

Fostering the Catholic cultural ties between the Netherlands and Flanders

A study on the reflections of the Dutch Catholic intellectuals involved in the periodical 'De Beiaard' regarding the First World War and its outcome

Research Master Thesis in Historical Studies

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Diese Masterarbeit ist meinen lieben Großeltern Ursula und Georg Hohmann aus Weimar gewidmet

‘Ich wollte einfach alles wissen.’

(Professor Dr.-Ing. habil. Georg Hohmann – mein Großvater)

‘Ik heb aan ’t eind van een studie altijd angst, niet genoeg gedocumenteerd te zijn, een soort examenvrees om nog een en ander en alles tegelijk na te slaan.’

(Gerard Brom)

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Introduction

Why would anyone want to study the history of Dutch Catholics during the First World War? Historian James Kennedy, while writing about religion in Dutch society and culture, provides a possible answer, which lies at the basis of this research. According to him, Dutch society is characterised by discontinuity, in which it differs from the North American society. He provocatively argues that the pre-1940 Dutch society seems to him as far removed from the present as the Neolithic era. Perhaps, Kennedy continues, the rapidly succeeding societal developments of the twentieth century gave many Dutch people the impression that the past consists of worlds, convictions and ideas, which are interesting to the Dutch people, but are irrelevant to the modern world. They have simply not withstood the ravages of time. As a consequence, Kennedy claims, the Catholic world of one hundred years ago is almost completely forgotten by the majority of the Dutch people.¹

Historian Peter Raedts also discusses where this ignorance regarding the confessional nature of the Dutch history originates. According to Raedts, this is due to a teleological form of history writing that has arisen in the last decade. Many Dutch historians, deliberately in Raedts' eyes, neglect the religious character of Dutch history while writing about 'the' history of the Netherlands in order to be able to stress what binds the Dutch together: the allegedly primeval habit to solve problems through discussing them, the polder model.²

Whatever might be the reason, it is exactly because of this 'otherness' that this research places the history of Dutch Catholic intellectuals at the centre of attention. Not because historians have not yet addressed the history of Catholicism in the Netherlands. Quite the contrary, many have done so, which led to an impressive historiography in the last decades. Rather, this study pays attention to Catholic views on the war for their otherness: although these reflections are 'only' one hundred years old, they are reminiscent of a world that has vanished. Yet sometimes, as made apparent whilst conducting this research, their considerations resemble those of us. It is this 'nearby otherness' that makes writing history exciting.

The time span this research investigates is 1915-1920, in order to study the reflections of a certain group of Catholic cultural leaders on World War I and its outcome. The self-taught historian Lodewijk Rogier evaluated the consequences of this war for the Netherlands by writing that

'the Netherlands was shocked far more deeply by the war than most had presumed. A first vague awareness of threats, that were the result of peace, and of great changes, that were caused by the war, opened a new awareness for many spirits. [...] The comforting peace, in which the Netherlands had cherished itself for so long until she nearly had become a characteristic of the people, was abided as an

¹ James Kennedy, 'Geloof achter de dijken. Religie in de Nederlandse samenleving en cultuur', in: G.A.M. Beekelaar and P. van Tongeren (eds.), *Stadsgezichten. Wandelen door de geschiedenis van christendom en cultuur* (Nijmegen, 2005), 132-142.

² Peter Raedts, *De uitvinding van de rooms-katholieke kerk* (Amsterdam, 2013), 7-11.

irresponsible approach to life. Even the Dutch circumstances turned out to no longer be stable.’³

Rogier seems to have had a rather modern view on the war, acknowledging the war's effects as it surrounded his country, while it did not participate.⁴

To broaden our understanding of the impact of this war on the neutral Netherlands, this research thoroughly analyses the way in which the editors and authors involved in the cultural journal *De Beiaard* reflected on the war and its outcome. Words by Rogier that have been quoted much more frequently than the above quotation, concerned this journal. In his view, *De Beiaard*

‘[...] has become the gateway to open Catholicism and until today it is in a cultural sense the most important and in apologetic sense the most fervent and serene of the journals that have been published since the Batavian liberation. [...]. [O]ne finds practically all important figures of the period 1916-1926 among the contributors’.⁵

Put differently, the war concerned not simply a Catholic clique, but some of the most prominent Catholics of that time period.

From 1918 to 1994, Dutch Catholics would be part of the government and in many occasions the Prime Minister was a Catholic.⁶ However, the role of the European war of 1914-1918 within the emancipatory process constitutes an understudied subject of study until the present day. By studying their reflections, I do what practically all historians engaging with the history of Dutch Catholicism have neglected, whether or not deliberately, to do. By combining both insights by Rogier, I study Dutch Catholics *with respect to* the war instead of discussing their behaviour *during* the war years. The central research problem of this master's thesis is the cultural journal *De Beiaard*, a cultural space where opinions and ideas circulated. It is the aim of this research to map the reflections concerning the war and its outcome circulating in this milieu by analysing articles and personal letters that contain such reflections. Concretely, this is accomplished by answering the following research question:

‘How did Catholic intellectuals involved in *De Beiaard* reflect on the First World War and its outcome in the years 1915-1920?’

Obviously, although the historiography on this specific theme is almost non-existent, this inquiry relates to existing literature concerning cognate topics. The following four broad subjects which have been studied by historians so far are addressed: the Dutch in the years 1914-1920, and, as a part of this, historical accounts on Dutch Catholics, Dutch intellectuals and Dutch Catholic intellectuals. In the first chapter these fields of attention are discussed, after which *De Beiaard* is introduced.

³ L. Rogier and N. de Rooy, *In vrijheid herboren. Katholiek Nederland, 1853-1953* (Den Haag, 1953), 619.

⁴ *In vrijheid herboren* was written by both Rogier and the priest N. de Rooy. However, according to historian Johannes Bornewasser, Rogier wrote chapter IV from which this quote is taken, see: J.A. Bornewasser, ‘Geschiedwetenschap en engagement bij L.J. Rogier (1894-1974)’, *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 87 (1974), 443-459, there 446.

⁵ Rogier, *In vrijheid herboren*, 583-585. Luykx uses words of similar meaning, see: Paul Luykx, *Heraut van de katholieke herleving: Gerard Brom (1882-1959)* (Nijmegen, 2015), 158-171.

⁶ Piet de Rooy, *Republiek van rivaliteiten: Nederland sinds 1813* (Amsterdam, 2002, fifth edition 2014), 164.

Consequently, some important concepts, terminology issues and the historical sources, mainly consisting of articles published in *De Beiaard* and the correspondence of the editors and authors, are accounted for. The second chapter addresses, on the basis of these sources, their reflections concerning the war. The third, and final chapter, analyses their views regarding the outcome of war.

Chapter 1 – Status Quaestionis

The Dutch

In 1997 historian Maarten Brands argues that the First World War was a ‘blind spot in the collective consciousness of the Netherlands’. His words had a lasting effect. As late as 2006, historians Joris van Eijnatten and Fred van Lieburg, in their monograph on the religious history of the Netherlands, argue that the Netherlands ‘had had the luck that the First World War stayed outside its borders. Neutrality was more or less considered to be a national obligation. The consequences of the Second World War were much more severe.’⁷ To be sure, their statement is correct. However, it simultaneously makes clear two things: firstly, their limited attention for the First World War and religion and secondly, the fact that the former war is very often seen in light of the latter war.

Nevertheless, ever since Brands’ statement, many studies on the Netherlands and World War I have been published. In 2000, the *Instituut voor Oorlogs-, Holocaust- en Genocidestudies* (NIOD) widened the scope of its research from only the Second World War to war throughout the entire twentieth century. Examples of publications related to World War I that have been published by the NIOD are its seventeenth yearbook *Religion and violence in the twentieth century* (2006) and the volume on the Dutch and the First World War (2016), edited by historian Conny Kristel. In 2002, the *Stichting Studiecentrum Eerste Wereldoorlog* (SSEW) started publishing its volume *De Grote Oorlog. Kroniek 1914-1918*, containing many articles concerning neutral countries during the First World War. Moreover, several monographs have been published.⁸

The publication by historian Maartje Abbenhuis shows that the Dutch were confident that they would remain neutral throughout the war. She argues that neutrality had become part of Dutch identity: the Dutch saw themselves as a peace-loving, trading people that relied on international law in cases of international conflicts. Neutrality was seen as a national virtue.⁹ Yet, although the Netherlands indeed remained neutral throughout the conflict, it was economically, politically, militarily and socially involved at numerous instances: its army was mobilised – initially counting 200,000, increasing to 400,000 soldiers towards the end of the war – which was a considerable part of the Netherlands’ population, approximately 6 million people; it housed many refugees, circa 1 million in the first month of the war, of whom circa 100,000 would stay until the end of the conflict; and while the German *Reich* was collapsing, its *Kaiser* fled to its neutral neighbour, where he was welcomed as a political refugee. These are merely the best-known examples; the list could go on for pages.

⁷ Joris van Eijnatten and Fred van Lieburg, *Nederlandse religiegeschiedenis* (Hilversum, 2006), 304.

⁸ The most important publications are: Marc Frey, *Der Erste Weltkrieg und die Niederlande: ein neutrales Land im politischen und wirtschaftlichen Kalkül der Kriegsgegner* (Berlin, 1998); Hubert van Tuyl van Serooskerken, *The Netherlands and World War I. Espionage, Diplomacy and Survival* (Leiden, 2001); Maartje M. Abbenhuis, *The art of staying neutral. The Netherlands in the First World War, 1914-1918* (Amsterdam, 2006); Ismee Tames, ‘Oorlog voor onze gedachten’. *Oorlog, neutraliteit en identiteit in het Nederlandse publieke debat 1914-1918* (Hilversum, 2006); Martin Kraaijenstein and Paul Schulten (eds.), *Wankel evenwicht. Neutraal Nederland en de Eerste Wereldoorlog* (Soesterberg, 2007); Paul Moeyes, *Buiten schot: Nederland tijdens de Eerste Wereldoorlog 1914-1918* (Amsterdam, third edition 2014).

⁹ Abbenhuis, *The art of staying neutral*, 23-37.

Simultaneously, these examples indicate that historians have mainly studied political, economic and diplomatic aspects of the conflict. The works of historians who did pay attention to cultural aspects can be counted on one hand. Firstly, historian Ismee Tames studied public opinion concerning Dutch identity and neutrality in the First World War. Secondly, historians Enne Koops and Henk van der Linden published a volume on Dutch Christianity and World War I. Thirdly, historians Ewoud Kieft and Marjet Broelsma dedicated parts of their dissertations to reflections of Dutch intellectuals on the war. Finally, historian Conny Kristel published an article and a monograph on Dutch responses to the war.¹⁰

All these publications offer research findings relevant to this master's thesis. Kristel's publications are discussed in the context of the Dutch and World War I, because she explicitly aimed to offer an overview of reflections from Dutch people *in general* relating to, in particular, war violence. 'Dutch people' is understood as non-Catholics and non-intellectuals, groups that receive attention in this chapter separately. Kristel studied 23 diaries of Dutch people, because, as she rightly points out, so far historians have paid most of their attention to the reflections of the Dutch elite.¹¹ From these diaries it appears the Dutch were well informed about the war. Information came to them via the Belgian refugees, their international networks and the Dutch printed media. These diarists viewed the conflict as an 'irrational phenomenon' and many felt – in line with Abbenhuis' argument – morally superior to it. Kristel is able to distinguish four themes that were relevant to Dutch people while reflecting on the war. Firstly, Dutch people expressed both positive and negative opinions about the war. There was, in the words of Kristel, a 'mysterious attraction' related to warfare. Secondly, many Dutchmen observed the limited room for manoeuvre of the Dutch state, which was perceived as powerless. Thirdly, the role of international law and the impact it had on the responses of the Dutch people. The fourth theme is the place of the Netherlands in the world.¹² While discussing the articles and letters in chapters 2 and 3, these themes are accounted for: to what extent did the views of the Catholic intellectuals involved in *De Beiaard* correspond with these themes?

Over the course of time historians paid attention to several topics related to the *outcome* of the war, which were relevant to Dutch people. The topics concerned are: the threat of revolution; the annexation demands by Belgium at the expense of the Netherlands; the asylum granted to the former

¹⁰ Enne Koops and Henk van der Linden (eds.), *De kogel door de kerk? Het Nederlandse christendom en de eerste Wereldoorlog* (Soesterberg, 2014). In addition, the Belgian-Dutch journal *Trajecta* devoted its second issue of 2014 to 'Religion and the "Great War" in the Low Countries', but none of the authors explicitly addressed Dutch Catholics during the war, see: Jan de Maeyer, Enne Koops and Tine van Osselaer (eds.), *Religion and the 'Great War' in the Low Countries* 23:2 (2014).

¹¹ The diaries Kristel discusses were almost exclusively written by people from the middle and upper classes. So she also largely focusses on the upper layer of the population.

¹² Conny Kristel, 'A wonderful something': The Netherlands and the war in 1914', in: James, E. Kitchen, Alisa Miller and Laura Rowe (eds.), *Other combatants, other fronts: competing histories of the First World War* (Cambridge, 2011), 79-98, here 84-94. Conny Kristel, *De oorlog van anderen. Nederlanders en oorlogsgeweld, 1914-1918* (Amsterdam, 2016), 7-27.

Emperor of Germany; the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations. Although historians have discussed these themes elaborately, the reflections on these topics by the Dutch have received less attention. Some historians touched upon the way Dutch people reflected on the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations.

Historian Remco van Diepen dedicated his dissertation to the Dutch role in the League of Nations, which was founded in January 1919. Part of his monograph is the way in which a few Dutch journalists perceived the Treaty of Versailles and the plan to create a League of Nations. According to Van Diepen, this treaty did not meet their wish for a peaceful and democratic Europe. Tames concurs with this viewpoint.¹³ At the core of the League of Nations, these journalists argued, lied hatred and resentment, not the ideals expressed by Woodrow Wilson, the president of the United States. In addition, Van Diepen argues that many Dutch people participating in commercial, industrial and financial circles were not pleased with the outcome of the Versailles negotiations. They argued the Netherlands would benefit from an economically strong Germany, but due to the severe restoration payments imposed on the Netherlands' eastern neighbour, economic recovery was not foreseeable in the near future. The response in the Dutch press on the plan for the League of Nations was also largely negative, although most journalists considered the Netherlands' entry into the league as desirable. In their eyes, the plan had many deficiencies, but membership was seen as the 'lesser of two evils', as Van Diepen puts it. As with the results of Kristel's research, the conclusions of Van Diepen are used to interpret the sources in the chapters 2 and 3.

Dutch Catholics

In an article in the aforementioned volume on Dutch Christianity, historian and archivist Ramses Peters discusses Dutch Catholics and the war. His publication is the only one that explicitly addresses this issue.¹⁴ According to him, the second decade of the twentieth century has already been studied profoundly. However, within these investigations, World War I only plays a minor role. Peters determines five special research areas related to the war: the Universal Church; Catholic theology; the apostolate; the cultural elite and the societal consequences. Here, I elaborate on these fields of attention except for the fourth one, the cultural elite, which is discussed separately.¹⁵

The first field of attention deals with the consequences of the conflict for the Universal Church. In his first encyclical letter of 1 November 1914, *Ad Beatissimi Apostolorum*, Pope Benedict XV (1854-1922) called for a Christmas truce. Despite the fact that this and subsequent peace proposals by Benedict were ignored by the warring parties, the Pope managed to take advantage of the war situation

¹³ Tames, 'Oorlog voor onze gedachten', 250-251.

¹⁴ Martin Conway and Peter Romijn, 'Belgium and the Netherlands', in: Robert Gerwarth (ed.), *Twisted paths. Europe 1914-1945* (Oxford, 2007), 84-110; Eginhard Meijering, *Het Nederlands christendom in de twintigste eeuw* (Amsterdam, 2007), 113-120.

