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

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Conclusion

Beyond the Confessional Divide?

Shylock to Salarino:
I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed?

- William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice* (159?)[1068]

In June 1656 three ships from Klaipėda, Lithuania, anchored in the port of Amsterdam.[1069] They carried three hundred Jewish refugees, who had probably paid well for their passage across the Baltic Sea in order to escape persecution back home in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Disembarking in a miserable state, the Ashkenazi arrivals were warmly welcomed by Amsterdam's Sephardim, one month before that same community excommunicated a young philosopher named Baruch Spinoza.[1070] On 7 June 1656 alone, 326 community members donated 3,375 florins for the relief of the Polacos, as the refugees from the East were called by their Portuguese brethren in the faith.[1071] Having set up two refugee relief organizations, the Sephardic community lodged the men, women, and children in two specially prepared storehouses and provided them with food and clothing while plans were made to find a more permanent settlement within and without the city.[1072]

The new arrivals of June 1656 were not the first Ashkenazim to flee the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, nor would they be the last. As Germany slowly began to recover

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[1068] W. Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice* (Oxford, 1877).
[1069] D. Burger van Schoorel, *Chronyk van de stad Medenblik* (Amsterdam, 1767), pp. 164–165.
[1070] P. Casteleyn, *Hollantse Merkurius behelzende de voornaemste geschiedenissen in Christenrijck in 't jaer 1656* (Haarlem, 1657), p. 75; Y. Kaplan, 'Amsterdam and Ashkenazic migration in the seventeenth century', *Studia Rosenthaliana* 23 (1989), 36–39.
[1071] Kaplan, 'Amsterdam and Ashkenazic migration', pp. 37–38.
[1072] One of the organizations was promisingly titled Zeh Sha'ar Hashamayim ('This is the Gate of Heaven', Genesis 28.17); M.A. Shulvass, *From East to West. The westward migration of Jews from Eastern Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries* (Detroit, MI, 1971), pp. 29–30.

from the Thirty Years' War, it was the people of Poland-Lithuania's turn to witness the utter destruction that ravaging hosts could bring upon one's lands and cities.[1073] Beginning with the 1648 Khmelnytsky Uprising, a time of relative prosperity and tolerance for the region's Jewish population came to a dramatic end. Ukrainian Cossacks accused the Jews of having strong ties to the magnates of the Polish szlachta and destroyed numerous Ashkenazi communities. Contemporary chroniclers' estimates of the number of casualties ranged between 6,000 and 670,000, which were great exaggerations.[1074] Recent estimates stemming from demographic research are significantly lower, but still calculate up to 20,000 Jewish deaths, out of a population of roughly 40,000.[1075] In the wars that followed, Muscovite, Swedish, and Polish hosts ravaged the lands and likewise targeted aggression at the Commonwealth's Jews. By 1656, thousands more had perished.[1076]

The death toll of the Jews in Poland-Lithuania around the middle of the seventeenth century was thus decisively higher than in any of the other persecutions of religious minorities discussed throughout this study. Still, the pogroms received much less international coverage. Although European newspapers provided ample reports of the wars in Poland-Lithuania, the fate of the Jews was not singled out. Newspapers that pointed specifically to violence against the Ashkenazim tended to present it as well-deserved.[1077] Only when Swedish forces marched into Poland-Lithuania did Western newspapers begin to single out one group of victims. Copying Swedish propaganda, they elaborated upon the horrors inflicted on Protestants by Polish forces, which were described with an eye for detail that the Jewish persecutions never received.[1078] The domestic response to the persecutions also attracted little public attention. The 1656 edition of the *Hollandse Mercurius* devoted a few sentences to the arrival of the three ships, a fraction of the attention that had been paid to the Waldensians the previous year, and

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[1073] Frost, *After the Deluge*, pp. 26–52.
[1074] B. Weinryb, *The Jews of Poland. A social and economic history of the Jewish community in Poland from 1100–1800* (New York, 1975), pp. 193–194.
[1075] S. Stampfer, 'What actually happened to the Jews of Ukraine in 1648?', *Jewish History* 17 (2003), p. 221.
[1076] S. Totten, *Teaching about genocide. Issues, approaches, and resources* (Charlotte, NC, 2004), p. 25; R. Spector, *World without civilization. Mass murder and the Holocaust, history, and analysis* (Lanham, MD, 2005), p. 77.
[1077] J. Raba, *Between remembrance and denial. The fate of the Jews in the wars of the Polish Commonwealth during the mid–seventeenth century as shown in contemporary writings and historical research* (New York, 1995), p. 166.
[1078] Ibid., p. 164.

that we discussed in Chapter 2. Readers were left to guess at what had driven the refugees to flee to the United Provinces and at the fate of those who were left behind.[1079]

Providing a snapshot of the United Provinces around 1650, Willem Frijhoff and Marijke Spies have argued that

> if we want to grasp Dutch culture in the European context at its workaday level, one notion immediately presents itself, namely that of a never-flagging discussion culture shared by all segments and groups of society. In 1650 Dutch culture defined itself through its continual struggle with a long list of discussion topics.[1080]

Whereas this list was long indeed, the silence on the persecution of Jews across the Baltic compellingly confront us with the limits of public debate in the United Provinces. The meagerness of public attention for the fate of the Ashkenazim was not due to a lack of accessible information. In fact, there were even Dutch printers dealing with the case. In Amsterdam, by now a main printing center of Jewish literature, Sephardic printers published two accounts of the persecutions in Hebrew in 1651.[1081] Two years later, rabbi and scholar Nathan Hannover, who had passed through Amsterdam before taking permanent exile in Venice, published the *Yeven Metzulah*, an immensely successful chronicle about the massacres of the Khmelnytsky Uprising that was allegedly based on witness accounts.[1082] Hannover recounted the events by community and claimed to describe what had befallen them as precisely as possible to allow bereaved refugees to calculate when their relatives had been killed.[1083] Yet for all its popularity among Europe's Jewish communities, the work was not translated into Dutch, French, or any other language suitable for the vast majority of Christian readers that did not read Hebrew.[1084] At least in one direction, the world of printed compassion remained firmly segregated.

