

# Supporting the Waldensians: The Politics of Transnational Aid in the Dutch Republic, 1655-1731

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## Abstract

Early modern aid to foreign fellow believers is usually seen as an expression of confessional solidarity, initiated by and through religious networks. By studying four collections organised in the Dutch Republic between 1655 and 1731 in aid of Waldensians persecuted in Savoy, this article argues for a broadening of our perspective on transnational aid beyond the narrow confines of religious solidarity. It investigates the role of the Dutch civil authorities in the provision of transnational aid to foreign Protestants, through an analysis of the decision-making process that followed aid requests, the manner in which charitable collections were organised, and how the resulting proceeds were used. Even if aid was only given to fellow believers, for the Dutch authorities such aid was never merely a question of confessional solidarity: it was first and foremost an instrument of national foreign policy. This adds an important dimension to our understanding of transnational aid to foreign fellow believers.

*Keywords:* transnational aid, confessional solidarity, charity fundraising, Waldensians, international politics, immigration

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In 1637, the ongoing hardships of the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) forced German ministers from the Palatinate to make an urgent appeal to 'the world-famous generosity and compassion' of the Dutch Republic.<sup>1</sup> A few years later, in 1643, English Puritan ministers likewise presumed that eliciting Dutch support for Irish Protestants experiencing persecution would be a straightforward matter, as the Dutch 'have always been famous for their charity to the oppressed'.<sup>2</sup> Nearly a century later, in 1731, the Dutch pamphleteer Claes Bruin seized the occasion of a very successful collection for Waldensians expelled from Savoy to praise Holland's generosity towards oppressed fellow believers: 'Merciful Holland, wealthy province, /Jewel of Compassion, /Which offers its wealth for the benefit/ Of him who cries for his misfortune, /Especially the oppressed' (fig. 1).<sup>3</sup> By the first half of the seventeenth century, the Dutch Republic had managed to develop a reputation for supporting foreign fellow believers, a reputation that persists to this day, as international historiography confirms the huge sums of money collected by the Dutch for Reformed victims of Catholic violence in the Palatinate (1620s-1640s) and Ireland (1643-1644), for displaced Waldensians (1655-1731), and in the 1680s for Huguenot refugees from France.<sup>4</sup>

Historians usually explain early modern transnational solidarity as emanating from within the context of a shared confessional identity. Ole Peter Grell, for example, has argued that the engagement with Calvinists in the Palatinate during the Thirty Years' War was based on a strong sense of belonging to an 'international brotherhood of the godly'. He observed that international religious networks and church members, especially those from refugee backgrounds, were crucial in generating solidarity and transferring aid.<sup>5</sup>

1 Nahum and Wogsius, *Ootmoedighe requeste*: 'De in alle werelt beroemde liberaliteijt en mede-lijden'. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are the author's.

2 Gauge, *Copie*: 't'alle tijt vermaert gheweest over den arbeyt der liefde aende ghene die in verdruckinghe voor desen zijn gheweest'.

3 Bruin, *Ter gedachtenisse*: 'Barmhertig Holland, ryk geweste, /Juweel van mededooghenheid, /Die uw vermogen geeft ten beste/ Aan hem die om zijn rampspoed schreit/Byzonder aan verdrevelingen.'

4 Grell, *Brethren*, 229; Grell, 'Godly Charity'; Boersma, "'Yrelandsche traenen'". For an overview of Waldensian collections, including the proceeds, see Boersma, *Noodhulp zonder natiestaat*, 95-96. On Huguenot collections, see: Bots, Posthumus Meyjes, and Wieringa, *Vlucht*, 70-73; Berg, *Réfugiés*, 322-323.

5 Grell, *Brethren*, 301.



Scholars within the field of memory studies have shown that memories of forced migration, exile, and victimhood during the early stages of the Dutch Revolt fuelled a national discourse that framed religious exile as something to be proud of. The arrival of large numbers of religious refugees in the Dutch Republic after 1585, and their activism in creating new patriotic images, further strengthened this national narrative, which in turn fostered identification with persecuted and displaced Protestants elsewhere and shaped Dutch perspectives on religious conflicts abroad.<sup>6</sup> This particularly strong identification with foreign Protestants is usually seen as the foundation of Dutch transnational solidarity. It is, therefore, not surprising that research on transnational aid has focused primarily on religious actors and confessional rhetoric. More recently, however, historians have noted that this engagement with foreign Protestants was not only justified in confessional language. While Lynn Hunt's ground-breaking study of humanitarianism located its invention in the late eighteenth century, recent studies on the early roots of human rights have shown that 'common humanity' was a political norm long before the Enlightenment.<sup>7</sup> David Trim has argued that by the middle of the seventeenth century, foreign intervention on behalf of persecuted fellow believers could be justified not only on confessional grounds but also on humanitarian ones, although he contended that Britain was an exception.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, David de Boer has recently pointed out that, when arguing their case in the public media, persecuted minorities in this period drew from secular ideas, such as the rule of law, reason, and humanity, in addition to confessional considerations.<sup>9</sup> These studies suggest that we need to broaden our approach to transnational engagement with foreign co-religionists and consider other factors. Moving beyond the religious perspective, therefore, this essay argues that political motives played a crucial role in turning engagement with foreign fellow believers into practical assistance.

Relief for victims of large-scale persecution usually required a great deal of money, which in the early modern era was mainly raised through voluntary donations. In centralised states, national collections could be ordered by the king and performed through the national church.<sup>10</sup> Yet organising national collections was not an obvious choice in the decentralised Dutch Republic, which was essentially no more than a union of seven sovereign provinces acting jointly only in foreign affairs. In turn, the provincial States were collaborations between the major cities and nobles.<sup>11</sup> The result of this decentralised system was that any final decision on charitable collections rested at the local level.

6 Müller, *Exile Memories*; Pollmann, *Memory in Early Modern Europe*, 38, 113-115; Geert H. Janssen, 'Republic of the Refugees', 249-252. For a recent overview of migration into the Republic: Lucassen and Lucassen, *Vijf eeuwen migratie*, 17-49.

7 Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights*; Delgado, "'All People'"; Weller, 'Humanitarianism Before Humanitarianism?'; Grigore, 'Humanism and its Humanitas'.

8 Trim, "'If a Prince'", 63-64.

9 De Boer, *Religious Persecution*.

10 In Britain, for example, the government issued 'church briefs' to raise voluntary contributions for various types of suffering and adversity. While most briefs were limited to a specific area, briefs for persecuted continental Protestants allowed collections throughout England and Wales, and sometimes in Ireland: Aufferberg, 'Church-State Philantropy'; Houston, 'Church Briefs'.

11 A good overview of the Republic's political organisation is to be found in Onnekink, 'Body Politic'. See also Prak, 'The Dutch Republic as a Bourgeois Society', 135-136.

Since collections were commonplace in early modern Dutch cities, they were strictly regulated by the city councils. While 'regular' collections for the local poor received long-term permission, every 'extraordinary' collection, such as for foreign Protestants, required the specific approval of the city council.

However, fundraising for foreign Protestants was not just a local issue, as the act of defending and supporting foreign minorities cannot be considered in isolation from international political relations. A case in point was the collection for Protestants in Ireland who had been brutally persecuted by their Catholic compatriots during the Irish Revolt of 1641. At the outbreak of civil war between King Charles I and the English Parliament in 1642, the Dutch Republic declared its neutrality. A year later, when Parliament requested permission for a collection for the Irish Protestants, the Republic was faced with the difficult, and hotly debated, choice between confessional solidarity (with the Irish Protestants and the English Parliament), trade interests, and the officially declared national foreign policy of neutrality.<sup>12</sup> In 1655, Oliver Cromwell faced a similar choice between supporting Waldensians in Piedmont and furthering his plans for an alliance with France to strengthen his anti-Spanish foreign policy.<sup>13</sup> These examples point to a strong connection between confessional solidarity and international politics.

Traditionally, it is thought that the way states conducted international politics changed after the Peace of Westphalia (1648). According to this line of thought, the post-Westphalian system saw secular arguments such as balance of power and economic interests dominating international politics, rather than religious interests and affiliations. Steven Pincus, who has strongly promoted this idea, argued that it was secular rather than religious oppositions that motivated the English anti-French politics of the 1680s. Fears of universal monarchy, the protection of the national integrity, and the national identity were the pressing issues of the day, not the Protestant religion. Protestantism was important, but only as 'a constituent in, though not constitutive of, the English national identity'.<sup>14</sup> If this were the case, then perhaps the reasons for supporting foreign fellow believers may have changed as well. While acknowledging that political thinking changed in the second half of the seventeenth century, historians have recently begun to question the clear-cut differentiation between pre- and post-Westphalian political motivations.<sup>15</sup> David Onnekink's edited volume from 2009, *War and Religion after Westphalia, 1648-1713*, has revived this debate but provided no clear-cut answers on the extent of secularisation. However, the four articles on the Dutch Republic show that religion continued to play a crucial role in the international politics of the Republic, including its justifications of war, as well as in the public debate on foreign policy.<sup>16</sup> In this essay, I will show how the actual reasons

<sup>12</sup> The dilemma was solved by clever use of the decentralised Dutch political system, which allowed to delegate the decision whether or not to collect to the separate provinces. However, most of them in turn left the decision to the city councils. This enabled the Republic to formally maintain its neutrality while at the same time providing confessional aid: Boersma, "Yrelandsche traenen".

<sup>13</sup> Trim, "If a Prince".

<sup>14</sup> Pincus, "To protect English liberties", 93.

<sup>15</sup> Onnekink, "Dark Alliance"; Thompson, 'After Westphalia'; Onnekink, 'The Perplexities of Peace'.

<sup>16</sup> Onnekink, 'The Last War'; Haks, 'States General on Religion and War'; Stern, 'A Righteous War'; Bergin, 'Defending the True Faith'.

behind the support given by the Dutch authorities to foreign Protestants after 1648 did not completely match those expressed in public, and in doing so, I shall challenge the purely religious nature attributed to what is traditionally called confessional solidarity.

