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

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Chapter 6

Between Eschatology and Enlightenment: Negotiating Bonds and Borders after the Tumult of Toruń (1724-26)

Not a dog in Aegypt would move his tongue against Israel,
if Israel were thus united.

- Charles Owen, *An alarm to Protestant princes and people* (1725)⁹⁰¹

Two weeks before Christmas 1724, burgomaster Johann Gottfried Rössner 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 climax of the tumult, an angry Lutheran crowd had stormed and vandalized the Jesuit school. After the riot, the Jesuits took proceedings against the city to the royal Assessorial Court—one of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth's three royal courts in Warsaw—which thereupon sent an all-Catholic research commission to the confessionally mixed city to investigate the matter.⁹⁰² The civic authorities were found guilty, and the verdict was confirmed by the Sejm, the Polish-Lithuanian parliament.

Toruń was occupied by royal troops to make sure that the sentences were carried out. Rössner was convicted for having forsaken his duties to keep the public peace, by having failed 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; their right hand, which they had used for their blasphemous acts, was chopped off before they were beheaded. Their bodies were burned before the city walls. The city's Lutheran community was

⁹⁰¹ Anonymous [C. Owen], *An alarm to Protestant princes and people, who are all struck at in the Popish cruelties at Thorn and other barbarous executions abroad* (Dublin, 1725), p. 32.

⁹⁰² D. Stone, *The Polish-Lithuanian state, 1386-1795* (Seattle, 2001), p. 188.

also punished collectively; they had to hand over their main church to the Benedictines and the city government, hitherto fully Lutheran, was to become fifty percent Catholic. Moreover, the city had to pay a large sum of money to the Jesuits for the damage caused to their school.⁹⁰³

That this local riot turned into a matter of national concern was the result of clever lobbying. Looking for justice, Toruń's Jesuits had drawn up an official account of events in Latin, which alleged that the magistrates had been responsible for the iconoclasm. This document was disseminated among the Polish nobility shortly after the riot. Through their mediation, the case could be taken higher up, to the predominantly Catholic Assessorial Court. The Toruń authorities subsequently turned it into a matter of international concern by publishing an official 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 Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth granted Royal Prussia a significant degree of self-government and autonomy from the rest of the realm. At the time of the tumult, however, the cities had been engaged in a long struggle to protect their historical privileges against the centralizing policies of the Polish monarchy.⁹⁰⁴ Neighboring Brandenburg-Prussia had long served as an informal protector to the Royal Prussian cities, for which they had interceded with the Polish-Lithuanian government on numerous occasions.⁹⁰⁵

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 Great Britain, the the Holy Roman Empire, and the United Provinces.⁹⁰⁶ Europe's main Protestant governments interceded. As a cause célèbre, the Tumult of Toruń became a milestone in the changing perception of Poland among Western Europeans.⁹⁰⁷ Once famed

⁹⁰³ For a detailed reconstruction of the tumult see F. Jacobi, *Das Thorner Blutgericht 1724* (Halle, 1896).

⁹⁰⁴ 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).

⁹⁰⁵ G. Rhode, *Brandenburg–Preussen und die Protestanten in Polen 1640–1740. Ein Jahrbuch preussischer Schutzpolitik für eine unterdrückte Minderheit* (Leipzig, 1941).

⁹⁰⁶ For a comprehensive, albeit not exhaustive, overview of contemporary publications about Toruń see H. Baranowski, *Bibliografia miasta Torunia* (Poznań, 1972).

⁹⁰⁷ See B. Elzbieta 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, 2002), pp. 75–76.

for their religious forbearance, the Poles now came to be seen as a barbaric, backward, and bigoted nation, serving as a negative example in Enlightenment debates on toleration. In 1772, for instance, Voltaire referred to the executions in Toruń in his praise for the partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth by Prussia, Austria, and Russia, which the philosopher regarded as a decisive victory for religious tolerance.⁹⁰⁸ The enduring negative imprint Toruń made on the image of Poland and the Poles helps explain why the episode remained the subject of a historiographical trench war for more than two centuries. This was principally fought out between German scholars, who maintained that a massacre had taken place, and their Polish colleagues, who insisted that the executions were a legal, if not just, response by the central government to a riot.⁹⁰⁹

The nadir of this politicized historiography came in 1939, when Gotthold Rhode defended his dissertation in Breslau (now Wrocław) on the eve of the German invasion of Poland. 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’.⁹¹⁰ After his defense the author volunteered to work as a translator, a role in which he remained for the remainder of the war.⁹¹¹ The most detailed study of Prussian intercession up to today thus bears a Nazi stamp—which was quite literally the case in the copy that I consulted in Mainz.

In 1982, Rhode revisited the Tumult of Toruń through the lens of the history of mentalities. He concluded that the event had such an unusual echo and led to a European crisis not because of the severity of the verdict, but because in the 1720s, ‘the European “Zeitgeist” had turned away from the world of fanatical religious wars and steered toward the Enlightenment’.⁹¹²

⁹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 77.

⁹⁰⁹ 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.

⁹¹⁰ C. Motsch, *Grenzgesellschaft und frühmoderner Staat. Die Starostei Drahim zwischen Hinterpommern, der Neumark und Großpolen (1575–1895)* (Göttingen, 2011), p. 30.

⁹¹¹ E. Eckert, *Zwischen Ostforschung und Osteuropahistorie. Zur Biographie des Historikers Gotthold Rhode (1916–1990)* (Osnabrück, 2012).

⁹¹² 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.

Recent studies of contemporary European reactions to the crackdown, which strongly focus on the legitimization of foreign intervention, argue differently. Taking an IR realist approach, Martin Schulze Wessel contends that foreign policy toward Toruń was dictated by reason of state;⁹¹³ the British authorities used the executions to foster anti-Catholic consensus against the Jacobites at home, whereas the Prussian Crown employed them to justify its imperialist ambitions in Poland.⁹¹⁴ Schulze Wessel acknowledges that print media were important for policy makers to publicly legitimize their actions, but he makes a clear distinction between the motivation for and justification of foreign policy.⁹¹⁵ Andrew Thompson positions himself against IR realist approaches by analyzing British diplomatic engagement with Toruń as guided by the desire to defend the ‘Protestant interest’, as contemporaries perceived it as general attack of Protestant by Catholics.⁹¹⁶ Thompson makes a distinction between the languages used by the English press commenting on the persecutions, and the English office holders who were engaged with the matter. Judging from the presented examples, English pamphlets framed the Tumult within the normative principles of confessional solidarity and confessional truth.⁹¹⁷ Britain’s diplomats, in turn, wanted to protect Protestantism without estranging its Catholic allies. They therefore framed their struggle as ‘moderates’ against ‘narrow-minded zealots’, thereby dissociating their endeavors from religious warfare.⁹¹⁸ They thus refrained from using a language of confessional truth. Instead, they justified their endeavors within the less antagonistic normative language of confessional solidarity. As we have seen throughout this study, it is important to differentiate between these two languages and, although he does not really conceptualize it, Thompson shows himself aware of this it. At the same time, his main focus is on foreign policy, he appears to present it as all part of the same ‘Protestant interest’ ideology, summarizing that ‘the language of confession [...] was never far from the surface’.⁹¹⁹

⁹¹³ For IR realism see Introduction.

⁹¹⁴ Schulze Wessel, ‘Religiöse Intoleranz’, p. 73.

⁹¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 71–72. See also M. Schulze Wessel, ‘Die Bedeutung “europäischer Öffentlichkeit” für die transnationale Kommunikation religiöser Minderheiten im 18. Jahrhundert’, in A. Ranft (ed.), *Der Hoftag in Quedlinburg 973. Von den historischen Wurzeln zum Neuen Europa* (Berlin, 2006), pp. 163–173.

⁹¹⁶ See Introduction.

⁹¹⁷ Thompson, *Britain, Hanover*, pp. 110–114.

⁹¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 118.

⁹¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 120.

In an insightful analysis of Europe's diplomatic reactions, Patrick Milton combines these two perspectives. He acknowledges the importance of analyzing normative political discourse as 'arguments made in public would have been chosen to correspond to prevailing values and mindsets'.⁹²⁰ Milton agrees with Thompson that Europe's Protestant political centers mainly looked at Toruń as proof that Protestant rights in the empire and abroad were threatened.⁹²¹ He stresses, however, that the maxim that fellow Protestants should be protected was only propagated when it converged with geopolitical interests.⁹²² Because international developments ultimately made these principles incommensurable an intervention did not take place, which demonstrates that power-political calculation was ultimately dominant.⁹²³ In other words, confessional solidarity was important, but reason of state was decisive.

Reminiscent of Habermas' ideal type of the premodern representative *Öffentlichkeit*, Schulze Wessel, Thompson, and Milton all treat opinionating print media as closely interwoven with the respective political centers.⁹²⁴ Indeed, Milton characterizes the public sphere 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'.⁹²⁵ Karin Friedrich has similarly argued that 'Brandenburg-Prussia's efficient propaganda machine made sure that [Toruń] was not forgotten'.⁹²⁶ As we have seen throughout this study, printed opinion surrounding persecutions did indeed often originate close to political centers. However, it has become clear throughout the preceding chapters that regarding the press only as a tool of the government fails to do justice to the complex relation between pamphlets and politics.