[1079] Casteleyn, *Hollantse Merkurius*, p. 75.
[1080] W. Frijhoff and M. Spies, *1650. Hard–won unity* (Basingstoke, 2004), p. 220.
[1081] A. Polonsky, *The Jews in Poland and Russia*, vol. 1. *1350–1881* (Liverpool, 2009), p. 128.
[1082] A. Teller, 'A portrait in ambivalence. The case of Nathan Hannover and his chronicle, *Yeven Metsulah*', in A.M. Glaser (ed.), *Stories of Khmelnytsky. Competing literary legacies of the 1648 Ukrainian Cossack Uprising* (Stanford, CA, 2015), p. 24.
[1083] M. Heller, *The seventeenth century Hebrew book*, vol. 2 (Leiden and Boston, MA, 2011), p. 735.
[1084] After a translation into Yiddish, the first major European language in which it was published was in German in 1720; S. Schechter and M. Seligsohn, 'Hannover, Nathan (Nata) Ben Moses', in *The Jewish encyclopedia* (New York, 1906), pp. 220–221.

Why did the non-Sephardim Dutch presses remain silent? One could hypothesize that the Dutch had no interest in the violence committed against the Commonwealth's Jews because they were too distant, both in a geographical and in a cultural sense. In many respects, only Muslims rivalled the Jews as the ultimate Other to Europe's Christian population.[1085] From this perspective, the predicament of the faraway Ashkenazim failed to elicit printed moral outrage among the Dutch Christians because the latter found no markers of identification. As Rousseau would observe one century later, the development of a sense of pity, although an innate human property, ultimately hinges on our ability to recognize something of ourselves in one another.[1086] Nowadays, social psychologists would refer to this dynamic in terms of 'social proximity' or 'psychological distance'.[1087]

Today, the relation between identification, compassion, and public attention is a subject of debate. In January 2015 several opinion makers criticized the selective public attention for two different Islamist terrorist attacks, which had happened more or less simultaneously.[1088] Western media were captivated by the *Charlie Hebdo* attack in Paris, which had cost twelve lives.[1089] Millions of people around the world, among them fourteen world leaders going arm-in-arm at a commemorative demonstration, rallied to show their solidarity with the victims, holding up the now world-famous and endlessly modified slogan 'Je suis Charlie'. A few days before the attacks in Paris, Boko Haram had carried out a massacre in Baga, north-east Nigeria. According to Human Rights Watch, the death toll ranged between 150 and 2000.[1090] Baga, once home to about 300,000 residents, has since turned into a ghost town where less than a

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[1085] See Kaplan, *Divided by faith*, pp. 294–330.

[1086] R. Boyd, 'Pity's pathologies portrayed. Rousseau and the limits of democratic compassion', *Political Theory* 32–4 (2004), 520–521.

[1087] K.H. Kwon, M. Chadha, and K. Pellizzaro, 'Proximity and terrorism news in social media. A construal–level theoretical approach to networked framing of terrorism in Twitter', *Mass Communication and Society* 20–6 (2017), 880–882.

[1088] M. Shearlaw, 'Why did the world ignore Boko Haram's Baga attacks?', *The Guardian*, 12 January 2015, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/12/–sp–boko–haram–attacks–nigeria–baga–ignored–media/.

[1089] Twelve people were killed during the attack at the Charlie Hebdo headquarters. Five more were killed in related attacks.

[1090] M. Segun, 'Dispatches. What really happened in Baga, Nigeria?', *Human Rights Watch*, 14 January 2015, https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/01/14/dispatches–what–really–happened–baga–nigeria.

thousand people remain to work the surrounding fields.[1091] Compared to the events in Paris, the Baga Massacre received minimal attention from Western media.[1092] Demonstrations against the Nigerian embassy in London attracted a maximum of several hundred people.[1093] Twitter hashtag #IAmBaga became an implicit critique of the unequal news coverage.

A minority of the consumers of leading Western media would be comfortable admitting that they deem the life of a Frenchman to be worth more than that of a Nigerian. In other words, there is often a discrepancy between our political language of empathy and the moments in which we speak this language. Despite ostensibly being a constant factor in human social life, the concepts of 'social proximity' or 'psychological distance' do not in and of themselves give a satisfactory answer as to why certain events give rise to extensive news coverage and others do not. After all, it was and is the craft of opinion makers to bring distant suffering close. By and large, their endeavors revolve around reducing 'psychological distance', first of all, by simply confronting readers with the news and, second, by constructing narratives of identification and signification. The rejection of persecution on the basis of shared humanity especially could, in principle, have applied as easily to Lithuania's Jews as it had been to the Waldensian massacre that stirred Protestant Europe in 1655.

However, even in one of Europe's dominant hubs of international news production, printed opinion surrounding the persecution did not develop spontaneously. The availability of an inclusive, confessionally neutral political language and its applicability to a specific episode of religious persecution did not guarantee it turning into a cause célèbre. Dutch opinion makers and pamphleteers did not plow through all newspapers or interview refugee communities to find new objects of discussion. For an act of persecution to gather international publicity and become an object of printed discussion, several local and foreign political conditions were vital.

[1091] E. Egbejule, 'The massacre Nigeria forgot. A year after Boko Haram's attack on Baga', *The Guardian*, 9 January 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/09/nigeria–baga–massacre–boko–haram–1–year–on/.

[1092] C. Alter, 'Why *Charlie Hebdo* gets more attention than Boko Haram', *Time*, 15 January 2015, http.//time.com/3666619/why–charlie–hebdo–gets–more–attention–than–boko–haram/.

[1093] S. Brown, 'The British Nigerians leading the fight against Boko Haram', *Channel 4*, 26 January 2015, https://www.channel4.com/news/nigeria–boko–haram–protest–london–bring–back–our–girls/.