In order to explore these issues, this essay will study the decisions made at the level of the States-General and the provincial States.<sup>17</sup> My argument will draw heavily from the minutes of meetings held by these authorities on the needs of persecuted minorities, as it is in these (internal) documents that we can find the reasoning behind the granting or refusal of aid. In addition, it uses the so-called *collecte-uitschrijvingen* (collection orders), in which the authorities formally announced charitable collections. Apart from the public justification and declared purpose of each collection, these orders also contained details on the manner in which they were to be carried out. Finally, an examination of the actual use to which the proceeds of these collections were put can show us just how the authorities understood the purpose of the collection in practice, and may allow us to identify any hidden objectives.

The Waldensians (or Vaudois) are an excellent case with which we might study the Republic's transnational solidarity, not only because theirs was the first large-scale religious persecution that occurred after 1648, but also because they were seen by Protestant Europe as the forerunners of the Reformation, which made them an important Protestant people.<sup>18</sup> Following the fierce persecutions of the Middle Ages, those Waldensians that persisted lived in the remote valleys of the Cottian Alps, on the borders of the Duchy of Savoy and France. They enjoyed limited religious freedom in both countries, as specified in Piedmont by the Treaty of Cavour (1561) and in the French region of Dauphiny by the Edict of Nantes (1598).<sup>19</sup> In the second half of the seventeenth century the Waldensians repeatedly fell victim to forced conversion, persecution, and expulsion, triggering aid from Protestant powers such as the Dutch Republic and England.<sup>20</sup> The long history of Dutch aid to the Waldensians offers a unique opportunity to study a range of collections for the same recipients over time, in contrast to most studies, which have tended to deal with only a single period or collection. We must not forget, of course, that by focusing on the large-scale relief efforts, small local relief initiatives remain underexposed.

### *The 1655 Piedmont Easter Collection*

In 1561, following a failed attempt to eradicate Protestantism in Piedmont, the Duke of Savoy was forced to sign the Treaty of Cavour, granting the Waldensians the right to

<sup>17</sup> For motives of the other parties involved in transnational aid campaigns, such as victims, propagandists, church institutions, and donors, see Boersma, *Noodhulp zonder natiestaat*.

<sup>18</sup> Because of their ancient roots the Waldensians were seen as 'proto-Protestants', who by extension legitimised Protestantism: Barnett, 'Where Was Your Church Before Luther?'

<sup>19</sup> The amount of historical literature on the Waldensians is vast: 'Bibliografia Valdese', <http://www.bibliografia-valdese.com/jspwald/index.jsp> (Accessed on 6 November 2022). For a brief introduction, see Tourn, *Geschichte der Waldeser-Kirche*.

<sup>20</sup> In Britain, large-scale collections for the Waldensians were organised in 1655 and 1699: Auffenberg, 'Church-State Philanthropy'.

practise their religion, albeit only in a few well-defined valleys. Although the Savoy court tried to limit Waldensian freedom as much as possible, their subsequent spread beyond these boundaries in the following century did not lead to any serious repercussions. This uneasy tolerance ended in early 1655, when the Waldensians were ordered, under penalty of death, to convert within three days or withdraw into their valleys. Initially they complied, but when they saw their homes plundered and their fields destroyed, they returned to protect their homes. In April a force of Savoyard troops, strengthened with Irish mercenaries, was sent to punish them. But the Waldensians were now armed and recalcitrant, forcing the Savoyards to wait for reinforcements from passing French troops.<sup>21</sup> In the ensuing battle, around 2,000 Waldensians (according to current estimates) died by violence, starvation, and frostbite.<sup>22</sup> News of the Piedmont massacre was quickly picked up and spread by dozens of pamphlets and newsletters, shocking Protestant Europe and turning the Piedmont Easter Massacre into an international affair.<sup>23</sup> Protestant states rallied to the cause, organising diplomatic and financial aid. Samuel Morland, Oliver Cromwell's secretary and envoy to Savoy, would later remark, with no little pride, that 'there has never been such great unanimity in the cause of religion'.<sup>24</sup>

On 19 May, news that around 4,000 Waldensians had been killed by French troops first reached the States-General. Noting that 'although the churches in these quarters are not part of the Reformed church of France, they nonetheless share a great conformity and similarity with them', the States instructed Willem Boreel, their ambassador at the French court, to verify the rumours and, if true, to intercede with the French king.<sup>25</sup> This comment implies that their action was motivated by the idea that the Waldensians were fellow believers. Eight days later, the Dutch ambassadors in England and France had not only confirmed the massacre, but also that it had been carried out by troops under Savoy command. The States then resolved to intercede with the duke.<sup>26</sup> Their intervention, the States-General wrote, was motivated by a sense of duty and a general Christian compassion, and moreover because the Republic 'had an interest in the preservation of all those who profess the Reformed Religion'.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, they firmly rejected the duke's accusation that the Waldensians had disobeyed his orders to withdraw, and had therefore been punished for their rebellion rather than for their religious beliefs. On the contrary, the States argued, the Waldensians had always been loyal subjects. Their cruel persecution therefore violated previously granted rights and freedoms, and breached accepted moral

21 Balmas and Zardini Lana, *La vera relazione*, 27-44.

22 Trim, 'Intervention', 36.

23 The Piedmont Easter Massacre derives its nineteenth-century name from the fact that, according to the Gregorian calendar, it took place at Easter.

24 Morland, *History of the Evangelical churches*, 540.

25 The Hague, National Archives (hereafter NA), States-General (hereafter SG) 3261, Resolution 19 May 1655: 'dat alhoewel de kercken van die quartieren niet en sijn vant lichaem der Gereformeerden van Vranckrijck, niet-temin eene groot conformiteijt, ende overeencomste tusschen henluiden is.'

26 NA, SG 3261, Resolution 27 May 1655.

27 States-General to the Duke of Savoy, 27 May 1655, cited in Léger, *Histoire*, II, 231: 'comme intéressés dans la conservation de tous ceux qui font profession de la Religion Reformée'.

values, especially 'Christian gentleness and charity'.<sup>28</sup> Further diplomatic steps followed on 7 June, after the States-General received a letter from the Protestant Swiss Cantons. The French king (who denied having ordered his troops to participate in the attack) would be called upon to mediate, and in addition the States-General would write letters to Cromwell, Lord Protector of England, and the Geneva city council, inviting them to join forces with the Republic on behalf of the Waldensians. The next day an urgent request arrived from Cromwell, who, like the Republic, was also trying to mobilise the Protestant states.<sup>29</sup>

On 28 July, the States-General unanimously approved a general collection, which, they explained in their letter announcing the collection to the provincial States, had been inspired by the 'laudable and Christian example' set by Cromwell, the Evangelical Swiss Cantons, and the French Reformed.<sup>30</sup> The Waldensians themselves did not call for the Republic's support until the end of August.<sup>31</sup> When they finally made their request, they denied the accusation of rebellion, instead asserting the cruelty and unlawfulness of the persecution as well as their great distress. In other words, they were innocent victims of tyranny. Moreover, they stressed that they adhered to the same Protestant faith as the Republic and invoked the shared memory of persecution. By referring to the 'Catholic yoke' under which the Republic had also suffered, they drew a parallel between their situation and the Dutch Revolt, placing their plight in the wider context of Protestant suffering.<sup>32</sup> While Waldensian propagandists, in order not to jeopardise diplomatic efforts by Catholic France, only used confessionally neutral (that is, legal and humanitarian) arguments in the public media, they were clearly not averse to using confessional rhetoric in their direct communications with Protestant authorities.<sup>33</sup> Finally, they played on the status of the Republic: 'All of Europe is waiting for what [your] Lordships will do in this matter, so have mercy on us.'<sup>34</sup> Although the letter arrived a month after the decision on the collection had been made, and therefore played no role in the decision-making process, the fact that the States-General had the letter printed in support of the collection implies that they accepted these arguments and considered them a suitable way of convincing donors.

The provinces had agreed on a joint, nationwide collection, which was to be conducted throughout the country on one and the same day. The Utrecht delegates had even proposed 'a general collection without any exception of religion'.<sup>35</sup> However, according to

<sup>28</sup> States-General to the Duke of Savoy, 27 May 1655, cited in Léger, *Histoire*, II, 231: 'douceur et charité Chrétienne'.

<sup>29</sup> NA, SG 3261, Resolutions 7 and 8 June 1655; Cromwell to States-General, 4 June 1655 n.s., cited in Morland, *History of the Evangelical churches*, 558-560.

<sup>30</sup> NA, SG 3261, Resolution 28 July 1655: 'loffelijck en Christelijck exempel'; NA, SG 11943, States-General to provincial States, 18 June 1655, fols. 135v-136v. In England and Wales, a general door-to-door collection was already held on 24 June; in Ireland a collection was held on 15 July: Cromwell, *His Highness Declaration*; Auffenberg, 'Church-State Philantropy', 292.

<sup>31</sup> NA, SG 3261, Resolution 26 August 1655.

<sup>32</sup> Their request was translated in Dutch in Léger et al., *Translaet*.

<sup>33</sup> On their arguments in the public media, see: De Boer, *Religious Persecution*, 114-115.

<sup>34</sup> Léger et al., *Translaet*: 'Geheel Europa wacht op 't geen [hunne] Hoog Mogenden in dese ghelegentheydt sullen doen, hebt dan medelijden met ons.'

<sup>35</sup> NA, SG 3261, Resolution 28 July 1655: 'generalick sonder eenige exceptie van religie'.