The aim of this chapter is therefore twofold. First of all, it will test whether the interceding governments indeed dominated publicity for Toruń by focusing on the Dutch Republic, which only interceded for Toruń in September, nine months after several Protestant

⁹²⁰ 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), p. 408.

⁹²¹ Ibid., p. 419.

⁹²² Ibid., p. 417.

⁹²³ Ibid., p. 426.

⁹²⁴ See Introduction.

⁹²⁵ Milton, 'Debates on intervention', p. 408.

⁹²⁶ K. Friedrich, *The other Prussia. Royal Prussia, Poland, and liberty, 1569-1772* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 187.

monarch began to pressure Poland-Lithuania.⁹²⁷ If Europe's Protestant governments were indeed mainly responsible for turning Toruń into a cause célèbre for a limited group of stakeholders, how integrated, or even concerted, was the publicity they generated? And to what extent did it reach the Dutch Republic? In the previous chapters, we have seen that publicity for religious persecution could, depending on the political circumstances, remain fundamentally transnational or go into a distinct domestic direction. This 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. I will argue that printed news media discussed the event to tackle a whole range of religio-political issues in different parts of Europe, of which justifying official foreign policy was just one. Secondly, this chapter will examine whether secular normative principles indeed gained ground, as Rhode suggested, as Europe progressed in its century of Enlightenment.

The Tumult

Before we unravel the stream of pamphlets concerning Toruń, it is important to provide some context about the history of Poland-Lithuania and its position in Europe. The Tumult of Toruń has mostly been studied as an isolated case, but should be understood within the larger development of 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, Poland-Lithuania made somewhat of a reverse move. The realm had once been renowned in Europe for its religious coexistence, exemplified by the 1573 Warsaw Confederation, which extended religious tolerance to all inhabitants of the Commonwealth.⁹²⁸ In course of the seventeenth century, however, new narratives emerged, which firmly linked being part of the

⁹²⁷ See footnote 935.

⁹²⁸ It remained unspecified whether this included anyone who did not belong to the *szlachta*; M. Müller, 'Toleration in Eastern Europe. The dissident question in eighteenth-century Poland-Lithuania', in O. Grell and R. Porter (eds.), *Toleration in Enlightenment Europe* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 218.

szlachta, the large noble class that dominated Polish politics, with Catholicism.⁹²⁹ Catholic Poles started to claim back churches that had been ceded to Lutherans, while the Sejm forbade Catholics to convert and decided that Protestants could no longer be ennobled.⁹³⁰ 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—known as the Deluge—during the Second Northern War (1655–60) were remembered as attacks not only on Poland but also on Catholicism.⁹³¹ 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 need to safeguard sovereignty against foreign interference through a fifth column.⁹³²

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 fifty percent of the city’s population.⁹³³ Since the Swedish occupation of the city during the Great Northern War (1700–21) especially, religious tensions had been high within the city.⁹³⁴

On 16 July 1724, a Catholic procession became the scene of a confrontation between a Jesuit student and a number of Lutheran onlookers. Different sources say different things about the precise cause of the confrontation; some argued that a Lutheran boy refused to take

⁹²⁹ M. Teter, *Jews and heretics in Catholic Poland. A beleaguered church in the post-Reformation era* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 52–58.

⁹³⁰ B. Porter, ‘The Catholic nation. Religion, identity, and the narratives of Polish history’, *Slavic and East European Journal* 45–2 (2001), p. 292.

⁹³¹ Teter, *Jews and heretics*, p. 53.

⁹³² M. 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 Mühlhölzer*, vol. 5 (Weimar, Cologne, and Vienna, 1999), pp. 456–457; see also Müller, ‘Toleration in Eastern Europe’, pp. 212–229.

⁹³³ S. Salmonowicz, ‘The Toruń Uproar of 1724’, *Acta Poloniae Historica* 47 (1983), pp. 69–70; M. Thomsen, ‘Das Betrübt 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.

⁹³⁴ Salmonowicz, ‘The Toruń Uproar’, 70.

off his hat as an image of the Virgin Mary passed by, leading an angry Jesuit student, named Lisiecki, to pull it off; in some versions several Lutheran boys were slapped by the student; yet other sources claim that the Lutherans in question were adults who shouted insults at the image. The classic question of ‘who started it’ would be hotly debated among German and Polish historians over the following two centuries, but it is probably safe to say that we will never really know.

After the procession, the conflict escalated into a skirmish between Lutheran citizens and Jesuit students, which led to the arrest of Lisiecki by the city guard. The Jesuits responded by taking a Lutheran student prisoner, which incited an angry Lutheran crowd to march to the Jesuit school and demand the hostage be freed. When some people in the crowd started throwing stones through the windows the intimidated Jesuits responded by shooting into the air—other stories claim they shot at the crowd. Shortly after, the crowd broke into the school and vandalized it. According to the Jesuits, the school suffered targeted acts of iconoclasm, as Lutheran citizens set fire to a pile of broken images on the square in front of it. Finally, the royal guard, which was stationed in Toruń, managed to quell the riot and disperse the crowd.⁹³⁵

Royal Public Diplomacy

In December 1724 the kings of England, 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 the Protestant religion in all of Poland-Lithuania was under threat.⁹³⁶ Since the executions had not yet been carried out, the Protestant kings thereupon sent letters of intercession to August II of Poland, insisting to reverse the death sentences; later, they were pleading 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

⁹³⁵ Jacobi, *Thorner Blutgericht*.

⁹³⁶ 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 August II of Poland. This time, they did invite the States General to get involved: Letter from ambassador Carel Rumpf to the States General, 14 August 1725, Archieven van de legaties in Zweden, Pruisen, Polen en Saksen, 1674–1810 1.02.07, Nationaal Archief, The Hague.

not only as diplomatic pressure, but also as an official public stance on the issue by the respective courts.⁹³⁷

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 [Fig. 11].⁹³⁸ The letters became one of the most important sources for other printed news media about Toruń, finding their way into 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, but 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 9 January 1725 illustrates this well.⁹³⁹ In this letter, the Prussian king deplored that the 'Polish side' hastened the execution, thereby showing 'a public contempt for [our] intercessions in front of the entire world'.⁹⁴⁰ George I of Britain actively tried to manage the public effect of his letter, only allowing it to be published after he had received a response from August II of Poland.⁹⁴¹ August II, in turn, asked George I to recall his envoy Edward Finch, after the ambassador's plea with the Evangelical Corps in Regensburg

⁹³⁷ On 6 February 1745, Carel van 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, 6 February 1725, *Archieven van de legaties in Zweden, Pruisen, Polen en Saksen, 1674–1810* 1.02.07, Nationaal Archief, The Hague; the *Amsterdamse Courant* reports from London that George I would only allow his letter to August II of Poland to be published after he received a response, confirming that the letter was intended to have a public second life: *Amsterdamse Courant*, 17 February 1725, from London 9 February 1725.

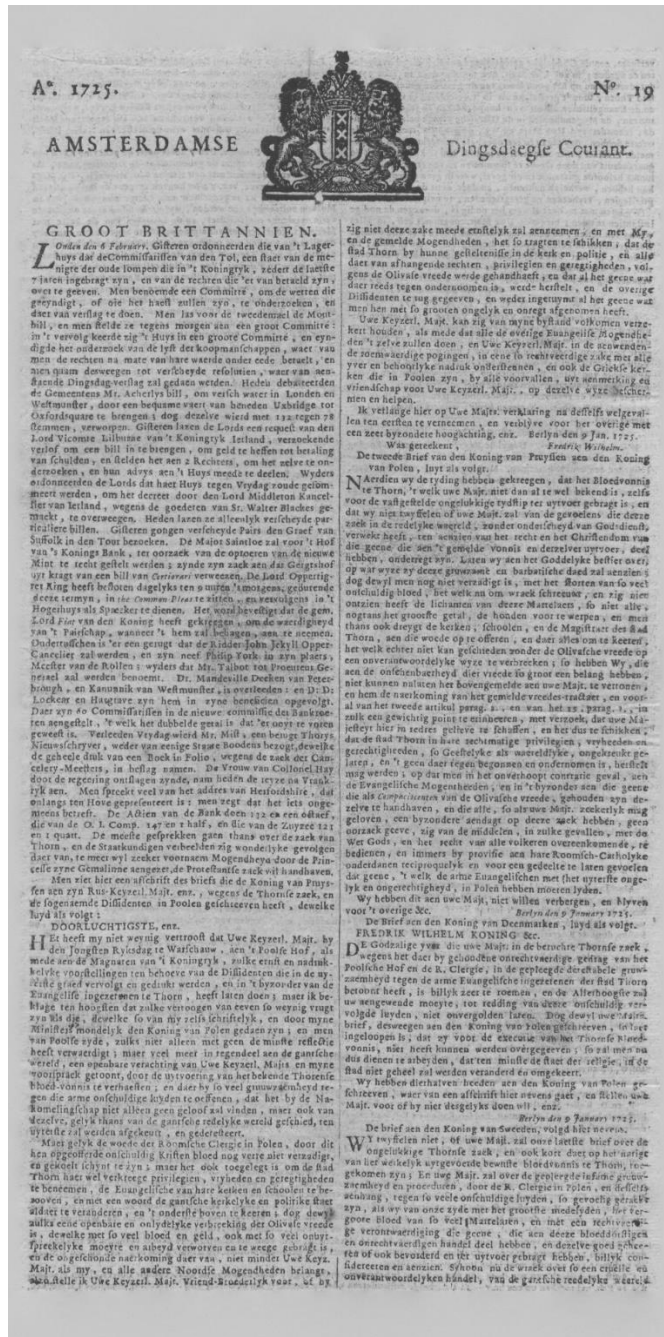
⁹³⁸ See, for instance, *Amsterdamse Courant*, 6 January 1725, 13 February 1725; *'s Gravenhaegse Courant*, 17 January 1725; *Leydse Courant*, 12 February 1725.