First, the early stretches of the road to international publicity were often paved by the persecuted themselves. They would not always decide to publicize their sufferings, even if they had the means. The main priority of subjects who had fallen from their sovereign's grace was to find their way back to living under his or her protection, provided that it was under acceptable conditions. Turning to foreign printing presses was only a viable option when it served this purpose. As long as there was no full breakdown of communication and the representatives of religious minorities were still pleading with their sovereign to find their way back into his favor, raising international publicity was not an obvious move. For the Huguenots under Louis XIV—as we have seen in Chapter 3—whether international publicity served a strategic purpose remained a controversial issue until they definitely fell from grace. Accordingly, there were few Huguenot publicity initiatives before 1685. The Waldensians, by contrast,—as we have seen in Chapters 1 and 2—*had* lost all access to their sovereign. Living in open confrontation with the authorities they mobilized the foreign press in order to gather the support of several European powers. However, they had to play by the rules to receive the compassion of foreign sovereigns; rather than admit their armed resistance—at least in the first instance—they presented themselves as passive and defenseless victims of religious persecution, in desperate need of an intervention on their behalf.

Second, opinion makers in the Dutch Republic, and other printing hubs in Europe appear to have followed similar patterns, were more eager to appropriate news about foreign persecutions if it could be reframed as relevant to domestic religio-political discussions. Through journalism, Dutch pamphleteers constructed narratives about their own society, linking their own past and future with the present of others across the border. Preachers invoked the Waldensians to stop the brotherly quarrel between England and the United Provinces and unite them against Rome; Orangists presented the religious policies of Louis XIV as the precursor of what would befall the Reformed in the United Provinces if the Statists of Amsterdam had their way; and politicians invoked Elizabeth I's support for the Dutch Revolt to justify an intervention in the civil war of the Cévennes.

As we have seen in Chapters 3, 5, and 6, little incentive from the persecuted was needed when foreign political authorities actively engaged themselves with their predicament and communicated their involvement publicly. This does not mean, however, that reframing

religious persecutions into domestic and international religio-political narratives was a game that was played exclusively by the authorities or those working within their patronage. Once the wheels were set in motion, an episode of persecution would often gain public momentum, and a wider range of different opinion makers—independently or with varying degrees of proximity to local, provincial, central, or foreign authorities—would join in the discussion. The Dutch Republic's political landscape was urbanized, decentralized, and layered, which meant that few opinion makers were not to some extent affiliated with a religious community, political body, or faction. This also meant that the specter of religious persecution was only explicitly used to criticize the authorities in times of political turmoil, when competing political factions tried to claim power and lambasted each other.

Still, the group engaging with printed opinion was varied. Dutch Catholics criticized the Reformed for caring about foreign persecutions while pursuing an intolerant policy at home; a sign of his limited power, Grand Pensionary Fagel published about the Huguenots to persuade Amsterdam to follow an anti-French policy ; the Dutch Reformed published about French exiles to criticize the patriotism of their Catholic compatriots; and Dutch Reformed authors made reference to executed Royal Prussian burgomasters to call for spiritual purification in the United Provinces.

This study has taken the Dutch Republic as its territorial boundary of observation. Nevertheless, it has also heeded Helmer Helmers' recent call to 'break down national barriers in the study of early modern vernacular literature'.[1094] After all, following the traces of what was published in the United Provinces about persecution in Savoy, France, or Poland-Lithuania has led us to, among many others, confidants of the Duke of Savoy in Paris, former court teachers in London, and Lutheran preachers in Königsberg. Often, print news media explicitly reflected on religious persecutions as internationally significant events; letters between Huguenot exiles in England and priests in France about the *dragonnades* were published in the United Provinces; Dutch newspapers eagerly reported interconfessional violence in Frankfurt over Toruń; the Elector of Brandenburg published pamphlets inviting Huguenots to settle in his lands in The Hague;[1095] purported manifestos from Cévenol insurgents were

[1094] Helmers, *Royalist republic*, p. 235.
[1095] Frederick I of Prussia, *Edict van sijn Cheurvorstelycke Doorlugtigheyt van Brandenburg Behelsende Alle de Gerechtigheden, Vrydommen en Privilegien dewelcke Hoogh gemelte sijne Cheurvorstelijcke Doorluchtigheyt van Brandeburgh aen de Franse vande*

written in English or Dutch cities, and almost simultaneously published in London, Amsterdam, and Berlin.

One open question is the reception of pamphlets. Future research should give us a clearer sense of who their audiences were. It is equally difficult to determine the extent to which printed opinion actually affected the policies of officeholders. Whether or not the normative languages pamphlets communicated, reflected dominant values and opinions, or whether they reflected arguments of which the public still had to be convinced, also remains an open question. Indeed, even though they clearly influence each other to a significant degree, it would be difficult to measure today's public opinion on the basis of leading media.

This study has demonstrated that opinion makers thought carefully about the publics they were hoping to reach or would inevitably reach due to their works' public nature, and adjusted the normative languages they used to frame a religious persecution accordingly. The Waldensians calculated that foreign governments would not appreciate their being insurgents and therefore used extensive legal argumentation to refute claims of having been disobedient. Moreover, they realized that by framing their predicament too much within their own confessional terms, they would potentially lose important allies across the confessional divide. Jurieu also played a confessionally neutral card to present the Huguenot persecution as unjust, unreasonable, and inhumane in the early 1680s in an attempt to convince Catholic audiences. When this strategy failed, he switched to a language of confessional truth and redemption to encourage remaining Huguenots to persist with their religion in the face of repression. Those trying to find political support for an intervention in the Cévennes played down the religiously sectarian language used by the Camisards, in order not to estrange both Huguenots in the Refuge and Catholics in France and in the League of Augsburg.

Gereformeerde Religie, die haer in sijne Staten sullen komen te nedersetten, accorderen sal. Gegeven tot Potsdam den 29. October 1685 (The Hague, 1685).