Lieuwe van Aitzema, a generally well-informed regent and diplomat, Holland feared that there might be ‘bitterness or alienation’ between the different confessions if some did not contribute proportionately.<sup>36</sup> In his private diary he noted that it was feared that ministers would exaggerate the massacre ‘to the detriment of the papists’.<sup>37</sup> These fears were not unfounded, as shown by an incident in Leiden a few weeks before the decision on the collection was made. On 9 June, after a debate between a Reformed minister and a Catholic priest about the Piedmont massacre, a Catholic had wished Dutch Protestants the same beating as in Savoy, which led to fighting in the Leiden harbour between Catholics and Protestants.<sup>38</sup> That this incident occurred just then was no coincidence, as 9 June had been proclaimed a national prayer day in commemoration of the peace with England (1654), and ministers undoubtedly included the recent events in Piedmont in their sermons.<sup>39</sup> However, anti-Catholic agitation was not limited to Holland: holding up the 1641 Irish Rebellion and the Piedmont massacre as warnings of what might also happen in the Dutch Republic, the Utrecht Reformed synod demanded a harsh crackdown on Catholics.<sup>40</sup>

In the end, the States-General decided to leave the actual execution of the collection, the so-called *voet ende forme* (‘base and form’), to the provinces themselves.<sup>41</sup> Most provinces opted for collections within the Reformed churches. Only the States of Groningen decreed a door-to-door collection without exceptions (fig. 2), while Holland left the decision to the cities.<sup>42</sup> In some places Lutheran, Remonstrant, and Mennonite churches also contributed.<sup>43</sup> The proceeds of the collections were to be transferred to the provincial States, and in the case of the Generality Lands to the States-General. From there, the money was forwarded to the Geneva city council, to which the distribution was entrusted (tab. 1).<sup>44</sup> Both in 1643 and 1655, the final decision on the form of the collection was decentralised, but for very different reasons: in 1643 it was to uphold the national foreign policy of neutrality during the English Civil War and to protect trade interests; in 1655 to prevent domestic religious disturbances.<sup>45</sup> Another important difference was that the Irish collection was in fact a series of local collections that took about two years to complete, whereas

36 Van Aitzema, *Saken*, III, 1229: ‘dattet verbitteringh of verwijderingh soude veroorsaecken’.

37 NA, Collectie Aitzema 5, Diary Lieuwe van Aitzema, 5 August 1655: ‘dat de predicanten de massacre der vaudois soude exaggereren tot nadeel van de papisten’.

38 Leiden, *Erfgoed Leiden en Omstreken* (hereafter ELO), Schepenbank 3, Criminele vonnisboeken, 15 and 28 September 1655, fols. 186–187.

39 Kist, *Neêrlands bededagen*, II, 201–202.

40 Yasuhira, *Civic Agency*, 74, 370–374.

41 NA, SG 3261, Resolution 3 August 1655; *Resolutiën Staten van Holland*, 30 July 1655.

42 Groningen, Groninger Archieven (hereafter GrA), Staten van Stad en Lande 475, Printed collection order on behalf of the Waldensians, 1655; *Resolutiën Staten van Holland*, 5 August 1655.

43 Amsterdam, Stadsarchief (hereafter SAA), Vroedschap 21, Resolution 31 August 1655, fol. 12r. In the province of Utrecht, both Remonstrants and Mennonites donated: Hajenius, *Dopers in de Domstad*, 139; Van der Monde, ‘Onderstand’. In contrast, in Leiden and Haarlem only the Reformed churches participated: ELO, Stadsbestuur Leiden 152, Burgemeesterdagboeken, 11 September 1655, fols. 62–64; Noord-Hollands Archief (hereafter NHA) 6897, Account of sums collected in Haarlem for the Waldensians, 13 and 16 September 1655.

44 NA, SG 3261, Resolutions 30 August and 4 October. For the Genevan accounts and the distribution of the collection money, see NA SG 12569.140.

45 Boersma, “Yrelandtsche traenen”.

# De Heeren

Stadthouder ende Gedeputeerde Staten van  
Stadt Groningen ende Ommelanden:

DOENTEWEETEN:



## Sloot de Hooch Mogende Heeren Staten

Generael der Grunneerde Provincien iteratibelyck hebben bekend gemaeckt / hoe dat de arme Inwoonderen van de baleyen van Lucerne / Angzona ende andere onder het gebiet van den hertoch van Saboyen in Piedmont / beslijdende de waere Gereformeerde Religie / ende weygerende deselve te berlaten / om de getuyghenisse onses heeren ende Salichmaeckers Jesu Christi, die sy luyden ende haer Sall: Voor-ouderen de oude Waldensien / oprechtte ende vermaerde Partelaren / door haer leven ende bywillige doot / nu beele eeuwen aen den anderen onberanderlyck bevestiget hebben / met een groutlycke / on-menschelycke ende meer als Barbarische wreethyft in de Paent van April lefleden / tegens belofte ende gegeven woort oberballen ende mishandelt sijn door gerommandeert Cijgwoelck / dewelcke met moorden / vanden ende schenden ongehoort de wreethyft hebben gepleecht / waer door de oberige gedwongen sijn geweest van daer te blieden om haer levent te salveren / dewelcke nu dwalen met haer Vrouwen ende Kinderen / ontbroot van haere goederen / ende verdruct door honger / koude ende naecktheyt: Oer welke ellendige staet alle waere Christenen met overgrootte droeftheyt ende een bewogen herte commiseratie behooren te hebben / ende daarom haer hog: Hog: in gevolge van andere Potentaten ende Geloofs-genooten / jae selfs van den Coninc van Franckryck / hebben verbaeren ende geresolveert dese onse verdrebene Broederen / Religions-verwanten ende medeleden des lichaems Christi, met een liberale subsidie / door een Generael Collect / in de Grunneerde Provincien / geassocieerde Landtschappen / Steden ende Leden van dien te doen / behoorden werden versien / op dat daer door een lieflyck Reuck-offer mochte opgaaen tot Godt den heere Almachtych ende sijne Godlycke Majesteyt bewoogen werde ons ende onse posteriteyt voor diergelijcke ongebal genadelijck te bewaren: Ende op dat het selve met een oprechtten jber mochte geschieden / hebben voorn: haer Hoog: Hog: goet gebonden een generale Taft ende Bede-dach uyt te schryven / dewelcke sijn sal op Sondag den 26. dese Maents Augusti ouden styl / omme ten selven dage Godt Almachtych niet allene vrientlyck te bidden / dat desselfs genieft wil sijn / sijnen Zegen ende onberdiende genade te laten continueren ober ons liebe Vaderlant / ende de Ingesetenen van dien tot sijnes heyligen naems eere ende glorie / mitsgaders tot voortplantinge van de hooft: waere Christelycke Religie / nemaer oock dat sijne Goddelijcke Majesteyt de voorn: arme Religions-verwanten ende naeckte ledematen in dese haere tegenwoordige verdruckinge genadelijck wille vertroosten ende verstercken tegens de machinaten haerer vyanden: SOO IST, Dat wy versoeken ende niet te min amchts-halben ondonneren allen Predigers deser Stadt Groningen ende Ommelanden / als mede van het Gorecht ende heyden Old-ambten / omme van dese algemeene Taft ende Bede-dach / als mede Collect-dach op dese twee voorgaende Sondagen notitie en publicatie te doen / oock haere terten ende Predication op den geyfigeerden Taft ende Bede-dach / daer heeren te dirigeren / dat Sijne Godlycke Majesteyt wille gelieven sijne Zegen ende onberdiende genade ober onse liebe Vaderlant ende ons te laten continueren / ende dat de herten aller Christ-gelobigen mogen werden bewoogen om den volgenden dach / ten behoeve van voor-verhaelde argie ende verdruckte mede-broederen / een milde gabe uyt te langen aen de respective Predigers / Ouderlingen ende Diaconen / door welcken dit Collect van deur tot deur sal gheschieden / om / boots: alhier gebracht zijnde / het selve aen haer ober te stuyen: Waer toe wy allen Ingestenen deser Provincie wel rechttyck vermaent ende gebeden willen hebben / dat sy op hooft: Taft ende Bede-dach niet alleen tot het gehoor van Godes woort sich vlytich ende jberich willen laten binden / nemaer oock op geyfde Collect ende Paendach dese onse verdrebene Broederen ende naeckte mede-leden met een liberael subsidium willen gelieven te versien / op dat daer door Godt de heere Almachtych moge werden bewoogen ons ende onse posteriteyt voor diergelijcke ongebal genadelijck te bewaren / ende aen den geenen / de barmherticheyt doen / barmherticheyt te bewijzen. Datum Groningen den 9. Augusti 1655.

Rembt Ten Ham <sup>vr.</sup>

Ter Ordonnantie der Heeren voorsz.

Dock: N; B U S C H, Secret:

Fig. 2 Order by the States of Groningen in 1655 for a provincial door-to-door collection on behalf of the Waldensians. Groningen, Groninger Archieven, Staten van Stad en Lande 475.

Tab. 1 Organisation and form of transnational collections in the Dutch Republic, 1620s-1731.

Collection	Organiser	Type of collection	Execution	Control of revenues
1620s-1630s Palatinate	Reformed Churches	Local (cities)	In the Reformed churches	Church consistories
1643-1644 Irish Protestants	English Parliament	Local (cities) - Groningen province: donation (no collection)	In the Reformed churches	- States of Zeeland - Other provinces: Parliamentary collectors and treasurers
1655 Waldensians	States-General	Nationwide, on 6 September	- Mainly in the Reformed churches, in Groningen door-to-door - National prayer day on 5 September	- Provinces (forward revenues to Geneva) - Geneva city council (final control over spending)
1660s Waldensians	Provincial States	Provincial: Groningen (1663); Utrecht and Zeeland (1664); Friesland (1665)	In the Reformed churches	- States of Zeeland - Other provinces: unknown
1687 Waldensians	Cities of Holland	Local (cities)	To be decided by the city council	Unknown
1687 Waldensians	States-General	Nationwide, on 10 November	- Door-to-door - All denominations expected to contribute - No national prayer day	States-General
1695 Refugees in the Palatinate	States of Groningen	Provincial, on 16 May	- Door-to-door - All denominations expected to contribute - No prayer day	States of Groningen
1695 Waldensians and other refugees	States-General	Nationwide, on 26 February	- Door-to-door - All denominations expected to contribute - National prayer day on 25 February - Uniform provincial collection orders	States-General
1728 Piedmont flooding	Walloon Church	Church collections	- In the Walloon churches - Additional donation by the States-General	- Walloon Church - States-General (additional controls on spending)
1731 Waldensians	States of Holland	Provincial, on 10 September	- Door-to-door - All denominations expected to contribute - No prayer day	States of Holland

the Waldensian collection was decided at a national level jointly by all seven provinces. Although decisions about collections in the Dutch Republic lay formally with the city councils, the Waldensian collection shows that the consent of the provincial States made it unnecessary to ask every city council for permission, although each city still published its own collection order.