¹⁵ Ramses Peters, 'Gesel Gods, een zegen? De Eerste Wereldoorlog en het katholicisme in Nederland', in: Enne Koops and Henk van der Linden (eds.), *De kogel door de kerk? Het Nederlandse christendom en de Eerste Wereldoorlog* (Soesterberg, 2014), 133-164, there 134.

by positioning the Vatican in the role of mediator between the belligerents. Hence, the Vatican's diplomatic position improved during the war: diplomatic ties were strengthened with many countries, including the Netherlands.¹⁶

The second theme Peters elaborates on is the effect of the war on Dutch theology. All Dutch bishops 'used' the encyclical letter of November 1 for their own plea against the evils of modern society. In the eyes of most bishops, the war affirmed the Church's refusal of 'godless' modernity: the war had to be seen as a punishment by God, precisely because of the evils of modern society. The deterioration of morals was considered the most worrying characteristic of the modern world. The way the bishops indicted modernity, and the role of the war therein, differed from diocese to diocese. Historian Enne Koops wrote an article on Reformed pastors and World War I. He analysed the interpretations of the war by these pastors and concluded that the war was chiefly seen as an event with devastating effects on religion. In his view, it is therefore 'no coincidence' that between 1909 and 1930 the numbers of people leaving the church rose sharply.¹⁷ By interpreting the war as a punishment from God, the stance of the bishops resembles the attitude of these pastors.

The third theme Peters discusses is the apostolate. Many confessionals observed a growing popularity to Christianity in the first months of the conflict. Yet as soon as the acute threat was averted, many Dutchmen left the church again. Before the war, people also converted to Catholicism, but the great apostolic zeal of Catholics from 1915 onwards, was unprecedented.¹⁸ Historian Jan Roes has shown that the crisis itself inspired Catholics to develop missionary activities. Because the German and French mission areas were in danger, missionary propagandists argued that the neutral Netherlands was supposed to fulfil a special missionary vocation. Out of gratitude for respecting Dutch neutrality, the Dutch were expected to take over the missionary duty of the belligerents.¹⁹

The final field of interest distinguished by Peters is the societal consequences of the war. From a political point of view, the years 1914-1918 were successful for Catholics. With what came to be termed the 'Pacification' of 1917, the confessionals received the long wished government subsidy for special education. The following elections for the House of Representatives resulted in the highest number of Catholic seats ever, and in August 1918 the first Catholic Prime Minister took office. The war did not cause the pacification, but it accelerated its realisation, because the economic crisis and the on-going uncertainty about the preservation of neutrality caused a stronger feeling of solidarity among national politicians.

Economically, the Netherlands had suffered from the worldwide crisis, but the labour unions had

¹⁶ Peters, 'Gesel Gods, een zegen?', 135-137; Martin Lätzel, *Die katholische Kirche im Ersten Weltkrieg. Zwischen Nationalismus und Friedenswillen* (Regensburg, 2014), 148-163.

¹⁷ Enne Koops, 'Ervaringen en reflecties van voorgangers', in: Enne Koops and Henk van der Linden (eds.), *De kogel door de kerk? Het Nederlandse christendom en de Eerste Wereldoorlog* (Soesterberg, 2014), 63-105, there 85.

¹⁸ Peters, 'Gesel Gods, een zegen?', 139-142, 144-146.

¹⁹ Jan Roes, *Het groote missiejaar, 1915-1940: op zoek naar de missiemotivatie van de Nederlandse katholieken* (Bilthoven, 1974), 8-19; Luykx, *Heraut van de katholieke herleving*, 46-56, 267-279.

benefited from it. The membership numbers of the Catholic trading unions increased from 33,000 in 1914 to 120,000 in 1919. The attempted revolution from 9 to 14 November, initiated by the leader of the Social Democrat Party (SDAP) Pieter Jelles Troelstra (1860-1930), caused feelings of anxiety among Dutch politicians. The Catholic trading union set up a countermovement and successfully mobilised Catholic labourers against the revolutionary threat. In doing so, the Catholics protected the Dutch monarchy and were able to present themselves as the alternative to the anarchy and chaos of the Socialists.²⁰ Adhesion prevailed in the attitude of Dutch Catholics towards the monarchy according to historian Jan Bank. Historically, in their eyes, the development of the monarchy had become a symbol of the societal order, in which, especially after 1848, their rights were respected. However, the counterrevolution of the Catholics should mainly be seen as a way of fighting Socialism.²¹

To conclude this theme, Peters draws attention to two relevant societal effects of the conflict. Firstly, the burden of helping the Belgian refugees that fled into the Netherlands fell mainly upon Catholic shoulders. Because these refugees entered the Netherlands mostly through Catholic regions and the greatest part of the Belgian refugees were Catholics, most of them were housed with Catholics. Secondly, Peters points to the disruptive effect of the national mobilisation on Dutch society. Suddenly many men were away from home and got in touch with 'dissenters'.²² Catholic leaders feared this would have negative consequences for their faith; therefore they published all sorts of behavioural guidelines. Peters concludes his article by stating that, ideologically speaking, the cultural crisis, deepened by the war, had a perpetuating effect on Catholic doctrine.²³

Dutch intellectuals

Tames' dissertation focuses on the development of the public debate on the position and identity of the Netherlands during the war. Dutch publicists participated by thinking and writing publicly about the war. Like other historians, Tames notes that many contemporary intellectuals considered the international conflict to be a cultural war. Intellectuals in France and England popularised the idea that civilisation had to be secured, whereas their German counterparts argued that their culture was at stake.²⁴ Tames aimed to ascertain what concepts Dutch publicists used to define Dutch national identity and whether (if so, how) their implications changed in the course of events. As potential allies, neutral countries had a function in the international public debate: they got caught up in the conflict

²⁰ Peters, 'Gesel Gods, een zegen?', 150-154.

²¹ Jan Bank, 'Katholieken en de Nederlandse monarchie. Tussen staatsraison en populariteit', in: C.A. Tamse and J.H. Meijssen (eds.), *De monarchie in Nederland* (Amsterdam, 1980), 195-208, there 198-200; Jac. Bosmans, 'Wilhelmina en de katholieken. Naar aanleiding van Cees Fasseur, Wilhelmina. De jonge koningin (Amsterdam, Uitgeverij Balans 1998)', *Ex Tempore* 17 (1998), 195-206, there 197.

²² 'Dissenters' is the translation for 'andersdenkenden' used by Dutch Catholics to name those people that were not Catholics. By using this word, I follow Marit Monteiro's translation of the concept, see: Marit Monteiro, 'Catholic intellectual elites in the Netherlands. Fruitful and vulnerable alliances during the Interbellum', in: Urs Altermatt, Jan de Maeyer and Franziska Metzger (eds.), *Religious Institutes and Catholic Culture in 19th- and 20th-Century Europe* (Leuven, 2014), 23-39, there 30.

²³ Peters, 'Gesel Gods, een zegen?', 154-159.

²⁴ Alan Kramer, *Dynamic of destruction. Culture and mass killing in the First World War* (Oxford, 2007), 159-210; Fred Bridgham (eds.), *The First World War as a clash of cultures* (Rochester, 2006), 1-40.

through the propaganda of the belligerents, who sought to win their sympathy. However, as the number of casualties of the warring parties increased, the neutrals were increasingly seen as annoying know-it-all's who stood on the sideline, instead of countries of high moral standing. Tames wonders what the consequences were of this changing attitude towards neutrals for the way in which Dutch publicists reflected on Dutch identity and the position of the Netherlands.

Her dissertation shows the evolution of the public debate. Initially, publicists clang onto the concept of justice, by reflecting on how Belgium's neutrality had been violated by the Germans. Later on, this concept of justice became problematic because the United Kingdom had declared war on Germany with reference to the same concept – which consequently became part of the propaganda warfare between the two countries. Therefore, Dutch publicists looked for alternatives, which they found in promoting national characteristics of the Dutch that could be attributed to the process of constituting a European peace. Near the end of the war, however, they realised there would be no special role for the Dutch. As a consequence, they explored the concept of democracy, as they assumed it would be a concept of importance in the 'new world' after the crisis. All in all, Tames shows how the 'cultural mobilisation', as she names it, was taking place in the Netherlands.²⁵

Historians Marjet Brolsma and Tessa Lobbes also address the reflections of Dutch intellectuals concerning the crisis. Brolsma studied the humanitarian movement, a 'heterogeneous movement, which came into existence at the turn of the twentieth century'. She discusses the alternatives to the war crisis suggested by Dutch humanitarian idealists in the period 1914-1930. The war had caused an upsurge of humanitarian idealism among Dutch cultural leaders. The pacifist, European and cosmopolitan ideals of many of them became evident in their wish to rebuild the European community that had been destroyed. For them, Christianity as an internationally uniting and peace making power had come to an end, because, like in other countries, the Dutch churches had supported the government's policy. As a consequence, many humanitarian idealists started to look for alternative religious ideas and practices, which would renew culture at large.²⁶ More recently, Lobbes addressed Dutch intellectuals in the war by discussing the way in which some of them were involved in hidden propaganda activities of the French and the Germans, respectively. Lobbes is thus able to show that, despite Dutch neutrality, many of them were eager to influence Dutch public opinion in favour of one of the belligerents.²⁷

Catholic intellectuals

According to Peters, there has been almost no historiographical attention for the Dutch Catholic elite

²⁵ Ismee Tames, *'Oorlog voor onze gedachten'. Oorlog, neutraliteit en identiteit in het Nederlandse publieke debat 1914-1918* (Hilversum, 2006), 19.

²⁶ Marjet Brolsma, *'Het humanitaire moment'. Nederlandse intellectuelen, de Eerste Wereldoorlog en de crisis van de Europese beschaving (1914-1930)* (Amsterdam, 2015), 23-52.

²⁷ Tessa Lobbes, 'Negotiating neutrality. Intellectuals, belligerent propaganda and Dutch identities in the Netherlands during the First World War', 1-12, there 12. Paper presented at the KNHG annual conference 'Neutral at war, 1914-1918. Comparative and transnational perspectives', on 20 November 2015.

during the conflict. For this reason, he tries to give the initial impetus to historical research regarding this topic by discussing several thinkers who have publicly expressed their views on the conflict. Furthermore, he draws attention to the fact that the Catholic elite radicalised as the crisis progressed, both in their opinions about the war and in their opinions about society at large. He implies that the foundation of the journals *De Beiaard* (1915) and *De Nieuwe Eeuw* (1916) should be seen in this context.²⁸ The mental impact of the war had reinforced the already existing criticism of modern culture. In the case of the so-called young Catholics, a critical and self-confident group of Catholics that emerged at the turn of the century, it concerned a sharp generation conflict. In fact, Peters argues, similar to historians such as Marjet Derks and Paul Luykx, that the Catholic world witnessed the first consequences of a successful emancipation: the first generation with higher education broke away from the previous generation.²⁹

Kieft studied a longer time span of which the war was part, by analysing diaries and letters written by prominent French and Dutch figures that had converted to Catholicism in the period 1870-1918. Their radicalisation had his interest: What inspired them to join the church? Why did they glamorise the war? The key word of Kieft's answer is regeneration. Before the outbreak of war, these men of learning had felt uncomfortable with modern culture, which they considered to be materialistic, superficial and unauthentic. Instead, they longed for a primitive, pure and re-enchanted world. For the realisation of these ideals, many turned to Catholicism. In addition, they assumed that the crisis offered an opportunity to get rid of the old world.³⁰ Kieft also discusses how poet and writer Pieter van der Meer de Walcheren (1880-1970) reflected on the war in *Menschen en God* (1940), the sequel to his first autobiography *Mijn Dagboek* (1913). According to Van der Meer de Walcheren, the vast majority of the Dutch population had taken a careless attitude towards the crisis, which he considered inexcusable. They did not care about world events that were taking place just across the border: 'The events taking place in Europe were too excessive, too wild for the plain average Dutch person.' ('Het groot-menschelijke dat zich afspeelde in Europa was te buitensporig, te wild voor de nuchteren doorsnee-Nederlander.')³¹

Another Catholic that already received attention by historians was Antonius Struycken (1873-1923) who was a renowned jurist during the period: he was a member of the Council of State and Professor of Constitutional Law at the University of Amsterdam. He is one of the central figures in Tames' previously discussed study. She argues Struycken was shocked by the outbreak of the conflict,

²⁸ Peters, 'Gesel Gods, een zegen?', 133-164, especially 147-150.

²⁹ Marjet Derks, *Heilig moeten. Radicaal-katholiek en retro-modern in de jaren twintig en dertig* (Hilversum, 2007), 9-38; Paul Luykx, *Andere katholieken: opstellen over Nederlandse katholieken in de twintigste eeuw* (Nijmegen, 2000), 28.

³⁰ Ewoud Kieft, *Tot oorlog bekeerd: religieuze radicalisering in West-Europa 1870-1918* (Utrecht, 2011), 116-169. The dissertation of Kieft shows many similarities with the monograph Paul Luykx, *Daar is nog poëzie, nog kleur, nog warmte. Katholieke bekeerlingen en moderniteit in Nederland, 1880-1960* (Hilversum, 2007), 26, 38-78, 111-139, 188-201.

³¹ Ewoud Kieft, *Het plagiaat. De polemiek tussen Menno ter Braak en Anton van Duinkerken* (Nijmegen, 2006), 11.

especially because it lay bare the weakness of international law and the vulnerability of small states. Along with other publicists, Struycken felt the need for interpreting this crisis and explaining what would be the right attitude towards the belligerents for the Dutch government. Tames argues that the professor had strongly believed in the on-going development of democracy and international law, but that the outbreak of war deeply shook his worldview. Initially, Struycken believed in justice, but as the war progressed his focus changed from international law to an interest in neutral states. He disapproved the 'loss of honour' of the Netherlands because the Dutch reconciled with every claim that came across from the belligerents. Thus, he provides an excellent example of the development of the Dutch debate at large: instead of referring to justice, publicists increasingly started to stress national interests of small states.³²

Van Diepen paid attention to how Struycken assessed the draft for the League of Nations. Struycken acknowledged the concept was far from perfect, but he warned his readers for expressing too much criticism. It had been humiliating for the neutral states to be excluded from the drawing table where the draft for the League of Nations was composed. Yet, his Dutch readers should ignore their feelings of disappointment, because it was their duty to cooperate with the foundation of this institution based on freedom, law and justice, as Struycken argued. The current League of Nations could possibly prelude, he concluded, the development towards a more advanced organisation in the future.³³

Unlike Struycken, many Dutch Catholics did not see the future with as much optimism. Many historians argued that Catholic cultural leaders experienced the loss of traditional values and standards and they subsequently were attracted to all sorts of movements, which aimed at eliminating democracy, individualism and Socialism, such as the so-called recovery movement ('herstelbeweging') and Fascism.³⁴

The journal De Beiaard

The core of this master's thesis consists of articles published in a journal. According to historian Stephen Vella newspapers can be used for 'three broad categories of investigation': the content, the

³² Tames, 'Oorlog voor onze gedachten', 19, 21, 31, 34-37, 60, 120, 130-131, 151, 162-164, 224, 231; Other publications, yet less extensively, that pay attention to the behavior of Dutch Catholic intellectuals in the war are: Gerard Brom, *Alphons Ariëns* (Utrecht, 1941 second edition 1950), 526-544; Gerrit F. Deems, *Een 'andere' Ariëns. De Doctrina Socialis van Dr. Alfons Ariëns (1860-1928)* (Almere, 2011), 99; Ton Crijnen, *Titus Brandsma: de man achter de mythe. De nieuwe biografie* (Nijmegen, 2008), 104-106; Frans Verhagen, *Toen de katholieken Nederland veroverden. Charles Ruijs de Beerenbrouck 1873-1936* (Amsterdam, 2015), 71-72, 114-115.

³³ Remco van Diepen, *Voor Volkenbond en vrede: Nederland en het streven naar een nieuwe wereldorde 1919-1946* (Amsterdam, 1999), 37-42.