⁹³⁹ It is not clear whether the czar would ever come to read it as he died on 8 February.

⁹⁴⁰ '[...] aen de gantsche wereld, een openbare verachtig [...] [onze] voorspraek getoont'; letter from Frederick William I of Brandenburg–Prussia to Peter the I of Russia, 9 January 1725, quote taken from Dutch translation (original in Latin) in the *Amsterdamse Courant*, 13 February 1725.

⁹⁴¹ *Amsterdamse Courant*, 17 February 1725.

concerning Toruń had been published. Polish notables regarded the plea as a public insult to their nation and demanded the ambassador's resignation.⁹⁴²



11. *Amsterdamse Courant* with letters of intercession, 13 February 1725. Resource: Delpher.

⁹⁴² Copie de la lettre de mr. le genl. maj. de Schwerin à mgr. le Primas, 10 July 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. nr. 255, Nationaal Archief, The Hague.

Joint royal engagement in public diplomacy against a fellow king with whom they were not at war was not a common practice. In Chapter 3 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 sought a reputation as protector of the Huguenots, refused to issue a public condemnation when requested.⁹⁴³ 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 August 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 against [the Protestant] Religion'.⁹⁴⁴ In a second letter, sent shortly after the executions, Frederick William I admonished August II to take into consideration the international public perception of events:⁹⁴⁵

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.⁹⁴⁶

Taking a similar stance, Frederick IV of Denmark warned August II in an intercessionary letter not to let his reputation be clouded by allowing such executions within his realm.⁹⁴⁷ George I of Great Britain, in turn, emphasized to the Polish-Lithuanian king that not only he, but the entire English nation, was moved by the executions.⁹⁴⁸ In short, the interceding monarchs not only ensured, but also emphasized, that the whole world was watching and judging.

⁹⁴³ Dunan–Page, 'Dragonnade du Poitou', pp. 6–7.

⁹⁴⁴ Full transcription in [J.–F. Bion], *Getrouw en naauwkeurig verhaal van 't schrikkekyke Treurspel onlangs uytgevoert tot Thorn, in Pools Pruyssen, door het overleg en aanstoken der Jesuiten* (Amsterdam, 1725), p. 64.

⁹⁴⁵ The King of Sweden makes a similar reference to the 'reasonable world' in his letter to the King of Poland–Lithuania of 9 January 1725.

⁹⁴⁶ '[...] wy [...] twyffelen [niet] of uwe Majt. zal van de gevoelens, die deeze zaak in de redelyke waereld, zonder onderscheyd van Godsdienst, verwekt heeft, ten aenzien van het recht en het Christendom van die geene die aen 't [...] vonnis en derzelve uytvoer, deel hebben, onderregt zyn'; Letter from Frederick William I to August II, 9 January 1725; quoted from Dutch translation in the *Amsterdamse Courant*, 13 February 1725, report from London, 6 February 1725.

⁹⁴⁷ Letter from the King of Denmark to the King of Poland–Lithuania; Dutch translation of Latin original in 's *Gravenhaegse Courant*, 17 January 1725, report from Frankfurt, 11 January 1725.

⁹⁴⁸ Thompson, *Britain, Hanover*, p. 106.

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. This treaty, drawn up in 1660 between Sweden, Poland-Lithuania, Brandenburg-Prussia, and the emperor, ended the Second Northern War.⁹⁴⁹ The second article of the Peace of Oliva 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 legitimation for foreign intervention in the affair.

Simultaneously, Frederick William I offered a justification on the basis of divine and natural law, claiming that ‘in such cases it would conform to divine law and the natural right of peoples’ if the Protestant powers made August II’s ‘Catholic subjects feel some of what [...] the poor Evangelicals had to suffer’.⁹⁵⁰ As we have seen in Chapter 4, 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 normative principles of sovereignty, rule of law, and confessional solidarity. In his view, August II’s sovereignty did not take precedence over Frederick William I’s right to act upon the normative principle of confessional solidarity, which he regards as supported by the normative principle of natural law. Following his argument, the Prussian king was not permitted to breach the sovereignty of Poland–Lithuania, but he did have the right to punish the coreligionists of August 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. Ambassador Finch added the normative principle of humanity as a justification for George I of England to act, declaring that

⁹⁴⁹ See R. Frost, *After the Deluge. Poland–Lithuania and the Second Northern War, 1655–1660* (Cambridge, 1993); M. Evans, *Religious liberty and international law in Europe* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 55.

⁹⁵⁰ ‘[...] welche in dergleichen Fällen dem göttlichen Gesetze, und auch dem Recht aller Völker gemäß sind; ‘römischcatholischen Religion beypflichtenden Unterthanen einen Theil dessen wieder empfinden zulassen, was die arme Evangelische [...] leiden müsten’; Letter from Frederick William I to August II, 9 January 1725, in D. Giegert (ed.), *Der reisende Herbergeselle oder Reisebeschreibung eines auf der Wanderschaft begriffenen Weisgerbergesellens, nebst anhängtem wahrhaften und eigentlichen Verlauf des in Thorn ao. 1724 bey dem Jesuiterkloster entstandenen Tumults und darauf erfolgter Execution* (Legnica, 1725), pp. 243–244.

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!⁹⁵¹

A Cause Célèbre

Compared to the scope of the other instances of religious persecution investigated in this study, Toruń seems like a minor episode. Royal public diplomacy and the somewhat ambiguous religious interpretation of events provided by the Protestant monarchs were two factors that help us understand 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 August II with a request to intervene in his domestic politics, but few opinion makers identified him as the author of the persecutions. Toruń was first and foremost regarded as a Jesuit issue. The news was therefore premediated by a shared repertoire of anti-Jesuit literature, some of which has been examined in Chapter 4.

Sabine Pavone has aptly described the Society of Jesus as ‘marked by central coordination and secrecy on the one hand and engagement in politics and society on the other hand’.⁹⁵² This provided the basis for a widely shared narrative in Europe that the Jesuits were a severe threat to sovereignty. On the one hand, they were associated with monarchomach theory and practice.⁹⁵³ On the other hand, having managed to gain close proximity to some of Europe’s Catholic courts as royal confessors, they were—to some extent rightly—associated with the manipulation of government policy.⁹⁵⁴ Still, these fears often stood in sharp contrast

⁹⁵¹ ‘De maatreegels dan, die de Koning, myn Meester, in deeze zaak zal nemen, zullen geene andere zyn dan die, dewelke hem door zyn gewisse, door zyne eer, en door zyne gevoelens van menschelykheid zullen worden ingeboezemt, en die genoegzaam zullen zyn om te stillen den geest van de Engelsche Natie, det met eene eenparige stemme roept, of Regt, of Wraak!’; Dutch translation in the *’s Gravenhaegse Courant*, 7 March 1725, report from Dresden, 27 February 1725.

⁹⁵² 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.

⁹⁵³ See Burke, ‘The black legend’, pp. 165–182.

⁹⁵⁴ See H. Braun, ‘Jesuits as counsellors in the early modern world. Introduction’, *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 4 (2017), pp. 175–185.

to the actual numbers of Jesuits present in a society. In the Dutch Republic only 75 Jesuits were active in 1686, and their numbers were declining.⁹⁵⁵

It is important to keep in mind that anti-Jesuit conspiracies were not necessarily based on anti-Catholicism. In the latter half of the seventeenth century, they had become prevalent among non-Protestant parties as well.⁹⁵⁶ The Jansenists developed a lively anti-Jesuit literature and several European governments—not only Protestant but also Catholic—began to regard the Jesuits as a fifth column.⁹⁵⁷ 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. Richard van Dülmen rightly states that ‘as different as the respective Enlightenment currents were, they were united in their opposition against the Society of Jesus’.⁹⁵⁸ By the eighteenth century this diffusion of anti-Jesuit thought increasingly pushed adherents into a corner. Ultimately, the Jesuit Order was suppressed by several governments—including the Vatican—in the second half of the eighteenth century.⁹⁵⁹

By the early eighteenth century, people of very different religious and political outlooks associated the Jesuits with a set of common evils, most notably (1) theological error, (2) bigotry and intolerance, (3) irrationality, (4) lust for power (5) foreign disruption of civic order and sovereignty, and (6) demonic association. 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 that the Jesuits were not only dangerous counselors to Catholic monarchs, but also 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 so far. Before examining the different religio-political discussions the Tumult of Toruń gave rise to, a final factor that turned Toruń into a cause célèbre should be discussed.