What inspired the authorities in 1655 to organise a nationwide relief effort for the first time in Dutch history? Fortunately, in their proposal to the provinces the States-General explained their motives, which, with a few minor adjustments, were incorporated into the Groningen collection order mentioned above.<sup>46</sup> In it, they emphasised that the Waldensians ‘professed the Reformed religion which they refuse to forsake’, thus underlining the religious character of the persecution.<sup>47</sup> Legal arguments such as those put forward in the public media by the Waldensians themselves were limited to a brief mention of Savoyard promises that had been violated. The letter denounced the barbaric atrocities and made explicit reference to the fate of the women and children, who had sought refuge in the high mountains, where they were now suffering from hunger and cold, but they were not directly referred to as fellow believers. The States-General expressed their humanitarian concerns even more explicitly by qualifying the massacre as an example of ‘gruesome, inhuman, and more than barbaric cruelty’.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, both the States of Groningen and the city of Amsterdam referred to inhuman cruelty in their own collection orders.<sup>49</sup> When the States-General intervened again in 1663, they criticised the duke for renouncing not only ‘the first principles of Christianity, which are charity and justice’, but also ‘humanity’ itself.<sup>50</sup> Clearly, there was already an awareness among regents that certain types of state behaviour were contrary to a humane policy. However, it seems that they more readily used humanitarian considerations to justify a relief effort to the general public or to persuade persecuting authorities to moderate their actions than as a ground for supporting foreign fellow believers.<sup>51</sup> In their internal deliberations confessional solidarity prevailed, while their efforts to unite Protestant Europe show that confessional politics also provided an important incentive.

Nevertheless, confessional affiliation alone was not enough to secure support, as illustrated by the reaction of the Amsterdam city council to the peace treaty concluded between the Duke of Savoy and the Waldensians. News that the Waldensians had signed the ‘Patent of Grace and Pardon’, an act by which they appeared to admit being rebels, reached the

46 NA, SG 11943, States-General to provincial States, 18 June 1655, fols. 135v-136r.

47 NA, SG 11943, States-General to provincial States, 18 June 1655, fols. 135v-136r: ‘belijdende de gereformeerde religie ende weygerende deselve te verlaten’.

48 NA, SG 11943, States-General to provincial States, 18 June 1655, fols. 135v-136r: ‘grouwelijcke, onmensche-licke ende meer als barbarische wreetheyt’, also cited in Rogge, ‘Vervolging’, 169-170. Interestingly, when citing the same letter, Van Aitzema, a crypto-Catholic, omitted the qualification of the massacre as inhumane: Van Aitzema, *Saken*, III, 1228-1229.

49 The Amsterdam collection order is cited in Léger, *Histoire*, II, 236-237. For Groningen, see GrA, *Staten van Stad en Lande* 475. Printed order for a provincial door-to-door collection on behalf of the Waldensians, 1655.

50 States-General to the Duke of Savoy, 12 November 1663, cited in *Antwoord-Brief*: ‘de eerste gronden des Christendoms, t welck sijn de liefde ende de barmhertigheyt, en selfs oock aende humaniteit’.

51 In taking the collection decision, the States-General qualified the persecution as ‘barbaric’, but nowhere as inhumane: NA, SG 3261, Resolution 19 May 1655.

Dutch Republic on 26 September 1655.<sup>52</sup> This prompted the Amsterdam city council to withhold any money until their innocence had been established, 'as it has never been the intention of this State, nor of the private citizens, who have given so generously, to provide any subsidy' or to grant 'adverse mercy' to people who 'suffered not for their faith, but were castigated by their sovereign for their disobedience'.<sup>53</sup> In the 1660s, when the persecution briefly resumed, rumours spread by the Savoy court questioning the innocence of the Waldensians, and accusing their leaders of misusing the collection money of 1655, successfully undermined new initiatives for a nationwide relief campaign.<sup>54</sup> These incidents demonstrate that transnational solidarity was not only based on a shared confession, but that the donors also had to believe the recipients were trustworthy and innocent. Confessional affiliation was a condition of receiving aid, but not a guarantee.

At first glance, it seems that the Dutch Republic had nothing to gain from its efforts to help the Waldensians. Although the authorities considered the massacre of the Waldensians to be barbaric and inhumane, their decision to support the survivors was primarily religious in motivation. Yet the States-General themselves gave an additional reason in their declaration that they were following Cromwell's example. However, this explanation seems difficult to believe, given that diplomatic steps had already been taken *before* Cromwell's letter arrived, and also because of the widely felt animosity in the Dutch Republic towards the Protector following the regicide of King Charles I (1649), which was exacerbated by the lost Anglo-Dutch war (1652-1654). This conflict between two Protestant states did not fit into the early modern framework of interpreting wars in terms of religious conflict, or as a struggle against a monarchical tyrant. To explain it, the Dutch developed, according to Helmer Helmers, a new 'demonic' interpretation, in which the war was understood as a struggle against demonic regicides and Cromwell was seen as the incarnation of the devil who had instigated the war.<sup>55</sup> Although this devilish image of Cromwell became somewhat contested after the war, it continued to be an important theme in the public media, poetry, and plays even after the peace with England.<sup>56</sup> To see the States-General's relief effort merely as a simple imitation of an example set by Cromwell therefore seems flawed. Of course, by saying this, the States pledged their allegiance

52 *Resolutiën Staten van Holland*, 26 September 1655, 354. The truce was concluded under heavy French pressure before the Dutch and English envoys could reach Turin: Rogge, 'Waldenzen-moord'. For a copy of the treaty, see Morland, *History of the Evangelical churches*, 652-662.

53 SAA, Vroedschap 21, Resolutions 1 October 1655: 'Alsoo den intentie van desen Staet, midtsgaders vande particuliere ingesetenen, die daertoe zoo mildelijck hebben gegeven, noijt en is geweest eenige subsidie te doen aen persoonen, die soo men seijt, niet om het gelooff hebben geleden, maer, om hare ongehoorsaemheijt, van haren Opper-heer sijn gecastijdt', 'averechtse barmertigheid'. The city council decided to hold on to the collection proceeds until the matter was sorted out. It soon transpired that not too much weight should be attached to the accusation: Rogge, 'Waldenzen-moord', 316-320, 341-343.

54 See the proposal for a nationwide collection by Zeeland: NA, SG 3268, Resolution 15 November 1662. However, the proposal was rejected by Holland: *Resolutiën Staten van Holland*, 30 November 1662. For a proposal for provincial contributions by the States of Utrecht, see NA, SG 3269, Resolution 21 December 1663. The Waldensian leader Jean Léger argued that rumours of mismanagement were disastrous to the willingness of the governments (and donors) to donate: Léger, *Histoire*, II, 254.

55 Helmers, *Royalist Republic*, ch. 7.

56 Helmers, *Royalist Republic*, 227-231.

to the Protestant cause. There might, however, be another interpretation, one which takes into account both the poor relations with the English state and the domestic situation in the Dutch Republic. In 1655, the domestic polemic surrounding the Treaty of Münster (1648) was far from over.<sup>57</sup> Although some had welcomed peace, others feared it would damage the unity of the Republic, endanger the public church, and put the state at risk. This feeling of impending doom was aptly expressed by the anonymous author of the pamphlet *Na-wêen vande Vrede* (Aftermath of Peace, 1650):

War has made you great, peace has made you small. War has given you splendour, authority, awe among all the potentates; peace has made you despised by all, even by the least of them, even by Portugal.<sup>58</sup>

The sentiment that the peace with Spain undermined the international reputation and status of the Dutch Republic was undoubtedly strengthened by the unsuccessful war with England and the turmoil that followed the 1654 Westminster peace treaty.<sup>59</sup> As we have seen, even the Waldensian request openly played on this sentiment. It seems plausible that the efforts on behalf of the Waldensians were not only confessional but also intended to reassert the Republic's status as a major Protestant power to both domestic and international audiences, while at the same time calming domestic unrest. Perhaps, rather than following Cromwell's example, the States competed with it. While mediation was motivated by confessional solidarity, the collection was at least partly justified by secular reasons.

### *The Revocation of the Treaty of Cavour and the 1687 Collection*

Following the restoration of the Treaty of Cavour in 1664, there were no major persecutions in Piedmont until 1686. In neighbouring France however, persecutions increased from the 1660s onwards until the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in October 1685 banned Protestant worship. Many Huguenot refugees sought protection in Piedmont. Concerned about the large numbers of Protestants just outside his borders, Louis XIV forced his nephew, the Duke of Savoy, to follow suit. In January 1686 the duke issued an edict banning Protestant worship and ordering the expulsion of ministers and schoolmasters, effectively revoking the Treaty of Cavour.<sup>60</sup> Those Waldensians who resisted or refused to convert were imprisoned. Following prolonged mediation by the Protestant Swiss Cantons, the survivors were allowed to leave Piedmont on condition that they were not to be resettled close to the Savoy border. The Swiss were thus forced to find Protestant states that were prepared to

<sup>57</sup> On this debate, see Stern, 'A Righteous War', 201-208.

<sup>58</sup> Philaletius [pseud.], *Na-wêen vande Vrede*, 4-5: 'De oorloge heeft u groot gemaect; de vrede maect u kleyn. De oorloge heeft u luister, autoriteyt, ontsach by alle potentaten toegebracht; de vrede maect u by allen veracht, tot de minste, tot Portugal toe.'

<sup>59</sup> After the death of William II in 1650, most provinces had not appointed a new stadtholder. This led to Orangist agitation on behalf of the future William III. When it became known that Holland had signed a secret clause to the Westminster peace treaty that excluded the Oranges in the future from the stadtholderate of Holland (Act of Seculsion), unrest broke out in large parts of the country and in the public church: Israel, *Republiek*, 795-800.

