Religious Persecution and Transnational Compassion in the Dutch Vernacular Press 1655-1745

Boer, D.R. de

Chapter 1

The Piedmont Easter: Sovereignty, Diplomacy, and Publicity (1655-56)

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughter'd saints, whose bones
Lie scatter'd on the Alpine mountains cold,
Ev'n them who kept thy truth so pure of old
When all our fathers worship't stocks and stones.

- John Milton, 'On the late massacre in Piedmont' (1655)[165]

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, consisting of 18,000 Savoyard, French, and Irish soldiers, had entered the Pellice Valley, some sixty 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 and entire villages were razed to the ground. The survivors fled into the mountains, where many more died in the extreme weather conditions of the early spring.[166]

Much to the chagrin of the Duke of Savoy, the Piedmont Easter did not remain a domestic affair. 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 in the print media. Dozens of pamphlets circulated throughout Protestant Europe, the majority of which regarded the persecutions as a scandal. Attention was soon followed by action. The States General and the Commonwealth of England declared national days of prayer for the

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[165] J. Milton, 'Sonnet 18, "On the late massacre in Piedmont" (1650)', *The explicator* 52–2 (1994), p. 70.
[166] M. Laurenti, *I confini della comunità. Conflitto europeo e guerra religiosa nelle comunità valdesi del Seicento* (Turin, 2015), pp. 175–176; estimations of the death toll include those who froze to death; D. 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.

persecuted 'brethren in the faith' and organized national collections, raising impressive amounts of money to aid the survivors.[167] Contemporary observers were struck by the intensity of the transnational solidarity. In his 1658 *History of the Evangelical churches of the valleys of Piemont*, Samuel Morland—who was sent as ambassador extraordinary to Turin to support the Waldensian cause on behalf of Oliver Cromwell—revealed 'that from the first beginning of the Reformation, there was never known such a marvellous unity in the cause of Religion'.[168]

By summer, it appeared that the massacre might lead to an international political crisis, as Protestant governments started negotiations to jointly confront the attack on their confession, under the leadership of the Lord Protector.[169] Cromwell pressured France to make Savoy stop its persecutions, threatening that he would scupper ongoing negotiations for an English–French alliance against Spain.[170] Moreover, he made preparations to send the English fleet to Nice and declare war on Savoy if the privileges of the duchy's Protestant subjects were not restored, their losses compensated, and the perpetrators punished.[171] 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.[172] Willem Boreel, the Dutch ambassador to the French court, repeatedly insisted to Grand Pensionary Johan de Witt that he should deal with the matter prudently, lest the conflict escalate and lead to a new age of confessional warfare between Catholics and Protestants 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, that

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[167] N. Kist, *Neêrlands bededagen en biddagsbrieven. Eene bijdrage ter opbouwing der geschiedenis van staat en kerk in Nederland*, vol. 2 (Leiden, 1849), p. 334; collections were also held in France and Switzerland; N. Greenspan, *Selling Cromwell's wars. Media, empire and godly warfare, 1650–1658* (London, 2012), p. 137; for an introduction to Dutch charity initiatives see E. Boersma, 'Yrelandtsche traenen gedroogd. Transnationale solidariteit en lokale politiek in Zeeland, 1641–1644', *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 2 (2015), pp. 201–222.
[168] S. Morland, *The history of the Evangelical churches in the valleys of Piemont* (London, 1658), p. 540.
[169] H. 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.
[170] D. Smith, 'Diplomacy and the religious question. Mazarin, Cromwell and the treaties of 1655 and 1657', *E–rea. Revue électronique d'études sur le monde anglophone* 11/2 (2014), https://journals.openedition.org/erea/3745; D. 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*, p. 54.
[171] For Cromwell's reaction to the Piedmont Easter see T. Venning, *Cromwellian foreign policy* (Basingstoke, 1995), pp. 94–101.
[172] Trim, '"If a prince use tyrannie"', p. 59.

> could also begin with an event like that, and this nation, which is bigoted and impetuous, should not be excited to such more than barbarian cruelties, which we have already seen way too much here.[173]

In short, the massacre seemed to open a scar on Europe's international 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 the Holy Roman Empire laws had been established which considerably extended the rights of Lutheran, Calvinist, and Catholic minorities. The Reich's princes had agreed that any future confessional conflict was to be settled through negotiation rather than violence. In 1648, Europe had broken loose 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 Munster and Osnabruck.[174]

The Piedmont Easter made tangible some of the ambiguities and limitations of the political norms prevalent in Westphalian Europe. The massacre compellingly showed the territorial limits of the 1648 peace settlements, reminding contemporaries that despite the settlements' claims to universality, states like the Duchy of Savoy remained unshackled by its regulations for religious peacekeeping. In fact, one could even argue that the Peace of Westphalia, as a landmark in the long-term reification of state sovereignty as a normative principle, had facilitated the bloodbath. It had confirmed the increasingly popular idea that princes were absolute lords and masters within their own domains: how they treated their subjects was no one's business, within or outside of their territory.[175]

At the same time, the Protestant powers' reactions to the massacre demonstrate that a mutual respect for territorial sovereignty was not the sole guiding principle of Europe's international political landscape. Reinforcing recent criticism of the Westphalian hypothesis,

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[173] 'Il y a environ cent ans, savoir en 1561 & 1562 qu'on commença à massacre les fideles dans ce Royaume. […] Dieu veuille nous preserver d'un pareille siècle, qui pouroit aussi commencer par quelque évenement semblable, & que cette Nation, qui est bigote et fougueuse, ne soit pas excite à ces cruautez plus que barbares, qu'on n'a que trop vuës ci–devant'; Letter from Willem Boreel to Johan de Witt, 11 June 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 plenipotentiaires des Provinces Unies des Pais–Bas aux cours de France, d'Angleterre, de Suède, de Danmarc, de Pologne &c. depuis l'année 1652 jusqu'à l'an 1669 inclus*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam, 1725), p. 330.

[174] D. Croxton, *Westphalia. The last Christian peace* (Basingstoke, 2013), p. 383.

[175] See the Introduction for a more detailed discussion on the Westphalian hypothesis.

David Trim argues that the Peace of Westphalia 'did not create a norm of non-intervention as part of the concept of sovereignty'.[176] He presents the Waldensian case as a prime example 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.[177]

Of course, accusations of massacre and tyranny are by definition polemical in nature; whether the terms applied to a certain event or situation was usually hotly contested and this was certainly the case with the Waldensians. In this light, Enea Balmas and Grazia Zardini Lana have suggested that the internationalization of the conflict was largely an effect of what they refer to as 'propaganda'—the texts and images created and disseminated by the survivors of the massacre to further their cause abroad.[178] Antonella Amatuzzi has similarly claimed that the pamphlets circulating in Europe were 'the arms with which the Reformed of Piedmont won their combat'.[179] But what kind of arms were these? What strategies did the persecuted use to advocate their cause abroad and urge foreign powers to intervene? Although they were definitely not the first to do it, turning to the printing presses to raise international attention was by no means a standardized practice, nor was it without risks. 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 by the English colonial administration.[180]

As this chapter will show, religious groups seeking foreign help stepped into a complex communicative landscape through which they had to steer carefully and reckon with the rules of the game. 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 Amsterdam. It examines how the Waldensians assumed international political agency as a non-state actor and

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[176] Trim, 'Intervention in European history', p. 39.
[177] Ibid., p. 26.
[178] 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), p. 70.
[179] A. Amatuzzi, 'Les libelles vaudois sur les Pâques piémontaises. Des armes efficaces dans le conflit avec la cour de Savoie (1655)', in S. Alan–Stacey (ed.), *Political, religious and social conflict in the States of Savoy, 1400–1700* (Oxford and Bern, 2014), p. 239; see also Balmas and Zardini Lana, *Vera relazione*, p. 73.
[180] 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*, Studies in Early Modern Irish History (Manchester, 2013), p. 2.

how international observers reacted to this diplomatic engagement. I will argue that rather unexpectedly, conceptions of sovereignty played a decisive role in international communication and evaluation of the conflict in Piedmont.