³⁴ Wim Zaal, *De herstellers. Lotgevallen van de Nederlandse fascist en van Wouter Lutkie's tijdschrift Aristo* (Utrecht, 1966), 10-31; L.M.H. Joosten, *Katholieken en fascisme in Nederland 1920-1940* (Utrecht, 1982) 9-28; Sjoerd van Faassen and Selma Chen, *Roomse ruzie. De splitsing tussen De Gemeenschap en De Nieuwe Gemeenschap* (Nijmegen, 2007) 26-28; Kieft, *Het plagiaat*, 11-18; Luykx, *Andere katholieken*, 225-242, 284-313; Mathijs Sanders, *Europese papieren: intellectueel grensverkeer tijdens het interbellum* (Nijmegen, 2016), 7-15.

format and the institutional structure.³⁵ This research concerns with the first category: the content. Historian Remieg Aerts draws attention to the difficulties that arise while analysing the content of historical journals. He argues magazines should be considered an ‘active party’, it is the journal which sets the agenda and while doing so the editors are able to frame values, norms, images and orders. Of course, the periodical is helpless without the public, but partly the magazine helps people to formulate opinions and ideas.³⁶

The literary scholar Mathijs Sanders has written extensively about Catholic journals. According to him, ‘cultural journals’, polythematic journals that addressed contemporary events written for a broad audience, came into existence during the 1760s and flourished from about 1870 up to 1970 in the Netherlands. Obviously, this is due to the abolition of the tax on newspapers in 1869 after which the number of issues and copies sharply rose.³⁷ It is no coincidence, Sanders argues, that this period coincided with the period of compartmentalisation, because this process went hand in hand with the unprecedented growth of publicity networks. Newspapers and journals were intended to be guiders and gatekeepers, ‘indispensable weapons’ in the struggle for Catholic interests. ‘They filtered the news and channelled and interpreted the information for their own audience.’ Thus, journals created a public sphere in which information and opinions could circulate freely. In this sense, such periodicals played an important role in the formation and consolidation of group identities. ‘We Catholics’ was the most common word combination to be found in Catholic journals, Sanders claims. By means of newspapers and journals, Catholics positioned themselves in the societal, political and cultural forefront where they were able to effectively counter attacks by dissenters.³⁸

The foundation of *De Beiaard* was prepared in the last months of 1915 and the first issue appeared in March 1916, published by *Uitgeversmaatschappij Teulings*, located in s-Hertogenbosch. The publisher would continue publishing the journal every month until December 1925. The first editorial meeting took place on 30 November 1915 and was attended by Bernard Molkenboer OP, Gerard Brom, Johannes Hoogveld, Joseph Schrijnen and Frans van Cauwelaert, the latter of who was asked by Brom to give shape to the ideal of the ‘Greater Netherlands’.³⁹ Later, J.A. Loeff was also added to the editorial staff, and was now considered to be complete: it was reasonably spread over the dioceses and consisted of three clerics and three laymen. The journal would focus on arts, philosophy and theology. Brom became the secretary, and he would be the pivot of the whole undertaking.

³⁵ Stephen Vella, ‘Newspapers’, in: M. Dobson and B. Ziemann (eds.), *Reading primary sources. The interpretation of texts from nineteenth- and twentieth-century history* (New York, 2009), 192-208, there 198.

³⁶ Remieg Aerts, ‘Het algemeen-culturele tijdschrift in het negentiende-eeuwse medialandschap’, *TS. Tijdschrift voor tijdschriftstudies* 11 (2002), 34-47, there 43-44; Remieg Aerts, *De letterheren: liberale cultuur in de negentiende eeuw: het tijdschrift De Gids* (Amsterdam, 1997), 11-22.

³⁷ Marcel Broersma, ‘Botsende stijlen. De Eerste Wereldoorlog en de Nederlandse journalistieke cultuur’, *Tijdschrift voor Mediageschiedenis* 2 (1999), 41-69, there 42.

³⁸ Mathijs Sanders, ‘Gidsen en poortwachters. De functies van katholieke tijdschriften in het Interbellum’, in: *Streven* 75 (2008), 834-844, there 834-837, quote on 834; Mathijs Sanders, *Het spiegelend venster: katholieken in de Nederlandse literatuur, 1870-1940* (Nijmegen, 2002) pp.

³⁹ The abbreviation OP stands for *Ordre Praedicatorum*: the order of Dominicans, see:

<http://www.ru.nl/kdc/weten/naslagwerken/online-naslagwerken/afkortingen/> Accessed 9 December 2015.

According to historian Theo Reul the journal had 500 subscribers when it first appeared. After the second issue this number had risen to 815. In the course of 1917, this number increased to 1100. From 1918 to 1924 the number of copies fluctuated around 900. The periodical was distributed across the Netherlands, but the editors hoped to reach the Flemish market as well, as soon as the conflict was over.

According to Luykx, the founders of this cultural journal were convinced that the existing prominent Catholic journals failed in carrying out their task. *De Katholiek* and *Studiën* were considered too focused on the clergy and *Van Onzen Tijd* was seen as a diluted extract of the aesthetics of the *Tachtigers*, who cherished an individualist view of art.⁴⁰ It was no coincidence that *De Beiaard* was established in this moment in time, since the first quarter of the twentieth century, famously called the ‘kwarteeuw der ontluiking’ by historian Lodewijk Rogier, witnessed many initiatives by young Catholics to distance themselves from the older generation. In doing so, they accomplished the revival of Dutch Catholics.⁴¹ In Luykx’ view, the journal strove to become a Catholic leader and simultaneously reach out for the non-Catholic world, by offering overviews of cultural and societal developments and by instigating the debate. This was something that was still unknown to the Catholic world of that time. The goal of the *De Beiaard* was to concentrate the Catholic forces of the Netherlands and Flanders. Literary scholar Ruth Beijert furthermore stresses the fact that Brom asked the other editors to promote the national and international feeling of solidarity among Catholics, hence Brom’s interest in Flanders.⁴² Thus, with their platform, the editors wanted to serve a new cultural elite.⁴³

The ideal of the Greater Netherlands

While discussing *De Beiaard*, the ideal of the ‘Greater Netherlands’ was mentioned. Several historians, Luykx in particular, have argued that it was important for the editors involved in this periodical to foster the ‘Greater Netherlands’; it had been one of its main goals. I, however, on the basis of five arguments, argue that this ideal could probably be regarded as the main goal of the journal.

Firstly, since the beginning of the century, the founders had been in contact with prominent Flemish people; one of these contacts, Frans van Cauwelaert, was invited, and became, an editor of the periodical to embody the Greater Netherlands. During the whole existence of *De Beiaard*, Brom

⁴⁰ Luykx, *Heraut van de katholieke herleving*, 150.

⁴¹ Rogier, *In vrijheid herboren*, 431-616.

⁴² Ruth Beijert, *Van Tachtiger tot Modernist. Het Gezellebeeld in de Nederlandse kritiek 1897-1940* (Groningen, 1997), 157.

⁴³ Luykx, *Heraut van de katholieke herleving*, 150-158. Several other historians have discussed this journal as well, see: Marcel Gebruers, *Het tijdschrift ‘De Beiaard’ (1916-1925) en zijn bijdrage tot de letterkundige herleving van katholiek Nederland* (treatise Nijmegen, 1949); P.A.M. Geurts, ‘Betrokkenheid van Marie Koenen bij de oprichting en de eerste periode van De Beiaard’, *Publications de la Société Historique et Archéologique dans le Limbourg* 128 (1992) 185-196; Theo Reul, ‘Het tijdschrift *De Beiaard* (1916-1925)’, in: *Jaarboek Katholiek Documentatie Centrum* 18 (1998), 318-333.

encouraged his Flemish contacts to contribute to his journal. Secondly, the ideal is explicitly expressed as the main goal of the journal in the prospectus:

‘From multiple sides over the last few years, plans have been formed for a general periodical, to concentrate the powers of The Netherlands and Flanders. Under influence of this growing urge people from different regions and circles have united themselves in establishing the periodical *De Beiaard*, the name of which sufficiently expresses the national, harmonic and transcendent spirit.’

(‘Van meerdere kanten zijn de laatste jaren plannen gevormd voor een algemeene periodiek, om de krachten van Nederland en Vlaanderen te concentreeren. Onder invloed van dezen hoe langer hoe sterker drang hebben zich personen van verschillende streken en kringen vereenigd tot stichting van het maandschrift *De Beiaard*, waarvan de naam genoeg den nationalen, harmonischen en transcendenten geest uitdrukt.’⁴⁴)

Later on in 1916, Schrijnen justified the name of the journal, in an article published in the journal. He wrote that they considered it the task of the editors and authors ‘to sound, as bright editors of *De Beiaard*, a song of unity and strength, of harmony and freedom in the countries of the Meuse and the Scheldt.’ ([om] als wakkere beiaardiers een lied van eenheid en kracht, van harmonie en vrijheid te laten uitklinken over de landen van Maas en Schelde’.⁴⁵)

Fourthly, when the armistice was imminent Hoogveld kept going on about the future of *De Beiaard* in Flanders in his letters to Brom: although the journal did not appear in Belgium, it was intended for both the Netherlands and Flanders. Whilst doing so, Hoogveld seemed more occupied with building the reputation of the journal in Belgium than the rebuilding of this country. In two letters from November 1915, Hoogveld had already expressed his hope that Van Cauwelaert would help to guarantee the future of their journal in Belgium.⁴⁶ The first letter in which Hoogveld returns to this theme is dated 7 December 1917. In it, Hoogveld asked Brom whether Van Cauwelaert would keep his promise: ‘And would he help us after the war, in Flanders? Remember we must occupy that area, a quarter of an hour after the Germans have left it!’ (‘En zou hij ons na de oorlog in Vlaanderen helpen? Denk er om we moeten dat gebied bezetten, ’n kwartier nadat de Duitschers het verlaten hebben!’⁴⁷)

In at least eight letters Hoogveld subsequently sent to Brom until 13 February 1919, Hoogveld expressed his frustrations concerning the lack of assistance from Van Cauwelaert for realising the aforementioned goal. Hoogveld wanted his help for nothing less than for constituting a ‘Roman Greater Netherlands’.⁴⁸ Once, Hoogveld scornfully noted that Van Cauwelaert must be realistic enough to know that he was not asked merely to embellish the magazine with his name.⁴⁹ In most

⁴⁴ Otto S. Lankhorst and Door Timmerman (eds.), *Bibliografie van katholieke Nederlandse periodieken* (Nijmegen, 1999), 38.

⁴⁵ Jos. Schrijnen, ‘Verscheidenheden’, *De Beiaard* 1 (1916), 84.

⁴⁶ Letters Hoogveld 5 November 1915 and 17 November 1915, Archief 68 G.B. Brom en W.J. Brom-Struick, inventarisnummer 2145.

⁴⁷ Letter Hoogveld 7 December 1917, Archief Brom, inventarisnummer 2146.

⁴⁸ Letter Hoogveld 26 October 1918, Archief Brom, inventarisnummer 2146.

⁴⁹ Letter Hoogveld 12 May 1918, Archief Brom, inventarisnummer 2146.

cases Brom responded that he tried as hard as he could, for instance by giving lectures ‘as editors of *De Beiaard*’ in Flanders, as he once noted.⁵⁰ Obviously, for Van Cauwelaert the ambition was of less importance; he was mainly occupied with building his career as will become clear.

Fifthly, as the analyses in the coming two chapters make clear, almost all the cultural leaders discussed here, especially those who published shortly after the war, referred to the Greater Netherlands. Some of these articles cannot be understood without understanding the importance of this concept to these editors and authors. Evidently, the on-going emancipation had provided these Catholic intellectuals with the confidence to also look beyond the border, to Flanders. Yet, in order to not anticipate the argument of this study: this matter is examined in more detail in the coming two chapters. For now, the above mentioned arguments should suffice as evidence for the claim that fostering the ideal of the Greater Netherlands could be seen as the main goal of *De Beiaard*.

But what does this ideal stand for? Historians Lode Wils and Sophie de Schaepdrijver have written extensively on the Greater Netherlands, the Flemish Movement and Frans van Cauwelaert, themes that are closely related to each other. According to both historians, the ‘Flemish Movement’ was an umbrella term for all sorts of groups, parties and principles that, although discord prevailed between the various groups, ultimately pointed in the same direction: the emancipation of the Flemish people, especially its language. The concept of the Greater Netherlands is closely related to the Flemish Movement, but existed before anyone spoke about such a movement.

After the disintegration of the Republic of the Seventeen Provinces in the sixteenth century, the memory of the Republic’s heyday remained alive in the south and the Catholic minority in the north, who maintained a religious link with this part of the lost Republic. Yet through the course of time, both Dutch-speaking regions grew apart. Therefore, Wils continues, the unification of 1815 was doomed to fail. Indeed, from 1839 onwards, the Netherlands and Belgium were definitively separated. From the national enthusiasm that had been aroused by the Belgian Revolution of 1830, the movement that strove for making the Flemish language the official language emerged. Until the end of the nineteenth century this Flemish Movement remained insignificant, but from 1900 onwards, noteworthy contacts with the Netherlands grew. Common student congresses were organised and Flemish students went to the Netherlands to study. In this period, representatives of the movement started demanding equality between the Dutch and French languages in Belgium. In the Netherlands, simultaneously, interest in the Dutch speaking population of Belgium increased, due to the nationalism that prevailed in the wake of the colonial and Boer wars, which were still fresh in the Dutch public’s memory.

As it turned out the war lasted longer than a few weeks. For this reason, the German occupiers tried to arouse sympathy of the Flemish people by stimulating the Flemish demands, in order to include Flanders and the Netherlands in the German Empire. Frans van Cauwelaert was the

⁵⁰ Letter Brom 18 July 1919, Archief 292 J.H.E.J. Hoogveld, inventarisnummer 212.

spokesman of the so-called moderate branch of the movement whose adherents were called ‘passivists’. With this designation, they were distinguished from the ‘activists’ that considered the help of the Germans useful in order to achieve their goals. On the contrary, Van Cauwelaert and his fellow passivists demanded the equalisation of the Flemish and French language, yet without any help from the German occupier.⁵¹

In the wake of World War II, the ideal of the Greater Netherlands has become controversial in historiography, because ever since it has often been associated with collaborating with the enemy. For instance, the historian Pieter Geyl’s (1887-1966) engagement with the Greater Netherlands during the 1920s and 1930s has been (and still is) regularly subject of vehement discussions among historians. This is due to the bad light in which the ideal of the Greater Netherlands is seen since the Second World War, but also relates to the radical nature (although hotly disputed among historians) of his engagement. Geyl seems to have pursued some sort of political unity of the Netherlands and Flanders, whereas the Catholic intellectuals concerned in this master’s thesis strove for a *cultural* bond between North and South, illustrated by the five arguments presented above.⁵²

Research problem and terminology

The central research problem of this master’s thesis is the cultural journal *De Beiaard*. Like Sanders and others, I consider this journal a cultural space where opinions and ideas could circulate freely. It is the aim of this research to map the reflections concerning the war circulating in this milieu by analysing articles and personal letters that contain such reflections. Before the historical sources can be analysed in the context of the existing literature, some other important notions require further explanation: Catholic intellectuals, their network and the role of censorship.

Those associated with *De Beiaard* were Catholic intellectuals and were men – only in a few occasions were women involved in the journal. As stressed before, historian Kristel observed that the Dutch elite has received the most scholarly attention. For three reasons, this research also focuses on the elite. Firstly, they have left out many sources, such as letters, articles and notes. Secondly, by focusing on them, this research reveals a specific milieu, rather than offering glimpses of the way in which people from different classes reflected on the conflict. Thirdly, by focusing on these men of learning, this inquiry offers an interesting and deviating supplement to the existing historiography on Dutch intellectuals and World War I in general.

⁵¹ Lode Wils, ‘De politieke Groot-Nederlandse Beweging’, in: Jane Fenoulhet et al, *Neerlandistiek in contrast. Bijdragen aan het Zestiende Colloquium Neerlandicum* (Amsterdam, 2007), 457-470, there 457-459; Lode Wils, *Onverfranst, onverduist? Flamenpolitik, activisme, frontbeweging* (Kalmthout, 2014), 9-56; Sophie de Schaepdrijver, *De Groote Oorlog. Het koninkrijk België tijdens de Eerste Wereldoorlog* (Antwerp, 2013), 165-170.