<sup>60</sup> Symcox, 'Toleration and *Ragion di Stato*', 36-37.

take the refugees in.<sup>61</sup> The first request to this effect reached the Dutch Republic in November 1686.<sup>62</sup> It was assigned to the delegates for foreign affairs, who advised that the reply ought to be that the States-General were ‘moved with true compassion and will gladly show them, for as many as may come in this country, all works of love’.<sup>63</sup> However, the delegates from Holland first wanted to consult their principals, the States of Holland. After this consultation, the final answer was considerably less hospitable: the States-General were ‘not unwilling’ to take in ‘some’ Waldensians, but were ‘very apprehensive that they would not be able to subsist’ in the Dutch Republic due to the differences in language, climate, and in particular the nature of the country.<sup>64</sup> Therefore, the States-General judged that the Waldensians

could better support themselves, if they were able to establish themselves elsewhere outside these countries, in which case their Lordships are confident that the provinces will be inclined and willing to assist and help the aforementioned Waldensians [...] with a few pennies.<sup>65</sup>

When in 1688 another group of about a thousand Waldensians requested admission to the Dutch Republic or its overseas colonies, the States-General were only prepared to admit eight hundred of them to the Dutch Cape Colony in South Africa. They did, however, agree to provide 40,000 guilders from the collection for their transport and first necessities.<sup>66</sup>

This reluctance to admit fairly small groups of Waldensians contrasted sharply with the rather more generous manner in which large groups of Huguenots were received over the same period.<sup>67</sup> According to Geert Janssen, by the middle of the seventeenth century the Dutch had developed a positive attitude towards migration. They had come to see their country as a ‘republic of refugees’, where immigrants were welcomed not only on the basis of the usual charitable arguments, but also on the basis of rational economic thinking.<sup>68</sup> But this hospitality apparently did not apply to the Waldensians. This is puzzling, because both groups were Reformed Protestants, religious refugees, and French-speaking. The first and most obvious difference between the two groups, however, is that the Huguenots were

61 Tourn, *Geschichte der Waldeser-Kirche*, 148-157; Minutoli, Balmas and De Lange, *Storia del ritorno*, 13-17.

62 *Resolutiën Staten Generael*, 5 November 1686.

63 *Resolutiën Staten Generael*, 2 December 1686: ‘met een ware compassie sijn bewogen, ende gaern aen de selve, voor soo veel die hier te lande soude mogen komen, alle wercken van liefde sullen betonen’.

64 *Resolutiën Staten Generael*, 10 December 1686: ‘niet ongaerne eenige hier te lande souden sien overkomen, maer ten uyttersten beducht zyn [...] dat deselve alhier niet kunnen subsisteren’.

65 *Resolutiën Staten Generael*, 10 December 1686: ‘Dat de selve haer beter souden kunnen behelpen, soo wanneer sy haer elders buyten dese Landen souden kunnen ter neder setten, in welcken gevalle haer Hoogh Mog. vertrouwen dat by de ghesamentlijcke Provincien wel genegentheiden en dispositie sal werden gevonden om de voorsz. Dalluyden [...] met enige penninghen te assisteren en te hulpe te zijn.’

66 NA, SG 3317, Resolutions 19 February and 22 May 1688; *Resolutiën Staten van Holland*, 12 February 1688. After this date the States-General did not discuss the subject again, probably because the Waldensians, who had been stalling their departure for Brandenburg, had changed their minds, very likely as a result of an attempted (Waldensian) invasion in Savoy in June 1688. Also see Rainero, ‘Popolamento ugonotto’; Evers, ‘La questione valdese’.

67 Some 70,000 Huguenots arrived in the Dutch Republic in the wake of the Revocation, of which around 35,000 settled: Nusteling, ‘The Netherlands and the Huguenot émigrés’, 26-30.

68 Janssen, ‘Republic of the Refugees’, 245-247.

expected to be skilled craftsmen, merchants, and intellectuals, while the Waldensians were seen as poor mountain peasants from the very beginning. Second, the Huguenots had a strong Dutch support base in the French-speaking Walloon churches, and their plight was widely discussed in the public press. With all the attention paid to the Huguenots, the misery of the Waldensians was only sporadically mentioned in the media and in the Walloon and Reformed churches.<sup>69</sup> More pertinent perhaps was the realisation that many of the French refugees who arrived after 1685 were in fact penniless and in urgent need of financial support.<sup>70</sup> The need to protect the already overburdened public poor relief system undoubtedly made the authorities reluctant to admit more destitute refugees. Just as economic considerations led magistrates to seek to attract Huguenots by offering them citizenship, economic privileges, and generous loans, so they led to the States-General denying the Waldensians entry.<sup>71</sup>

In May 1687, the Protestant Swiss cantons petitioned the Dutch Republic for a general collection for the Piedmontese refugees. By June, Holland had already consented, but it would take until October for the last province to agree, probably because by then it was certain that Brandenburg was prepared to take them in. This time, all seven provinces agreed on a general door-to-door collection for the subsistence of the destitute Waldensians, to be held nationwide on 10 November.<sup>72</sup> The organisation of the 1687 collection differed from that of 1655 in three important respects (tab. 1). First, the collection was carried out in a uniform manner throughout the country. Second, it was a door-to-door collection, which meant that everyone, including Catholics, would be confronted with collectors. In Utrecht, the province with the highest percentage of Catholics (fifty-five percent), measures were taken to ensure that Catholics would contribute proportionally.<sup>73</sup> To monitor this, a list had to be kept of what each Catholic person or household contributed to the collection (fig. 3).<sup>74</sup> In previous years, a number of cities and provinces had already monitored Catholic contributions to local and provincial collections

69 Between 1685 and 1688, more than one hundred and fifty pamphlets on the persecution of the Huguenots were published: De Boer, 'For the True Religion', 162-163. On the attention for the Waldensians in Dutch churches, see Posthumus Meyjes, 'Relations', 88-92; Knuttel, *Acta*, v, vi. The number of Dutch pamphlets on the Waldensians amounted to twenty in 1655, five in 1662, nine in 1663, ten in 1664, two in 1686, three in 1687, one in 1688, one in 1689, five in 1690, one in 1699, and five in 1731 (of which only two about the expulsion). See the 'Bibliografia Valdese', <http://www.bibliografia-valdese.com/jspwald/index.jsp> (Accessed on 6 November 2022).

70 Van der Linden, *Experiencing Exile*, 69-78.

71 Van der Linden, *Experiencing Exile*, 41.

72 *Resolutiën Staten van Holland*, 29 May and 17 June 1687; *Resolutiën Staten Generael*, 10 and 15 October 1687. The Swiss envoy David Holzhalb informed the States-General on 6 September of Brandenburg's decision: Bokhorst, *Nederlands-Zwitserse betrekkingen*, 163-164.

73 Utrecht, Het Utrechts Archief (hereafter HUA), Domkapittel 3677, Collection order States of Utrecht, 1687. See for the percentage of Catholics: De Kok, *Breuklijn*, 248. In Groningen, where Catholic contributions to the 1686 provincial Huguenot collection had to be monitored, no measures were taken to force Catholics at the 1687 Waldensian collection: GRA, Staten van Stad en Lande 476, Collection order States of Groningen for Protestant immigrants, 1687; Leiden, University Library (hereafter UBL), Bibliothèque Wallonne (hereafter BWA) 1437, Provincial collection order Groningen for the Piedmont, 1687.

74 HUA, Stadsbestuur Utrecht Supplement 540, Documents regarding the collection held at Pijlsweerd on behalf of the Waldensians, 1687.

Pro Deo.

F tot solagement vande p[ro]v[incie] mout[re] de Gallie

Collecte bij schandts en gerechte van Pijlsweerd ook genaemp den a[ld]eren Noordsgedaen op dese zj. octof. 1687 a[ld]er Stijfelingvoelge van de a[ld]ershyvinge van de G[ro]t Mogend' Heere staaten der landts van Utrecht van den is. dito onder het district van Pijlsweerd.

Erasmus van Jacob van Mollem Minist	9	9	0
Willelm Brauwer Looms	0	6	0
Lammert Persoons gereformert	0	6	0
Abernon van Blickeval gerefor.	0	3	0
Jacobus de groot Looms	0	6	0
Goovers Verbeul Looms	0	3	0
Johannes van den Broeck gerefor.	1	10	0
Cornelis van Toorn gerefor.	0	2	0
Isaac Sam gerefor.	0	0	8
Bria wauker Looms	0	2	0
Jan Stevens Backer Looms	0		
Jan Artsen Looms	0	2	0
Gerrit van der Horst Looms	0	12	0
Jannete Breij Looms	0	12	0
Geij Janse Looms	0	3	0
Wessel Geijberts Looms	0	2	0
Weynige Corn. li Looms	0	3	0
Weynige Geertr. Looms	0	6	0
Abillize Corn. li Looms	0	3	0
Birck Spoor gereform.	0	6	0
Bart Janse Looms	0	1	0
Gerrit de Groot Looms	0	12	0
Jacob maul den a[ld]er Looms	0	13	0
	16	7	0

Fig. 3 Collection for the Waldensians in 1687, listing the donations made by the Catholic inhabitants of Pijlsweerd. Utrecht, Het Utrechts Archief, Stadsbestuur Utrecht Supplement 540.

for Huguenot immigrants.<sup>75</sup> While this could be explained by an increase in anti-Catholic sentiment in the Dutch Republic after the Revocation, there were also secular reasons for forcing Catholics to contribute.<sup>76</sup> As Reformed immigrants, the Huguenots had to be supported by public charities, which were typically funded by collections among all city residents.<sup>77</sup> Contributing to these collections could therefore be seen as a civic duty. Two anonymous pamphlets that discussed the alleged lack of Catholic support for these collections confirm this.<sup>78</sup> The author of *Beweegreden en propositie tot soelaas der arme Franse vluchtelingen* (Motive and Proposition for the Relief of the Poor French Refugees) suggested taxing Catholics if they failed to contribute sufficiently to the collections. This proposal was further discussed in the fictional *Dialogue sur les impôts de Hollande* (Dialogue about the Taxes in Holland) between passengers of a towing barge. One of the main characters, a lawyer from the Supreme Court of Holland, who probably represents the position of the States of Holland, argues ‘that the Huguenot refugees have become our fellow citizens’. He points out that the state is burdened with their upkeep and has therefore the right to force all inhabitants, regardless of their religion, to contribute to their upkeep.<sup>79</sup> Although these are just two pamphlets, they show that supporting Protestant immigrants was considered a civic duty and proof of civil allegiance. The 1687 Waldensian collection, on the other hand, was not intended to support immigrants or sustain the public poor relief system, but to help Protestants in faraway lands, who, in the eyes of many Dutch Catholics, had rebelled against their rightful sovereign. Nevertheless, the decision to collect door-to-door shows that the authorities considered such contributions a civic duty of all Dutch people, irrespective of their religious denomination. Finally, the collection of 1687 differed significantly from its predecessors in the handling of the collection money. Rather than simply being sent abroad, the fruits of the 1687 collection were pooled and deposited with Cornelis de Jonge van Ellemeet, the receiver-general of the Dutch Republic. This enabled the States-General to retain control over the money and use it as they saw fit. All in all, we can call the 1687 collection a ‘national’ campaign by virtue of it being more centralised, uniform, and covering the entire population.