The Poor of Lyon

Let us begin by taking a step back to briefly consider the history of the Waldensians and explore the tensions that led up to the tragedy of 1655.[181] The Waldensians—originally a pejorative term used by their confessional adversaries to discredit them as sectarians—styled themselves the Poor of Lyon. They originated in the twelfth century as followers of a man named Peter Waldo, probably once a member of the Lyonese elite who had given up his wealth to preach the merits of poverty and of basing one's faith on Scripture only.[182] The *sola scriptura* premise made the Waldensians doctrinally very different from their better-known contemporaries, the Cathars, with whom they were often—purposefully or inadvertently—confused.[183] In fact, with their strong tradition of popular preaching the Waldensians provided one of the strongest voices against the Albigensian heresies of the twelfth century.[184]

Nevertheless, in 1184 Pope Lucius III excommunicated the Waldensians, a move which was soon confirmed by the emperor.[185] Things could have gone differently. Francis of Assisi, who was a three-year-old at the time of the excommunication, would eventually be canonized by the same Church for a very similar emphasis on poverty.[186] In the following decades the

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[181] There is an impressive number of regional publications on specific aspects of the history of the Waldensians. Most postwar general literature on the Waldensians describes their history until the sixteenth century. See, for instance, E. Cameron, *Waldenses. Rejections of Holy Church in medieval Europe* (Hoboken, NJ, 2001); G. Audisio, *The Waldensian dissent. Persecution and survival, c. 1170–c. 1570* (Cambridge, 1999); A. Molnár, *Die Waldenser. Geschichte und europäisches Ausmaß einer Ketzerbewegung* (Göttingen, 1985); E. Roll, *Die Waldenzer. Aufbruch in eine neue Zeit* (Stuttgart, 1982).

[182] C. Touzellier, 'Considérations sur les origins du Valdéisme', in Società dei studi valdesi (ed.), *I Valdesi e l'Europa* (Torre Pellice, 1982), p. 7; Samuel Morland has transcribed the Waldensian confession of faith from a manuscript dated 1120, see Morland, *History of the Evangelical churches*, p. 34.

[183] The Cathars held a Manichaean doctrine, the belief that there were two tantamount gods. For a good introduction to Cathar theology see E. Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou. The promised land of error* (New York, 1979).

[184] Audisio, *Waldensian dissent*, p. 14.

[185] Ibid., p. 16.

[186] For a comparison between the Waldensians and the Franciscan movement see B. Marthaler, 'Forerunners of the Franciscans. The Waldenses', *Franciscan Studies* 18–2 (1958), pp. 133–142.

movement dispersed and an era of active persecution began with the foundation of the Papal Inquisition in the thirteenth century, forcing the Waldensians into hiding. Yet unlike most other medieval 'heresies', remnants of the movement managed to persist, mainly in the Cottian Alps, where its adherents lived as shepherds and farmers. However, centuries of persecution had transformed the Waldensians from a charismatic movement, involved in public propagation and persuasion, into a secluded people, who passed their faith from parent to child in relative social isolation.[187]

They had not, however, lost all contact with the world beyond their communities. In the sixteenth century the Waldensians took special interest in the news of revolutionary reformations in the German lands and, closer to home, in Switzerland. In 1530 they declared themselves Reformed and rethought their creed and church order in a Calvinist fashion.[188] Supranational religious unification did not, however, bring political protection; the now Reformed Waldensians continued to live under Catholic rulers, first under Francis I of France and, after 1559, under the dukes of Savoy, 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 Treaty of Cavour—which we will discuss in more detail in Chapter 2—after a military campaign by Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy (1528–1580), had failed to extirpate the Reformed religion within his lands. The treaty stated that the Waldensians were allowed to practice their religion in a restricted number of valleys. Attempts to expand into other areas were strictly forbidden and although the Reformed were permitted to freely communicate with other subjects in the realm, they were not allowed to try to convert them. Today, a plaque on the fortified house where the peace was concluded proudly presents the

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[187] Audisio, *Waldensian dissent*, p. 68.

[188] E. Cameron, *Reformation of the heretics. The Waldenses of the Alps, 1480–1580* (Oxford, 1984), pp. 202–215; G. Audisio, 'Des Pauvres de Lyon aux vaudois réformés', *Les Vaudois. Revue de l'histoire des religions* 217–1 (2000), pp. 155–166; C. Zwierlein, *Discorso und Lex Dei. Die Entstehung neuer Denkrahmen und die Wahrnehmung der französischen Religionskriege in Italien und Deutschland, 1559–1598*, Schriftenreihe der Historischen Kommission bei der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 74 (Göttingen, 2006), p. 359.

Treaty of Cavour to visitors as the 'first example of religious liberty in modern Europe'.[189] Indeed, it was a fundamentally different religious settlement than the 1529 Landfriede in Switzerland and the 1555 Peace of Augsburg, which stipulated that the ruler was allowed to decide the religion of his subjects, according to the principle that was later summarized as *cuius regio, eius religio*. In most cases this led to an enforcement of religious uniformity.[190] In 1561, by contrast, this Catholic sovereign for the first time officially agreed to protect rather than persecute his 'heretical' subjects, albeit within a restricted territory.

Despite the treaty, the Waldensians were repeatedly threatened with violence in the decades that followed. But whereas the Protestants in other parts of the Duchy of Savoy continued to suffer intense persecutions—dramatically demonstrating the geographical limitations of the Treaty of Cavour—the Reformed in the assigned valleys of Piedmont enjoyed relative peace. Strong religions tensions remained, however, partly because of the presence of Catholic clergy in the region, who increasingly engaged in missionary activities.[191] According to Morland, 'the enemy of our salvation' changed shape from a roaring lion into a 'cunning serpent, subtilly intruding himself, and secretly wounding the faithfull'.[192] Whether or not the duke or other Catholics truly indulged in serpent-like behavior, open confrontation largely remained absent. While 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.