⁹⁵⁵ C. Lenarduzzi, ‘Katholiek in de Republiek. Subcultuur en tegencultuur in Nederland 1570-1750’ (unpublished PhD thesis, 2018), p. 73.

⁹⁵⁶ Already in the late seventeenth century, the Jesuits had been expelled from France, but were allowed to return a decade later. See E. Nelson, ‘The King, the Jesuits, and the French Church’ (unpublished PhD thesis, Cambridge, 1998).

⁹⁵⁷ Pavone, ‘History of anti-Jesuitism’, p. 113.

⁹⁵⁸ R. van Dülmen, ‘Antijesuitismus und katholische Aufklärung in Deutschland’, *Historisches Jahrbuch* 1989 (1969), p. 52.

⁹⁵⁹ C. Vogel, *Der Untergang der Gesellschaft Jesu als europäisches Medienereignis (1758–1773). Publizistische Debatten im Spannungsfeld von Aufklärung und Gegenaufklärung* (Mainz, 2006).

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. The Tumult of Toruń received so much attention that print media soon began to discuss that public attention in its own right. On 4 January 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.⁹⁶⁰ 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.⁹⁶¹

On 12 January, 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.⁹⁶² On 24 January, 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'.⁹⁶³ On 27 January, 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 in several centuries.⁹⁶⁴

On 30 January the *Amsterdamse Courant* reported that there was no lack of writers who make it their business

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,

⁹⁶⁰ *Amsterdamse Courant*, 4 January 1725.

⁹⁶¹ 'De zaak van Thorn is het voorwerp van discours in alle de fraye gezelschappen geworden. Men verlangt met ongedult na de Duytsche brieve, om het verdere gevolg van die zaak te vernemen'; *Amsterdamse Courant*, 9 January 1725.

⁹⁶² *'s Gravenhaegse Courant*, 12 January 1725.

⁹⁶³ '[...] hoe weining gemodereerd die ook zyn, schynen daar een innerlyke schaamte over te hebben, en ontgaan zoo veel zy kunnen daar van te hooren spreken'; *Leydse Courant*, 24 January 1725. The *Amsterdamse Courant* reports the same one day later.

⁹⁶⁴ 'Het Treurspel van Thorn door de Jesuiten gespeelt, maeckt in geheel Europa veel geruchts, en wert aengesien als een saeck die men in eenige Eeuwen niet heeft gehoort'; *Oprechte Haerlemsche Courant*, 27 January 1725.

do not fail to make a lively impression, not only in the minds of the common people, but also among persons of the highest ranks.⁹⁶⁵

Four days later, the *Amsterdamse Courant* reported that several Protestant powers had begun to enact reprisals because of Toruń, while on 6 February, the *Oprechte Haerlemsche Courant* claimed that in Hanover Roman Catholics had been told to leave the city before the 25th.⁹⁶⁶ Newspapers also mentioned the publication of pamphlets in different countries. The ‘*Gravenhaegse Courant*, for instance, wrote on 28 February that a pamphlet had been published in London, written in a style both ‘emphatic and moving’.⁹⁶⁷ On 16 March, 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 written in Dutch, German, and French newspapers.⁹⁶⁸

One series of pamphlets, presenting a fictional conversation between Rössner and Luther, narrated that even the people in the realm of the dead—both Protestant and Catholic—were anxiously awaiting news about Toruń.⁹⁶⁹ The *Europische Mercurius* 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’.⁹⁷⁰ In short, royal attention may have made the story big, but it set something in motion that, at least in the Dutch Republic,

⁹⁶⁵ ‘[...] om de noodzaeklykheyd aen te toonen van den geest van vervolging, en de woede der Discipulen van Lojola in te teugelen. Deeze geschriften, waer in het Papendom met de swartste koleuren afgemaalt werd, laten niet na een leevendige indruk, niet alleenlyk in de gemoederen van het volk, maer zelfs onder personen van den hoogsten rang, te verwekken’; *Amsterdamse Courant*, 30 January 1725.

⁹⁶⁶ *Amsterdamse Courant*, 3 February 1725; *Oprechte Haerlemsche Courant*, 6 February 1725.

⁹⁶⁷ ‘nadrukkelyk als beweeglyk’; ‘*Gravenhaegse Courant*, 28 February 1725.

⁹⁶⁸ ‘[...] kon zich niet betooven van moeylykheid over de tydingen aangaande het werk van Thoorn, die men in de Hollandse zoo Nederduytse als Fransse nieuws—papieren geschreeven vind’; *Leydse Courant*, 16 March 1725.

⁹⁶⁹ Anonymous, *De onschuldige bloetdruppende voetstappen op de eerste aankomste van de br. Johann Gottfried Rösner, gewesene hoogloflyke president burgermeester der stadt Thorn* (Amsterdam 1725), pfl 16645; Anonymous, *Nieuw aangekomen en noodig vervolg tot de in het ryk der dooden gehouden t’samenspraak tusschen den heer Johann Gottfried Rösner [...] en dr. Martinus Lutherus* (Amsterdam 1725), pfl 16646; Anonymous, *De derde afzending van de, in het ryk der dooden geboudene samenspraak tusschen den onthalsden br. Johann Gottfried Rösner [...] en dr. Martinus Lutherus* (Amsterdam 1725), pfl 16647; these pamphlets are translated from German originals.

⁹⁷⁰ ‘Zo ras den lezer de naam van Poolen ziet, zo kan hy by zig zelve wel bezeffen, dat’er al wederom van die ongelukkige Thoorners zal gesproken worden’; *Europische Mercurius, behelzende de voornaamsze Zaken van Staat en Oorlog, voorgevallen in alle de Koningryken en Heerschappyen van Europa; benevens eenige meldenwaardige Tydingen uit verscheide andere Deelen der Waereld*, vol. 36, pt 1. L. Arminius (ed.), (Amsterdam, 1725), p. 77.

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 *Das Betrübte Thorn* (*Distressed Thorn*), appears not to have been translated into Dutch at all.⁹⁷¹ The only edition published in the United Provinces that could be traced was in French.⁹⁷² 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

Several Dutch opinion makers interpreted Toruń in a pronounced language of confessional truth. The allegorical print *De bloeddorst der Jesuiten, vertoond in het onderdrukken der Poolse Kerk* (*The bloodthirst of the Jesuits, shown in the oppression of the Polish Church*) is a case in point [Fig. 12]. 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 religion. 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.⁹⁷³

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

⁹⁷¹ D. Jablonski, *Das betrübte Thorn, oder die Geschichte so sich zu Thorn von dem 11. Jul. 1724. biss auf gegenwärtige Zeit zugetragen*. Berlin: 1725.

⁹⁷² D. Jablonski, *Thorn affligée ou relation de ce qui s’est passé dans cette ville depuis le 16. Juillet 1724* (Amsterdam, 1726).

⁹⁷³ Anonymous, *De bloeddorst der Jesuiten, vertoond in het onderdrukken der Poolse kerk, met de yszelyke uitwerkzelen der roomse geestelyken, verbeeld by het bloedbad van Thoorn, den 7den van wintermaand, 1724* (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.

a ‘lover of the Protestant religion’. The pamphlet series strikingly lacks nuance, presenting its readership with a salvo of exaggerated historical examples of Catholic cruelty. The author wonders whether the ‘Roman

Beast has not plunged around in Christian martyrs’ blood for long enough’.⁹⁷⁴ He revisits the cruel treatment of indigenous Americans, described in detail how children were roasted and human flesh was eaten on Bartholomew’s Day, 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.⁹⁷⁵

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 an army of 60,000 Tartars, who were commonly associated with Satan, irreligion, and invasion, against the Protestant powers.⁹⁷⁶ This anti-Catholicism came with a political agenda. In the *Aanspraak aan de protestantse mogentheden, tot bescherming van hunne onderdrukte geloofsgenoten in Polen* (*Appeal to the Protestant powers for the protection of their oppressed coreligionists*), the author of the *Laurel* praised the ‘heroes who guard the Dutch garden’, but simultaneously admonished them to action:

Awake from your rest, 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.⁹⁷⁷

In other words, 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

⁹⁷⁴ ‘Heeft dan het Roomsche beest niet lang genoeg gewoed? Niet lang genoeg geplast in ‘t Christen martelbloed?’; Anonymous, *Lauwerkrans, gevlogten om het hoofd der godzalige martelaren, door de woede der jesuiten omgebracht binnen Thoorn, den 7den van wintermaand, 1724* (Amsterdam, 1725), pfl 16648, p. 3.

⁹⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 5.

⁹⁷⁶ Anonymous, *De Jesuiten, en verdere roomse geestelijken, in hun eigen aard en wezen ontdekt, en ten toon gesteld op het Toornse moordschavot* (Amsterdam, 1725), pfl 16650, p. 11; see for instance E.B. Song, *Dominion undeserved. Milton and the perils of Creation* (Ithaca, NY 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.