Table 1 *Normative principles in the vernacular press*

Normative language	**Argumentation**	**Community of appeal**	**Example**
1a. Confessional truth	Religious persecution is unjust because of the confessional superiority of the victims (God's elect).	Adherents of the 'true religion'	'Author of the laurel' (Chapter 6)
1b. Confessional solidarity	The world is divided into opposing religious confessions. Preference to protect one's own is legitimate.	1. Members of one's own confession. 2. General/ confessionally neutral	Lieuwe van Aitzema (Chapter 2)
2a. Positive rule of law	Rejection of religious persecution because it does not conform to established positive laws. Establishes that act of persecution is indeed religious in nature.	General/ confessionally neutral	Waldensian pamphlets (Chapter 2)
2b. Natural rule of law	Rejection of religious persecution because it does not conform to natural law/law of peoples. Establishes that act of persecution is indeed religious in nature.	General/ confessionally neutral	Abel Boyer (Chapter 5)
3. Reason	Rejection of religious persecution because 1. it is a form of bad government, caused by the persecutor not being guided by reason 2. will not lead to desired effect or does not take into account other effects; 3. does not conform to reason of state; 4. discrepancy between motivation and legitimation of persecutor cognizable through the observer's reasoning.	1.General/ confessionally neutral 2. All reasonable people as opposed to unreasonable people	Pierre Jurieu (Chapter 3)
4. Humanity	Religious persecution is unjust because 1. humans should be well-disposed to one another; 2. humans are naturally well-disposed to one another 3. the violent behavior is not humanlike	1.General/ confessionally neutral 2. All humane people as opposed to inhumane people	Benjamin Hoadly (Chapter 6)
5. Sovereignty	Religious persecution is the prerogative and right of the state. There should be no domestic or foreign intermingling with the state's prerogative.	General/ confessionally neutral. (But also denial of a domestic and transnational community of appeal.	Savoyard court (Chapter 1)

Historians have often approached the employment of different normative principles with suspicion. They have argued that opinion makers just used the arguments they believed could convince the greatest number of people, leading to a sharp divide between motivation and legitimation. Yet, in the context of this study, whether or not the opinion makers employing these languages were truly motivated by them is of secondary importance. More important is that these languages all appear to have been part of a shared normative repertoire, both within one's religious and political community, and across confessional and political divides. The Savoyard court, for instance, had initially only propagated their measures domestically, through a discourse of confessional truth. Yet the Waldensians called them out using legal and humanitarian arguments, ultimately compelling their ruler to also apply the same confessionally neutral normative principle to counter their claims before an international audience. Jurieu developed a universalized image of the human psyche and human religiosity—applicable to Jews, Muslims, and Protestants alike—to defy the policy of persecution as both unreasonable and inhumane. Jurieu certainly believed that the Reformed religion was the only true religion; he extensively defended confessional truth claims in other works. This does not, however, mean that his arguments about human nature, reason, and empathy were insincere or less secular.

Of course, some forms of argumentation struck a more sensitive chord than others. That news of persecution led to days of prayer for coreligionists, interconfessional brawls in Dutch ports, and anti-Catholic political measures clearly indicates that some people readily interpreted events through a sectarian prism. But this also points to the fact that people developed secular markers of confessional distinction. Instead of quarreling about dogma—which rarely happened in news media about persecution—people would pride themselves on being part of a religious community in which people were not fanatical, but behaved reasonably, humanely, and treasured the rule of law. One can observe similar dynamics today; during the 2015 refugee crisis several Eastern European countries declared that they would only allow Christians into their country. Slovakia's Ministry of Interior defended its decision not with religious truth claims, but because Muslims were 'not going to like it here'.[1096] Polish

[1096] 'Migrant crisis. Slovakia "will only accept Christians", 19 August 2015, BBC, http.//www.bbc.com/news/world–europe–33986738.

immigration officers, in turn, justified their stance because allowing non-Christian refugees could be a threat to Poland and provided a 'great way for Isis to locate their troops'.[1097] Both utterances are perfect examples of what this study has identified as confessional solidarity.

This leaves us with the fundamental question, posed at beginning of this study. How did the public evaluation of religious persecution change over the course of a century? As has been discussed in the Introduction, many historians have tried to describe the secularization of politics by tracing the rise of one normative political principle within the timeframe of this work, thereby often implying the fall of another. This text has not been able to establish such a rise or fall. We have not observed that one normative language became increasingly dominant over another in the course of seventy years. Does that mean that nothing changed in printed political debate in the century after the Peace of Westphalia?

Judging from printed opinion published in the Dutch Republic there was no decrease in references to religion as a normative principle. In fact, the Tumult of Toruń in 1724-1725 was more clearly interpreted through a confessional lens than the Piedmont Easter in 1655. This study has shown, however, that it is crucial to distinguish between two forms of religious argumentation: confessional truth and confessional solidarity. The normative principle of confessional truth built on the idea of the dogmatic superiority of ones' own confessional community, remained fairly stable throughout the studied period. We have seen, though, that it was increasingly differentiated from the idea of confessional solidarity. The normative principle of confessional solidarity was built around the perception that confessional communities stick together, and are often—though not necessarily—antagonistic toward each other.

While both confessional truth and confessional solidarity sprang from the religious polemic of the sixteenth century, the normative principle of confessional solidarity became increasingly separated from references to religious truth. This long-term development merits wider scrutiny, as it marks a change from political conflicts over religious belief—beginning in a time when all Protestants were former Catholics and stable confessional identities had not yet developed—to political conflicts fueled by religious identity. This is paramount if we wish

[1097] 'Poland favours Christian refugees from Syria', 21 August 2015, *Financial Times*, https://www.ft.com/content/6edfdd30–472a–11e5–b3b2–1672f710807b.

to understand why confessional discourse could remain important in politics for centuries to come. An old Irish joke provides a striking illustration of this differentiation:

> A gormless tourist has wondered into one of Belfast's more belligerent quarters. A sectarian thug approaches and asks our hero what religion he practises. 'Oh, I'm an atheist' the chap says. The hooligan leans forward and breathes beery breath: 'Are you a Catholic atheist or a Protestant atheist?'[1098]

Benjamin Kaplan has observed that in the sixteenth century, 'Europe's religious divisions […] threw ideological fuel on the fires of existing [conflicts]', whereby 'competitions for power, wealth, or land, became cosmic struggles between the forces of God and Satan'.[1099] This study has shown that this ideological fuel was so potent because it also turned these struggles into existential and transnational struggles over group survival without resort to the forces of God and Satan. Also without talk about dogma, confession marked and distinguished political communities.