The Massacre and its Aftermath

This uneasy but relatively stable stalemate came to a sudden and dramatic end in the spring of 1655. What had happened? In the absence of large-scale persecution, the Waldensian community thrived in the first half of the seventeenth century. Faced with overpopulation,

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[189] 'Qui, il 5 giugno 1561 Filippo di Savoia Racconigi a nome del duca di Savoia e I rappresentanti delle chiese valdesi stilarono l'accordo detto "di Cavour", primo esempio di libertà religiosa nell'Europa moderna'.
[190] W. te Brake, *Religious war and religious peace in early modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2017), pp. 44–64.
[191] Morland, *History of the Evangelical churches*, pp. 268–271.
[192] Ibid., p. 268.

communities had begun to settle beyond the localities assigned to them through different ducal concessions.[193] Although in doing so they arguably broke the law, the expansion was not met with repercussions from the Savoyard court. This must have given the Reformed the idea that the duke tolerated it. This impression was strengthened by the fact that on 19 May 1654 Charles Emmanuel II of Savoy had again reconfirmed earlier concessions, without mentioning the recent transgressions into forbidden territory.[194]

This presumed toleration was suddenly exposed as false on 25 January 1655, when a judge named Andrea Gastaldo ordered the Waldensians to convert to Catholicism or recede to the localities first yielded to them in the Treaty of Cavour within three days, on penalty of death.[195] Despite pleas that retreating into the mountains in the midst of winter was too dangerous, the Waldensians were forced to leave their homes and goods behind.[196] But upon noticing that their abandoned homes were being plundered, they returned to protect them and stayed to work the land. This understandable yet bold return would prove fatal. On 17 April the Marquis of Pianezza, the Savoyard army's commander and a zealously anti-Waldensian Catholic,[197] led 700 soldiers—strengthened by Irish mercenaries and armed peasants who were recruited with the promise of loot—to the Pellice Valley to punish those who had stayed.[198] Waldensian apologists would later claim that the attack had come as a surprise. They argued that the duke had requested them to accommodate an army that was crossing the Alps on its way to Milan to prove their loyalty.

This was not, however, what had actually happened. Warned by Swiss brethren in the faith about the approaching army, the Waldensians had vacated their villages and had entrenched themselves in Torre Pellice, something which the Waldensian envoys in Turin

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193 See Chapter 2.
194 A. Muston, *The Israel of the Alps. A complete history of the Vaudois of Piedmont*, vol. 1 (Glasgow, 1857), p. 335.
195 For a full translation of Gastaldo's ordinance into English see J. Stoppa, *A collection, or narative, sent to His Highness, the Lord Protector of the Common–Wealth of England, Scotland, & Ireland, &c concerning the bloody and barbarous massacres, murthers, and other cruelties, committed on many thousands of Reformed, or Protestants dwelling in the vallies of Piedmont, by the Duke of Savoy's forces, joyned therein with the French Army, and severall Irish regiments* (London, 1655), pp. 7–8.
196 The following summary of events is largely based on Balmas and Zardini Lana, *Vera relazione*, pp. 15–35.
197 Laurenti, *Confini della comunità*, p. 180.
198 Balmas and Zardini Lana, *Vera relazione*, pp. 32–33.

admitted in the course of the ensuing peace negotiations.[199] A battle ensued, which was won by the Savoyard army, but because they were limited in numbers the following days remained rather quiet. About a week later, however, a French army was passing by, which joined the troops under Pianezza's command in the hope of taking a share in the spoils. A massacre ensued. The broken survivors either converted to Catholicism or fled into the mountains. The valleys were left looted, burned, and depopulated, and on 6 May Pianezza wrote to the regent that he had been victorious:

> The signs of victory have already been planted within the confines of these Alpine mountains […] No longer do we feel rebel weapons, everything is deserted, the felony has been suppressed completely, the perversity is extinct.[200]

On 28 May Gastaldo published another edict forcing all Waldensians to remove themselves from the archduke's lands in an effort to finally extinguish all heresy from Savoy.[201] It was around this time that 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 19 May.[202] Reorganized in the Dauphiné in France, where they were guaranteed Louis XIV's protection, the Waldensian refugees retaliated. Aided by local Huguenots, they managed to win several victories over the Savoyards.[203] Yet despite international support, their situation remained dire and in the course of the summer several military expeditions ended in defeat. From the beginning of August, French ambassador Abel Servien mediated peace negotiations in Pinerolo between a Savoyard, Waldensian, and a Reformed Swiss delegation. Two weeks later, on 18 August 1655, the Waldensians' religious and military leaders signed the 'Patent of grace and pardon'.[204] The treaty ended the hostilities and restored the Waldensians' right to free worship in the three valleys. England and the Dutch Republic were wary of the patent,

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[199] B. Peyrot, 'Giosué Giavenello, ovverò il Leone di Rorà', in C. Mornese and G. Buratti (eds.), *Banditi e ribelli dimenticati. Storie di irrudicibili al future che viene* (Milan, 2006), p. 209.
[200] 'Già si sono piantate le insegne vittoriose in tutto il recinto di questi alpestri monti […] Non si sentono più armi ribelli, ogni cosa è deserta, oppressa affatto la fellonia, estinta la perversità'; quotation taken from Balmas and Zardini Lana, *Vera relazione*, pp. 39–40.
[201] Ibid., p. 37.
[202] Rogge, 'Waldenzen–moord van 1655', p. 307.
[203] Muston, *Israel of the Alps*, vol. 1, p. 356.
[204] For a transcription of the Italian original and an English translation see Morland, *History of the Evangelical churches*, pp. 652–663.

however, as it had been signed so hurriedly. Special envoys from the two republics had been on their way to Turin to take part in the negotiations on behalf of the persecuted and the terms of the peace were detrimental to the Waldensians.[205] Although the duke had pardoned the insurgents and reconfirmed their liberties, the treaty stated that the Waldensians had indeed taken up arms against their rightful sovereign and were thus guilty of rebellion.[206]

The Waldensian delegation sent letters of gratitude to the powers from whom they had received aid, confirming that they were again living under the archduke's protection and were no longer in need of support. Morland, the English ambassador who had failed to reach the Alps in time, would write three years later that these letters had been dictated by Servien; he had forced the Waldensian delegation to sign them. In doing so, to Morland's dismay, the French ambassador prevented further foreign intercessions and made it impossible for the Waldensians to recant.[207] The relationship between the duke and his subjects was once again reduced from a European scandal to a local affair, albeit stamped with the signatures of French and Swiss officials.

Appealing to Foreign Courts

What do you 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, the Waldensians 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 all their people.[208] Recent history provided the Waldensians with ample examples of how such theories had been put into practice. The Dutch had built a republic upon the precepts of resistance

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[205] For a description of the Dutch envoy's mission to Switzerland and Savoy see Rogge, 'De Waldenzen–moord van 1655'. The single monograph dedicated entirely to Morland focuses mainly on his scientific career. H. Dickinson, *Sir Samuel Morland. Diplomat and inventor, 1625–1695* (Cambridge, 1970).
[206] For a copy of the Patent see Morland, *History of the Evangelical churches*, pp. 652–662.
[207] Ibid., p. 667.
[208] R. Kingdon, 'Calvinism and resistance theory, 1550–1580', in J. Burns and M. Goldie (eds.), *The Cambridge history of political thought, 1450–1700* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 193–118.

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.[209]

In the seventeenth century 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, but few went as far as to deny them fully. Three decades before the Piedmont Easter, Hugo Grotius had argued in his influential *On the law of war and peace* (*De iure belli ac pacis*) that natural law allowed subjects to wage war against their ruler in cases of extreme and imminent danger.[210] Yet he strongly preferred that in such cases foreign sovereigns intervene militarily on behalf of the subjects in question, an idea the Dutch jurist had borrowed from Jean Bodin—and which would later be adopted by John Locke.[211] Grotius, in fact, believed that rulers had a duty to intervene,—especially if the foreign subjects in question were persecuted for their religion—having an obligation to care not only for their own subjects, but for humanity as a whole.[212] In other words, political thinkers generally regarded the compromising of external sovereignty as less problematic than the fracturing of domestic sovereignty.