⁹⁷⁷ ‘Ontwaakt uit uwe rust, eêr ‘t woedend altaarbeest, uw grenzen ook bestookt, en laat de zelve geest, die zo veel koningen tot wraakzugt aan komt manen, uw ziel bewegen, om de elendige onderdanen, te redden uit hun leed, en derelyken staat’; Anonymous, *Aanspraak aan de protestantsse mogentheden, tot bescherming van hunne onderdrukte geloofsgenoten in Polen, en de elendige ingezetenen van de stad Thoorn* (Amsterdam, 1725), pfl 16649, p. 5.

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 *Uitgeleze aanmerkingen over het Thornse bloedblad* (*Exquisite remarks about the Thornish massacre*), a conversation pamphlet in the same series, the prospect of an apocalyptic war is 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.⁹⁷⁸ 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 *Uitgeleze aanmerkingen* 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 a bad shape.⁹⁷⁹ 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.⁹⁸⁰ The conversation ends with a firm rejection of the ‘openly profane and [...] the feigned adherents of Christ’.⁹⁸¹

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 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.⁹⁸² To improve the spirituality and morality of the people, the ‘Further Reformation’ also called for a

⁹⁷⁸ Anonymous, *Uitgeleze aanmerkingen over het Thornse bloedblad, of bedenkingen over de schrikkekyke gevolgen van ’t onderdrukken der Protestanten in Polen, in twee zamenspraken verhandeld tuszen Theophilus en Philometor* (Amsterdam, 1725), pfl. 769.

⁹⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 7.

⁹⁸⁰ ‘Vorsten en potentaten’; Ibid., p. 13.

⁹⁸¹ ‘[...] opentlyk profane en [...] de geveinsde Aanhangers van Christus’; ibid., p. 9.

⁹⁸² There is a vast historiography on the ‘Further Reformation’. For a good introduction 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* (Kirkville, MO, 1994), pp. 409–429.



12. *De Bloeddorst der Jesuiten, vertoond in het onderdrukken der Poolse kerk, met de yszelyke uitwerkzelen der roomse geestelyken, verbeeld by het bloedbad van Thoor* (s.l., 1725). Resource: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

struggle against pretended religiosity and pseudo-piety—an important exponent of which was Roman Catholicism.⁹⁸³ ‘Further Reformation’ polemic often interpreted contemporary Dutch history in providential terms. The author expanded upon this theme by interpreting Toruñ as the herald of what would befall the Dutch Republic if the country persisted in its sinfulness.⁹⁸⁴ In short, 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 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.⁹⁸⁵ He praised the city’s four burgomasters—Trip, Van den Bempden, Lestevenon, and Six—for keeping Amsterdam safe from tyrants and allowing the people to ‘sleep under the shade of [...] [their] wisdom’.⁹⁸⁶ 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 places the freedom cap onto the country’s sharpened spear, and following ancient law leaves all to live in his own religion. [...] Oh, loyal fathers of the worthy fatherland! Witness our city at 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 at the rudder of government.⁹⁸⁷

⁹⁸³ Ibid., p. 414.

⁹⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 418; As Joke Spaans recently observed, ‘somewhere around the turn of the century “enlightened religion” had quietly taken over’. In its wake came rapprochement between the churches, which increasingly ‘played their role as guardians of piety and morality side by side’. This ‘enlightened religion’ strongly positioned itself against fanaticism and encouraged free discussion about dogmatic purity. Joris van Eijnatten argues that this was not extended to Catholics, who were still seen as members of an anti-religion. J. 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.

⁹⁸⁵ Anonymous, *Aanspraak aan de protestantse*, p. 6.

⁹⁸⁶ ‘[...] in den lommer van [...] [hun] wysheid’; Ibid., p. 23.

⁹⁸⁷ ‘Maar booswigt, waar is ooit de zielendwang gebleken, daar ‘t zeven statendom den hoed der Vryheid zet, op ‘s lands gescherpte speer, en naar de aloude wet elk een laat in de keur van zynen godsdienst leven? [...] Ô trouwe vaderen van ‘t waardig vaderland! Dit tuige onze Amstelstadt [Amsterdam], wiens uitgestrekte rand, ontelb’re zielen sluit in zyn verheve muuren; daar leeft de Vryheid, die zelf de eeuwen zal verduuren. Daar waakt de grote Trip (burgemeester) aan ‘t roer van ‘t staatsbestuur’; ibid., p. 17.

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 of the *Laurel*’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 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* (*Harlequin distiller*), to Toruń.⁹⁸⁸ 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 turned the knife in the heart of their burgomaster.⁹⁸⁹

Drawing on Dutch history, the poet invoked the death of the Catholic 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 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.⁹⁹⁰

⁹⁸⁸ Anonymous [W. van Swaanenburg], *Arlequin distelateur of de overgehaalde nouvelles zynde een werk immers zo dwaas, als de maker zelfs, denyl het in twee-en-veertig weekelykse afdeelingen, aan een gezond oordeel zonneklaar vertoont alle de bokken van het Dolhuis dezer geheele wêrld, met weinig geest, god veel woorden, meest, ex tempore, (tot vermaak dier Wysaarts, die uit gebrek van onderzoek naar hemelse dingen, op dezen aardbol met hun tyd verleggen zyn) by den ander geflanst*, vol. 4, 22 February 1725 (Amsterdam, 1725).

⁹⁸⁹ ‘Ik kan deze treurige stof niet Arlequinagtig behandelen, om niet te zondigen tegens de pligt der mensselykheit, die alle goede Patriotten, zelfs onder de Catholyken met drift omhelzen, verfoeiende het uitvaagzel der beulse paapen, die [...] hun eigen burgervader, als kinderbeulen den dolk in het hart omwringende’; *ibid.*, p. 28.

⁹⁹⁰ ‘Knielt myn Battavieren, knielt voor den Schepper der starren, als gy aan uwe landsvaderen denkt, want hier zyn genade en regtvaardigheit der maaten vereenigt, dat men nimmer de eene deugt zonder den ander

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 reminding the reader that people of all religions contribute to the welfare of their fatherland.⁹⁹¹ In other words, Toruń should remind the reader of the value of religious tolerance. This emphasis is noteworthy. 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 *Den ontleeder der gebreeken* (*The dissector of defects*) 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 *Ontleeder der gebreeken*, Weyerman follows English conspiracy theories, arguing that the Jesuits had devised Toruń to ‘drill into the grassy meadows of Albion’—in other words, to get a foothold in England.⁹⁹² The author began his perspective of events with a proverb by Lucretius, *tantum religio potuit suadere malorum* (‘so great the evils to which religion could prompt’), from his Epicurean didactical poem *De rerum natura*, written in defense of materialism and against superstition.⁹⁹³

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. Indeed, 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,

ontmoet. Een foliant is te klein om den roem der Nederlandsche Goden te schetssen, en een riem pappier te gering om een begin te maaken van de glorie der Amstel Prinsen daar op door letters te borduuren;’ *ibid.*, p. 30.

⁹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁹⁹² ‘[...] te boren in de graazige weyden van Albion;’ J. Weyerman, *Den ontleeder der gebreeken*, vol. 2, issue 27, 16 April 1725 (Amsterdam, 1726), p. 215.

⁹⁹³ Quotation taken from B. Farrington, *Science and politics in the ancient world* (London, 1965), p. 178.

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’.⁹⁹⁴

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 preoccupied Protestant Europe in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries and that revolved around irenicism, an ideology concerned with the (re)unification of Protestantism or Western Christendom in general.⁹⁹⁵ Ever since Europe’s religious fragmentation by the Reformation, early modern thinkers had tried to think of ways to glue the pieces back together and reestablish unity.

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.⁹⁹⁶ Throughout Europe, both influential figures such as Leibniz and the popular press made an effort to emphasize a basic common Protestant ground;⁹⁹⁷ 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: international Catholicism.⁹⁹⁸ 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

⁹⁹⁴ ‘[...] en laat die mogendheden in zodanige evenwichtige weegschaalen worden opgewoogen, dat de macht van een meerder geen doorn in het oog zy aan een minder, nog ‘t vermoogen een sterker aanzette, om de staaten van een zwakker vorst met geweld te benaderen’; J. Weyerman, *Den ontleeder der gebreeken*, vol. 2, issue 28, 23 April 1725 (Amsterdam, 1726), p. 220.

⁹⁹⁵ Van Eijnatten, *Liberty and concord*, pp. 5–6.

⁹⁹⁶ For an overview of different strands of irenicist thinking 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).

⁹⁹⁷ See, for instance, Anonymous, *Translaat. Christiani Fratelli onpartydige minnelijke missive aan een ... vriend, wegens de vereenigingh der twee protestantsche religien, namentlijk ... de Evangelische Luythersche en de Evangelische Gereformeerde* (The Hague, 1725). 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.

⁹⁹⁸ Eijnatten, *Liberty and concord*, pp. 117–119.

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 permeated all of Europe.