In other words, the century after Westphalia was not defined by the rise of some normative languages and the fall of others. All persisted, but they were infused with new meaning. The normative principle of humanity, for instance, was mainly used negatively in 1655, as something which the perpetrator was lacking. In the 1680s, it also became a trait to describe the victims of persecution. For instance, it could be used to forgivingly explain why not all persecuted people followed the path to martyrdom. Finally, in the 1720s it was elevated to being the foundation of human benevolence, on which religious sentiment could have a negative rather than a positive influence. These different approaches to the normative principle of humanity were complementary rather than exclusionary. In other words, this was a century in which new variations to old normative principles developed. The changes in political languages in the century after Westphalia should therefore be seen primarily in terms of differentiation.

Between ca. 1650 and 1750 these normative principles existed alongside one another, were negotiated in relation to each other, sometimes competed with one another, and were

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[1098] D. Clarke, 'How will you answer the religion question on your Census 2016 form?', *The Irish Times*, 23 April 2016, https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/heritage/how–will–you–answer–the–religion–question–on–your–census–2016–form–1.2620971.

[1099] Kaplan, *Divided by faith*, p. 102.

often conflated or integrated in one argument. Which normative principle took precedent, depended on the (imaged) discursive field in which one took part, and secondly, on whom the author was trying to convince; i.e. whether one's intended public consisted of Dutch Protestants, all the ambassadors within a desired or actual alliance, or all Europeans of all possible sorts. This study has also given rise to new questions about long-term changes in political language. To understand how political language changed over time, this study shows that two strands of future research will be particularly valuable. First, looking at the perception of public spheres is imperative. I mean this not so much in the sense of who partook in printing opinion or how many people were influenced by it, or to what extent it was actually independent from the political sphere—although these are all important questions. Instead, I want to argue that we should pay attention to (long-term changes in) the imagined scope of print media: Who did the publishers and writers believe the supposed audiences of their reports and stories to be, and what type of groups did readers themselves believe to be part of?

In his seminal book *Imagined communities*, Benedict Anderson assigned a central role to 'print capitalism' in the development of nationalism in the late eighteenth century. He argued that the emergence of printing press capitalism allowed a larger number of people to gain access to mass-produced media, leading to a wider dissemination of common discourses. The sense that everyone was taking part in the same public sphere and consuming the same common discourses gave rise to an 'imagined community', the nation. Now that we increasingly begin to grasp the often transnational character of early modern public spheres and their striking flexibility and cross-fertilization, we can safely argue that the intensification of print media and their increased targeting to specific masses—as described by Anderson—may have widened the 'imagined community' in one sense, but also severely narrowed it in another. Appeals to humanity or all reasonable people also constituted, to an extent, an imagined community, but its boundaries were soft. At the same time, inclusive normative principles have a Janus-face as they also provide fuel to exclude groups; according to many early modern Protestants, Catholics tended to behave inhumanely; today, Muslims are often

accused of being unreasonable and in need of their own Enlightenment, like the one that Europe had in the eighteenth century.[1100]

Moreover, it should not be forgotten that during the European Enlightenment discourses about what it meant to be human not only led to abolitionism and early feminism, but also to scientific racism and sexism. These developments remind us that we should not write about the development of humanity as a normative principle in triumphant terms alone.[1101] In the century examined in this study, Dutch entrepreneurs shipped hundreds of thousands of enslaved people from Africa to the West and East Indies. Around 1750, an estimated 64,000 slaves lived in the Dutch West Indies and more than 75,000 in the Republic's eastern colonies.[1102] Few contemporary Dutchmen criticized this practice, even though applying a humanitarian language in their favor would not have been unthinkable, as criticism against slavery on the basis of shared humanity had existed since at least the sixteenth century.[1103] Moreover, everyone knew about the horrors of slavery through the harrowing reports about the European Christians that were enslaved by Barbary pirates.[1104]

A second strand of valuable new research would be to go further back in time, to the sixteenth century—and perhaps even further—to trace the genealogy of humanity as a normative political principle. In line with recent scholarship on the cultural memory of the wars of religion, this book has shown that these wars were never far away in discussions about religious persecution in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This study suggests that politicized appeals to humanity developed in the face of religious violence, as a way to find common ground across the confessional divide, but also to blacken the other confession on another basis than the soundness of its theology. Past research has already demonstrated that

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[1100] See, for instance, M. Shermer, 'Why Islam? Of the three great monothestic religions one did not go through the Enlightenment', *The Moral Arc*, 25 February 2015, https://moralarc.org/why–islam–of–the–three–great–monotheistic–religions–one–did–not–go–through–enlightenment/; for an example of recent criticism of this narrative see C. de Bellaigue, 'Stop calling for a Muslim Enlightenment', *The Guardian*, 19 February 2015, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/19/stop–calling–for–a–muslim–enlightenment.

[1101] For examples of how humanitarian language were applied for a strikingly aggressive imperialist projects see M. MacDonald, 'Lord Vivian's tears. The moral hazards of humanitarian intervention', in F. Klose (ed.), *The emergence of humanitarian intervention. Ideas and practice from the nineteenth century to the present* (Cambridge, 2015), pp. 121–141.

[1102] M. van Rossum, *Kleurrijke tragiek. De geschiedenis van slavernij in Azië onder de VOC* (Hilversum, 2015).

[1103] Weller, 'Humanitarianism before humanitarianism?, pp. 151–168.

[1104] See M. Guasco, *Slaves and Englishmen. Human bondage in the early modern Atlantic world* (Philadelphia, PA, 2014), pp. 121–154.

William of Orange's propagandists 'invented' the idea of a Dutch nation, which allowed both Catholic and Reformed inhabitants of the Low Countries to rally behind his cause.[1105] Some decades earlier the Schmalkaldic League made similar appeals to the German nation, but in confessionally exclusive terms, equating being a true German with being a Protestant.[1106] Appeals to humanity may have similar, albeit less territorially bounded, origins.