As is so often the case, the facts on the ground 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—where they were granted protection by Louis XIV—and took up arms. Yet they refrained from publishing a manifesto justifying their resistance. Nor did they initially sent

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[209] 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.

[210] D. Baumgold, 'Pacifying politics. Resistance, violence, and accountability in seventeenth–century contract theory', *Political Theory* 21–1 (1993), p. 10; M. Barducci, *Hugo Grotius and the century of revolution, 1613–1718. Transnational reception in English political thought* (Oxford, 2017); three years before the Waldensian massacre, Thomas Hobbes suggested something similar. 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).

[211] 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.

[212] R. Vincent, 'Grotius, human rights, and intervention', in H. Bull, B. Kingsbury, and A. Roberts (eds.), *Hugo Grotius and international relations* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 246–247.

out requests for aid to foreign governments. Instead, they sent several messages to Savoyard officials pleading for the hostilities to cease.[213] The reason for this indecision was that the Waldensians were stuck in what I will call a 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 the diplomatic initiative. During the course of the seventeenth century, non-state actors began to lose formal access to Europe's increasingly differentiated spaces of diplomatic communication.[214] If the subjects of a state sought the help of any foreign power they *ipso facto* subverted their ruler'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—to convert or return to the assigned valleys—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', allow them freedom of conscience, and let them live within their old habitations.[215] The duke replied that 'the boldness that [the Waldensians] take to make their addresses to forraign states' only made matters worse.[216] He admonished the Evangelical cantons to mind their own business and reminded them of the 1653 Swiss peasant revolt:[217]

> 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 testifie the same affection and deportment towards us, in abstaining from giving any foundation or appearance of reason, to uphold their vain and insolent temerity.[218]

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[213] Balmas and Zardini Lana, *Vera relazione*, p. 49; one of these pleas has been translated in Stoppa, *A collection, or narative*, p. 38.
[214] M. Anderson, *The rise of modern diplomacy, 1450–1919* (London and New York, 1993), p. 42.
[215] '[…] de regarder vos dits sujets si pitoyeblement affligés, d'un oeil de commiseration'; J. Léger, *Histoire générale des églises evangeliques des vallées de Piemont, ou Vaudoises*, vol. 2 (Leiden, 1669), p. 203.
[216] Morland, *History of the Evangelical churches*, p. 542; translation by Morland. Léger has copied the first part of this letter in French in his *Histoire générale*. Because Morland has included the entire letter, I quote from his *History of the Evangelical churches*.
[217] 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.
[218] Translation by Morland; Morland, *History of the Evangelical churches*, p. 542.

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. Doctor Querino, as the man was called, had carried various *mémoires*, drafts for treatises against the court.[219] In a magnanimous gesture Susa's governor set the minister free. The documents he had carried were sent back to Bern with an accompanying letter exposing the hope that the authorities had not been involved in anything that could endanger the harmony that existed between allied states.[220] The fact that writing to foreign governments with pleas for help was understood as a form of lèse-majesté helps explain why the Waldensians long refrained from doing so. In one of their first pamphlets, the *Relation veritable de ce qui s'est passé dans les persecutions et massacres faits cette année, aux Eglises Reformées de Piemont* (*True account of what has happened during the persecution and massacres this year of the Reformed of Piedmont*)—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 forth from their holy zeal and ardent charity.[221]

In May—the month in which the Waldensians began their military offensive against the duke—they reiterated this argument of obedience in the *Relation dernièr authentique & tresveritable de ce qui s'est passé dans les persecutions et massacres* (*Latest authentic and very true report of what has happened*

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[219] '[Dottore Querino] munito di varie memorie e progetti di trattato pregiudizievoli al servizio del duca, e con mandato di fomentare, il più che possibile, la guerra dei valdesi'; G. Claretta, *Storia del regno e dei tempi di Carlo Emanuele II, duca di Savoia*, vol. 1 (Genoa, 1877), p. 138.

[220] 'Il governo sperava che l'autorità loro non avesse avuto mano in un fatto, il quale avrebbe potuto avventurare la buona armonia che deve esservi fra stati alleati'; ibid, p. 138.

[221] '[…] on a imputé ausdites Eglises Reformées qu'elles aboyent recerché la protection des princes ou estats estrangers, mais on ne leur fait pas moins de tort que dans les precedentes impositions : Car il est veritable, comme lesdits princes & estats sont prests à le declarer, qu'ils n'eurent jamais ni lettre ni mesmes le moindre billet de ces eglises. Que s'ils ont escrit quelques lettres en leur faveur à S.A.R. elles sont procedées purement de leur sainct zele & charité ardente'; Anonymous, *Relation veritable de ce qui s'est passé dans les persecutions et massacres faits cette année, aux Eglises Reformées de Piemont* (s.l. 1655), pp. 45–46.

during the persecutions ans massacres) [Fig. 2]. This pamphlet stated that foreign princes and states had interceded on their own initiative 'out of pity with their poor brothers'.[222]

Finding themselves in a dire military situation, the Waldensian committee finally sent a letter to the States General on 27 July 1655. 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 suffer their raging raid (to give less place to this calumny) than to give them the advantage to make us look bad and to brand us with a crime of which we are completely innocent.[223]

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.[224] 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, the Dutch ambassador to

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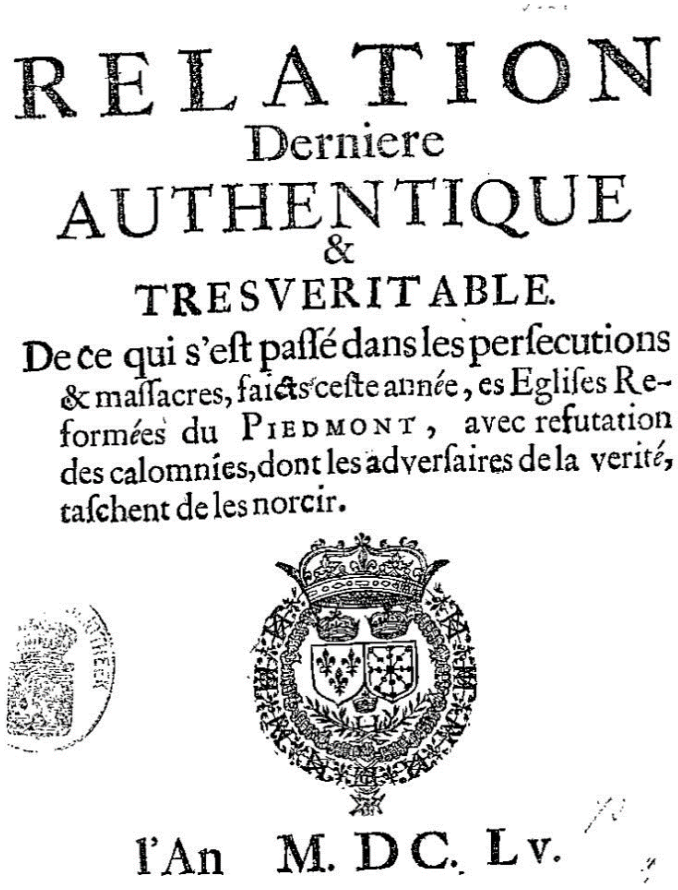
[222] '[…] par commiseration de leurs povres freres'; Anonymous, *Relation dernier authentique & tresveritable de ce qui s'est passe dans les persecutions et massacres, faicts ceste année, es Eglises Reformées du Piedmont, avec refutation des calomnies* (s.l., 1655), pflt 7633.