The internal deliberations of the States-General were mainly concerned with the resettlement of those refugees who had left their fatherland because of their ‘staunch commitment to the Reformed Religion’ and were now living in miserable conditions in the Protestant Swiss cantons.<sup>80</sup> Most collection orders concentrated on the practical side of

75 Boersma, *Noodhulp zonder natiestaat*, 118-126. At least three provinces organised provincial door-to-door collections for Huguenot immigrants in the early 1680s.

76 On the hardening of anti-Catholic feelings, see Israel, *Republiek*, 717-719; Gibbs, ‘The reception of Huguenots’, 303-304; Bergin, ‘Defending the True Faith’, 229.

77 The States of Friesland emphasised that the 1686 provincial Huguenot collection was only intended for those Reformed migrants who settled in Friesland and were able to support themselves. Transient refugees were excluded: *Reglement ende ordre*.

78 *Beweegreden en propositie; Dialogue sur les impôts*.

79 *Dialogue sur les impôts*, 11: ‘que les Réfugiez sont devenus nos concitoyens’.

80 *Resolutiën Staten Generael*, 10 October 1687: ‘de standtvastighe belijdenisse der gereformeerde religie’.

the collection, citing the 'solace' of the Waldensians as its aim.<sup>81</sup> None of the resolutions or collection orders mentioned religious considerations, such as the defence of the true Protestant faith or confessional solidarity. The main focus was the refugee problem. There was commiseration with 'these wretched people', but no humanitarian arguments.<sup>82</sup> The rather neutral tone of the collection orders was probably intended to avoid fuelling any further increase in religious tensions, but also served the national character of the collection which required that it engaged non-Protestant donors.

While the collection plainly served as a way of preventing a rush of unwanted immigrants into the Dutch Republic and the consequential overburdening of the poor relief system, its national character and the fact that the proceeds were placed under the direct control of the States-General point strongly to a link with foreign policy. Although the Peace of Nijmegen (1678-1679) had ended the war between France and the Dutch Republic, few believed it would halt Louis XIV's territorial ambitions. The French invasion of the Southern Netherlands in 1683 had already alarmed the Dutch, while the increasingly repressive treatment of the Huguenots further strained international relations. Fears of a repetition of 1672 began to resurface following the Catholic succession to the English throne in February 1685, fears which were amplified when France imposed restrictions on Dutch trade in August 1687.<sup>83</sup> With the rising of international tensions, it seems plausible that the States-General's decision in October to hold the collection was influenced by the prospect of a new war with France, in which the proceeds of the collection could come in handy.

One way to verify this hypothesis is to examine the use of the proceeds, since this indicates how the States interpreted the purpose of the collection. According to Ellemeet's records, most of the money seems to have gone to the Waldensian refugees in Switzerland and various German states, which was in line with the formal collection objective.<sup>84</sup> However, after the outbreak of war with France in 1689 the money was also spent on supporting those Waldensians who had already returned to Switzerland in the run-up to the so-called *Glorieuse Rentrée* (Glorious Return), the armed invasion of Piedmont by the Waldensians (and Huguenots) in August 1689.<sup>85</sup> Gabriel de Convenant, the Dutch special envoy for Waldensian affairs in Switzerland, lent his support to these plans at the end of 1688. In a letter to the States-General, he noted that a return of the Waldensians to Piedmont could fit well into a broader anti-French policy, as they were capable of making 'a great diversion', especially since French refugees were eager to join them.<sup>86</sup> However,

81 The 'soulagement' was mentioned as aim in several provincial collection orders for the Piedmont: NHA, Ambachts- en gemeentebestuur Heemskerk 224, Collection order States of Holland, 30 October 1687; HUA, Domkapittel 3677, Collection order States of Utrecht, 9 September 1687; UBL, BWA AW2 1437, Collection order States of Groningen, 30 October 1687.

82 Both the Groningen and Leiden collection orders referred to 'dese miserabele menschen': UBL, BWA AW2 1437, Provincial collection order Groningen, 30 October 1687; ELO, Stadsbestuur Leiden 26, Aflezingsboeken, Promulgation, 4 November 1687.

83 Onnekink, *Reinterpreting*, 67-68; Israel, 'Dutch Role', 113-115.

84 NA, Collectie De Jonge van Ellemeet (hereafter Ellemeet) 78, Resolutions regarding collections, 1675-1698.

85 Bokhorst, *Nederlands-Zwitserse betrekkingen*, 167-174.

86 Convenant to States-General, 3 February 1689, cited in Evers, 'La questione valdese', 74: 'une grande diversion.'

for this to succeed, he considered it crucial that the States give their consent and provide the funds to buy weapons and everything else necessary for this return.<sup>87</sup> The States-General adopted Covenant's position at the beginning of 1689.<sup>88</sup> Not long thereafter, on 9 March, the Dutch declared war on France in order 'to help avoid losing their religion and freedom'.<sup>89</sup> Attempts to move the war into Louis's backyard were an integral part of Stadtholder-King William III's strategy. Piedmont was geographically ideally situated for an invasion of France which, it was hoped, would spark a Protestant revolt.<sup>90</sup> Subsidising the Glorious Return with funds from the 1687 collection was part of this policy.<sup>91</sup> For the Dutch authorities, putting the collection money to martial use seems to have been considered in keeping with the purpose of the collection, or at the very least it was not seen as being in conflict with it. There is indeed something to be said for this reasoning, since a successful return of the Waldensians to their own valleys was perhaps the best way to achieve the collection's objective of providing comfort and support, while at the same time protecting the Dutch Republic and the Protestant religion, which were the official grounds for the declaration of war in the first place.

The unexpected success of the Glorious Return not only increased Savoy's strategic importance, it also transformed the status of the Waldensians. No longer were they merely destitute refugees, as they now became an important part of the Dutch foreign strategy. Recognising the danger, Louis XIV demanded that the Duke of Savoy take vigorous action against the Protestants on France's border and threatened to send troops if he did not. In May 1690, however, Victor Amadeus chose to join the Grand Alliance against France. In exchange for financial and military support, the duke promised both to restore the privileges of his Waldensian subjects and to (temporarily) accept other Protestant refugees. It was not until May 1694 that the duke, under pressure from England and the Republic, formalised the annulment of the 1686 persecution edict. Once more the Waldensians were allowed to worship, albeit within strictly defined territorial limits.<sup>92</sup> Nonetheless, these international agreements prevented further persecution of the Piedmontese Waldensians until 1731.

### *The Expulsion of French Protestants from Savoy and the 1699 Collection*

Savoy's entry into the Grand Alliance in 1690 had led to an influx of Piedmontese and foreign Protestants into Piedmont, much to the chagrin of both Victor Amadeus and Louis XIV.<sup>93</sup> In 1696, when the duke and the king concluded a bilateral peace treaty, they

<sup>87</sup> For the involvement of Covenant in the Glorious Return, see Evers, 'La questione valdese'; Bokhorst, *Nederlands-Zwitserse betrekkingen*, 167-183.

<sup>88</sup> Conclusion drawn by Evers based on Covenant's letter to the States-General of 3 March 1689: Evers, 'La questione valdese', 75.

<sup>89</sup> *Declaratie van oorlog*, 4: 'het verlies van hare Religie en Vryheyd [...] willen helpen afweren'. See also Haks, 'States General on Religion and War', 158-159.

<sup>90</sup> Glozier, 'Schomberg', 121-125; Storrs, 'Lindau Project'; Bokhorst, *Nederlands-Zwitserse betrekkingen*, 13-19.

<sup>91</sup> *Resolutiën Staten Generael*, 18 March 1690; Storrs, 'Lindau Project'.

<sup>92</sup> Symcox, 'Toleration and *Ragion di Stato*', 37-38; Storrs, 'Politische Kontext', 19-24.

<sup>93</sup> Storrs, 'Politische Kontext', 25-27.

secretly agreed that all French Protestants, who had been excluded from the Toleration Act of 1694, would be exiled. Unaware of this clause, the allies included the treaty in the Treaty of Rijswijk (1697), which ended the Nine Years' War. In July 1698, about three thousand French Protestants, both Huguenots and Waldensians, were thus expelled from Savoy.<sup>94</sup> Two months later, the States-General discussed a request from the Protestant Swiss cantons which, overwhelmed with more than ten thousand refugees on their territories, asked the Republic to mediate in finding places for all these refugees to settle and to provide financial support.<sup>95</sup> On 5 November, the States-General appointed Pieter Valkenier as their special envoy for the relocation of the refugees.<sup>96</sup> Aware that this would require a huge amount of money, the States-General promptly proposed another collection in the hope that their financial support would persuade the Swiss cantons to let most of the refugees stay and other Protestant princes – Lutherans included – to take in the remaining refugees. As such, they wanted to set a good example and encourage other 'Reformed princes and potentates' to take similar measures. In addition, the States-General increased the Republic's war budget by 60,000 guilders per annum in order to provide for the maintenance of French soldiers who had served in Piedmont and at the Rhine.<sup>97</sup> When Zeeland finally gave its consent on 7 February 1699, the States-General immediately ordered a general prayer day to be held on 25 February, followed by a nationwide door-to-door collection 'without exception' on the following day.<sup>98</sup> The proceeds were intended for 'religious refugees from France, Piedmont, and the Palatinate, as well as for the preservation of the church in these parts and the continuation of the true Reformed religion'.<sup>99</sup> Interestingly, not one of the resolutions mentioned the possibility of admitting Waldensians to the Dutch Republic, but no reason was given. However, it is reasonable to assume that the States-General sought to avoid being burdened with the costs of long-term assistance to needy immigrants. Given the poor financial situation of the Dutch Republic after the Nine Years' War, financing their resettlement elsewhere with the proceeds of a new collection was a much safer option.<sup>100</sup>

Why was it, therefore, that while the Dutch Republic chose not to admit any refugees, it still supported the Waldensians and Huguenots after they lost their political significance in 1697? The resolutions show that preventing immigration and upholding the true faith were important motives. However, there is good reason to suspect that the States-General also intended to use the proceeds of the collection for other purposes when they settled upon calling it in early November 1698. Because the Peace of Rijswijk had failed to settle

94 Symcox, 'The Waldensians', 246; Storrs, 'Politische Kontext', 28-36.

95 *Resolutiën Staten Generael*, 22 September. 1698. The Swiss request, dated 26 July 08, was handled in conjunction with a request from the Walloon synod, which also demanded relief for the refugees in Switzerland. The States-General noted that there were already eight thousand refugees from France in the Swiss cantons: *Resolutiën Staten Generael*, 26 January 1699.