The Last Expulsion

Having summed up several observations from this study, we can now return to Ashkenazi Jews in Poland-Lithuania to better understand why the non-Jewish Dutch presses barely paid attention to their fate. First, there is no evidence that the persecuted themselves sought access to the vernacular press. Second, there is a discrepancy between the inclusiveness of prevalent political languages and the groups for which they are used. People may have exclaimed that persecution was inhumane, but, in general, only when coreligionists were persecuted was moral outrage publicly disseminated. This leads us to point three: the discrepancy between inclusive political language and discrimination between those in whose favor it is uttered is in part constituted by narratives of identification; even without religious truth claims, the persecution of Protestants by Catholics leads to a more obvious reframing within Dutch cultural memory or the United Provinces' political landscape than does the persecution of Jews by Cossacks. These same observations can be seen through the communicative dynamics of the last mass expulsion of Jews in Europe before the Holocaust, and the last episode of religious persecution that will be described in this study.[1107]

Shortly before Christmas 1744 the zealously Catholic and anti-Semitic Maria Theresia (1717–1780), at that time Queen of Bohemia and future Empress of the Holy Roman Empire, decreed that all Jews were to leave Prague within a month and remove themselves entirely from

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[1105] A. Duke, 'In defence of the common fatherland. Patriotism and liberty in the Low Countries, 1555–1576', in R. Stein and J. Pollmann (eds.), *Networks, regions and nations. Shaping identities in the Low Countries, 1300–1650* (Leiden, 2010), pp. 217–240.

[1106] G. Haug-Moritz, 'The Holy Roman Empire, the Schmalkald League, and the idea of confessional nation-builing', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 152–4 (2008), pp. 435–437.

[1107] B. Stollberg–Rillinger, *Maria Theresia. Die Kaiserin in Ihrer Zeit* (Munich, 2017), p. 639.

Bohemia within six months. One fourth of Prague's population—Europe's largest Ashkenazi community—was accused of having collaborated with the Prussians, who had occupied the city in the recent past. Some 13,000 inhabitants were forced to leave their homes, while the 40,000 Jews who lived outside the city began to prepare their imminent exile.[1108]

Although they did not communicate with the queen directly, in response, Prague's Ashkenazi community leaders practiced *shtadlanut*, negotiation and intercession with Christian authorities.[1109] *Shtadlanim* (spokesmen) persuaded people within the queen's inner circle to plea for their cause, presenting long accounts of the Jews' enduring loyalty. They also offered to cover all military expenses in Bohemia for six months—a generous offer to make during the War of the Austrian Succession (1740–48).[1110] *Shtadlanim* also sent letters to several Jewish communities abroad with requests to they plead with their own local Christian authorities. This created a snowball effect; influential community leaders and court Jews throughout and beyond the Holy Roman Empire independently began to mobilize their international networks, writing to other communities with requests to aid their distressed brethren in the faith.[1111]

The most prominent among them, Wolf Wertheimer (1681–1765), planned a tightly orchestrated campaign, sending letter templates to the Jewish communities of Venice, Warsaw, Amsterdam, and many others.[1112] The receivers would present these precisely dictated letters of intercession to their governments, who, in turn, were to send them to Maria Theresia in their name. As a consequence, almost all intercession letters sent to the Queen of Bohemia argued that it was unjust to punish innocents for the crimes committed by some individuals, an argument also used by the Waldensians in 1655. Wertheimer even addressed draft letters to

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[1108] S. Plaggenborg, 'Maria Theresia und die Böhmischen Juden', *Bohemia. Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kultur der Böhmischen Länder* 39–1 (1998), 1. The 20,000 Jews living in Moravia were also banished; L. Kochan, *The making of western Jewry 1600–1819* (Basingstoke, 2004), p. 170; Stollberg–Rillinger, *Maria Theresia*, p. 637.

[1109] *Shtadlanut* developed into a refined practice in the early modern period, leading some historians to define it as Jewish diplomacy *avant la lettre*; M. Thulin, 'Von der Shtadlanut zur Diplomatie jüdischer Fragen', in s.n. (ed.), *Konvergenzen. Beiträge von Doktorandinnen und Doktoranden des Simon–Dubnow–Instituts* (Leipzig, 2014), pp. 73–76; M. Thulin, 'Introduction. Transformations and intersections of *shtadlanut* and *tzedakah* in the early modern and modern period', *Jewish Culture and History* 19–1 (2018), p. 2.

[1110] F. Guesnet, 'Textures of intercession. Rescue efforts for the Jews of Prague', in D. Deiner (ed.), *Jahrbuch des Simon–Dudnow–Instituts* (Göttingen, 2005), p. 362.

[1111] These were Vienna, Frankfurt, Amsterdam, London, Venice, Augburg, and Nijmegen; S. Avineri, 'Prague 1744—Lake Success 1947. Statecraft without a state', *Jewish Studies at the Central European University* 4 (2005), pp. 8–9.

[1112] Ibid., pp. 11–14.

the Holy See, in which he effectively spoke with the pope's voice, admonishing the empress for unlawfully punishing innocents.[1113] Within months, Maria Theresia had received a flood of protests ranging from the kings of England, Denmark, and Poland, to the Sublime Porte in Istanbul and the merchant guilds of Amsterdam, Hamburg, Leipzig, and London.[1114] All these efforts ultimately failed to have their desired effect. Maria Theresia would only revoke the edict in 1748, in a move to gain the approval of the Bohemian Estates for a new system for centralized taxation.[1115] Yet the intercession efforts were so massive in scope that this case has often been considered a landmark in informal diplomacy and Jewish diplomatic agency.[1116] What uninitiated audiences could learn about these diplomatic efforts through printed news media was, however, strikingly limited. Why?