[223] "T is dan nae gebleven / om dat korts near het begin van onse ellenden / de Vyanden vande ware Religie ons te laste leyden / dat wy hulpe by vreemde ende Uytheemsche Machten hadden gesocht / om ons des te beter uyt te kwijten voor Misdadigers jegens den Staet / ende dat wy hier over gantsch verstelt zijnde (om te minder plaets te geven aen die lasteringh) resolveerden liever haren rasenden overval te dulden / dan haer dat voordeel te laten / van ons te konnen swart maecken en beswaren met een misdaet daer van wy gantsch onschuldich waren'; Anonymous, *Translaet uyt den Françoysche, vande missive, geschreven aen de Hooge en Mogende Heeren Staten Generael der Vereenighde Nederlanden. By de predikanten, ouderlingen, ende andere getrouwe ledematen der verwoeste kercken in Piemont* (The Hague, 1655), pflt 7626.

[224] Rogge, 'Waldenzen–moord van 1655', p. 315.


RELATION
Derniere
AUTHENTIQUE
&
TRESVERITABLE.
De ce qui s'eſt paſſé dans les perſecutions & maſſacres, faicts ceſte année, es Egliſes Reformées du PIEDMONT, avec refutation des calomnies, dont les adverſaires de la verité, taſchent de les norcir.
l'An M. DC. Lv.

2. *Relation derniere authentique & tresveritable, de ce qui s'est passé dans les persecutions & massacres, faicts ceste année* (s.l. 1655). Resource: Dutch Pamphlets Online.

Paris, on 27 May, nine days after they had first discussed the rumors of the massacre in Piedmont.[225] They requested an immediate cessation of the violence committed against the Waldensians and the restitution of their goods and territories.[226] 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.[227] On 13 July the States General had also decided to send a special envoy, Rudolf van Ommeren, to Turin, to advocate the

[225] Ibid., 307–308; for a transcription of this letter see Léger, *Histoire générale*, vol. 2, p. 231.
[226] Rogge, 'Waldenzen–moord van 1655', p. 308.
[227] Claretta, *Storia del regno*, vol. 1, p. 140.

Waldensian cause and provide the States General with reliable information from a court in which they had no resident ambassador.[228]

Despite all the diplomatic and financial support Dutch regents gave, they were not insensitive to the possibility that they might be supporting a revolt. This became painfully pressing when news of the 'Patent of grace and pardon' reached the Republic. We have seen how the document, signed by all parties, officially stated that the Waldensians had indeed rebelled. The *vroedschap* (city council) of Amsterdam thereupon initially decided to freeze the money raised for charity, to make sure that they were not supporting rebels.[229] Early modern observers had become aware of the disruptive potential of religious intolerance, but they were equally wary of the specter of revolt that had recently haunted France, England, and Naples.[230]

On 15 October, Willem Boreel, the Dutch ambassador at the court of Paris, forwarded a letter written by Waldensian representatives to the States General. Boreel 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'.[231] The letter was another request for help and argued that the peace treaty 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]'.[232] This time, as requested, the States General refrained from

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[228] Individual provinces' squabbles over finances and the death of Van Ommeren's father delayed the envoy's departure until 21 August; Rogge, 'Waldenzen–moord van 1655', pp. 313–314.

[229] 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.

[230] For other examples and contemporary perceptions of the so–called General Crisis of the seventeenth century see G. Parker, 'Crisis and catastrophe. The global crisis of the seventeenth century reconsidered', *American Historical Review* 113–4 (2008), pp. 1055, 1060–1064.

[231] The letter, including Boreel's introductory note, is published in Rogge, 'Waldenzen–moord van 1655', p. 341; 'Dese ingesloten brief […] is mij behandicht door publique handt en onder sonderlinge recommendatie, dat soowel de Brief als d'afschriften […] ten ernstichsten secreet mogen werden gehouden, want haer Ho. Mo. uit den inhoudt genouchsaem sullen gelieven te bemercken, dat soodanigen secreet teenemael noodich sij, ten waere de arme luyden souden werden geprostitueert tot uiterste ruïne ende miserien'.

[232] Rogge, 'Waldenzen–moord van 1655', pp. 342–343.

publication. Finally, in early 1656, almost a year after the massacre, the Waldensians received their money, which was transferred via the consistory of Geneva.[233]

Public Diplomacy

Clearly, keeping up the appearance of passive obedience while at the same time asking foreign governments for aid was a tricky thing to do, especially if the governments in question rashly published your pleas. There were no laws in early modern Europe, however, that forbade subjects communicating with foreigners per se. On the contrary, Francisco de Vitoria and Hugo Grotius had both argued that humans had a natural right to communication beyond the polity in which they lived.[234] To a considerable extent, every state's economic well-being depended on the freedom of communicating with people across political borders. This meant that then, as today, there was always a grey area between 'innocent' cross-border communication—which might advertently or inadvertently draw the attention of another country's government—and illegal pleas for foreign intervention. Resistance theorists generally did not really touch upon the lawfulness of international communication. Grotius stressed that states did not have to wait for requests for help to intervene against tyranny.[235] 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—he 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. Grotius did argue that in times of civil war, when a people's loyalties are equally divided, both sides had a 'right of legation', the right to send and receive envoys.[236] Yet the Waldensians were but a small minority within Savoy and would always remain far from abjuring their sovereign.

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[233] H. Rogge, 'Vervolging der Waldenzen in 1655 en 1656', *Nederlandsch archief voor kerkgeschiedenis* 2 (1903), pp. 152–155.
[234] A. Pagden, 'Human rights, natural rights, and Europe's imperial legacy', *Political Theory* 31–2 (2003), pp. 184–188.
[235] 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.
[236] T. Hampton, *Fictions of embassy. Literature and diplomacy in early modern Europe* (Ithaca, NY and London, 2009), p. 121.

In Roman law, violating the honor or rule of one's sovereign through libel was an act of lèse-majesté.[237] 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 we will see in Chapter 5—that claimed to speak with the official voice of the Waldensians' leadership. Moreover, they were published far away in cities like Amsterdam, which enhanced, in the words of Barbara Tralster, the dispersal of authorship.[238] 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, these 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 religious and secular Waldensian leaders in an assembly and convinced them to gather eyewitness accounts and make their stories public.