Despite their projects of rapprochement, irenicists were not a homogenous 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. 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'.⁹⁹⁹ 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 the 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 have a brotherly pity with 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.¹⁰⁰⁰

⁹⁹⁹ '[...] en, maar met eenige verandering, de wyze maatregelen van Olivier Cromwel, ten behoeve van de Vreede in 't Noorden, na te volgen'; Bion, *Getrouw en naauwkeurig verhaal*, p. 32. I only had access to the Dutch version of this pamphlet.

¹⁰⁰⁰ 'Het treurspel, en de gepleegde moorden tot Thoorn [...] roepen over luyd, en wekken alle Protestanten, van wat benaaminge zy ook mogen zyn, op, om haare onderlinge beuselverschillen, haat, trotsheyt, en onnoodige twistredenen aan de kant te leggen, en zig van herten met malkander te vereenigen, om alzoo de handen van de respectieve oppervorsten tegens een onversoonlyken, rustloosen en magtigen vyand, te sterken, die geen ander ding beoogt als de volslaage uytroying van den Protestantsen naam [...] Tot dien eynde, zo laat de Lutherschen in Duytsland, Sweeden en Dennemarken, die voor deesen meest alle de vervolging der

In another pamphlet, 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 bear terror wherever your banners will appear.¹⁰⁰¹

Bion's approach shows that irenicism should not be conflated with religious moderation; the last quote is firmly embedded in the normative principle of confessional truth—and implicitly anti-Catholic. Not all irenicists adopted this militant view of the Tumult of Toruń. In two of his works, Bion, or his publicist, integrally incorporated two articles from the *London Journal*, a government newspaper that was published between 1720 and 1731, by another author who invoked providence, albeit with a rather different perspective on events. The articles were written by the Whig pamphleteer Benjamin Hoadly, bishop of Hereford, under the pseudonym Britannicus.

Hoadly was arguably the most influential British latitudinarian thinker of the eighteenth century.¹⁰⁰² A man of the Enlightenment and a follower of Locke, Hoadly was a firm believer in government built on reason, toleration, and the human happiness that was to spring from these maxims.¹⁰⁰³ He was also a controversial figure, having stood at the center of the Bangorian Controversy in 1716, recently described by Andrew Starkie as 'the most bitterly fought ideological battle of eighteenth-century England'.¹⁰⁰⁴ The controversy revolved around a sermon by Hoadly, in which he had preached that the true church was a spiritual community

Hugenooten in Vrankryk, met drooge oogen hebben aangesien, een broederlyk meedelyden met de so genaamde Calvinisten leeren hebben, en aan haar deselve vryheit vergunnen die de Calvinisten aan de Lutherse toestaan. Laat ook de Calvinisten in Zwitserland iets van hare al te naauwe gesetheit tegens de Arminische wat aflat. Laat de Presbyterianen van Schotland zig verdragen met de Episcopale Kerk van Engeland [...]. Met een woord laten alle Protestanten de matigheit, wysheit, en andere Christelyke deugden van de Kerk van Engeland betraften, want gelyk die het magtigste bolwerk voor de Reformatie tegens het Pausdom is, zo heeft deselve ook in alle wiftige gevallen getoont een algemeene liefdadigheit, en een moederlyk belang voor alle de verscheidene Leeden van het Protestantsche lighaam'; *ibid.*, pp. 38–39.

¹⁰⁰¹ 'La grande union, l'amour cordial qui regne aujourd'hui entre vous, sont autant de voix de la Providence divine, qui vous crie, marchez, combattez, je serai avec vous, & je porterai l'effroi par tout ou vos étendars (banners) se presenteront'; J.-F. Bion, *Narré exact et impartial de ce qui concerne la sanglante Tragedie de Thorn* (Amsterdam, 1725), p. 69; I only had access to the French version of this pamphlet.

¹⁰⁰² Hoadly was writing as Britannicus at that moment in time. However, other writers had taken up the role before him.

¹⁰⁰³ B. Spinks, *Liturgy in the Age of Reason. Worship and sacraments in England and Scotland 1662–c.1800* (Abingdon, 2016).

¹⁰⁰⁴ A. Starkie, *The Church of England and the Bangorian controversy, 1716–1721* (Woodbridge, 2007), p. i.

rather than a worldly institution. The Anglican Church should therefore not enjoy the legal protection of the authorities. After all, any legislative protection of a particular set of doctrines would inevitably incite people not to follow their consciences.¹⁰⁰⁵ Opponents thus accused Hoadly of arguing against a state religion.¹⁰⁰⁶

This is not the place to dive deeply into the theological and political complexities of the Bangorian controversy—which was fought out in over two hundred pamphlets. Yet it is important to note that a fundamental point of contention was the question whether the secular authorities and the church had any authority to act against religious dissenters. While the discussion initially revolved around Protestant dissenters, it quickly spilled into concerns about the possible ramifications for English Catholics.¹⁰⁰⁷ In England, the memory of a Catholic invasion was still fresh. 1715 had seen another Jacobite Rising, during which the Catholic pretender James Francis Edward Stuart—a descendant of the exiled Stuart kings—attempted to claim the thrones of England, Scotland, and Ireland.¹⁰⁰⁸ In the eyes of many English Protestants, Catholics thus remained a potential fifth column. Hoadly had earned his credentials as an anti-Jacobite polemicist, but he explicitly urged people to be passionate about it out of patriotism, not religion.¹⁰⁰⁹ Hoadly's opponents, in turn, were eager to point out that his arguments against the secular authority of the church played into the Jacobites' hands.¹⁰¹⁰

As a government newspaper, the *London Journal* was staunchly anti-Jacobite. It was filled with accounts of arrested Jacobite conspirators and plots, thus nourishing anxieties about the danger of a Catholic restoration.¹⁰¹¹ It is within the light of the controversies about the position of the Church and the Jacobite threat that we should read Hoadly's treatment of the 'Tumult of Toruñ. Britannicus warned that nothing is 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 recalled the Glorious Revolution as a

¹⁰⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 3.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 31.

¹⁰⁰⁷ C. Leighton, *Catholicism in a Protestant kingdom. A study of the Irish ancient régime* (Basingstoke and London, 1994), pp. 99–100.

¹⁰⁰⁸ See D. Szechi, *1715. The Great Jacobite Rebellion* (New Haven, CT, 2006).

¹⁰⁰⁹ Starkie, *Church of England*, p. 184.

¹⁰¹⁰ Ibid., p. 116.

¹⁰¹¹ D. Lemmings and C. Walker, *Moral panics, the media and the law in early modern England* (New York, 2009), pp. 145–147.

period of fear of popery and the Huguenot diaspora as a moment of heightened Protestant sentiment. He argued that now, providence again kept Protestants vigilant against danger:

It pleases providence therefore, at several intervals of time, 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 men will not be rous'd by such terrors as these, they have nothing to blame but their own wilful and mad stupidity.¹⁰¹²

In other words, Hoadly argued that the matter of Toruń should wake 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'.¹⁰¹³ 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:

And this methinks, should weigh with all Protestants who would not be miserable; whether they have the same notions of happiness with others, or not. The point to such persons is not, whether they love their present superiors; or whether they perfectly approve of their administration; but whether they can bear all the miseries of popish bigotry, and will choose to exchange liberty for chains; property for arbitrary will. [The pretender will turn to] the same measures of ruine and devastation, by which the same bigotry has ever work'd, and ever will work, till humane nature be totally alter'd.¹⁰¹⁴

Hoadly referred to providence to support his argument. Yet he did not perceive it as operating within a bilateral world divided between a true and a false religion, but as something that protects human beings and civil society from evil-doing in the form of bigotry. Hence, he asserted that not all Catholics were bigots, as some of them held onto their 'natural or religious humanity' and 'the bias of their good nature'.¹⁰¹⁵ Still, as a body, Catholics formed a great threat

¹⁰¹² Letter from Britannicus, *London Journal*, 2 January 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.

¹⁰¹³ Letter from Britannicus, *London Journal*, 9 January 1725, in Hoadly (ed.), *The works of Benjamin Hoadly*, p. 371.

¹⁰¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 372.

¹⁰¹⁵ Letter from Britannicus, *London Journal*, 2 January 1725, p. 368

to ‘all who value any rights, whether religious or civil’.¹⁰¹⁶ 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.¹⁰¹⁷

It is our concern, from the highest to the lowest, from the prince upon the throne, to the meanest of his subjects, [...] from the most rigid church-man to the most distant Quaker, through all the intermediate differences of moderate men, Latitudinarians, Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists; 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.¹⁰¹⁸

At first glance, Hoadly appeared to sketch a confessional perception of events, combining references to providence with a clear stance against Catholic rule. However, the picture is more complex. The bishop identified Catholicism as a political threat rather than a religious error. And although he equated Catholic power with intolerance, he did not regard bigotry as an exterior evil, or even—in the form of the Jacobites—a fifth column. 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]’.¹⁰¹⁹ The mutual condemnation on account of religious differences, hard judgments of private men against 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’.¹⁰²⁰ Step by step, society could lapse into forms of violence that could ‘not have been borne by any humane mind’.¹⁰²¹

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

¹⁰¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰¹⁷ Ibid., p. 369.

