreling about dogma—which rarely happened in news media about persecution—people would pride themselves on being part of a religious community in which people were not fanatical, but behaved reasonably, humanely, and treasured the rule of law. Universalizing norms such as shared humanity have a Janus-face, as they also provide fuel to exclude groups. According to many early modern Protestants, Catholics tended to behave inhumanely—a predicate that is still often used to criticize religious communities.

In sixteenth-century Europe, religious divisions threw, in the words of Benjamin Kaplan, “ideological fuel on the fires of existing [conflicts],” turning them into “cosmic struggles between the forces of God and Satan.”⁴ Such confessional value judgments certainly emerged from the religious polemic of that period, but throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it became increasingly separated from references to religious truth. As this study has shown, this ideological fuel was so potent because later polemicists also turned these conflicts into existential and transnational struggles over group survival without resort to the forces of God and Satan. This long-term development merits wider scrutiny, as it marks a change from political conflicts over religious

⁴ Kaplan, *Divided by faith*, p. 102.

belief—beginning in a time when all Protestants were former Catholics and stable confessional identities had not yet developed—to political conflicts fueled by religious identity. Also without talk about dogma, confession marked and distinguished political communities and continued to guide humanitarian attention in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.⁵ Even today such tribalism permeates and limits humanitarian engagement.

Between Word and Deed

To understand how the relation between humanitarianism and print media evolved throughout the centuries, two strands of future research would be particularly valuable. First, looking at contemporary perceptions of the scope of print media: Who did publishers and writers believe the supposed audiences of their reports and stories to be, and what type of groups did readers believe themselves to be part of? Depending on publicity strategies and historical circumstances, these imagined audiences could expand and shrink. This also helps to explain why we do not observe a linear expansion of moral communities in history, and why we recurrently see supposedly “unmodern” markers of identification reappear throughout modernity.

In his seminal book *Imagined communities*, Benedict Anderson assigned a central role to the press in the development of nationalism in the late eighteenth century. He argued that the emergence of printing press capitalism allowed a larger number of people to gain access to mass-produced media, leading to a wider dissemination of common discourses. The sense that everyone was taking part in the same public sphere and consuming the same narratives gave rise to an “imagined community,” the nation. Now that we increasingly begin to grasp the transnational dimensions of early modern public spheres and their striking flexibility and cross-fertilization, we can safely argue that the intensification of print media and their increased targeting to specific masses—as described by Anderson—may have widened the “imagined community” in one sense, but also severely narrowed it in another. Appeals to humanity or all reasonable people also constituted, to an extent, an imagined community, but its boundaries were soft.

A second strand of valuable new research would be to go further back in time, to trace the deeper history of appeals to humanity in the face of local conflicts between religious communities before the rise of the printing press. This book has

⁵ See D. Rodogno, *Against massacre: Humanitarian interventions in the Ottoman Empire, 1815–1914* (Princeton, NJ, 2012); S. Kroll, “The legal justification of international intervention: Theories of community and admissibility,” in Klose (ed.), *The emergence of humanitarian intervention*, pp. 73–88.

argued that politicized appeals to humanity developed to a considerable extent as a response to religious violence, either as a way to find common ground across the confessional divide, or to demonize rival confessions on grounds other than the soundness of their theological doctrines. Past research has already demonstrated that in the sixteenth century William of Orange's propagandists "invented" the idea of a Dutch nation, which allowed both Catholic and Reformed inhabitants of the Low Countries to rally behind his cause.⁶ Appeals to humanity may have similar, albeit less territorially bounded, origins. After all, also before the Protestant Reformations, there have been ample instances in which Europeans saw the need to develop discursive strategies to bridge predominant religious and ethnic divides.⁷

State persecutions of minorities are often far-reaching in their effects. Then, as now, they acutely show that projects of rulers and states to impose uniformity on their subjects often lapse into violence. At the same time, this book has shown that publicizing religious violence can lead individuals, communities, and societies to articulate core values and develop strategies about how to live together despite the differences that divide people. But the story about printed indignation is also a story about the people for whom no one decided to operate the printing press. Throughout the seventeenth century, countless victims of persecution failed to receive the support of foreign advocates, despite inclusive languages of common humanity, reason, and the rule of law.

It is important to bear in mind that this inconsistency between word and deed remained a recurring phenomenon in humanitarian practices in the three centuries that followed. If we want to understand the dynamics of moral outrage, we should therefore not only examine the norms of a given society, but also when, how, and why these norms were or were not activated for specific situations. Printed opinion was and is a powerful weapon of marginalization, but actual persecution, as many early modern Europeans already realized, often thrives on the silence of the press.

⁶ A. Duke, "In defence of the common fatherland: Patriotism and liberty in the Low Countries, 1555–1576," in R. Stein and J. Pollmann (eds.), *Networks, regions and nations: Shaping identities in the Low Countries, 1300–1650* (Leiden, 2010), pp. 217–240.

⁷ For conceptions of ethnicity (*gens*) in medieval Europe see C. Weeda, *Ethnicity in medieval Europe, 950–1250* (Woodbridge, 2021); G. Heng, *The invention of race in the European Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2018).

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