Having studied in Geneva, Léger was probably a well-connected man. Moreover, his uncle, Antoine Léger, had served as chaplain to Cornelis Haga, Dutch ambassador to Istanbul, for eight years.[239] These family credentials must have helped Léger to get appointed to travel north and advocate the Waldensian cause across Europe. Interestingly, the assembly provided the minister with a letter of credence, an object of accreditation which ambassadors carried with them as a sign that they represented their sovereign.[240] This indicates that Léger's mission

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[237] K. Härter, 'Political crime in early modern Europe. Assassination, legal responses, and popular print media', *European Journal of Criminology* 11–2 (2014), p. 149.
[238] M. North, 'Anonymity in early modern manuscript culture. Finding a purposeful convention in a ubiquitous condition', in J. Starner and B. Tralster (eds.), *Anonymity in early modern England. 'What's in a name?'* (Abingdon, 2011), pp. 25–28.
[239] L. De Michelis, 'Léger, Jéan', in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 64 (2005).
[240] Léger, *Histoire générale*, vol. 2, p. 365; for some information on early modern letters of credence, which as objects of diplomatic practice desperately require more historical investigation, see W.J. Roosen, *The age of Louis XIV. The rise of modern diplomacy* (Cambridge, 1976), pp. 100–101.

was indeed regarded as a form of diplomacy, despite the risks it entailed of him being judged a rebel; to refer to Grotius' *De jure belli ac pacis* once more, only sovereign actors were entitled to dispatch ambassadors, as this proved their supreme power.[241]

In his book on the persecutions, the *Histoire générale des églises evangeliques des vallées de Piemont*, published in Leiden in 1669 by the Huguenot refugee Jean Baptiste le Carpentier, Léger recounts his wanderings to disseminate the story of the massacre across Europe.[242] Initially, he hoped to have the manuscript published in Geneva, but the canton's authorities forbade it.[243] Probably they did not want to worsen the political situation in the Swiss Confederation, where religious tension was mounting between the Protestant and Catholic cantons—who, in fact, suspected each other of fomenting the crisis in Piedmont.[244] Léger therefore set course to Paris, where he met with the Dutch ambassador Willem 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.[245] The relationship between Léger and Boreel is a striking example of the indirect and, above all, unofficial relations non-state political actors such as the Waldensians had with other states. They were both ambassadors—although the latter was, of course, not universally recognized as such. But the Dutch diplomat seems to have helped the minister on his own account. He undoubtedly had the welfare of the United Provinces in the back of his mind, but he did not, in this case, act directly on the States General's behalf. Accordingly, Boreel does not mention his dealings with Léger in his correspondence with De Witt.

Léger's first account, the *Recit veritable de ce qui est arrive depuis peu aux vallées de Piémont* (*True story of what has recently happened in the valleys of Piedmont*), was first published anonymously at an unknown location.[246] It was translated into Dutch in The Hague as *Waerachtich verhael van*

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[241] B. Stollberg–Rillinger, 'State and political history in a culturalist perspective', in A. Flüchter and S. Richters (eds.), *Structures on the move. Technologies of governance in transcultural encounter* (New York, 2012), p. 52.
[242] Léger's work shares many similarities with Morland's account. See D. Tron, 'Jean Léger e la storiografia valdese del Seicento', *Bolletino della Società di studi valdesi* 172 (1993), pp. 82–90.
[243] Léger, *Histoire générale*, vol 2., pp. 365–366.
[244] This tension would ultimately result in the First Villmergen War (1656). See W. Oechsli, *History of Switzerland 1499–1914* (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 216–221.
[245] Léger, *Histoire générale*, vol 2., pp. 365–367.
[246] Anonymous, *Recit veritable de ce qui est arrive depuis peu aux vallées de Piémont* (s.l. 1655); Balmas and Zardini Lana have identified five different editions of the French edition of the *Recit veritable*; Balmas and Zardini Lana, *Vera*

't gene eenigen tijdt herwaerts inde valeyen van Piemont is voor-ghevallen.[247] The *Recit veritable* was soon followed by the aforementioned *Relation véritable*, a similar but more extensive narration of the events, which was translated into Dutch as *Waerachtich verhael van 't gene gepasseert is in de vervolgingen ende moorderyen, aen de gereformeerde kercken in Piemont*.[248] Together, the *Recit* and the *Relation* provided the basic narrative of the persecution, which subsequent pamphlets drew from.[249]

The arguments raised in these two pamphlets will be extensively discussed in Chapter 2. For now, it 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 make no mention of a (military) leadership, resistance, or skirmishes. As such, the rhetoric of these works starkly differs from manifestos, through the publication of which non-state actors clearly postulated themselves as political actors.[250] In fact, although Léger is in all likelihood the author of the *Recit veritable* and the *Relation veritable*, he does not portray himself as one of the Waldensian victims. Instead, he emphasizes that he recounts what he has heard about the massacre 'from those who experienced this disastrous desolation'.[251] The works do make a direct appeal to their readership, albeit of a rather innocent sort; they ask all believers to support the victims through prayer and charity. They are, however, not presented mainly as pleas, but as truthful

relazione, pp. 435–437; Enea Balmas and Grazia Zardini Lana argue that the document is not from the hands of Léger, because he does not state that he is the author in his history. They also claim that Léger arrived in Paris too late to have written this work. However, I argue that the omission of his name likely springs from a genre–typical convention. Moreover, Léger does argue that the dissemination of his work was all the more necessary because the massacre had already been discussed in a manner unfavorable for the Waldensians in the *Gazette de France* on 8 May 1655. Corresponding with this concern, the *Recit veritable* alludes to the *Gazette*. In this light, I believe it is likely that Léger is indeed the author of the work; Balmas and Zardini Lana, *Vera relazione*, pp. 95–96.

[247] Anonymous, *Waerachtich verhael van 't gene eenigen tijdt herwaerts inde Valeyen van Piemont is voor-ghevallen* (The Hague 1655), pflt 7631.

[248] Anonymous, *Waerachtich verhael van 't gene gepasseert is in de vervolgingen ende noorderyen, aen de gereformeerde kercken inde valeyen van Piemont dit iaer 1655 geschiet* (The Hague 1655), pflt 7630.

[249] See, for instance, Anonymous, *Rechte beschryvingh van de wreede vervolgingh en schrickelijke moordt, aende Vaudoisen in Piedmont geaen in 't jaer 1655* (Amsterdam, 1655).

[250] A. Tischer, *Offizielle Kriegsbegründungen in der Frühen Neuzeit. Herrscherkommunikation in Europa zwischen Souveränität und korporativem Selbstverständnis*, Herrschaft und Systemen in der Frühen Neuzeit 12 (Berlin, 2012), pp. 25–26.

[251] '[…] de ceux qui se sont rencontrés dans cette funeste desolation'; Anonymous, *Relation veritable*, p. 1.

accounts of what had happened in Piedmont. Coupling this too closely to requests for political aid and intervention would only harm the image of passive obedience.

This did not, of course, mean that the duke could only stand by as this narrative gathered pace, although, initially, this was more or less what he did. One government-ordained pamphlet, *La conversione di quaranta heretici*, had been published in Turin in May, around the same time as the publication of the *Recit veritable* and the *Relation veritable*, but the work dealt exclusively with the glorious conversion to Catholicism of forty captured Waldensians [Fig. 3]. It gives a lengthy description of how these converts-to-be were paraded through the streets of Turin, past the city's main churches, cheered by trumpets and thousands of people lining the sides of the physical path to their conversion.[252] In other words, the pamphlet firmly framed events within the normative principle of religion. Where these recent converts had come from and how they had ended up in a Turin prison in the first place remained undiscussed. The fact that Pianezza presided over the celebration was the only implicit reminder that this was, in fact, the epilogue to a military campaign.[253]

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 Lucerne valley and they have sent relations of the executions done by [the duchess's] troops […] and they present them as so horrible, one has never seen an emotion quite like that false pity excited in the minds of the Huguenots.[254]