Of course, as a rather straightforward persecutory policy from one of Europe's political centers, newspapers quickly picked up on the news. The *Leydse Courant* reported Maria Theresia's decision within two weeks, still cautiously stating that whereas 'it is not yet clear why [she expels the Jews] she must have a good reason since there is no place in the world where the Jews have so many privileges'.[1117] Four days later, the *Oprechte Haerlemsche Courant* reported that the States General had ordered Burmania to intercede.[1118] The information newspapers managed to provide, however, was limited. The *'s Gravenhaegse Courant*, for instance, published on 29 January that Christian VI of Denmark had written a letter of intercession. Yet it failed to reproduce that letter, as the newspaper had done when reporting Toruń in 1725.[1119]

[1113] Guesnet, 'Textures of intercession', pp. 368–369.
[1114] Ibid., p. 368.
[1115] F. Guesnet, 'Negotiating under duress. The expulsion of Salzburg Protestants (1732) and the Jews of Prague (1744)', in F. Guesnet, C. Laborde, and L. Lee (eds.), *Negotiating religion. Cross–disciplinary perspectives* (Abingdon, 2017), p. 59.
[1116] J. Dekel–Chen, 'Philanthropy, diplomacy, and Jewish internationalism', in M.B. Hart and T. Michels (eds.), *The Cambridge history of Judaism*, vol. 8. *The Modern World 1815–2000* (Cambridge, 2017), pp. 477–504; Thulin, 'Von der Shtadlanut zur Diplomatie'.
[1117] *Leydse Courant*, 1 January 1745.
[1118] *Oprechte Haerlemsche Courant*, 5 January 1745; the few letters that did leak out were gratefully reproduced by periodicals; for instance, the *Mercure historique et politique*, the *Mémoire historiques pour le siècle courant*, the *Lettres historiques (et politique) contenant ce qui se passe de plus important en Europe*, and the *Gazette de Leyde* all reproduced a letter sent on 5 March 1745 by Secretary of State the Earl of Harrington to the British ambassador to Vienna; Anonymous, *Mercure historique et politique* (The Hague, 1745), p. 363; J. Desroches–Parthenay (ed.), *Mémoire historiques pour le siècle courant* (Amsterdam, 1745), pp. 278–279; Anonymous, *Lettres historiques (et Politique) Contenant ce qui se passe de plus important en Europe* (Amsterdam, 1745), pp. 341–342; *Gazette de Leyde*, J. Luzad, ed., Leiden, 19 March 1745.
[1119] See Chapter 6.

Those who wanted a more elaborate moral judgment regardingthe event would look for pamphlets in vain. Dutch periodicals too offered little solace. The content in the *Europische Mercurius*—which did not shy away from providing stark criticism where appropriate—barely differed from the factual coverage provided by newspapers.[1120] Periodicals published in French had somewhat more to offer. The one to elaborate upon the matter most extensively was the *Journal Universel*, which ran from 1743 to 1748.[1121] Pierre Quesnel (1695?–1774), the journal's editor, was a militant Jansenist who had fled persecution in France in 1743.[1122] The *Journal Universel* accordingly uses the expulsion to polemicize against the intolerance of Catholic rulers. Quesnel argues that when Maria Theresia's *ordonnance* takes full effect, its consequences will 'be more fatal to a nation than the unfortunate religious prejudice that has odiously been shown by all Catholic princes':[1123]

> This unfortunate people found […] no consoler […] in Catholic courts. […] They solely owe their resurrection to the heterodox powers which, by their charitable actions, have continued to show the whole Christian world that the first Religion, the first laws, the first virtues must be humanity, commiseration, love for one's neighbor, wherever he may be; that within Jesus Christ there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile, all men, all Christians must, by the example of their divine Master, love each other without distinction. […] Why have these precepts been practiced so badly for so many centuries in our communion? Why this contempt, this aversion, this species of horror for all those who are not [like us]? Ask our prelates, our priests, our monks, our parents who inspire us with all these beautiful sentiments from our most tender age, and which reason has so much difficulty in rectifying thereafter.[1124]

1120 *Nederlandsch gedenkboek of Europische Mercurius, eerste deel van 't jaar 1745*, vol. 56. B. Van Gerrevink (ed.), (Amsterdam, 1746), pp. 50–51.

1121 The *Journal universel, ou mémoires pour servir à l'histoire civile, politique, ecclésiastique et littéraire du XVIII^e siècle* was at the time published by Laurent Bekoske in The Hague, but would later be published in Utrecht and Amsterdam. It ran from 1743 to 1748; J. Sgard, 'Le Journal Universel 2', in *Dictionnaire des journaux*, http.//dictionnaire–journaux.gazettes18e.fr/journal/0787–le–journal–universel–2.

1122 F. Moreau, 'Pierre Quesnel (1695?–1774)', in *Dictionnaire des Journalistes 1600–1789* (1991, 2005), http.//dictionnaire–journalistes.gazettes18e.fr/journaliste/662–pierre–quesnel; for the Jansenist persecutions in France see J. Merrick, 'Conscience and citizenship in eighteenth–century France', *Eighteenth Century Studies* 21–1 (1987), 48–70.

1123 '[…] seroient bien plus fatales à une nation que le malheureux préjugé de la Religion a rendu odieux à tous les Princes Catholoqiues'; P. Quesnel (ed.), *Journal Universel, ou Mémoires pour Servir à l'Histoire Civile, Politique, Ecclésiastique et Littéraire du XVIII^e Siècle*, vol. 7 (The Hague, 1745), p. 70.

1124 'Ce peuple infortune n'a trouvé, dans la désolation, aucun consolateur ni interesseur dans les cours catholiques, mais qu'il doit uniquement sa resurrection a des puissances etherodoxes qui, par cette action charitable, ont continue de faire voir a tout l'univers chrétien que la premiere religion, les premieres loix, les premieres vertus doivent être l'humanité, la commiseration, l'amour du prochain quell qu'il soit; que comme en Jesus Christ il n'y a point de stinction entre le Juif & le gentil, tous les hommes, tous les chrétiens doivent, a l'exemple de ce divin Maitre, s'aimer sans distinction les uns les autres. Telle es la loi. Tels sont les prophêtes.

The question of Prague's Jews thus became an occasion to once again discuss the old conflict between Protestant forbearance and Catholic intolerance, albeit by a man who was theologically somewhat stuck in the middle and used this dispute in defense of Jansenism. Indeed, Quesnel concludes that this was the same line of thinking that led to the 1713 promulgation of *Unigenitus*, a doctrinal constitution devised by Paris and Rome as a final blow against the Jansenists in France;[1125] here too, the production of public opinion was guided by a religio-political agenda, and here too, it was legitimized through the secular normative language of humanity.