⁵² Wim Berkelaar, ‘Pessimist – optimist? Dat is de ware tegenstelling niet’. Pieter Geyl als geëngageerd intellectueel’, 17-24, in: Leen Dorsman, Niek van Sas and Wim Berkelaar, *Pieter Geyl: autobiograaf, geschiedschrijver, polemist. Voordrachten gehouden bij de presentatie van de autobiografie van Pieter Geyl* (Utrecht, 2009).

Catholic intellectuals

Thus, the editors and authors associated with *De Beiaard* were both Catholics and intellectuals. This master's thesis applies the concept of intellectuals as formulated by the literary critic Stefan Collini. He considers intellectuals as people occupying a specific role. More widely, these people practice a profession with which they have earned a certain reputation. They use this reputation by coming publicly into action to ventilate their view(s) on a specific case concerning general interest that transcends their own profession.⁵³ For the sake of the legibility of the presented research results, various synonyms are used, such as cultural elite, cultural leaders, men of learning, prominent figures, publicists, authors and editors, which all refer to the aforementioned interpretation of intellectuals. These prominent figures used their journal as a platform to convince their audience, which was probably predominantly Catholic, with their views with respect to issues that concerned general interest. At the same time, although their number was relatively and quantitatively small, they were part of the national elite. They were educated at public universities and were unwilling to isolate themselves in their Catholic circles. Thus, they were largely part of the national elite.

Yet, some differentiations must be made, because the relation between Catholic intellectuals and the nation was somewhat more complex. Especially, Luykx and historian Marit Monteiro have nuanced the image of the uniform Catholic world by discussing precisely the frictions amongst cultural leaders and the conflicts between them and the hierarchy. This is hardly surprising: the number of Catholic institutions rose sharply from the end of the nineteenth century, which fostered and enhanced an own group identity, which is reason enough for some historians to argue that the isolation of Catholics was not eliminated. Rather it was maintained, they argue.⁵⁴ Whatever might be the correct interpretation; according to the then Catholic cultural leaders a second emancipation was needed to guarantee the 'full integration of the Catholic community within the Dutch nation state', as argued by Monteiro.⁵⁵

The most eye-catching friction centred around the Pope, many Dutch Catholics were suspected of being loyal to him in the first place. Indeed, the Pope cult seemed to have been relatively popular in the Netherlands compared to other countries. Therefore, as inhabitants of a 'protestant' nation, Catholics had to search for ways to prove their loyalty to the nation. One way was cultivating the monarchy, which had become a prominent feature of Dutch nationalism from the end of the nineteenth century onwards. Yet, Luykx is eager to note that another interest played a role as well. While building up a Catholic group life, the leaders were also concerned with the possible danger of the appeal of Socialism for Catholic labourers. They made use of the fierce antimonarchic tradition of Socialism by

⁵³ S. Collini, *Absent minds. Intellectuals in Britain* (Oxford, 2006), 52.

⁵⁴ Hans Bornewasser, *In de geest van Thijm. Ontwikkelingen in de verhouding tussen wetenschap en geloof 1904-1984* (Baarn, 1985), 16; De Rooy, *Republiek van rivaliteiten*, 156-157; Ab Flipse, *Christelijke wetenschap. Nederlandse rooms-katholieken en gereformeerden over de natuurwetenschap, 1880-1940* (Hilversum, 2014), 46-48.

⁵⁵ Monteiro, 'Catholic intellectual elites', 26.

stimulating a form of monarchism that also contained antisocialist components. Dutch Catholics thus considered Socialism a serious threat, but simultaneously they were constantly aware of their position within the Netherlands at large. They had a repertoire at their disposal, of which the monarchy was part, through which they could underscore their loyalty to the nation.⁵⁶

Network

In the introduction to their volume on thirteen journals that appeared some time over the last three centuries, historian Hans Bots and literary scholar Sophie Levie sum up the characteristics regarding the networks of these journals. Although they acknowledge the differences between these journals, they are able to discern some important recurring elements, which are also applicable to *De Beiaard*.

Editorial staffs had to make sure that they were well informed about the fields they dedicated attention to by forming and maintaining a network. The scope and intensity of the exchanges within this network were decisive for the content of the journals. Within these networks, there existed circles or groups that influenced the composition of the journal to a greater or lesser extent, which Bots and Levie call ‘concentric circles’. In the case of *De Beiaard*, this concentric circle consisted of Gerard Brom, Johannes Hoogveld and Bernard Molkenboer OP. Successful journals were also often dependent on an intermediary, a person with great prestige and an extensive network. With respect to the here studied journal this role was undoubtedly fulfilled by Brom, who ceaselessly invited his friends and acquaintances to write articles for his journal. The many responses to his requests in his archive still bear witness to this.

The correspondence of the people involved in the network gives evidence of certain codes and conventions. Still, Bots and Levie note, in principle all features of a confidential letter are undetermined; there existed no rules regarding length, style and content. Nonetheless, they point to the existence of self-censorship: it was common practice that letters were circulating in the network and letter writers were well aware of this. The way in which a letter was composed was heavily influenced by the extent the letter writer was dependent on the addressee. Put differently, reciprocity, also elaborately addressed by historian Miriam Dobson, was an essential feature of every epistolary contact.⁵⁷

Censorship

On a national level censorship did not exist during the war years. Historian Marcel Broersma argues that the vast majority of the Dutch press supported the policy of neutrality of the Dutch government. Therefore, except for a very few exceptions, the government nor the military were forced to take

⁵⁶ Luykx, *Andere katholieken*, 243-252.

⁵⁷ Miriam Dobson, ‘Letters’, in: M. Dobson and B. Ziemann (eds.), *Reading primary sources. The interpretation of texts from nineteenth- and twentieth-century history* (New York, 2009), 57-73, there 57; Hans Bots and Sophie Levie (eds.), *Periodieken en hun kringen. Een verkenning van tijdschriften en netwerken in de laatste drie eeuwen* (Nijmegen, 2006), 7-17, there 7-12.

measures.⁵⁸ The question regarding the press policy from the ecclesiastical authorities is somewhat more intricate. From the first decade of the twentieth century onwards, the Dutch bishops sought to formulate a uniform policy concerning the published written word.

The cultural studies scholar Cecile van Eijden-Andriessen wrote a dissertation about the *Informatiedienst Inzake Lectuur* (Idil), a Catholic review service founded in 1937. This service was instructed to review books in light of the Catholic morality, by means of the Catholic books law that was part of the *Codex Iuris Canonici* of 1918. For the first time, censorship was uniformly regulated. Van Eijden-Andriessen claims that before this law was implemented, there existed no uniform policy concerning censorship.⁵⁹ Luykx, however, suggests there already existed a policy that had been customary before 1918. According to him, the bishop was in the position to appoint and refuse a censor or to impose further conditions on the policy of a medium. Censorship subsequently became, from the end of the nineteenth century onwards, ‘a not unimportant policy instrument’ for the bishops to promote or frustrate certain newspapers. The most important consequence of the censors’ appointment would ‘in most cases probably’ have been a form of self-censorship of editors, and possibly previous consultation on certain publications. Apart from these censors, many clerics were involved in the Catholic press and tightened the contacts between press and church, for they were obedient and responsible to their bishop or prior.⁶⁰ With regard to *De Beiaard*, Luykx argues, while admitting that the sources are unclear on this point, the editorial board did not ask for a special censor. Two secular priest-editors, Schrijnen and Hoogveld, would determine whether articles would be permitted or not, with which they tried to avoid problems with the episcopate.

According to Luykx, it had been Hoogveld who suggested this idea. Unfortunately, Luykx makes no reference to this agreement allegedly suggested by Hoogveld, so I am unable to study it myself. However, in Hoogveld’s archive, I did find a so-called ‘Huishoudelyk Reglement’. Some of the eleven points of this undated two-page agreement refer to agreements regarding the acceptance or refusal of contributions. The fifth point of the fifth clause stipulates that the editorial secretary would ‘ensure that all articles would be censored before their appearing’. Furthermore, the seventh clause determines that ‘all contributions have to be send to the editorial secretary which decides whether or not to include it, on the condition that no contribution can be accepted or refused without prior consultation with one of the co-editors’. Thereupon, it is determined which editor had to be consulted about certain subjects.⁶¹ To summarise, it seems, in line with Van Eijden-Andriessen, no uniform policy concerning censorship existed in the case of *De Beiaard*. Yet, although it is difficult to determine what was meant with ‘censorship’ in the agreement composed by the editors, it hints to a certain degree of pre-censorship or (stipulated) self-censorship.

⁵⁸ Broersma, ‘Botsende stijlen’, 47-48.

⁵⁹ Cecile van Eijden-Andriessen, *‘Moralinezuur’ en voorlichting. De twee gezichten van Idil in het katholieke debat om de moderniteit 1937-1970* (Tilburg, 2010), 41-57.

⁶⁰ Luykx, *Andere katholieken*, 154-159.

⁶¹ Huishoudelyk Reglement Archief Hoogveld, inventarisnummer 153.

Fitting in the sources

The existing historical literature on the relevant research topics, as mentioned above, indicates the relevant issues related to this research problem. Here, I reflect briefly on these issues with respect to my research in order to contextualise it properly. Above all, the contours of some abstract issues become clear: in what ways did these publicists demand their freedom within society at large, and, in particular, with respect to the episcopate? How did they assess the Vatican's course, theologically and politically? What would the new world look like according to them? What would be the role of democracy in the future? What was their attitude towards modernisation? Is it possible to determine their degree of radicalisation? How do they relate to the four themes distinguished by historian Kristel: the ambivalent attitude towards war; the limited room for manoeuvre of the Dutch state; international law and the place of the Netherlands in the world?

In addition, several more concrete matters arise from the historical literature: Where were these intellectuals well informed about the conflict? Did they feel morally superior to it? Which words did they use while describing the crisis? Does this network show 'the entire range of opinions'? Did they deduce a special task from the neutral position of the Netherlands with respect to missionary activities or attempts to restore peace? What were, according to these thinkers, the causes of the crisis and to what extent did they, in line with the episcopate, interpret the conflict as a punishment by God? Had it been a just war? In what way did they reflect on the 1917 Pacification, the development of the trading unions, the policy of the government, the 1918 attempted revolution by Troelstra, the disruptive consequences of mobilisation and the lack of a Catholic peace movement? Did they underscore the idea that Christian principles of solidarity were the key for rebuilding European civilisation? Many, but not all, aspects of these questions appear in the articles and correspondence. Yet, some topics could be identified which were not previously discussed by historians who were concerned with these fields of study.

I have studied all the letters and articles these Catholic authors and editors wrote in the context of their activities concerning *De Beiaard* in the years 1915-1920, which are available at the *Katholiek Documentatie Centrum* (KDC). Because I was able to determine which aspects of the conflict drew their attention, I could assess the relative place of these reflections with respect to all subjects they wrote about. The letters contain rather fragmented ideas and reflections on specific issues concerning the war, whereas the most 'mature' ideas are found in the published articles. For this reason, these published articles occupy the central place in this master's thesis. Sometimes authors reflected on the articles they wrote or on the themes they considered relevant in their letters. So, although the articles constitute the basis on which the argument is based, the correspondence helps to properly interpret the way in which these thinkers assessed the war and its outcome. The additional value of knowing the content of the letters is illustrated through a number of examples.

Obviously, the selected sources are problematic, as with all historical sources. With respect to the

articles, the historian is able to determine which articles contain reflections on the conflict, since *De Beiaard* has come down to us entirely, published in separate volumes for each half year. Unfortunately, as a consequence of the way in which the journal is preserved, it is no longer possible to determine on which date the articles were published, although authors sometimes added the date to their articles. Mostly, however, only an estimation of the date of publishing can be made on the basis of the place of the concerned article within the volume.

Only 20 of the articles contain drawn-out contemplations regarding the war, a minority of all the 391 articles published during the conflict.⁶² After 1918 the war had, in relative terms, a more prominent role in the articles. In 11 articles, the outcome of the conflict played a prominent role. The importance of the outcome of war should not be overestimated. In light of all articles published in the journal in 1919, a total of 112 articles, it turns out that the war still played a minor role.

This clarity does not apply to the letters. These were not written to utter views with respect to the conflict in the first place, because most letters were composed in connection with the activities for the journal. In addition, the views expressed in these letters were not meant for a wider audience, but rather for the addressee and/or the other editors involved in *De Beiaard*. Furthermore, the historian can be certain that this collection of letters is incomplete. Some letters are not accessible; others did not withstand the ravages of time or are untraceable and in certain instances it was not necessary to write letters, as the protagonists also talked with each another in person. Consequently, the relevant ideas and reflections in these letters must be reconstructed.

As stressed before, *De Beiaard* was a cultural journal, for which reason the editors focussed mainly on arts, literature and science. Notwithstanding this perspective, one of the editors, Frans van Cauwelaert, was a Belgian politician and one of the rubrics of the journal was *Staatkunde* (politics). So indeed, these editors focussed on cultural subjects, but they also considered political issues relevant enough to address them in their journal. Therefore, it makes sense to determine what role the First World War, the international political theme *par excellence* in the chosen time span, played in this Catholic milieu.

The historian who studies these sources soon finds out that the European struggle, as a theme, only represented a small part in light of all the topics they discussed in the years concerned. Only for the cultural leaders whose articles and letters have been selected, the conflict constituted a highly relevant topic. This is an important notion not to forget, because otherwise it could appear as if the war was an important topic to *the* intellectuals involved in *De Beiaard*. All in all, this research neither displays every utterance, nor claims to represent *the* representative view of *the* Catholic intellectual concerning the war and its outcome. Rather it maps the views that existed with respect to the war within this specific network.

⁶² It is important to note that all contributions in *De Beiaard* are counted as articles, so also novels that were published in several parts, simply because these occupied space in *De Beiaard*. In addition, it is important to bear in mind that the articles were of a heterogeneous nature, some consisted of only a few pages, others had a length of several tens of pages.

The selected reflections concern a variety of topics relating to the international conflict. By classifying these sources several overarching themes could become visible. Many of these themes resemble the above-mentioned questions derived from the existing literature, yet others serve as new perspectives. In order to reach the main objectives of this inquiry, determining the spectrum of opinions regarding the war and its outcome and analysing the most important considerations in more detail, the reflections are discussed thematically in the coming two chapters.

Chapter 2 – Reflections on the war

Studying the articles and letters written throughout the conflict one learns that a number of themes were relevant to these cultural leaders. Josephus van Schaik was the only one who continuously reflected, in his rubric *Staatkunde*, on aspects related to the war, by commenting on the policy of the Dutch government. So the first theme is ‘Dutch politics’, which can be divided in the following three subcategories that were important to Van Schaik: neutrality, freedom, and moral decay. Johannes Hoogveld addressed neutrality several times in his letters. Therefore, these are discussed here as well.

The second theme is ‘International solidarity’, expressed by Frans van Cauwelaert, Petrus Steenhoff and Joseph Schrijnen, who addressed topics such as self-determination and the fate of the Belgian and Polish people. Van Cauwelaert wrote three articles regarding the situation of Belgium as the conflict progressed, which coincides with three related subthemes: the attitude of the Belgian government, the position of the Belgian Episcopate and the Flemish Movement.

The last theme, distinguished on the basis of the published articles is ‘War’, or more narrowly the way in which war affected life in the Netherlands. This theme is divided into a number of sub-themes, which are: ‘war and science’, ‘war, literature and architecture’ and ‘the just war’, discussed by Bernard Molkenboer OP, Louis Leeuwenberg and, again, Joseph Schrijnen. All of the above mentioned themes are presented by means of the same structure: firstly, the background of the authors concerned is briefly introduced, after which his considerations are examined and explicitly compared with existing literature.

Theme I – Dutch politics

Josephus van Schaik (1882-1962) was born in Breda and went to school in ‘s-Hertogenbosch. In 1905, he studied law in Utrecht and obtained his doctorate, cum laude, with the dissertation *De overheid tegenover de artikelen 1401 en v. B.W.* under the supervision of H.J. Hamaker. After being a teacher of economics for a brief period, Van Schaik was then a lawyer and attorney from 1906 to 1919. Near the end of this period, in 1917, he became a member of the Lower House and, in the words of historian Jac Bosmans, he belonged to the progressive Catholic members of parliament.