¹⁰¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰¹⁹ Letter from Britannicus, *London Journal*, 9 January 1725, p. 372.

¹⁰²⁰ Ibid., p. 373.

¹⁰²¹ Ibid.

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.¹⁰²²

Religious hatred led to gradual shifts in human sociability, that could ultimately lead to a society that ran counter to human nature. Although Hoadly believed that Protestants had a stronger sense of the duties of 'love and forbearance', he warned them to remain universally charitable and not give bigots an excuse for their behavior, which runs counter to God, nature, reason, and revelation.¹⁰²³ As such, Toruń became a reminder of the necessity of forbearance and human sociability. In short, the bishop took a complex approach to the subject, ingeniously combining fierce attacks against Catholicism with a strong defense of religious toleration, based on the normative principles of humanity, reason, and religious truth.

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 steered 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 towards 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. Yet there were also many printed works about Toruń that the Dutch did not find in their bookshops. The Dutch press produced some foreign adaptations to cover Toruń, but the question remains to what extent they were reflective of a larger European debate. To

¹⁰²² Ibid.

¹⁰²³ Ibid.

answer this question, the remainder of this chapter will discuss several works that appear not to have made it to the presses of the Republic.

Let us first return to Jablonski, a central figure in Prussia's 'propaganda machine', whose work could, in fact, be found in a Dutch bookshop, albeit in French. Like Hoadly, the Prussian court preacher was a prominent figure in the early eighteenth-century Enlightenment. He wrote and corresponded extensively about religion, science, and politics, and, as an avid translator, served as a main channel between the English and German learned worlds.¹⁰²⁴ Apart from being a man of science, Jablonski had long been a fervent supporter of the Protestant cause.¹⁰²⁵ Moreover, as a devoted irenicist, he maintained an intensive correspondence with Leibniz on the possibilities of unifying the Reformed and Lutheran religions.¹⁰²⁶

Jablonski published *Das Betrübte Thorn* (*Distressed 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. Recently, Martina Thomsen identified *Das Betrübte Thorn* as a 'programmatic and engaged pamphlet against Catholicism in general, and the Jesuits in particular'.¹⁰²⁷ By contrast, I would argue that the court preacher consciously—albeit perhaps not entirely successfully—refrained from writing an anti-Catholic pamphlet. Instead, Jablonski presented a nonconfessional perspective on Toruń, focusing on the normative principles of humanity and reason. Accordingly, he identified the Jesuit Order as the root of all problems rather than the Catholic Church in general.

Das Betrübte Thorn begins with a history of Toruń, discussing the city's conversion to Lutheranism in the sixteenth century, the religious tensions to which the entire Commonwealth was subjected during the Reformation, and the religious peace resulting from the Warsaw

¹⁰²⁴ For extensive discussions on Jablonski see J. Bahlcke and W. Korthaase, eds. *Daniel Ernst Jablonski. Religion, Wissenschaft und Politik um 1700* (Wiesbaden, 2008).

¹⁰²⁵ He 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.

¹⁰²⁶ H. Rudolph, 'Daniel Ernst Jablonski und Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz in ihrem ökumenischen Bemühen', in Bahlcke and Korthaase, eds., *Daniel Ernst Jablonski*, pp. 265–284; Jablonski and Leibniz had a close relationship. Together, they founded the Berlin Society of Sciences, where they served together as the institute's first presidents; H. Rudolph, 'Daniel Ernst Jablonski. Ein Brückenbauer im Europa der frühen Neuzeit', *Lexicon Philosophicum* 5 (2007), p. 62.

¹⁰²⁷ Thomsen, 'Betrübte Thorn', p. 244.

Confederation. He argued that this religious harmony was disrupted by the arrival of the Jesuits, whom he described as foreign enemies.¹⁰²⁸ 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.¹⁰²⁹ 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'.¹⁰³⁰ In other words, the Jesuits were a fifth column in every polity in the broadest possible sense, regardless of religious affiliation.

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.¹⁰³¹ He thus discussed the normative principle of confessional solidarity, but only as a negative trait of the adversary. 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.¹⁰³² Yet the preacher refrained from conflating Catholics or Catholicism with superstition. On the contrary, he emphasized that intolerant verdicts such as the one passed in Toruń, which stemmed not from justice 'but from the judge's obstinacy', were criticized by those Catholics who understood that they 'do harm to all worldly and Godly laws':¹⁰³³

It is not to be doubted, how such inhumane cruelty generally arouses in human nature itself shock and disgust. Therefore, [the executions] will have aroused a just disapproval

¹⁰²⁸ D. Jablonski, *Das betrübt Thorn, oder die Geschichte so sich zu Thorn von dem 11. Jul. 1724. biss auf gegenwärtige Zeit zugetragen* (Berlin, 1725), p. 12.

¹⁰²⁹ Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁰³⁰ '[...] wo die Jesuiten einkehren, daß da Stanck und Verwirrung sie unzertrennlich begleite, Fried un Ruhe hingegen auf ewig verbannet warden'; *ibid.*, pp. 18–26.

¹⁰³¹ '[...] und weil sich hierdurch augenscheinlich geäussert, daß die Verbitterung wider die Religion die wahre Quelle solcher Strenge, und dieses al sein Vorspiel der beschlossenen Zerstörung des Evangelischen Wesens in Polen anzusehen sey'; *ibid.*, p. 56.

¹⁰³² Ibid., p. 41.

¹⁰³³ '[...] aus des Richters eigensinn'; '[...] alle göttliche und weltliche Gesetze verletzt worden'; *ibid.*, p. 95.

and indignation among all rational Catholics, but a Christian pity and lamentation among the Evangelicals.¹⁰³⁴

In other words, 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 nonconfessional message, *Das Betrühte Thorn* does 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 the concerted reaction against the executions, 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 interests of their fatherland to take a milder stance. In that way, all subjects could live together in mutual trust.¹⁰³⁵ 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.¹⁰³⁶ The court preacher's nonconfessional 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 secular normative principles.

This does not mean, however, 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 popular conversation piece periodical *Extraordinaires Gespräche in dem Reiche derer Todten* (*Extraordinary*

¹⁰³⁴ '[...] so ist wol nicht zu zweiffeln, wie ingemein dergleichen unmenschliche Grausamkeit der menschlichen Natur selbst ein Entsetzen und Abscheu erwecket, also werde sie bey allen vernünfftigen Catholischen ins besondere ein rechtmäßiges Mißfallen und Unwillen, bey den evangelischen aber ein Christliches Mitleiden und Bejammern erzeuget haben'; *ibid.*, pp. 94–95.

¹⁰³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 102–103.

¹⁰³⁶ 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 and Oxford, 2012), p. 103.

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 burgomaster Rössner converse with Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus.¹⁰³⁷ 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.¹⁰³⁸ In their conversation about Toruń, Loyola aptly counters many of Rössner’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 that took up the pen in anger should have set their emotions aside, as to prevent irrational curses, admonishments, and untruths from being spread.¹⁰³⁹

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.¹⁰⁴⁰ Faßmann made Loyola convincingly argue that the Jesuits did not seek worldly pleasure or power, but rather gave it up to serve people.¹⁰⁴¹ Rössner finally concluded that whereas he still believed 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.¹⁰⁴² In other words, Faßmann presented the Jesuits as erroneous, but not without good intent.

Opinion makers who were close to the fire also called for moderation. Theophilo Theodor, a pamphleteer from the Polish-Prussian city of Elbląg, some 160 kilometers north of Toruń called for caution in *Das mißhandelnde Thoren im pohlischen Preußen* (*Abused Thorn in*

¹⁰³⁷ For a detailed study on David Faßmann and his periodical see S. Dreyfürst, *Stimmen aus dem Jenseits. David Fassmanns historisch-politisches Journal ‘Gespräche in dem Reiche derer Todten’ (1718–1740)* (Berlin, 2014).

¹⁰³⁸ 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., 1725), p. 2.

¹⁰³⁹ D. Faßmann, *Apologie des angetasteten extraordinären Gesprächs in dem Reiche derer Todten* (1725). This apology was written in defense of his conversation piece after an angry reply. Unfortunately, I have not been able to find. Anonymous, *Schreiben eines Preussen an seinen Freund in Teutschland* (s.l., 1725).

¹⁰⁴⁰ Faßmann, *Extraordinaires Gespräche*, p. 5.

¹⁰⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 10–11.

¹⁰⁴² Ibid., pp. 210–211.

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 roads 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.¹⁰⁴³

In other words, 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, as Catholics were irritated by the non-participant onlookers and the authorities failed to curtail the curious commoners' lust for spectacle.¹⁰⁴⁴ Luther criticizes the Protestant spectators for indulging in the voyeuristic curiosity, while showing respect for the zeal of the processioners.¹⁰⁴⁵

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.¹⁰⁴⁶ 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

¹⁰⁴³ 'Denn ob gleich nach dem Völcker-Recht ein jeder Staat, welcher beleidigt ist ein *Jus belli* [...], so rahtet doch die Billigkeit, und die Klugheit erst die gelindesten Wegen zu gehen und auf eine freundliche Art, so viel möglich Satisfaction zu Erlangen. [...] Diejenigen gehen also in ihrem Urtheil zu weit, welche schon in ihrem Gedancken Feuer und Schwerdt in Pohlen wegen dieser Affaire blincken sehen'; 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, 1725), pp. 70, 73–74.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Anonymous, *De onschuldige bloetdruypende voetstappen op eerste aankomste van de hr. Johann. Gottfried Rösner, gewesene hooglofhyke president burgermeester der stad Thorn* (Amsterdam, 1725), pp. 8–9.