96 Bots and Evers, 'Valkenier', 148.

97 *Resolutiën Staten Generael*, 6 November 1698.

98 *Resolutiën Staten Generael*, 7 February 1699.

99 *Resolutiën Staten Generael*, 6 November 1698: 'ten besten van de Gerefugeerden uyt Vranckrijck, Piemont, en Patlz, midsgaeders tot subsistentie van de Kercke aldaer, en tot voorsettinge van de ware Gereformeerde Religie'.

100 The poor financial condition is mentioned in NA, SG 8123, General Petition for 1699, 23 November 1698.

the Spanish succession, it was widely expected that peace would be short-lived, as the States' decision to keep the French soldiers on their payroll already indicated. The General Petition of November 1698 also demonstrates that a new war was expected when the decision on the next collection was made. These annual petitions provided a political reflection on the war budget for the following year and were intended to convince the provinces of the necessity of the military efforts projected, and of the costs involved. In 1698, the Petition opened by noting that 'it was to be wished that the affairs of the world had taken such a happy turn with the conclusion of the general peace, that complete peace and security had followed all the worries of war'. As the financial condition of the Republic precluded any increase in military spending that the likelihood of further conflict demanded, the Petition proposed that the budget remain unchanged.<sup>101</sup> Apparently, the States-General foresaw a new war which would cause a financial shortfall, that might be in part alleviated by the proceeds of the new collection. The prospect of conflict may also have provided a further incentive for refusing to allow the Waldensians to take refuge in the Republic, since in the event that plans for an invasion of France were revived, the Waldensians could be deployed more quickly if they remained in the vicinity of Piedmont.

Does the actual use of the collection money confirm these assumptions? A large proportion of the money was indeed spent on the (resettlement of) refugees, the stated goal of the collection, but it is hard to determine exactly how much.<sup>102</sup> There is no doubt, however, that a good deal of money was invested in plans to attack France from within. Such plans had already been part of the allied strategy in the 1690s, and were revived at the start of the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1713), when the Protestant Camisards in the Cevennes – who had seen their hope for religious freedom crushed in 1697 – took up arms in what became known as the Camisard War (1702-1710). The news of the uprising first reached Protestant Europe in the winter of 1702-1703.<sup>103</sup> In October 1703 Savoy re-joined the (revived) Grand Alliance, which, combined with the prospect of local support in France, made an invasion a real option.<sup>104</sup> Suggestions that a separate collection might be organised in support of the Camisard revolt and, by extension, to help finance an invasion of France from Piedmont, were being made in the circles that surrounded the influential Grand Pensionary Anthonie Heinsius, who had also been closely involved in the invasion plans of the 1690s.<sup>105</sup> The States-General decided instead to use part of the 1699 collection for this purpose, probably to avoid the publicity a new collection would entail, as military plans usually thrive on secrecy. On 23 February 1704, Holland agreed to

**101** NA, SG 8123, General Petition for 1699, 23 November 1698: 'T was te wenschen dat de Saaken vande wereld soo gelukkige keer genomen hadden met het sluiten van[de] generale Vrede, dat een volkomen rust en veiligheid gevolgd waren op al de oorlogskommeren.'

**102** For the States-General's resolutions regarding the 1699 collection, see NA, Ellemeet 79-81; Kiefner, *Die Waldenser*, III, passim.

**103** Laborie, 'Huguenot Propaganda', 641-642.

**104** On Dutch-English plans to use the Camisard rebellion to attack France from within, see Glozier, 'Schomberg', 142-143; Monahan, *Let God Arise*, ch. 9.

**105** NA, Familiearchief Surendonck (hereafter Surendonck) 221, Jacob Surendonck to Johannes Hudde, 5 May 1703. I am indebted to David de Boer for bringing this source to my attention. See also De Boer, 'For the True Religion', 243-245.

the States-General's proposal to use 100,000 guilders from the 1699 collection for military support to the Camisards.<sup>106</sup> Two years later, funds had to be found again for the establishment of a battalion, if possible from the remainder of the 1699 collection.<sup>107</sup> Funds for the Camisards were also made available from the provincial contributions to the general war budget.<sup>108</sup> However, poor organisation probably prevented this aid from ever reaching the Camisards.<sup>109</sup> A secret resolution passed by the States-General in 1705 nonetheless noted that 'a good sum from the general collection had already been spent for that purpose'. According to this resolution, supporting the Camisard revolt not only served a religious goal ('for the sake of religion'), but also a secular military-political purpose, namely to 'divert [...] the arms of the enemy' and bring 'the war into the bosom of France'.<sup>110</sup> The general wording of the collection objective, which referred to giving aid to 'all kinds' of (Reformed) refugees and the preservation of the Reformed religion, allowed for this broad interpretation.<sup>111</sup>

Although the States-General were aware of the deplorable conditions of the refugees in Switzerland, they did not consider welcoming them to the Dutch Republic. Clearly, an important aspect of the 1699 collection was to prevent unwanted immigration by finding alternative resettlement sites for the refugees. In addition to these secular domestic considerations, the decision to hold the collection was influenced by the prospect of a new war to safeguard the national interests, which obviously included the preservation of the true Reformed religion. This goal, and the desire of the States-General to inspire other Reformed rulers, demonstrates that at the end of the seventeenth century confessional politics still played an important role in the support of foreign fellow believers.

### *The Last Expulsion from Piedmont and the 1731 Collection*

In June 1730, Savoy issued a new edict which amounted to a very strict interpretation of the 1694 Toleration Edict, causing about 1,700 Protestants to leave. Protestants from the Pragelato valley, ceded by France to Savoy at the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, were ordered to convert or go into exile, as the duke argued they were not protected by the 1694 edict. Waldensians who had converted to Catholicism during the persecutions of the 1680s but had returned to their Protestant faith after 1694 were considered lapsed heretics, a crime punishable by death. They were given six months to either convert again or leave.

**106** *Generaale Index Secreete Resolutien Holland*, II, 13 and 23 February 1704; *Generaalen Index Resolutiën Holland*, 22 November 1704.

**107** *Generaalen Index Resolutiën Holland*, 28 January 1706. However, a month later, the States' financial deputies reported that the collection proceeds had almost run out: NA, Ellemeet 82, Resolution States-General, 25 February 1706.

**108** *Generaalen Index Resolutiën Holland*, 17 March 1705, 13 February and 11 March 1706.

**109** Monahan, *Let God Arise*, 168-169; Laborie, 'Huguenot Propaganda', 644-645.

**110** NA, Surendonck 223, Secret resolution States-General, 26 February 1705: 'daer toe al een goede somme uyt de generale collecte geëmployeert', 'ter oorsaecke van religie', 'diversie [...] aen de wapenen van den vyandt'; 'om den oorlogh in den boesem van Vranckrijk over te brengen'.

**111** *Resolutiën Staten Generael*, 6 November 1699: 'verscheyde soorten'.

Toleration remained in force only for those Waldensians who had always stayed with their ancestral faith. The States-General appealed to the duke to reconsider the edict, stating the new measures were a violation of the treaties of 1690 and 1694.<sup>112</sup> These legal arguments were not accompanied by any explicit humanitarian arguments, although the States-General did show some compassion when they stated that it ‘pained them’ to learn that ‘these poor people’ were forced to choose between their fatherland and their conscience.<sup>113</sup>

In January 1731, the Swiss cantons approached the Dutch Republic for diplomatic mediation, admission of Waldensians, and financial support. The States-General were prepared to mediate, and just as in 1688 they looked into the possibility of admitting Waldensians to the Dutch overseas colonies.<sup>114</sup> After two more urgent Swiss letters, the States of Holland, which had been pushing for collections in all provinces from the first letter onwards, decided in July 1731 to resort to a provincial door-to-door collection, which had to be done soon so the proceeds could be used before the onset of winter. Their decision rested on religious arguments, such as ‘Christian duty’ and the ‘honour’ of the Reformed Religion. Although the States moved in haste to pre-empt the winter, they did not explicitly mention humanitarian considerations, such as the refugee problem or the dire need of the exiles.<sup>115</sup> The collection order stated only that the collection was ‘for the benefit of the Piedmontese Waldensians who had to leave their fatherland for the sake of religion’.<sup>116</sup> Public justification thus closely matched the States’ internal motivation. In the States-General, Holland again proposed that each province should organise ‘an equal Christian charity’.<sup>117</sup> However, the other provinces preferred to centralise the money the collection would raise, fearing a lot of confusion if each of them would decide for itself how to spend their proceeds. The States-General therefore suggested following the method of the (national) collections of 1687 and 1699 and explicitly called on Holland to refrain from a provincial collection.<sup>118</sup> Holland would not give in, and continued with its provincial collection.<sup>119</sup> The debate surrounding the general collection would continue in the States-General until at least 1733, during which time it was gradually expanded to include more groups, such as expelled Salzburg Lutherans and captured sailors. However, nothing came of it, and no collections were held in the other provinces.<sup>120</sup>

Again, immigration proved to be a major issue. Even when in 1732 the number of aspiring immigrants had dropped to a mere six hundred, the States of Holland still proved unwilling to take in Waldensian refugees, because among them were ‘several old and

112 States-General to Duke of Savoy, 7 November 1730 and 3 January 1731, cited in Viora, ‘Documenti’, 298-300, 302-304.

113 Symcox, ‘Toleration and *Ragion di Stato*’, 40-42; States-General to Duke of Savoy, 24 April 1730, cited in Viora, ‘Documenti’, 295-297: ‘Nous apprenons pourtant avec douleur que ce pauvres gens’.

114 *Resolutiën Staten Generael*, 16 and 30 January 1731.

115 *Resolutiën Staten van Holland*, 26 January, 21 June (citation), and 3 July 1731: ‘een saak, waar in de pligt van een Christelijke Overheid, soo wel als de eer van de Gereformeerde Religie, sonderling geconcerneert zyn’.