From the foundation of *De Beiaard* onwards, Van Schaik was affiliated with the journal, yet he had not been the first choice of the editors to carry out this task. People such as Struycken and the politician Victor de Stuers (1843-1916) were asked, but declined the honour. It seems Van Schaik sensed the fact that he was not the editors’ first option, as he wondered why he was asked: ‘why do you search for me and not a 100 others?’ (‘waarom zoek je mij en niet eerder 100 anderen?’⁶³) In addition, he raised a number of problems: he considered the spiritual work of the lawyer much higher than that of a politician, he claimed to not be familiar with national politics and warned Brom that his ideas differed from the prevailing ideas among Catholics. He was, for example, ‘far from averse to’ female suffrage. Van Schaik’s articles should be interpreted keeping these initial considerations in

⁶³ Letter Josephus van Schaik 26 December 1915, Archief Brom, inventarisnummer 1131.

mind.

Apparently, these objections constituted no insurmountable obstacles to Brom, since Van Schaik did eventually contribute to the first issue. In total Van Schaik published ten articles, which are discussed here, four in 1916, five in 1917 and one in 1918. In the latter year, Brom repeatedly asked Van Schaik to produce more writings, but he responded that he simply lacked time. This suggests that Brom would have preferred more articles on Dutch politics by Van Schaik in their periodical.⁶⁴ The ten articles Van Schaik did publish illustrate the growing confidence among Catholics, as discussed by Peters. He expressed his satisfaction with respect to the impending Pacification and the increasing number of labourers that had joined Catholic labour unions. Unfortunately, the limited scope of this research does not provide enough space for analysing these reflections elaborately. Consequently, only Van Schaik's considerations regarding war related topics are discussed.

1.1 Neutrality

The first subcategory that played a prominent role in the articles written by Van Schaik is 'neutrality'. This concept is used in a broad sense; it not only covers Van Schaik's perspective on the neutrality politics of the Dutch government, but also the manner in which he elaborated on the activities of the neutral government throughout the conflict.

In his first article, published in the first issue of *De Beiaard* in 1916, Van Schaik explained that according to him politics in the Netherlands had witnessed an era of stagnation. The country fared well economically, but the lethargic political condition he attributed to the uncertainty regarding the future: the Netherlands' international position after the peace was indefinite. It was therefore understandable, he continued, that hardly any plans for the future were made: 'The other way around would be too much of a contradiction with the well-known Dutch common sense.' ('Het omgekeerde zou met de bekende Hollandsche nuchterheid te zeer in tegenstelling zijn.'⁶⁵) The government was well aware of all the dangers that threatened the Netherlands, so it tried to maintain Dutch neutrality by avoiding clashes with the belligerents as much as possible. So like Struycken and some of the people whose ideas historian Kristel studied, Van Schaik acknowledged the vulnerability of small states. Yet in Van Schaik's eyes, the government was exaggerating the potential hazards, which was evident from the 'anxious way' in which the government stuck to the perpetuation of the mobilisation that had such a 'deep impact' on the lives of the people.

Later in 1916, Van Schaik continued to critically assess the neutrality politics of the Dutch government. He for example claimed that the government justified its behaviour by claiming the neutrality of the Netherlands was constantly in jeopardy. Yet, he noted, all surrounding belligerents claimed that they respected Dutch neutrality. So Van Schaik wondered why the government so strictly

⁶⁴ Luykx, *Heraut van de katholieke herleving*, 632; http://www.parlement.com/id/vg091171hwv/j_r_h_josef_van_schaik Accessed 7 February 2016; Archief Brom, inventarisnummer 1131.

⁶⁵ J.R.H. van Schaik, 'Staatkunde', *De Beiaard* 1 (1916), 69-74, there 69.

held on to its objective to stay neutral: ‘No wonder that little by little the sentiment is gaining ground, that one has been frightened needlessly and by that many thousands have become victims.’ (‘Geen wonder dan ook, dat langzamerhand het gevoel veldwint, dat men zich noodeloos beangst heeft gemaakt, en dat vele duizenden daarvan het slachtoffer zijn geworden.’⁶⁶) Thus, like Struycken, Van Schaik critically reflected on the politics of neutrality. However, the former had argued the Dutch had ‘lost their honour’ by reconciling with every claim of the belligerents, whereas Van Schaik claimed that the policy of neutrality was too strict.

By mid-1917 Van Schaik discussed something that had bothered the Dutch representatives: the relation of the House of Representatives with respect to the governmental department on foreign relations. According to him, it was ‘a notorious fact’ that the causes of the war lay beyond the imagination of the millions sacrificed to it: the diplomats were guilty of this ‘profound global misery’. Therefore, it was understandable that the Dutch people and their representatives strove for participation in conducting foreign policy. ‘The secret intrigues must end and the masks, which governments put on towards one another as towards the people they govern, must be removed.’ (‘Een einde moet er komen aan het gekonkel in het geheim, afgeworpen moeten worden de maskers, die de Regeeringen opzetten zoowel tegenover elkander als tegenover de volkeren waarover zij het bestuur uitoefenen.’⁶⁷) The Dutch, who were living in a democratic country, demanded participation in foreign affairs, which would eventually avoid the ‘terrible conflicts’ of the current time. Put differently, Van Schaik emphasised national characteristics of the Dutch, as Struycken and other Dutch publicists had done during this stage of the war.

At least one (other) editor seemed to have felt uncomfortable with neutrality, or to put it differently his preserved letters show that he structurally expressed himself critically about Dutch neutrality. Yet, before elaborating on this editor and his considerations, two comments should be made in advance. Firstly, he, in principle, backed the neutrality of the Netherlands. Secondly, in most cases it concerns isolated remarks from which a perspective on neutrality emerged. It concerned Johannes Hoogveld (1878-1942) who was born in Elden and studied in Culemborg and Rijsenburg at the seminaries of the archbishopric. In 1902 he was ordained a priest, after which he went to Rome to study philosophy and theology. He obtained his doctorate in both fields in 1904 and returned to the Netherlands. There, from 1906 onwards, he taught philosophy and empirical psychology at the seminary of Culemborg. One year after World War I broke out he also became a teacher of pedagogics at the newly found *Rooms-Katholieke Leergangen* in s-Hertogenbosch. Although he was actively involved and concerned with ‘world events’, as he put it in many of his letters, he did not publish any articles with his views on these affairs.⁶⁸

Yet, in at least eight letters sent to Brom, Hoogveld addressed neutrality. All of these remarks

⁶⁶ J.R.H. van Schaik, ‘Staatkunde’, *De Beiaard* 1 (1916), 358-362, there 360.

⁶⁷ J.R.H. van Schaik, ‘Staatkunde’, *De Beiaard* 1 (1917), 328-334, there 329-330.

⁶⁸ <http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/bwn/BWN/lemmata/bwn3/hoogveld> Accessed 9 December 2015.

make clear Hoogveld viewed neutrality in a critical way. In February 1916, while discussing what rubrics the new journal should have, Hoogveld pleaded for a rubric on foreign countries, scornfully noting this would probably not happen due to ‘our blessed neutrality’. In May 1917, whilst discussing several articles on themes that were not related to the war, Hoogveld suddenly lamented the fact that they ‘still remained outside world history with our neutrality’. In April 1918, Hoogveld, while discussing an article intended for *De Beiaard*, argued that it was indeed important that they adhered to neutrality. ‘But we should not become so neutral, that we no longer dare to review the truth.’ (‘Maar zoo neutraal mogen we niet worden, dat we de waarheid niet meer durven bekijken.’) In another letter he rhetorically asked whether they – the intellectuals affiliated with *De Beiaard* – were unworldly.⁶⁹

So Hoogveld seemed satisfied with the fact that the Netherlands managed to remain neutral, but it seems as if he saw it as his responsibility to reflect on the crisis, to participate on a mental level. This interpretation will be underscored by discussing his utterances regarding the outcome of war in the next chapter. Hoogveld fits the image of the cultural mobilisation of Dutch publicists, outlined by historian Tames, who felt the need to engage mentally with the conflict. Yet, unlike these publicists and the diary writers central in the research by historian Kristel, Hoogveld seemed to not have felt as morally superior to neutrality. Rather, he argued that neutrality was something else than indifference. Another difference with respect to these Dutch publicists, but in line with these diary writers, is that Hoogveld did not utter his views publicly, but only in private correspondence to other editors involved in *De Beiaard*. Possibly, he felt responsible for the content of the journal, but considered himself not suitable for publishing articles himself.

1.2 Freedom

As the previous paragraph showed, Van Schaik considered the policy of neutrality, as conducted by the Dutch government, somewhat exaggerated. A theme that really grieved him more was the powerlessness of the inhabitants of the southern and eastern border regions who were under martial law. They had been ordered to relinquish huge parts of their freedoms to the military authorities by means of numerous ever-changing ordinances, rules and regulations. Van Schaik criticised this policy in the beginning of 1916: it led to injustice, unfairness and arbitrariness. He admitted that he understood where the military authorities’ behaviour of came from; they were for instance seeking to prevent smuggling. Yet, the problem was, according to Van Schaik, the arbitrariness of the measures plus the lack of communication that came along with them. Despite this criticism, he acknowledged the problems the army leadership had to face. The system constituted the real problem: national interest was considered more important than that of an individual.

Van Schaik proposed an alternative in order to protect the interests of border residents by giving them the right of appeal.

⁶⁹ Letter Hoogveld 17 February 1916, Archief Brom, inventarisnummer 2145; Letters Hoogveld 5 May February 1917, 27 April 1918, 16 November 1918 Archief Brom, inventarisnummer 2146.

‘Now the abnormal conditions slowly have left their very temporary nature, now the old police state crops up in another guise and the end of this all cannot be foreseen, it seems a cultural demand of the present time to me, yet to create a temporary independent jurisdiction. There can be no interest that exactly, and only, the military authorities control the economic and social life, without counterbalance.’

(‘Nu de abnormale omstandigheden langzamerhand hun zeer tijdelijken aard geheel hebben verloren, nu de oude politiestaat in een nieuwe gedaante weder zijn hoofd heeft opgestoken en het eind van dit alles nog niet is te voorzien, lijkt het mij een cultuureisch van den tegenwoordigen nooddijd, dat alsnog een tijdelijke onafhankelijke rechtspraak worde in het leven geroepen. Er kan geen enkel belang bij gebaat zijn, dat juist en alleen het militair gezag een deel van het economische en sociale leven zonder tegenwicht beheerscht.’⁷⁰)

By forming local courts consisting of both soldiers and confidential civilians with an advisory capacity, the problem of injustice and arbitrariness could be tackled.

At the end of 1917, he elaborated on the economic life in the Netherlands. Economically speaking the Netherlands was in a bad shape, the production and distribution of food supplies was frustrated by the crisis and no new ways of organising them were found. The hindrance of free trade with foreign countries caused an increasing lack of basic necessities. Of course, measures were necessary to guarantee an equal share to all civilians. Thanks to these measures the strength of the people and the economic equilibrium remained stable. However, the individual had to relinquish many of its freedoms at the expense of the community. ‘How submissive has the Dutch people remained, however, during the on-going nibbling away of the rights and freedoms, which it would not led happen so easily under normal conditions.’ (‘Hoe lijdzaam is echter het Nederlandsche volk gebleven onder de voortdurende afknabbeling van de rechten en vrijheden, waaraan het in normale tijden niet zoo gemakkelijk zou hebben laten tornen.’)

Van Schaik admitted an increasing governmental interference seemed inevitable, although he warned for the outcome of this development by arguing that when the government continued its economic policy, it would lead to economic levelling which heralded the transition phase to a pure communist community. Eventually, the ‘common sense of the masses’ would prevail, although Van Schaik doubted whether the pre-war economic structure would function again once peace had returned. He believed that the then process had changed the economic structure of the Netherlands fundamentally: people had become more individualistic and egoistic.⁷¹

1.3 Moral decay

Whereas Van Schaik seemed annoyed by the neutrality politics of the government and worried about the restriction of the freedom of the Dutch people, he was downright alarmed by what he considered the moral decay of many Dutch people. He published three articles in the second half of 1916 and the

⁷⁰ J.R.H. van Schaik, ‘Staatkunde’, *De Beiaard* 1 (1916), 170-175, there 174.

⁷¹ J.R.H. van Schaik, ‘Staatkunde’, *De Beiaard* 2 (1917), 365-368, there 367.

beginning of 1917, which bore witness to concerns regarding the moral decay of the people. In his first article he briefly referred to the deteriorating national mood: articles of food were shockingly expensive, commerce and industry suffered from tormenting measures of the ‘so-called friendly powers’ and many were frustrated by the withdrawal of the military leaves.

In the first of these three articles, Van Schaik addressed the demoralisation of the Dutch people, which he saw rising alarmingly due to the smuggling activities conducted by more and more people: ‘[W]ith that the characters of thousands and thousands are being perished, maybe put down forever.’ (‘[M]et dat al worden de karakters van duizenden en duizenden mensen bedorven, misschien voor goed ten onder gebracht.’) He heard ‘thoroughly honourable and good citizens’ arguing that it would be a sin towards God not to make a fortune now the opportunity had arisen. Thus, like the bishops addressed by historian Peters, Van Schaik worried about depravity. Different from the bishops, who pointed to the disruptive effect of the mobilisation (also referred to by Van Schaik), the intellectual concerned here was chiefly alarmed by the negative consequences of smuggling.

The mobilisation only applied to men, but – as Van Schaik noted – in the case of smuggling women were also involved. As a consequence, he argued, these women were losing their notion of honour and decency. ‘The woman, the personification of virtue, meant to raise and educate the younger generation in all that is noble and good, is currently taking the lead in committing evil.’ (‘De vrouw, de verpersoonlijking van de deugd, bestemd om het jonge geslacht in alles wat edel is en goed op te voeden en op te leiden, zij gaat thans voor in het plegen van het kwaad.’) There was more: because women conducted these businesses together with ‘all sorts’ of men ‘at ungodly hours’ this also led to depravity ‘in the narrower sense’. The moral decay affected piety, honesty and trustworthiness; therefore Van Schaik was looking forward to the end of the war.⁷²

In an article written in the beginning of 1917, Van Schaik complained the interest in politics was reduced to the minimum, people seemed merely interested in daily affairs. He considered the ‘difficult circumstances of the moment’, referring to the mobilisation and the scarcity of foodstuffs, as the main reason for the current political crisis. In addition, he pointed to the devastating effect of a government without a parliamentary majority that governed the Netherlands at that moment. Such a cabinet, not founded on political parties, hampered the ‘natural working’ of a parliamentary system. Especially socially, as he argued, much ‘work had to be done’. In addition, crucial sectors such as industry, trade and agriculture needed special protection from the government. Of course, as Van Schaik himself argued, he wrote his piece in ‘difficult circumstances’.

Nonetheless, while writing about government intervention and with claiming to sense how the parliamentary system worked, he did not speak on behalf of all Catholics. Since the end of the nineteenth century, Catholic politicians began to manifest and organise themselves more and more. Notwithstanding this development, as historian Bornewasser argues, the ‘conservative mentality’ of

⁷² J.R.H. van Schaik, ‘Staatkunde’, *De Beiaard* 2 (1916), 473-474, quotes on 473 and 474.

many Catholic politicians proved to be quite persisting: they opposed further increasing government interference. According to them, instead of the government, societal organisations had to take their responsibilities.⁷³ Possibly, this piece of writing embodied some of the deviating ideas Van Schaik was hinting at while responding to the request of Brom to contribute to *De Beiaard* at the end of 1915.