To understand the relative absence of public attention we should therefore look first and foremost at those whose political agendas included the Bohemian Jews. None of the intercessors would really benefit from turning to the press as a political tool. For the campaigning court Jews confidentiality was crucial;[1126] interceding against the policy of the very queen he worked for, Wertheimer repeatedly insisted on the importance of secrecy to his correspondents.[1127] The Sephardic and Ashkenazi communities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and The Hague gained direct access to the States General and immediately convinced them to intercede with sound economic argumentation.[1128] Generating public debate would constitute nothing but an unnecessary detour. The same went for foreign courts: Europe's political centers had been mobilized and pointed in one direction without recourse to the blunt blows of public opinion.

The States General had to be careful too; they interceded with their ally in the midst of a war that held most of Europe in its grip.[1129] Proudly presenting themselves as guardians of the foreign oppressed through print—as they had done with the Waldensians—would serve

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Pourquoi ces préceptes sont–ils, depuis tant de siècles, si mal pratiquez dans nôtre communion? Pourquoi ce mépris, cette aversion, cette espéce d'horreur pour tous ceux qui n'en sont pas? … Demandez le a nos prêlats, a nos prêtres, a nos moines, a nos parents qui nous inspirent tous ces beaux sentimens dès l'age le plus tender, & que la raison a toutes les peines du monde a rectifier par la suite'; ibid., pp. 360–361.

[1125] J. Merrick, '"Disputes over words" and constitutional conflict in France, 1730–1732', *French Historical Studies* 14–4 (1986), 497.

[1126] Guesnet, 'Negotiating under duress'.

[1127] M. Thulin, 'Jewish families as intercessors and patrons. The case of the Wertheimer family in the eighteenth century', *Jewish Culture and History* 19–1 (2018), 46; Guesnet, 'Textures of intercession', pp. 372–374.

[1128] Gerrevink, *Nederlandsch gedenkboek*, pp. 89–90; I. Prins, 'Een Hollandsche interventie ten behoeve van Oostenrijksche Joden', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 30 (1915), 72; Avineri, 'Prague 1744', p. 10.

[1129] In Chapter 3 we have seen that the States General refused to intercede with Louis XIV, with whom it was not officially in conflict, for the Huguenots.

little political purpose and could indeed backfire. The interceding ambassador to the Viennese court, Barthold Douma of Burmania, in turn, had no reason to engage in public diplomacy to pressure Maria Theresia. Many intercessors used a strategy of warning the queen that the expulsion would damage her reputation, but they hampered this argument by publicly contributing to her defamation. If one professes to help a monarch save face, one has to do so discretely, not in front of the world.[1130]

Regardless of the emphasis on discretion, however, the argumentative strategies activists used were not very different. Burmania's correspondence shows that intercessors negotiated the event with recourse to some of the universalizing languages discussed throughout this study. When some Austrian ministers told the ambassador not to meddle with domestic issues he responded by saying that

> although all sovereigns are master within their realm, they should not therefore injure friends and strangers. Those who suffer from this, have the right to resist such ordinances and show and defend their interests, as we are currently doing.[1131]

In April, Burmania further elaborated upon the limits that humanity imposed on sovereignty in a missive to the States General about a discussion he had with the Austrian court chancellor:

> In my opinion the first question is whether the case is equitable or not. […] If yes, the case will justify itself […] without the queen having to fear any persecution of her allies and other powers. If not, her Majesty will not be able, despite all her supreme power, to avert the bad impression, reflections and consequences of a case like this. […]

[1130] Accordingly, the first public evaluation of the queen appears to have been not a defamation, but an indirect, albeit perhaps somewhat ironic, celebration. On 25 May, a medal was coined commemorating the supposed revocation of the expulsion on 15 May. On the one side it shows Queen Maria Theresa sitting upon her throne, flanked by the female personifications of justice and charity. The Book of Samuel is loosely quoted in Latin 'Let not the queen impute anything unto his servant'. On the other, we see the Jewish temple, decorated with the weapons of Poland, Sweden, England, and the United Provinces. Although these medals were probably minted with Jewish consumers in mind, they were advertised more broadly; an advertisement in the *Leydse Courant* notified its readers that they could order it for 15 guilders in Haarlem, Amsterdam, Leiden, Rotterdam, and Dordrecht. The minters had, however, rejoiced too soon; A. Polak, *Joodse penningen in de Nederlanden* (Amsterdam, 1958), p. 9; *Leydse Courant*, 20 October 1745.

[1131] '[...] dat ieder souverein wel meester is in zijn land, maar vrienden en vreemden daardoor niet behoort te schaden. Dat diegenen, die daardoor lijden, het recht hebben, tegen dergelijke ordonnantien op te komen en hunne belangen aan te toonen en te verdedigen, gelijk wij dit nu doen'; cited in Prins, 'Hollandsche Interventie', p. 76.

> Sovereigns, say what you like, are accountable for their deeds to God and to man, even more than others.[1132]

Burmania's observations bring us to a general conclusion. State persecutions of minorities are disruptive events. Then, as now, they acutely show that projects of rulers and states to impose uniformity on their subjects often lapse into violence. At the same time, communicating religious persecution can lead individuals, communities, and societies to articulate their core values and develop strategies about how to live together despite the differences that divide people. Unfortunately, they often fail to do so. Hence, the treatment of English Catholics, Ashkenazi Jews, or enslaved people shipped by the Dutch to the East and the West Indies remained virtually uncriticized in the United Provinces, despite there being well-developed inclusive languages of common humanity, reason, and rule of law. If we want to understand the dynamics of moral outrage, we should therefore not only examine the norms of a given society, but also when, how, and why these norms were or were not activated for specific situations. Printed opinion was and is a powerful weapon of marginalization, but actual persecution, as many early modern Europeans already realized, often thrives on the silence of the press.

[1132] 'Mijns bedunkens de eerste quaestie is of de zaak recht en billijk is of niet […] zoo ja, dat deze zaak zich van zelf zal justificeeren en redden, zonder dat de Koninging daaromtrent eenige persecutie van haar geallieerden en andere mogendheden heeft te vreezen; zo neen, dat hare Majesteit met alle hare oppermacht de kwade impression, reflexien, en gevolgen van een dergelijke zaak niet kan verhinderen. Dat de Souverainen, men segge wat men wil, responsabel zijn wegens haere deaden voor God, en voor de menschen, ja meer als andere'; cited in ibid., p. 78.