116 NHA, Stadsbestuur Haarlem 65, Collection order States of Holland, 24 July 1731: ‘in faveur van de Piemonteze Dalluyden die hun Vaderland moesten verlaten ter saake van de Religie’.

117 *Resolutiën Staten Generael*, 20 July 1731: ‘gelijcke christelijcke weldaadigheydt’.

118 *Resolutiën Staten Generael*, 26 July 1731; *Resolutiën Staten van Holland*, 20 July 1731.

119 *Resolutiën Staten van Holland*, 1 August, 15 September 1731.

120 *Resolutiën Staten Generael*, 25 February 1733.

impotent men, as well as women and small children.’ Instead, they decided to pay the Swiss cantons a further fifty thousand guilders from the collection proceeds and admit only those individuals who could support themselves, but without their families.<sup>121</sup> Despite another refusal by the States of Holland to accept Waldensians in September 1733, the canton of Bern sent three ships with refugees down the Rhine to Rotterdam. Their unexpected arrival in October forced Holland to admit about four hundred Waldensians of all ages and professions. The immigrants were not allowed to settle freely like the Huguenots before, but were divided over cities with Walloon Churches, which were given money from the collection to support them.<sup>122</sup>

Whereas Holland was trying to prevent the immigration of Waldensians, three Zeeland cities – Middelburg, Vlissingen, and Veere (in 1732) – and the Generality Land Vrije van Sluis (in 1733) were actively recruiting expelled Salzburg Lutherans to make up for labour shortages. Both the States of Zeeland and the States-General gave permission for recruiting Salzburger.<sup>123</sup> They did not provide any funds, however, which indicates that they considered these immigrants a local responsibility.<sup>124</sup> In 1732, seeking to persuade both the States of Zeeland and local authorities to allow the settlement of Prussian Mennonites, the Middelburg Mennonite congregation demanded that the Dutch Mennonite Committee for Foreign Needs (Verenigde Commissie voor Buitenslandsche Nooden) would guarantee to bear the costs should the immigrants or their descendants fall into poverty.<sup>125</sup> That same year, the Wageningen city council demanded similar guarantees to prevent any financial burdens for the magistrate, church, or guilds.<sup>126</sup> Apparently, the authorities had fewer problems with the immigration and settlement of Mennonites if they were supported by their own community. It is evident that the protection of the public poor relief system, which was ultimately the responsibility of the authorities, was an important incentive behind the refusal to admit certain groups of Reformed immigrants.

By 1731, the Waldensians were no longer politically important and supporting them would not result in any strategic or geopolitical advantage. Why, then, was the Republic willing to offer them diplomatic and financial support? On the one hand out of Christian compassion, as both Holland and the States-General stated, and on the other, as the States-General noted in a letter to the Duke of Savoy, because the Republic had been

121 *Resolutiën Staten van Holland*, 5 September 1732: ‘verscheiden oude en impotente luiden, ook vrouwen en kleine kinderen’.

122 *Resolutiën Staten van Holland*, 25 September, 21 and 28 October 1733; *Resolutiën Staten Generaal*, 28 September. Another 150 Waldensians, with permission of the States of Holland this time, arrived in 1734: *Resolutiën Staten van Holland*, 15 and 23 July, 14 August 1734.

123 De Kruijter, *Salzburgse vluchtelingen*, chs. 3-4.

124 The three cities resorted to local house-to-house collections: De Kruijter, *Salzburgse vluchtelingen*, 91. In anticipation of the general collection, the States-General repeatedly asked Holland for 10,000 guilders from the Waldensian collection to support these immigrants, but Holland thought it wiser to wait and see how much money was needed to support the Waldensians: *Resolutiën Staten van Holland*, 29 February and 2 December 1732, 8 January and 9 July 1733.

125 SAA, Verenigde Doopsgezinde Gemeente Amsterdam 1997, Middelburg Mennonite congregation to the Committee for Foreign Needs, 25 April 1732.

126 Gulik, *Mislukte kolonisatie*, 7, 35.

closely involved in the 1690 treaty which led to the Edict of Tolerance of 1694.<sup>127</sup> Despite several calls to this effect in the States-General, the provincial States failed to cooperate on a national basis because of their disagreement on how the collection proceeds ought to be managed. Why did Holland so strongly oppose the nationalisation of collection revenues in 1731, when it had not been a problem in 1687 and 1699? It is likely that Holland wished to take control over its own collection because it expected that the majority of the immigrants would settle within its borders. Or perhaps the province, which usually contributed more than sixty percent to these collections, feared that any unspent proceeds would fall into the hands of the States-General, especially given the problematic financial situation of the Dutch Republic, and of Holland in particular.<sup>128</sup> But more fundamentally, supporting Reformed immigrants was a form of poor relief, which was primarily a local and sometimes a provincial responsibility, but never a national one. This also explains why Holland had kept insisting on provincial collections. Although Holland's solo action can be seen as an example of provincial particularism, it seems rather to be rooted in notions of (provincial) sovereignty and responsibility.

### *Conclusion*

According to the States-General in 1655, the driving forces behind their engagement with foreign religious brethren were duty, Christian compassion, and Protestant interest, just as in 1731 the States of Holland claimed to act out of Christian duty and the honour of the Reformed religion. There is no doubt, then, that religion remained an important reason for supporting foreign Protestant minorities well into the eighteenth century. However, a common confessional identity alone was not enough to persuade the authorities to provide relief. While by 1655 the States-General had an idea that certain types of state behaviour were incompatible with a humane policy, their use of humanitarian language was generally confined to diplomatic mediations and to the justification of foreign aid to Dutch donors, and was not cited as a ground to support fellow believers. Decisions regarding foreign aid were thus based primarily on political interests, both domestic and foreign.

Foreign policy considerations varied from case to case, but their common denominator was the defence of the Dutch Republic (its territory, religious set-up, and international status) and the Reformed religion. The latter argument was not just religious in nature but also political, as it was closely linked to national security. In 1687 and 1699, national security concerns were particularly high, and were thus invoked to turn contributing to the collections into a patriotic duty. This justified nationwide door-to-door collections including all inhabitants, irrespective of their religious affiliation. The aims of the States-General, namely the preservation of both the state and the Reformed religion, were inextricably intertwined, a fact which explains the use of the collection proceeds for (anti-French) war

<sup>127</sup> *Resolutiën Staten van Holland*, 21 June 1731; States-General to the Duke of Savoy, 24 April 1730, 7 November 1730, and 3 January 1731, cited in Viora, 'Documenti', 298-300, 302-304.

<sup>128</sup> For the provincial shares, see Boersma, *Noodhulp zonder natiestaat*, 335-336. The state of the public finances is discussed in Dormans, 'Economie'.

purposes. It also suggests that upholding national foreign policy was an important, albeit often unspoken, purpose of these collections. That these objectives were real can be seen in the use to which the proceeds of the collection(s) were put.

A constant domestic concern after 1687 was the protection of the public poor relief system, which amounted to preventing unwanted immigration by using collections to pay for the resettlement of refugees elsewhere. Although early modern states were not able to prevent immigrants from entering their country, the Dutch Republic was able to take – and did take – measures at both state and provincial level in order to prevent mass immigration of (perceived) underprivileged migrants. This policy seems to be at odds with the reputation of the Dutch Republic as a safe haven for refugees. Was the realisation that many Huguenot immigrants had to rely on the public poor relief system perhaps a turning point in the Dutch attitude towards immigration? To answer this question, we need to go back to the Palatinate refugee crisis of the Thirty Years' War. In 1628, the synod of South Holland wanted to establish a central fund for expelled German ministers, which was to be filled by means of a provincial collection. Moreover, it wanted to encourage other synods to set up similar funds in order to share the financial burden equally.<sup>129</sup> Afraid that such a fund would only attract 'a crowd' of needy immigrants 'whom these lands cannot support', the States of Holland prohibited both the collection and the establishment of the fund.<sup>130</sup> Between 1626 and 1641, the synod would see all its requests for provincial collections rejected for the same reason.<sup>131</sup> However, as it was felt that they would be less attractive to these immigrants, small, local collections were allowed. This shows first of all that even before 1648, decisions on foreign aid were not made purely on religious grounds, but also included secular concerns. Furthermore, it reveals that the prevention of unwanted immigration in 1687 was not a direct result of the mass migration of Huguenots, nor of a more secular post-Westphalian policy, but rather of a concern for the public poor relief system and the economy. The generous reception of the Huguenots seems to have been the exception rather than the rule. Paradoxically, the admission of disadvantaged Reformed immigrants presented a larger problem than the admission of other Protestant denominations. However, the protection of the public poor relief system is a form of good governance – and an ongoing concern for the higher Dutch authorities, despite the fact that it was primarily a local responsibility in the decentralised Republic.

This article has approached large-scale transnational aid to foreign Protestants from the perspective of the higher civil authorities. The States-General and the provincial States played an important role in organising foreign aid when the national interests were at stake. When this was not the case, generating solidarity was left to the churches, for instance in 1728, when a flood disaster hit the Waldensian valleys (tab. 1). The Waldensian cases have shown that supporting foreign religious minorities was not just a matter

129 Knuttel, *Acta*, I, 263-265.

130 *Resolutiën Staten van Holland*, 6 April and 9 August 1629; Knuttel, *Acta*, I, 298-299: 'soodat alsoo dese landen den last van sooveel personen niet en zoude connen dragen'.

131 *Resolutiën Staten van Holland*, 28 September, 6 April, 9 August 1629; 20 July 1633 (for the Bohemian Brothers); 11 December 1636; 16 September, 16 March 1639. Knuttel, *Acta*, I, 263-265, 298-300, 347; II, 92-94, 161-162, 297-299. In 1641, the States judged favourably, but left it to the discretion of the cities to decide depending on the local situation: *Resolutiën Staten van Holland*, 10 July 1641.

of confessional solidarity, it was also highly political, both before and after 1648. One could even say that, under the right circumstances, such collections, or at least their proceeds, became an instrument of foreign policy. Of course, relief was provided only to fellow believers, which makes it confessional in nature. Yet by reducing transnational aid to foreign fellow believers to confessional engagement, we miss the point that it was in fact a multifaceted and complex process, involving both religious and secular arguments and institutions.

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