To conclude, Van Schaik wrote about the Dutch in the context of the conflict, similar to the publicists as discussed by Tames. He mentioned topics such as the profound impact of the mobilisation, the effect of measures from the belligerents on the Netherlands, and the sweeping powers of the military authorities in the southern border provinces. Yet, Van Schaik's main concern seemed to have been the devastating effect of the crisis on moral standards, caused by the smuggling practices whereby Catholics, men and women, came into contact with dissenters. Expressing himself in this way, another important difference with respect to Dutch intellectuals comes to the fore: Van Schaik saw the conflict from a Catholic perspective.

Theme II – International solidarity

Several authors addressed topics related to international solidarity. Among them was Joseph Schrijnen (1869-1938) who wrote, from a scientific perspective, on Catholic Peoples abroad. He was born in Venlo and studied Classical Languages in Leuven and Paris. In 1891, he obtained his doctoral degree with a dissertation on predetermination in the Indo European languages. In 1894, he was ordained a priest. From 1912, he was extraordinary professor in Utrecht to teach about the cultural history of Christian antiquity and comparative linguistics. In the following years his academic prestige rose, especially due to his *Handleiding bij de studie der vergelijkende Indogermaanse Taalwetenschap* (1917) and a number of publications on early Christian Latin. In the war, he had a large share in organising education for Belgian students and professors who had fled to the Netherlands.⁷⁴ Schrijnen reflected on the conflict in three articles, each of which belonged to another category: war and science, international solidarity and the just war. His article on self-determination fits the category of international solidarity and is discussed here.

2.1 Self-determination

Schrijnen expressed his satisfaction, as an ethnologist, concerning the principle of nationality that he regarded as stronger than ever before. This principle, as expressed by the American President Woodrow Wilson, to whom he referred to, was distinguishable in its 'real and healthy' guise. Before continuing with Schrijnen's argument, it is necessary to elaborate on this principle formulated by Wilson. Historian Margaret MacMillan contends one thing was clear concerning the arrival of Wilson in Europe at the end of 1918: he brought great hopes to the continent because of his Fourteen Points of

⁷³ J.A. Bornewasser, *Katholieke Volkspartij 1945-1980 Band 1 Herkomst en groei (tot 1963)* (Nijmegen, 1995), 25-28, 32-35.

⁷⁴ Jan Brabers, *Proeven van eigen cultuur. Vijfzeventig jaar Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen 1923-1998 Deel 1* (Nijmegen, 1998), 85; <http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/bwn1880-2000/lemmata/bwn1/schrijnenjcfh>. Accessed 7 December 2015.

which the concept of self-determination seemed the most promising: every nation had the right to strive for independence. The president had unfolded these ideas on 8 January 1918, at a joint session of both houses of Congress: fourteen proposals that were to form the foundation of a sustainable European peace. The president envisioned a League of Nations that, by means of laws, courts and policemen, had to safeguard security across the European continent. It was groundbreaking in that it broke with the balance of power, embodied by all sorts of alliances, determining international politics in Europe for centuries.⁷⁵ Instead of the interests of the empires that instilled fear among one another, the common interest of the community of nations had to be leading.

However, as MacMillan indicates, these ideas were vague, the president himself did not know what he meant with the concept of self-determination nor how his Fourteen Points had to be implemented. ‘Wilson had said much about general principles but had mentioned few specifics.’⁷⁶ But despite the opaque nature of his ideas, they ‘struck a chord’ among the European elites and Schrijnen was among them.⁷⁷ He especially welcomed the notion of self-determination although he already foresaw difficulties with its implementation: what if every imaginable nation would start striving for independence? He noted that the pursuit of self-determination would not necessarily lead to separation, because it was also thinkable that a nation acquired national independence within the framework of a larger political organisation. However, this is not what Schrijnen was concerned with most. Instead, he expressed his satisfaction concerning the vitality of the nations in this period of crisis. Before the conflict, he had feared a uniform hyper culture was emerging that would replace the variety of the different nations, but ‘behold the awakening of the national awareness, as if by magic, everywhere, even there, where it was considered lost [...]. Thank God!’ (‘ziedaar dat het nationale bewustzijn als met toverslag weer ontwaakt, overal, ook daar waar men het voorgoed verstikt achtte [...]. Gode zij dank!’⁷⁸)

Someone who also reflected on the fate of a nation, the Belgian nation, yet from an essentially different perspective, was Frans van Cauwelaert (1880-1961). Obviously, he was the odd one out among the intellectuals associated with *De Beiaard*. Not only because he was a Flemish politician, but also because he explicitly spoke on behalf of his oppressed countrymen and of his government that was confronted with the German occupation. The involvement of Van Cauwelaert in this journal needs more introduction, in order to understand his role properly.

Van Cauwelaert was born in Onze-Lieve-Vrouw-Lombeek, Flemish Belgium, and attended the

⁷⁵ To be sure, historians disagree on the interpretation of Wilson’s ideas. I follow the interpretation offered by MacMillan. Unfortunately, the limited scope of this master’s thesis does not allow for elaborating on these divergent interpretations. Some scholars, for instance, argue that the United States promoted self-determination to create dissension in Europe, see: Adrian Guelke, *Politics in deeply divided societies* (Cambridge, 2012), 134-135; Nina Caspersen, *Unrecognised states* (Cambridge, 2012), 17-18.

⁷⁶ Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919. Six months that changed the world* (New York, 2001), 8; Van Diepen, *Voor Volkenbond en vrede*, 11.

⁷⁷ MacMillan, *Paris 1919*, xxv-16; Van Diepen, *Voor Volkenbond en vrede*, 11-23.

⁷⁸ Jos. Schrijnen, ‘Het nationaliteitsbeginsel’, *De Beiaard* 2 (1918), 302-311, there 311.

preparatory seminary in Hoogstraten. Subsequently, he studied natural sciences and medicine at the Catholic University in Leuven. In this time, Van Cauwelaert was already known in Dutch Catholic circles, for the Catholic student associations in the Netherlands and Flanders visited each other's lectures from the beginning of the twentieth century onwards. In 1905 he obtained his doctorate in Thomist philosophy and in 1910 he became representative of Belgium's Catholic Party. From 1911 onwards, he campaigned for the 'Dutchification' of Ghent University. On 30 September 1914, Van Cauwelaert was asked to arrange the accommodation of the Belgians that had fled to the Netherlands. He did, but after the fall of Antwerp on 10 October, the flow of refugees became immense. He argued that a government commissioner for the refugees had to be appointed, which occurred on 10 March 1915: Van Cauwelaert became secretary of the *Officieel Belgisch comité voor Nederland*. This committee aimed to help the dozens of organisations that worked for the Belgians in the Netherlands. He did not earn an income with these activities, apart from his parliamentary salary. In the war, he became the spokesman of the moderate course within the Flemish Movement.⁷⁹

Luykx argues Brom was 'obviously' aware of the presence of his Flemish contact in the Netherlands. So at the time the Dutch intellectuals founded their journal and discussed who had to be the Flemish editor, who had to bring in Flemish editors and subscribers, they soon agreed to opt for Van Cauwelaert. After some pressure from the editors, he ultimately decided to join the editorial staff, partly because he could use the income since his seventh child was on the way. This importance of income is also highlighted by a letter of October 1918 from Van Cauwelaert to Brom, in which he lamented the parsimonious remuneration for the editors.⁸⁰ Apart from the three articles on Belgium published in the course of 1916, discussed here, Van Cauwelaert did not write articles for the Dutch Catholic periodical.⁸¹

2.2 The Belgian government

In his first article, Van Cauwelaert was profuse in superlatives about the response of the Belgian government to the German ultimatum and the subsequent invasion. He stressed that it must be considered a great achievement of a small nation that is was able to preserve its honour by fighting the invading Germans. Belgium did so with the help of the Entente powers, but – and this is important to Van Cauwelaert – without joining them. Hence, Belgium became the symbol of 'proud pride [sic], indomitable love of freedom, heroic self-defence and unbreakable loyalty'. By doing so, Belgium had earned an independent position at a time the peace and the future of Europe would be discussed. Simply protesting symbolically had not been sufficient, as Belgium's independent existence would have ended then. In addition, Van Cauwelaert considered it very doubtful whether the war misery Belgium experienced would have been less severe if Belgium indeed had only protested symbolically.

⁷⁹ Lode Wils, *Frans van Cauwelaert en de barst van België 1910-1919* (Antwerp, 2010), 9-43, 78-79, 129-135, 144-145; Luykx, *Heraut van de katholieke herleving*, 612.

⁸⁰ Letter Van Cauwelaert 15 October 1917, Archief Hoogveld, inventarisnummer 9.

⁸¹ Luykx, *Heraut van de katholieke herleving*, 612-614.

So by acting the way it did, Belgium safeguarded its future existence and it has put an example for other small nations: never surrender to the whims of the great powers.

The rebirth of Belgium after the war was not only a duty of honour for its allies, but for civilised nations in general. Van Cauwelaert claimed that these nations could not possibly permit the disappearance of a country that had ceased the 'banner of law' so bravely for its own freedom. It would be a lasting shame for Germany if Belgium were to continue to be part of it. By believing in the healing power of blood, 'spilled as confession', the Belgians had found solace and had become invincible. It simultaneously demonstrates that justice, he argued, however much battered, would not perish as long as small nations were willing to make sacrifices. Europe would violate its conscience when it ignores the numerous violations of the law, it must enable the continued existence of small nations. Although Van Cauwelaert admitted that the future was uncertain, he expressed his optimism regarding the fact that Belgium would not be treated to merely serve the interest of the great powers.⁸²

By explicitly and numerous referring to justice and the law, and by stressing the fact that, indeed, Belgium had not joined the Entente powers, but merely acted in self-defence, Van Cauwelaert attempted to justify the behaviour of the Belgian government. Internationally many considered it a bad decision that the Belgians fought the Germans. Why did a symbolic protest not suffice? And why did the Belgians choose not to join the Allied Powers? Initially, after the invasion, there existed great uncertainty among all warring parties as to which side Belgium would choose. It could become a member of the Allied but it was also thinkable that Belgium would compose a separate peace treaty with Germany.⁸³ Van Cauwelaert provided his answer to both issues: the Belgians had respected international law as it was composed before war broke out, and therefore the Belgians should have a role within the reconstruction of international law, or something similar, after the conflict.

2.3 The Belgian Episcopate

Van Cauwelaert discussed the attitudes of the Belgian episcopate throughout the crisis in similar terms. According to him, the bishops, with publishing ecclesiastical writings as a response to the German invasion and occupation, had served their people and the Catholic Church in general. The Germans brought injustice to Belgium, and even worse they accused the Belgians of killing German troops. The Belgian episcopate responded by urging their fellow countrymen to firmly and loyally defend Belgium by refuting the allegations. The episcopate, led by the cardinal Désiré-Joseph Mercier (1851-1926), had to ensure that the realm of souls would not suffer from the devastations in the transitory life. Van Cauwelaert was eager to justify the behaviour of the bishops, by stressing that they had no choice but to react to these false accusations: they were mandated by their episcopal vocation and oath. In addition, they would confirm their submission to God and, eventually, guarantee the final victory of just law. In doing so, the episcopacy even affirmed the authority of the Church abroad.

⁸² Frans van Cauwelaert, 'België', *De Beiaard* 1 (1916), 175-182, there 177.

⁸³ De Schaepdrijver, *De Groote Oorlog*, 50-51; Jan de Volder, *Kardinaal verzet. Mercier, de Kerk en de oorlog van 14-18* (Tielt, 2014), 25-31.

Van Cauwelaert especially praised cardinal Mercier and bishop Thomas Louis Heylen (1856-1941). They published several ecclesiastical documents in which every German allegation was refuted, which illustrated, he argued, the unity of the Belgian nation: ‘Mercier a Walloon on a Flemish episcopal see; Heylen a Fleming, by origin and conviction, at the head of the most Walloon diocese [Namur].’ (‘Mercier een Waal op een Vlaamschen bisschopszetel; Heylen een Vlaming, naar afkomst en overtuiging, aan het hoofd van het meest Waalse bisdom [Namen].’) These documents, of which the pastoral letter of Christmas 1914 written by Mercier was the most famous, asked for reading and consideration because with publishing them the Belgian bishops had proven to be the true saviours of the Belgian people:

‘The honour of our people and its priesthood, washed in blood and tried with fire, shines with enhanced strength against the dark background of German slander, and our Belgian people will continue to regard its bishops as the chief saviours of its beleaguered innocence and remember thankfully one day that it [...] has found the last shelters of its patriotic freedom in our churches.’

(‘De eer van ons volk en zijn priesterschap, in bloed gewasschen en in vuur beproefd, schittert op den donkeren achtergrond van Duitschen laster met versterkte kracht en ons Belgische volk zal zijne Bisschoppen blijven beschouwen als de voornaamste redders van zijn belaagde onschuld en zich eenmaal dankbaar herinneren dat het [...] in onze kerken de laatste schuiloornden van zijn vaderlandslievende vrijheid heeft gevonden.’⁸⁴)

This last remark corresponds with remarks made by other Flemish people during the occupation, although the vast majority of these were not published, as historian Pieter Serrien’s inquiry into 32 diaries made clear.⁸⁵

By discussing the Belgian episcopate Van Cauwelaert tried to convince his readers that the so-called *franc tireurs*, Belgian civilians that were accused of killing German soldiers, had not existed. Historians agree that the Germans used this accusation to avenge the delayed march through Belgium that was caused by the Belgian resistance. Van Cauwelaert was also eager to enhance the image of the Catholic Church, but this part of his argument was less consistent with reality. Rather than a unity, the Belgian bishops disagreed on the question of how to cope with the German occupation. Like the Belgian government, Mercier was accused of opposing the German authorities too vehemently and thus running the risk of repercussions. For instance, Mercier’s notorious pastoral letter of Christmas 1914, mentioned before, in which he called his followers to persevere and to remain loyal to the Belgian nation, but in which he also stated that the German authorities were no legitimate authority. Many interpreted these words by Mercier as a way to call for civil disobedience, an incorrect interpretation according to historian Jan de Volder. Yet, for the other bishops it was the reason not to sign the pastoral letter. Bishop Heylen, who together with Mercier was the paragon of unity in the eyes

⁸⁴ Frans van Cauwelaert, ‘België – Het Belgische Episcopaat en de oorlog’, *De Beiaard* 1 (1916), 362-371, quotes on 364 and 367.

⁸⁵ Pieter Serrien, *Oorlogsdagen. Overleven in bezet Vlaanderen tijdens de Eerste Wereldoorlog* (Antwerp, second edition 2014), for instance 165.

of Van Cauwelaert, even urged Mercier not to publish his pastoral letter.⁸⁶ So what Van Cauwelaert tried was throwing up a façade of a unified Belgian episcopate.

Possibly, his ambitions reached even further: he also argued that the Catholic Church was offered an example of unity by the Belgian episcopate. Obviously, the prestige of Christianity was severely damaged due to the war: Christians fought Christians – the Catholic Poles even fought each other. With offering this impeccable example of Catholic unity Van Cauwelaert possibly tried to save the damaged image of the Catholic Church.

2.4 The Flemish Question

The third theme broached by Van Cauwelaert, was the Flemish Question, which he discussed for two reasons. Firstly, he warned the Belgians, especially the supporters of the Flemish Movement, not to cooperate with the German *Flamenpolitik*. Secondly, he tried to underline the loyalty of Flanders to Belgium as a whole. The latter he deemed necessary because some Flamingants had accepted the help of the Germans. '[O]ne certainly need not be a profound psychologist of the people to realise that in the hearts of our people a great hatred has flared up due to the disgraceful assault by Germany.' ('[M]en moet gewis geen diepzinnig volkpsycholoog zijn om te beseffen, dat er in het hart van ons volk een geweldige haat is ontbrand door de vloekwaardige aanranding van Duitschland.'⁸⁷)

Having stated this, Van Cauwelaert made every effort to make a reasonable case for the Flemish loyalty to the Belgian nation: the Belgians reacted like one man to the German invasion. Of course, Van Cauwelaert was eager to note that the Flemish language rights had been disregarded for a long time, but those fighting for these rights envisioned legislation and civil equality. Being loyal was even in the interest of the Flemish people themselves, since only in an independent Belgium the 'spiritual future' of the Flemish people would be saved. He admitted it was still unknown how the Flemish goals should be attained, but one thing was clear: it had to be achieved without the help of 'foreign coups' carried out by 'blood enemies'.