¹⁰⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 9–10.

¹⁰⁴⁶ See, for instance, Anonymous, *Litterae ab amico e civitate regia polonica Torunensi Rastadium missae in causa tumultus ibidem excitati* (s.l., 1725).

[...] to the Republic of Poland. The Protestants are [...] incited to hostile indignation and to take up arms against Poland, indeed, against all Catholics.¹⁰⁴⁷

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.¹⁰⁴⁸ 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.¹⁰⁴⁹

One 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 perpetual 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.¹⁰⁵⁰ 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 would have the power to do so, because their 'zeal for

¹⁰⁴⁷ 'Allein / gleich nach der Thornischen Execution seynd fast ohne Zahl / Stich Schimpff und LasterSchriften ausgangen / und fliegen noch bis dato ans Licht. worinnen nicht freundlich, sondern allerdings feindlicher Weise / das Lermenblasen unaufhörlich promoviret / ein Blutgieriger Krieg begehret / gesucht / und [...] der Republic Pohlen versprochen wird. Die Protestanten werden zur feindlichen Empörung / und die Waffen wider die Pohlen ja alle Catholiquen zu ergreifen / [...] aufgehetzt'; [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? Wird ausführlich beantwortet* (Stadt am Hoff, 1725).

¹⁰⁴⁸ [G. Hannenberg], *Authentische Nachricht Von der zu Thoren erregten – und nach Erforderung der Gerechtigkeit gestrafften Aufruhr. Nebst einer Authentischen Beschreibung von Ibro Königl. Majestät verordneten Commission und Inquisition zu Thorn; ingleichen ein wahrbafter Innhalt, des zu Warschau bey dem Königl. Assessorial Gerichte gefällten Urtheils, und darauf geschehenen Execution, wobey zugleich alles erdichtete herumtschwebende Relations–Wesen handgreifflich, widerlegt, und der Olivische Fried defendirt wird* (Stadt am Hoff, 1725).

¹⁰⁴⁹ [Hannenberg], *Wichtige Frage*.

¹⁰⁵⁰ C. Owen, *An alarm to Protestant princes and people, who are all struck at in the Popish cruelties at Thorn, and other barbarous executions abroad* (London, 1725); Owen, *An alarm to Protestant princes [...] the second edition*; I have consulted the second edition.

the church sanctifies all cruelties and solves all doubts and compunctions, that may arise from unextinguish'd humanity in the conscience'.¹⁰⁵¹

In other words, 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'.¹⁰⁵² Instead, it was time to take action:

If we had banish'd those bloody assassins, root and branch, into Tartary, Siberia, or any where beyond the tropicks, to cool their thirst after human blood, 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.¹⁰⁵³

Owen emphasized that one should be wary not to copy the 'gloomy original'. Persecuting Catholics within ones' midst would effectively make the foreign cruelties stop, but it would also 'lay waste [to] human nature'.¹⁰⁵⁴ Protestant should therefore 'root out popery from their dominions, and [...] have but one religion with its various subordinations and subdivisions', without resorting to violence.¹⁰⁵⁵ 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.¹⁰⁵⁶

¹⁰⁵¹ Owen, *An alarm to Protestant princes [...] the second edition*, pp. 14-15.

¹⁰⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁰⁵³ Owen, *An alarm to Protestant princes [...] the second edition*, pp. 7, 11-12.

¹⁰⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁰⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

¹⁰⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

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.¹⁰⁵⁷

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'.¹⁰⁵⁸ Whereas 'private Christians' should not take matters into their own hands, princes 'are born to assert and maintain the liberties of mankind':¹⁰⁵⁹

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.¹⁰⁶⁰ 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.¹⁰⁶¹

The sovereign right or duty to intervene against tyranny abroad had also been invoked to support the Camisards, some twenty years earlier.¹⁰⁶² But Owen's appeal to confessional solidarity is much starker; if Protestants are persecuted abroad monarchs should answered to it with the persecution of Catholics at home. On the one hand, this presents a compelling argument against the normative order of sovereignty. Evidently, rulers cannot do with their

¹⁰⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 21

¹⁰⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 20

¹⁰⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 22.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶¹ Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁰⁶² See Chapter 5.

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, the normative principle of sovereignty is reified, as rulers have the right to make their own subjects suffer to punish the behavior of foreign sovereigns. In other words, confessional solidarity is the central normative principle, which is supported by the normative principles of sovereignty, rule of law, and humanity.

Finally, the normative principle reason also comes into play 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’.¹⁰⁶³ 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.¹⁰⁶⁴

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 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’.¹⁰⁶⁵ Owen therefore believed that ‘skirmishes about religion may happen among opposite powers but [that there will be no] universal religious war’.¹⁰⁶⁶

¹⁰⁶³ Owen, *An alarm to Protestant princes [...] the second edition*, p. 24.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 30.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 31.

If we compare Owen's *Alarm to Protestant princes and people* with the Dutch pamphlets by the 'Author of the *Laurel*' an interesting contrast appears. Whereas 'the Author of the *Laurel*' 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 'Author of the *Laurel*' pointed to the value of religious toleration, Catholics included, whereas Owen made a radical call for confessional homogeneity. This shows that the normative principle of confessional truth was not necessarily more hostile to the confessional other—in this case Catholics—than the normative principle of confessional solidarity.

Conclusion

Did the Enlightenment take the edge off of Protestant concerns about the confessional divide? The European backlash against the 'Bloodbath of Toruń' suggests it did not. Ten people were executed in a city of which many pamphleteers had probably never even heard 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. Indeed, judging from the pamphlets discussed in this chapter, Protestant opinion makers still looked at Europe through a confessional lens. This becomes all the more apparent 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.

Still, pamphleteers provided very different insights as to how Europe's confessional divide should be tackled. Some argued that the confessional differences between Catholics and Protestants were paramount. Catholics followed a religion that corrupted their human nature and made them cruel. They described a Protestant–Catholic division that was not so much conflated with the ungodly and the godly, but between the humane and the inhumane. Others believed that Europe's most significant dividing line roughly followed confession, but could not be equated with it. Authors like Benjamin Hoadly also believed that the true division was

between the humane and the bigoted, but people of all confessional colors could lapse into that second category, if they failed to behave in a civil manner towards confessional others. Others yet saw that God was signaling to the faithful to rise up, but anticipated the impending holy war while at the same time celebrating religious toleration.

Indeed, it shows that the public backlash of Toruń was not all about justifying foreign policy; one of the main works written at the Prussian court does not even appear to have been translated into Dutch. In his article on Toruń, Milton stresses that the norms ‘evinced in the public sphere, can be believed to reflect prevailing attitudes and values, as they would have been carefully selected in order to resonate positively and strike a chord with the intended audience.’¹⁰⁶⁷ There is little evidence, however, that the bulk of printed opinion in the wake of Toruń originated from within government circles. Instead, we should probably turn Milton’s argument on its head; authors like Charles Owen, Jean-François Bion, and the ‘Author of the *Laurel*’, seized upon the state-authorized public outrage over Toruń to communicate and justify their contested political and religious norms. Protestant governments had long ceased to call for wars of religion; militant confessional language was reserved for those further removed from actual foreign policy. In that sense, the rise of the public sphere did not go hand in hand with the rise of reason as a normative principle, as Habermas suggested. It also allowed pamphleteers to look at foreign politics through lense of confessional truth when governments no longer used this language.

For several pamphleteers, the ‘Bloodbath of Toruń’ was only a topical example in the greater narrative they wanted to tell, a broader story about the international religio-political landscape that could differ wildly from the course of action taken by Europe’s governments. But their differences aside, these narratives had some characteristics in common. First of all, they were remarkably ‘European’ in perspective: Print media about the massacres in Piedmont, while justified in recourse to universalized normative principles, had been first and foremost about the Waldensians; the debate surrounding the persecution of the Huguenots was more multifaceted, but still revolved mainly around questions of how to behave toward France and the exiles in one’s midst. The same can be said for the publicity surrounding the War of the Camisards. In response to Toruń, by contrast, people were mainly talking about Europe’s

¹⁰⁶⁷ Milton, ‘Debates on intervention’, 426.

political and confessional landscape, in which Toruń sometimes served as little more than a footnote—the smaller the event the more general the discussion.

Second, the debate was dominated by the question to what extent confessional difference related to civil and political society. The answers provided are characterized by a careful negotiation of the normative principles of sovereignty, reason, humanity, rule of law, confessional truth, and confessional solidarity. What typifies the pamphlets published in the wake of the ‘Bloodbath of Toruń’ was the extent to which these normative principles were fleshed out and elaborately weighed in relation to each other, with rather different outcomes.