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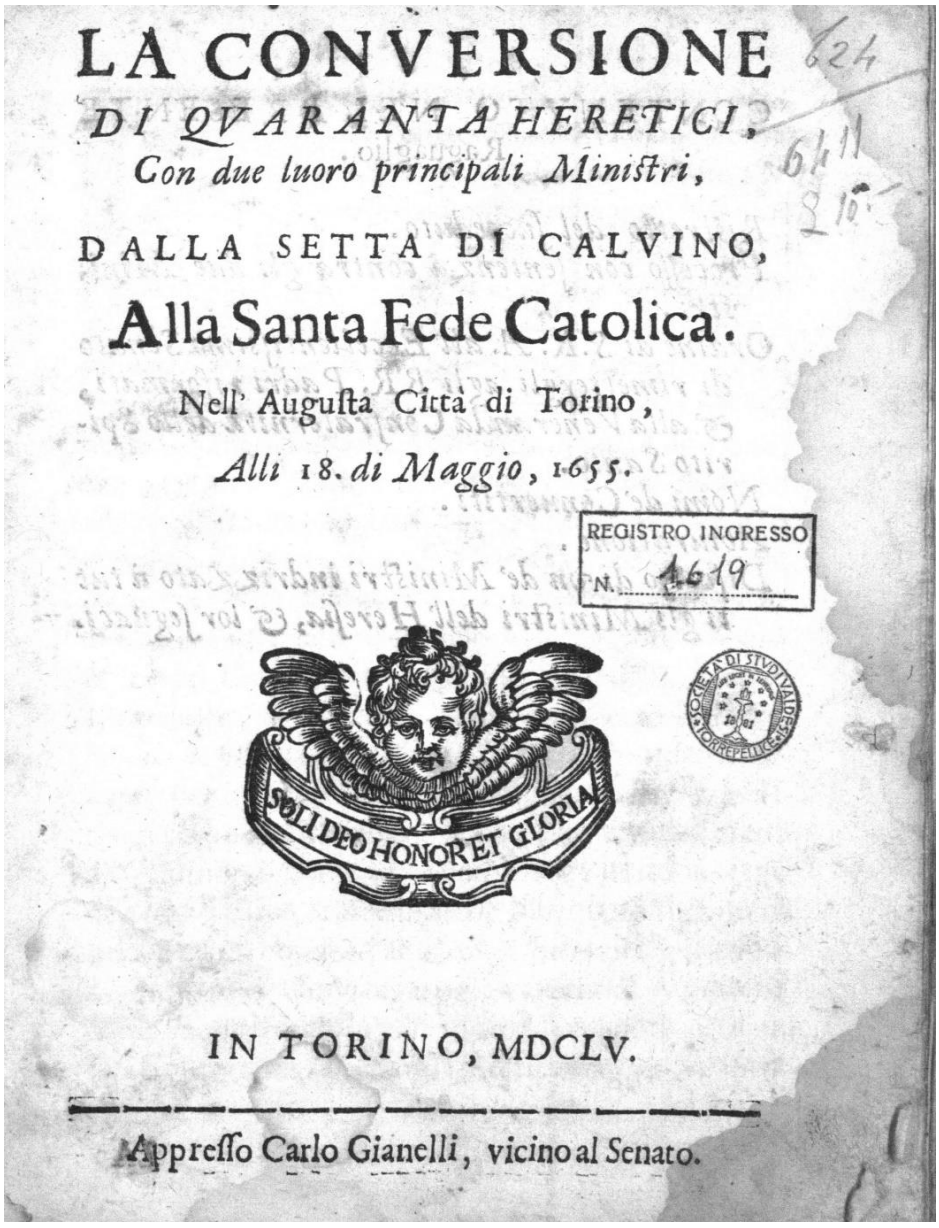
[252] Anonymous, *La conversione di quaranta heretici, con le due luoro principali ministry, dalla seta di Calvino, alla Santa Fede Catolica, alla 18 di Maggio 1655* (Turin, 1655).

[253] Ibid.

[254] '[...] ne saurait croire la malice de vos rebelles de la vallée de Luserne et ont envoyè en Bèarne en Bretagne et à toutes leurs eglises prètendues de ce royaume les relations de l'exècution que vos troupes ont faire dans leurs pays, et ils la representent si horrible, qu'on n'a jamais vu d'emotion pareille à celle qu'une fausse pitié a excite dans les esprits des huguenots'; Claretta, *Storia del regno*, vol. 1, p. 137; Vallé de Luserne is the former name for the Val Pellice.

Bailly warned Turin that a Huguenot nobleman from Bretagne had told him that his people were waiting to 'take up arms and organize themselves'.[255] He concluded with the claim made by the nuncio at Louis XIV's court that 'never had anything made such a noise throughout the


LA CONVERSIONE
DI QVARANTA HERETICI,
Con due luoro principali Ministri,
DALLA SETTA DI CALVINO,
Alla Santa Fede Catolica.
Nell' Augusta Città di Torino,
Alli 18. di Maggio, 1655.
REGISTRO INGRESSO
N. 1619
SOLI DEO HONOR ET GLORIA
IN TORINO, MDCLV.
Appresso Carlo Gianelli, vicino al Senato.

3. *La conversione di quaranta heretici con due luoro principali ministri, dalla setta di Calvino, alla santa fede catolica* (Turin 1655). Resource: Fondazione Centro Culturale Valdese, Torre Pellice.

[255] '[…] et me dit que ceux de sa créance jettaient feu et flammes et n'attendaient sinon de se mettre sous les armes et de se ranger'; ibid.

north like this'.[256] Savoy's ambassador in Paris, the Abbot of Agliè, began to exhort the court to engage in the public discussion on 18 June, after having come across a Dutch publication, the *Wreede vervolginge en schrickelijcke moordt aende Vaudoisen in Piedmont* (*Cruel persecution and terrible murder of the Waldensians in Piedmont*), about which he was severely worried.[257] 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 lowered himself to the position of a discussant rather than standing above the popular slander in cheap print. Moreover, we must in 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 counterstrategy.

Persuaded by the foreign reports, however, the court decided to make an official public statement, aimed at an international public with translations into Latin and French.[258] The *Relatione de' successi seguiti nella Valle di Luserna* (*Account of what happened in the valley of Luzern*) was probably written by the Marquis of Pianezza himself and was published in mid-July.[259] It reiterated that after the Treaty of Gastaldo the Waldensians had written letters 'to some foreign states, desiring their counsel on what do to in this matter'.[260] According to the statement, they had written to the Reformed Church in Geneva, enclosing letters destined for the city's governors. The ministers advised the Waldensians to keep pleading with the duke and concluded that 'if after all, they could obtain nothing, they should nevertheless obey their sovereign'.[261] Moreover, they had refused to deliver the letters to the city's magistrates 'lest it should redound to their prejudice'.[262] All this, the pamphlet argues, bears witness to the fact that they were dealing with an act of rebellion, even in the eyes of Calvinists.[263] The apology also discredits the Waldensians' search for public attention:

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[256] '[…] et monsieur le none a dit à un de nos péres que jamais chose n'avait fait tant de bruit dans tout le Septentrion que celle ci'; ibid.
[257] Ibid. p. 135; the *Wreede vervolginge* will be discussed at length in Chapter 2.
[258] Balmas and Zardini Lana, *Vera relazione*, p. 169; Claretta, *Storia del regno*, vol. 1, p. 135. For the Italian original as well as an English translation of this pamphlet see Morland, *History of the Evangelical churches*, pp. 385–403.
[259] Balmas and Zardini Lana, *Vera relazione*, p. 173.
[260] '[…] scriffero ad alcuni Stati stranieri, chiamando loro Consiglio di ciò, che dovessero fare in questo caso'; Morland, *History of the Evangelical churches*, p. 389.
[261] '[…] ma alla fine se non potevano ottenre cos'alcuna, ubbidissero al loro Sovrano'; ibid.
[262] '[…] per non mettergli in colpa'; ibid.
[263] Ibid., pp. 389–390.