It is clear that Van Cauwelaert reflected his political point of view on the Flemish Question. He was the representative of the passivist branch within the Flemish Movement and formulated his argument in *De Beiaard* in this line. As a passivist, he strove for the equality of the Flemish language by legal means. Therefore, he condemned those supporters of the Flemish Movement, the so-called activists, who were willing to accept the aid offered by the Germans, most notably the foundation of a Dutch speaking university in the city of Ghent which had been the main goal of the Flemish Movement before the war had broken out. It is for this reason that Van Cauwelaert optimistically claimed that, once the war was over, they would continue pursuing their goals in a legal way.

The words of Van Cauwelaert resonated with those of Schrijnen regarding the Flemish Question, published in the same period in 1916, for he claimed the 'we' wished for the free development of the

⁸⁶ De Volder, *Kardinaal verzet*, 44-53.

⁸⁷ Frans van Cauwelaert, 'Vlaanderen en de oorlog', *De Beiaard* 1 (1916), 485-490, there 489.

being of the Flemish people. As soon as the ‘last sounds of the war rumour will have died away’, thus without the German help, ‘our blood brothers’ would strive for the development of their own culture. The Flemish people, however, were not alone in doing so, Schrijnen claimed:

‘We will consider it as our duty, to, in the Future, increasingly strengthen the ties that unite the North and the South; and the feeling of solidarity, and the firm will to remain united will continue to increase in strength and in growth with the nation of the Greater Netherlands, united in the days of ordeals, but not less in the jubilant mood of the liberation.’

(‘Wel zullen wij ons tot plicht rekenen, in de Toekomst steeds nauwer de banden aan te halen, die Noord en Zuid verbinden; en het gevoel van saamhorigheid, en de vaste wil verenigd te blijven zal immer in kracht en in groei toenemen bij de natie van Groot-Nederland, verenigd in de dagen van beproeving, maar niet minder in de jubelstonde der bevrijding.’⁸⁸)

According to Schrijnen, from the viewpoint of Flanders, the cooperation between Flanders and the Netherlands was even necessary, since the Flemish language alone had no chance against the French language.⁸⁹

Put differently, Schrijnen and Van Cauwelaert both underlined the importance of the aims of the Flemish people that needed to be achieved without the help of the so-called *Flamenpolitik*. Schrijnen also, once again, stressed the cultural connection between the North and the South, whereas Van Cauwelaert embodied this connection.

2.5 The Polish Question

Next to the fate of the Flemish people, the situation of the Polish people during the war was also addressed in *De Beiaard*. Petrus Steenhoff (1866-1945) was born in Utrecht. He became a journalist and was subsequently involved in the founding of a new Catholic newspaper in 1884, *Het Centrum*. In the following years he served the newspaper and in 1902 he succeeded the priest-historian Gisbert Brom (1864-1915) as editor in chief, a position he would occupy until 1929. Steenhoff managed to bind many progressive politicians, clerics and journalists, in the words of Rudolf van Breukelen, to *Het Centrum*.⁹⁰ Steenhoff had also been a member of the *Klarenbeekse Club*, an association of progressive young Catholics that met in the period 1900-1908.⁹¹ Joseph Schrijnen and Louis van Gorkom, also discussed in this master’s thesis, were also participating in this club that aimed to support initiatives to foster the intellectual coming of age of Dutch Catholics.

Steenhoff noted, in an article published earlier in 1916 that no one spoke about the recognition of the Polish nation until shortly after the outbreak of war, when the Russian tsar and the German chancellor issued proclamations in which the Poles were promised some form of independence in the

⁸⁸ Schrijnen, ‘Het nationaliteitenbeginsel’, 310.

⁸⁹ Jos. Schrijnen, ‘Volkstaal en kultuurtaal’, *De Beiaard* 1 (1916), 390-392.

⁹⁰ R. van Breukelen, *Het Centrum tussen kromstaf en publiek schandaal 1884-1932: een perskwesitie in het centrum des lands met aanzienlijke verliezen én verliezers* (Baarn, 1993), 26-27, 45, 157; Luykx, *Heraut van de katholieke herleving*, 89; Knipselcollectie KDC 14826.

⁹¹ Rogier, *In vrijheid herboren*, 492.

future. Thus, as Steenhoff observed, attempts had been made to win the favour of the Polish people, who had suffered greatly: dozens of villages had been destroyed and the Poles had been deprived of their most essential needs. But that was not all; the Poles were living in the ‘painful particularity’ of being scattered across different nations that were fighting each other.

Steenhoff properly assessed the situation, as it had indeed been the intention of the governments of these empires to win the favour of the Polish people for various reasons. Historian Louis Gerson showed that with the changing situations on the front lines, the policies regarding the Polish people changed as well. So the Polish Question was not broached out of sympathy with the Poles, instead it was an example of power politics.⁹²

But Steenhoff twisted the matter by arguing that the recognition of the Polish Question was the only ‘redeeming feature’ in the middle of this disaster. Prior to writing about this question, he claimed, the Polish people must be offered material aid. He furthermore expressed the hope that this situation would bring the Poles closer together, which was necessary because the Polish people had been living separately since they were split apart at the Congress of Vienna. Ever since, Steenhoff claimed, only the Poles that were part of Austria-Hungary were treated well. They were living in a Catholic state so their language, religion, customs and traditions were respected. Providing the Polish people with their state was according to Steenhoff not only righteous, but also a benefit for Europe: ‘A deed of injustice would be reversed with Poland’s recovery and the re-establishment of this once so mighty Empire could become a safeguard for the peace and the healthy balance in Europe.’ (‘Een daad van onrecht zou met Polen’s herstel ongedaan worden gemaakt en de wederoprichting van dit eenmaal machtige Rijk zou een waarborg kunnen worden voor den vrede en het gezonde evenwicht in Europa.’⁹³)

It is difficult to determine why Steenhoff addressed the Polish Question. In the KDC, several sources have been preserved that provide hints of his interest in the Polish people. In relation to a number of newspaper articles dedicated to aspects related to the war published in *Het Centrum*, he has written personal notes on the ‘miseries of war’, as his notes were titled. Moreover, eleven letters written by Van Cauwelaert to Steenhoff, mostly written in the first months of the war, have been preserved. In these letters, Van Cauwelaert informed his Dutch acquaintance about the situation in Belgium and the Flemish Movement with respect to the war. What is more, Van Cauwelaert thanked Steenhoff for his interest in the situation in Belgium. Poland is absent in these newspapers, notes and letters, but they nonetheless highlight that Steenhoff was concerned and informed about matters related to the European war. Furthermore, it is possible that he was triggered by the fate of the Catholic Poles by his knowledge of the situation the Catholic Flemish people found themselves in.⁹⁴

Concluding, the differences between the reflections of these Catholics are striking. Schrijnen expressed a rather optimistic view by discussing the concept of self-determination. Like many other

⁹² Louis L. Gerson, *Woodrow Wilson and the rebirth of Poland 1914-1920* (New Haven, 1953), 7-37.

⁹³ P. Steenhoff, ‘Het Poolsche vraagstuk’, *De Beiaard* (1916), 74-80, quote on 79-80.

⁹⁴ Archief Steenhoff, P.H.J. en Smulders, Albertine, inventarisnummers: 370, 468 and 559.

Dutch and European intellectuals, he welcomed this concept, although he even expressed some doubts on the question whether it could be implemented.

Steenhoff on the contrary, did worry more about the miseries of war, as he spent many words to discuss the fate of the Polish people. He furthermore argued that a reunited Poland would function as a guarantee for peace and a 'healthy balance' in Europe. Although Schrijnen did critically assess the implementation of the concept of self-determination, considerations on the future of Europe in this sense were lacking. He was more interested in a varied Europe than a balanced Europe.

In his articles, Van Cauwelaert did not express solidarity with the Belgians by writing on their situation, instead he aimed at fostering international solidarity for the Belgian case, for which goal *De Beiaard* offered him a platform.

Theme III – War

Two authors reflected on the war in relation to architecture or literature, respectively: Bernard Molkenboer OP and Louis Leeuwenberg. Bernard Molkenboer OP (1879-1948) was born in Leeuwarden. He attended the bishopric seminary Hageveld in Heemstede and at the age of eighteen he enlisted in the order of Dominicans. A year later, he began his novitiate in Huissen with the result that he was ordained a priest in 1906. Three years later, Molkenboer went to Rome to study art history. Back in the Netherlands, from 1911 onwards, the Dominican was appointed professor of 'theologia dogmatica' in Huissen and subsequently professor of 'sacred rhetoric'. From his youth onwards, he was interested in Vondel and from 1905 he would regularly publish on this Dutch poet. During the conflict, most of his publications appeared in *De Beiaard*.⁹⁵ In one of these, a short one of two pages that was part of the rubric *Verscheidenheden* and published in the beginning of 1916, he reflected on the war.

3.1 War, literature and architecture

Molkenboer discussed, on the basis of an article in *De Gids*, how the city councillor G. Th. M. van den Bosch protested against the plans to 'destroy the most beautiful square' of the city of Alkmaar, the *Waagplein*. According to Molkenboer, the struggle for the preservation of the 'old beauty' of the cities was more topical than ever due to the destruction in Belgium and Northern France, and the annually growing competition among trading firms that placed ugly building in cities. So the 'friends of beauty' were confronted with the systematic mutilations that threatened the picturesque parts of the Dutch cities inside and outside war zones. To the latter he referred to as 'peace destructions', which he subsequently critically discussed. The only thing that mattered in the eyes of architects was profit and comfort, whether a building was beautiful, respectable or instructive remained completely disregarded by them. While expressing his dismay, Molkenboer paid limited attention to the war, it was only

⁹⁵ http://www.biografischwoordenboek gelderland.nl/bio/3_Bernardus_Constant_Molkenboer Accessed 9 December 2015; Johan Renders, *Bibliographie der geschriften van dr. B.H. Molkenboer O.P. 1898-1939* (Nijmegen, 1939), 3-19.

present in two ways: it contributed to the systematic destruction of cities and, more importantly, the destructions caused by the conflict were mirrored with those made in times of peace. He argued that demolitions caused by the armies, however regrettable, were only of a temporary character whereas the peace destructions had a lasting impact. With this, Molkenboer put the impact of the war into perspective.⁹⁶

Another author reflected on the war while discussing a novel. Louis Leeuwenberg (1868-1922) was born in Delft and studied chemistry at the technical college in Delft although he did not complete his studies. Afterwards, he occupied himself mainly with literature. To earn a living, he wrote articles about foreign politics in the newspaper *De Gelderlander*. For *De Beiaard* he translated the Spanish novel *Kinderen der zee* written by J.M. de Perada (1833-1906). Leeuwenberg had a frail health and was deaf which makes it likely, according to archivist Johannes van Campen, that Leeuwenberg was listed 'without profession' in the municipal register and in the address books.⁹⁷

Leeuwenberg reflected, at the beginning of 1917, on the conflict in a review of the novel *Seine englische Frau* written by Rudolf Stratz in 1914. Before discussing the book, he noted that it should be considered 'merely' war literature, but that it was a pleasure reading it. In addition, it sold tremendously well. While describing the content of this publication Leeuwenberg suddenly, when he discussed an encounter between a German and an Englishman, uttered his view on the war:

'Oh dear, between some English and German idiosyncrasies we are as neutral as a horse between a whip and a stick. Principally we consider British self-conceit and Prussian self-worship as brother and sister. Nasty little children! [...] The one holds innocent neutral ships, the other sends them to the bottom. Despite all quantitative differences, qualitatively the egoism and conceitedness of both is the same.'

('Och hemel, tusschen sommige Engelsche en Duitsche eigenaardigheden staan wij zoo neutraal als een paard tusschen een zweep en een stok. En in den grond houden wij Britschen eigendunk en Pruisische zelfvergoding voor broertje en zusje. Vervelende kindertjes! [...] De een houdt onschuldige neutrale schepen vast, de ander boort ze in den grond. Bij alle kwantitatief verschil, kwalitatief is het egoïsme en de laatdunkendheid het zelfde bij beiden.'⁹⁸)

After this statement Leeuwenberg continued his review. It is an interesting view, because he reflected on concrete matters: the dangers the Dutch merchant ships were confronted with. In addition, he considered both evils equally bad. He seemed to imply: we Dutch people just want to do business, and anyone that hinders us is equally annoying, an attitude which resembled the policy of neutrality of the Dutch government.

At the end of his article, Leeuwenberg noted that religion was totally absent in the book, God was only referred to by means of cursing: 'Gott!' or 'Herrejesus!'. He scornfully noted that one should try

⁹⁶ B.H.M., 'Verscheidenheden', *De Beiaard* 1 (1916), 189-190.

⁹⁷ J.W.C. van Campen, 'Over vrienden en relaties van Toorop in zijn Nijmeegse tijd', *Numaga: tijdschrift gewijd aan heden en verleden van Nijmegen en omgeving* 27 (1980), 69-89.

⁹⁸ L.L., 'Seine Englische Frau, door R. Stratz - Stuttgart 1914', *De Beiaard* 1 (1917), 94-96, there 95.

to use ‘Kaiser’ or ‘Kronprinz’ as stopgaps instead.⁹⁹ Because the German Emperor personified Germany’s power, he was regularly object of scorn and derision; mocking songs, for instance, as historian Pieter Serrien’s investigation of Flemish diary writers showed.¹⁰⁰ Thus, Leeuwenberg’s proposal seemed anything but innovative. Yet, one wonders why Leeuwenberg regarded it necessary to discuss this book: in his eyes it was ‘merely’ war literature, it praised Germany in explicit terms (although he himself seemed not pro-German) and religion was absent in the book. Did he discuss it because it was so popular, or did he use the platform this journal offered him to express his opinion concerning the way in which the crisis hampered the Netherlands? Either way, he did not put the conflict into perspective as Molkenboer did, instead he expressed a strictly neutral perspective on the war.

3.2 War and science

Schrijnen was the one who most explicitly referred to his scholarly background when regarding to the conflict, which was already illustrated by the way he discussed the concept of self-determination. His article, published in the beginning of 1916, addressed to the language used in the French trenches, for which he referred to the observations of the French writer and politician Maurice Barrès (1862-1923), was an even clearer example of his way of perceiving the war. In order to introduce the theme, Schrijnen described that class and profession created social groups determined by language variations, in which words often gain a particular meaning. In addition, new words emerge. This group language, Schrijnen claimed, remains related to the general language, but the intensity of the community life determines the differentiation of the group language with respect to the general language. Especially soldiers constitute solid social groups: since ancient times, most notably the Greeks and Romans, soldiers made use of specific group languages. But social life in the modern trenches was way more intense than in the camp so it was no surprise, Schrijnen argued, that life in the trenches of this ‘long-lasting, murderous’ war had created a peculiar ‘trench language’.

After these general observations, Schrijnen analysed several words used in specific circumstances in the trenches. These words were remarkable due to the strange circumstances the soldiers were in. The common name for soldier was *poilu*, the hairy and unshaven creature that lived in the trenches. *Becqueter*, grubbing, was the best way to describe the way this creature ate. It was an odd custom to give names to weapons and equipment parts. For sleeping in the trenches was very scant, for the enemy could fire at any time. Therefore, words such as *pioncer* and *roupiller* were used, which could be translated with nodding off. Soldiers also made use of all sorts of names to describe the gunfire and grenades, but also the letters they received: *les babillardes*, babblers. Perhaps, although Schrijnen did not mention it, this referred to the censorship that only allowed soldiers and the people on the home front to chat about harmless matters in the letters. Obviously, the soldiers had regular quarrels with

⁹⁹ L.L., ‘Seine Englische Frau, door R. Stratz – Stuttgart 1914’, *De Beiaard* 1 (1917), 94-96, there 95.

¹⁰⁰ Serrien, *Oorlogsdagen*, 161-165, 199, 220, 242.

one another for which they made use of all sorts of invectives. An example the author mentioned was *volaille*, which could be translated with slut.