> They now think to 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.[264]

Three hundred copies of the pamphlet were made, which Savoy's ambassadors distributed among 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 abbot by arguing that only those who fail to keep agreements use propaganda.[265] If he wanted to persuade, Boreel concluded, the abbot would need to back up his stories with documents and good testimonies.[266]

There is no evidence that the *Relatione de' successi* ever circulated in the United Provinces. The court of Turin had probably not taken the initiative to provide a Dutch translation. Perhaps they had hoped that the document would be picked up in Paris and spread northwards in the same manner as the pro-Waldensian pamphlets had. However, a few weeks after the publication of the *Relatione de' successi*, the United Provinces saw the publication of another pro-Savoyard pamphlet, the *Manifest of verhael van het bedrijf der Vaudoisen* (*Manifesto or story about the business of the Waldensians*). The *Manifest* stands out as the only known printed pro-Savoyard attack on the Waldensians that was not orchestrated by the court of Turin. It was published in August by an unidentified Catholic from Amsterdam with help from Bailly—who had provided him with sources—and was intended as a response to the *Wreede vervolginge*.[267] The *Manifest of verhael* had probably been devised for a Catholic public; the sneers made about the Reformed faith made it unlikely that it would convince a Reformed audience of the Savoyard case. The pamphlet consists of two translated letters and a general treatise on the events; the first letter is anonymous and was allegedly sent from Paris on 31 July 1655. The other claimed to have been written by Christine Marie of Savoy. Interestingly, the *Manifest of verhael* attacks

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[264] 'Pensino di disseminare quei strain racconti, che vanno facendo per eccitar, non solo comiseratione del loro tanto meritato castigo, ma sinistro concetto contro chi l'hà loro giustamente, e moderatamente stabilito'; ibid., p. 404.
[265] Claretta, *Storia del Regno*, vol. 3, p. 136.
[266] Ibid.
[267] 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.

the Waldensians' publicity campaign by pointing out what disruptive effect it had 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 gutters, throwing it in the faces of their fellow citizens, neighbors, friends, yes, relatives, even though they know so little about a duke of Savoy, of Waldensians, of a valley of Lucerna 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.[268]

No matter what the truth of the matter may have been, so the argument goes, it was not something which common people living in foreign lands should form an opinion on the first place, especially when this opinion-making implied accusations toward a sovereign prince. According to the manifesto, the Waldensians had spread lies about being maltreated by the archduke in order 'to excite the tempers of foreign princes and countries in helping the Waldensians, while belittling his Royal Excellence [the Duke of Savoy] and slandering his procedures'.[269] It is worth noting that the *Manifest of verhael* does not present the Waldensian pamphlets as upsetting the relation between ruler and ruled, as the letters written to foreign governments were perceived to have done. Instead, they are presented as upsetting the civic harmony of the country in which they circulated. Despite the prevalence of print media in the Dutch Republic, the idea that pamphlets were potentially hazardous to society was widespread.[270] Pamphlets invited people to form an opinion on things they were not supposed to have an opinion about, making them potential sources of civic unrest. By their polemical nature, pamphlets were easily regarded as being filled with lies that upset the public order.

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[268] 'Alle die opgheraepte tijdingen hebben veroorsaeckt een grooten overloop van gal / inde vroome gemoederen der eenvoudigen / de welcke andersints te samen levende in vrede / liefde en burgelijcke eendracht / onaengesien wat religie zy belijden / bejegenen tegenwoordich malkanderen met woorden vol vier en vlam / en opnemende dese ghepronckte logens / als slijck uyt de goote / die werpen in't aensicht van hunne mede–burgers / Buren / vrienden / ja verwanten / schoon zy meerendeels soo weynich weten te spreecken van een Hartoch van Savoyen, van Vaudoisen van een Valleye van Lucerna &c. […] of de ghemeene man schuldich was te verantwoorden wat Coningen en Princen bedrijven / inde landen daer zy ghebieden'; Anonymous, *Manifest, of verhael van het bedrijf der Vaudoisen, tegens syne coninckklijcke den hertoch van Sauoye* (1655), pflt 7627.

[269] '[...] om de gemoederen van uytheemsche Princen en Landen te bewegen tot bystant der Vaudoisen / kleynachtinge van sijn Con. Hoocheyt en lasteringe van sijne proceduren'; ibid.

[270] 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.

There were laws, repeatedly issued by the Councils of Holland, Zeeland, and Friesland, that forbade the publication of 'seditious and defamatory pamphlets'.[271]

Students of Dutch publicity have often pointed to the limited enforcement of such prohibitions.[272] Yet the fact that the *Manifest of verhael* refers to civic unrest to defame the Waldensian pamphlets suggests that these prohibitions reflected a norm. 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 printed media, a low move to which the other side could only respond, albeit reluctantly, by providing their own public answer.[273] The danger of sedition was most often associated with pamphlets reflecting on domestic politics. As discussed, pamphlets on foreign issues could also face censorship.[274] Such prohibitions, however, were usually aimed at ensuring the United Provinces' international relations remained stable—they were not concerned with domestic tranquility. The fact that the manifesto nevertheless points 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, a topic which will be explored in further detail in Chapter 2.

Conclusion

With the signing of the Westphalia treaties, Europe's mid-seventeenth-century diplomatic landscape had not suddenly turned into a realm exclusively inhabited by sovereign states. The Waldensians' pleas with foreign governments to further their cause show that non-state actors still found ways to engage in diplomacy. At the same time, we have seen that although the parameters of external 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 Dutch political solidarity. The persecuted also had to convince the Dutch

[271] 'seditieuse en lasterlijcke boeckjes'; cited from Harms, *Pamfletten en publieke opinie*, p. 151.
[272] See Introduction.
[273] Harms, *Pamfletten en publieke opinie*, pp. 51, 102.
[274] See Introduction.

authorities, who were willing to help persecuted Protestants but not rebels, that they respected the normative principle of sovereignty.

In order not to be accused of rebellion, the Waldensians thus had to, first, present themselves as passive victims rather than warriors and, second, raise attention for 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 of circumventing this political problem. General communication with the world abroad was not in and of itself an act of subversion. Printed media were thus deployed to draw the attention of foreign powers while at the same time maintaining an image of remaining loyal to one's sovereign. Moreover, by turning to the printing presses the Waldensians created a space of international observance, indirectly compelling the Savoyard authorities to internationally account for their deeds. They may have been deprived of official legation, but by using the printing presses they nevertheless had a firm grip on Europe's diplomacy, ultimately receiving ambassadorial missions from three different states to act on their behalf.

We cannot know wether the Waldensians would have managed to gather the support of the States General without publicity. What has become clear, however, is that foreign interest groups managed to advocate their cause in the Dutch public sphere and through this, encouraged the authorities to act on their behalf, and not without success. In other words, the Dutch not only publicly discussed the fate of the persecuted abroad, the Republic's public sphere was actively influenced by them. The normative principles in reference to which they justified their cause in their pamphlets, and how Dutch pamphleteers reacted to those arguments, will be investigated in the next chapter.