Yet, Schrijnen reminded his readers, which would probably adopt a dismissive attitude with respect to such practices, to see this trench language in their proper context:

‘Yet, it would be a mistake to argue that this trench language merely contains roughness and capricious banter. Living together in those underground dens in constant peril of death [...] also creates a certain degree of confidentiality and friendship, with its own peculiar, typical forms and expressions.’

(‘Toch zou men zich vergissen door te meenen, dat deze loopgraven taal slechts ruwheden kent en luimige scherts. Het samenleven in die onderaardsche holen onder voortdurend levensgevaar [...] scheidt ook een zekere vertrouwelijkheid en vriendschap, die weer haar eigenaardige, typeerende vormen en uitdrukkingen bezigt.’)

He concluded his article with questioning to what extent these expressions would influence the general French colloquial language. Thus, he acknowledged the lasting impact the war could have.¹⁰¹ Yet, like his earlier discussed article, although he acknowledged the perils of the conflict, he focussed on those facets he considered interesting.

3.3 The just war

Another theme discussed by Schrijnen, mid-1918, was the just war. Rather than reflecting on a certain aspect of the conflict, its justification from a Christian perspective had his attention. In a letter to Hoogveld, he explained his motivation for addressing this topic. He challenged the view that considered it ‘absolutely Christian’ to refuse military service: ‘This piece is therefore actually directed against the conscientious objectors and activists. It was indeed my goal to provide De Beiaard with something topical. Whether I have been successful?’ (‘Dit stuk is dan eigenlijk ook gericht tegen de dienstweigeraars en aktivisten. [...] Mijn doel was inderdaad voor de Beiaard iets aktueels te geven. Of ik geslaagd ben?’¹⁰²) So in this case Schrijnen ostensibly felt called, although the role did not suit him very well as this letter seems to indicate, to reflect on a topical matter from a sense of dissatisfaction with prevailing opinions.

From August 1914 onwards, the churches and Socialists, already publicly discussed the relation between pacifism and the war. None of the pacifist institutions had been able to prevent the conflict, so Christians and Socialists were forced to answer the scorn of their opponents. Concerning Christianity, especially its international pretence was criticised: suddenly every nation had its own God in whose name the nations went to battle. Dutch Christians wondered whether the war was a punishment by God due to the modern lifestyle of the Europeans or that the conflict itself had to be seen as a sin against God. Long before the twentieth century, there already existed a tradition of the just war within Christianity. According to the ethicist Koos van der Bruggen it could not be named a

¹⁰¹ J. S., ‘Fransche loopgraven taal’, *De Beiaard* (1916), 84-87, quote on 87.

¹⁰² Letter Schrijnen 7 October 1918, Archief Hoogveld, inventarisnummer 244.

doctrine, instead it consisted of a wide variety of views from the Greek and Roman times, the Church Fathers Ambrose and Augustine, Medieval scholasticism – above all Thomas Aquinas – and international law studies by Hugo de Groot and others.

In 1915, in what came to be termed the ‘Dienstweigeringsmanifest’, published in September 1915 and reissued several times, many Christians, among whom the pacifist antimilitarist Bart de Ligt (1883-1938) and the liberal reformed pastor Louis Adrien Bähler (1867-1941), called for the refusal of military duty. The manifest had stirred discussion in the Netherlands, also among Christians.¹⁰³ In the same year, Joannes Aengenent (1873-1935), then a professor of philosophy, had, contrary to De Ligt and Bähler, referred to the tradition of the just war in order to make sense of the war. In an article in the journal *De Katholiek*, Aengenent argued that there existed a difference between what God wanted and what he tolerated. In his eyes, God let the conflict happen, to make the people see the errors of their ways, especially the increasing disbelief in the modern world. However, Aengenent urged his readers for not becoming passive; they had to cooperate with the peace movement to end the crisis as soon as possible. Throughout the war, differences of agreement regarding the relation between God and the conflict would continue to persist, but no on-going debate existed.¹⁰⁴

Given the absence of such a debate, it is remarkable that Schrijnen addressed this topic as late as mid-1918. He reflected on the extent to which there could exist a just war, by elaborating on the pacifist publications written by the Roman Emperor Tertullian (ca. 160-ca. 230), such as *De Corona*, *De Idololatria* and *De Patientia*. In the current times, Schrijnen argued, people referred to such accounts in order to plea for the refusal of military service. Such people argued that defencelessness was the basic principle of ‘true Christianity’, as taught by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. Yet, as Schrijnen argued, Jesus spoke about endurance, but with this utterance he expressed a wish and not an order. The abolition of war was an ideal condition worth striving for, but the state was, ultimately, entitled to defend its right of existence, also through armed conflicts. So waging war did not contradict Jesus’ words, Schrijnen claimed. Finally, he referred to what Augustine had said, namely that waging war was a way of achieving peace. Going to battle could even be a plight, abstaining from it neglecting a duty.¹⁰⁵

His argument was in line with that of Aengenent, although the editors of *De Beiaard* elaborated on the tradition of the just war, whereas the philosopher argued that the war was a sort of punishment

¹⁰³ Herman Noordegraaf, *Niet met de wapenen der barbaren. Het christen-socialisme van Bart de Ligt* (Baarn, 1994), 197-202.

¹⁰⁴ Maarten van den Bos, *Mensen van goede wil: een geschiedenis van de katholieke vredesbeweging Pax Christi 1948-2013* (Amsterdam, 2015), 24; Koos van der Bruggen, *Verzekerde vrede of verzekerde vernietiging. Ontwikkeling van een theorie van gerechtvaardigde afschrikking* (Kampen, 1986), 231-235; Tames, ‘Oorlog voor onze gedachten’, 46-57; Hanneke Takken, ‘Zij zijn de vijand van God’. Franse Duitse en Britse geestelijken in oorlog’, in: Enne Kooops and Henk van der Linden (eds.), *De kogel door de kerk? Het Nederlandse christendom en de Eerste Wereldoorlog* (Soesterberg, 2014), 189-208, there 189-191; Erik Sengers, *Roomsch socioloog – sociale bisschop. Joannes Aengenent als ideoloog en bestuurder van de katholieke sociale beweging 1873-1935* (Hilversum, 2016), 160-169.

¹⁰⁵ Jos. Schrijnen, ‘Dienstweigeren bij de oude christenen’, *De Beiaard* 2 (1918), 193-213, 212.

by God. Nonetheless, both denied that war was necessarily incompatible with Christianity. It seems likely that Schrijnen, while mentioning the ‘conscientious objectors and activists’, referred to the discussion that followed the ‘Dienstweigeringsmanifest’, as it was reissued several times and had stirred tremendous national turmoil. Yet, it remains hard to say what urged Schrijnen to respond to this matter years later. Had he been occupied with the matter all this time? Had he done research for his article in the meantime?

In conclusion, it can be argued that the range of topics discussed by these intellectuals was fairly large. For this reason, the differences among their writings catch the eye. Again, these authors wrote for a cultural journal, for which reason it is no surprise that the war was not the most important topic for them to write about. They mainly reflected on the war from their own backgrounds: Schrijnen in his capacity as a linguist and an ancient historian (although the tradition of the just war did not belong to his expertise), Leeuwenberg as someone who occupied himself mainly with literature and Molkenboer from an art historian’s point of view. In addition, except for Molkenboer, they expressed themselves in distinctly Catholic ways, which is most clearly illustrated by Schrijnen, who explicitly addressed the way in which a Christian had to see the war. Historian Tames showed that Struycken reflected on the war in a non-Catholic way, which enabled him, she argued, to reach a broad national audience. In this sense, Struycken’s writings differed from those concerned here. Yet, Struycken, similar to Schrijnen, Leeuwenberg and Molkenboer, also reflected on the war from his own background.

Conclusion

It was touched upon several times: the conflict did not occupy a prominent place in the articles and letters throughout the years 1916-1918. This seems logically, as *De Beiaard* was a cultural journal, which aimed to mainly address topics relating to theology, philosophy and arts. Yet, this journal featured a rubric on politics and the editors had invited a politician as editor, namely Van Cauwelaert. Both facts indicate that these editors, in general, deemed politics relevant. Therefore, it is fair to assess the attention these intellectuals paid to the war, which leads to the conclusion that they, mostly implicitly, put the international conflict in perspective.

Generally speaking, despite the differences, these men of learning considered the conflict in similar terms. None of them challenged the neutral position of the Dutch government, although Van Schaik expressed sharp criticism of its implementation, and Hoogveld argued that neutrality was something else than indifference. In addition, none of them expressed a stance contra or pro any warring party, they were – or pretended to be – neutral. Leeuwenberg best expressed this position with his description of the Netherlands as a horse that was equally tormented by the British and the Germans. All of them, like most people studied by the historians Kristel and Tames, expressed their disgust regarding the war (although Schrijnen only devoted a few words to it) and seem to have been well informed about the topics they wrote about.

At a more detailed level, it has become clear that Van Schaik was the only one who structurally

assessed the politics of the Dutch government in the war. Although he acknowledged the circumstances, he felt the Dutch government clung too convulsively to neutrality. Due to this policy, the freedom of the people became increasingly curtailed. Yet, he seemed most worried by the moral decay of all those involved in smuggling activities. He even feared the people would remain more individualistic after the war. Hoogveld also critically assessed neutrality, yet he did so in a more abstract manner. In addition, he lamented the lack of articles dedicated to world events.

Van Cauwelaert, Steenhoff and Schrijnen expressed topics concerned with international solidarity, albeit in different ways. Steenhoff and Cauwelaert emphasised the harsh circumstances of the Poles and the Flemish people, whereas Schrijnen had less attention for these circumstances, instead he focussed on what he considered the flourishing of the nations. In doing so, these Catholic intellectuals had clear goals of their own: Van Cauwelaert aimed to justify the behaviour of the Belgian government, the episcopate and the Flamingants, Steenhoff asked for attention for the fate of the Polish people. Schrijnen expressed his satisfaction concerning the fact that Europe was not (yet) a uniform culture. All of them referred to the ideal of the Greater Netherlands, which occupies an even greater role in the next chapter.

The third, and last, theme that emerges from the articles is the way in which war could affect life. By discussing French trench language, architecture and literature, Schrijnen, Molkenboer and Leeuwenberg focussed on subjects only indirectly related to the conflict. Schrijnen, for instance, acknowledged that language used in a specific context could change. That was it: the language was at the core of his interest, the war constituted an interesting context in which this language emerged. Van Schaik and Van Cauwelaert were the most important exceptions: they did their best to inform their readers about the consequences of the war.

The most significant difference compared with the publicists as discussed by Tames (although it is important to stress that Tames selected them because they did so), is that these Catholics did not reflect on the position or the identity of the Dutch or the Netherlands. Instead they saw the war from a Catholic perspective. Van Schaik was, like the bishops, troubled by depravity: because of smuggling practices, the Catholic followers came into contact with dissenters. Van Cauwelaert and Steenhoff discussed the fate of Catholics abroad. Apparently, they did so because they felt connected with them. In the case of Van Cauwelaert, this was the most obvious, as he was a Flemish person himself. Schrijnen addressed the question whether the war and Christianity were compatible, for which reason he dwelled upon the tradition of the just war. All in all, it is clear that these intellectuals viewed the war from their Catholic identities.

Chapter 3 – Reflections on the outcome of war

Consideration of the selected articles and letters indicates that a few themes related to the outcome of war were relevant to these Catholic intellectuals. As in the case of the previous chapter, many of these themes correspond with themes that are also important in existing literature, whereas some themes constitute new perspectives on the war. The first discerned theme is ‘Literary relations’: Bernard Molkenboer and Gerard Brom both addressed Flemish authors, but more importantly they stressed the connection between the Netherlands and Flanders, a connection important in almost all articles published on themes associated with the outcome of war. This link between the Netherlands and Flanders is most apparent in the second theme, the ‘Belgian territorial demands’, that cannot be understood without having in mind the importance attached to the ideal of the Greater Netherlands by these cultural leaders, for which reason it was elaborately discussed in the first chapter. Three authors: Willem Mulder SJ, Henricus Huijbers and Joseph Schrijnen, directly responded to the claims made by the Belgians. They expressed their deep disappointment at the Belgians, but simultaneously they expressed their hope for a future in which the Belgians and the Dutch would understand each other better.

The third theme is ‘Socialism and Catholics’ about which Brom expressed in the strongest terms, although his relation with the ‘red flood’ was more complicated than it seems at first sight. Louis van Gorkom and Wenzel Frankemölle, who both elaborated on quite different aspects related to the German Empire, the fourth theme. The last word is for Brom, who elaborately discussed the allegedly unique role of Dutch Catholics in the future of Europe. Therefore, the last theme discussed here is ‘The future’. As in the second chapter each theme is addressed by means of the same structure: the background of the authors concerned is accounted for after which his reflections are elucidated and explicitly mirrored with existing literature.

Theme I – Literary relations

Bernard Molkenboer reflected on the Greater Netherlands in a review article written by mid-1919. All the books he discussed were written by Catholic Flemish authors (eight in total), his so called ‘Flemish brothers’. Indeed, for Molkenboer both the Flemish and Catholic character of the authors was important. While discussing the work by Stijn Streuvels, he noted that the Christian element in the novel was overshadowed by descriptions of nature, which he considered a less attractive side of the book. With respect to the work of Karel van den Oever, Molkenboer argued that it was not really Flemish and considered his style attitudinised. Streuvels and Felix Timmermans were capable of representing the ‘Flemish soul’ and ‘Flemish body’ better than anybody else.¹⁰⁶ According to Molkenboer, the crisis had a major influence on these books: ‘Within and without, these books carry the marks of harsh events, that cracked Belgium, but did not crush it.’ (‘Van binnen en buiten dragen

¹⁰⁶ B.H. Molkenboer OP, ‘Letterkundige kroniek’, *De Beiaard* 2 (1919), 492-510, there 499 and 506. The authors discussed by Molkenboer are: René Vermandere, Jan Hammenecker, Jozef de Cock, Stijn Streuvels, Felix Timmermans, Karel van den Oever, Jozef Muls and Ernest Claes.

die boeken de sporen der barre gebeurtenissen, waardoor België gekraakt, maar niet verpletterd is.’)

While discussing the works of two authors, Molkenboer revealed some of his opinion with respect to the war. René Vermandere’s work was praised by Molkenboer, while the author refrained from railing against the Germans, but all the more against the Flemish people who deliberately continued using the French language, which frustrated Flamingants. For this reason, Flamingants called such Flemish people Franskiljons. Molkenboer scornfully noted that ‘the persistent stabbing of the pro-French Flemings to the Flemish right and the Flemish heart must be more unbearable than the Prussian whirlwind, that swept across Belgium.’ (‘het hardnekkig trappen van de Franskiljons op ‘t Vlaamsche recht en ’t Vlaamsche hart moet onverdragelijker zijn dan de Pruisische windhoos, die over België woei en voorbijging.’¹⁰⁷) In other words, from Molkenboer’s perspective, the German occupation of Belgium had been something terrible, yet it was like a whirlwind: it brings damage incidentally, which can be repaired. More damaging where the Flemish people who hampered the emancipation of the Flemish language.¹⁰⁸

The other work was written by Jozef Muls who, according to Molkenboer, wrote that the beauty of old streets lied in the fact that they have ‘grown’, rather than modern streets that have been ‘made’. The Flemish author even argued, Molkenboer continued, that it was much worse to damage architecture by trying to beautify it than by consciously destroying it. This was a curious observation of an exile from Antwerp, as Molkenboer noted. Furthermore, he argued that this insight should become general: such systematic demolishers are substantially worse than ‘a passing gang of vandals’ (‘een voorbijvliegende bende kapotschieters’). This way of coming to terms with the war is reminiscent of the way in which Molkenboer wrote about the war in 1916, when he compared ‘peace destructions’ with destructions caused by the war.

Despite all the demolitions, the war had been fruitful for literature – although Molkenboer was eager to point to the misery the conflict had brought:

‘[w]ho would, to win the most beautiful book of the world, dare to hurt one life, to break one heart? But now that we have accepted the war scourge as a fact, endured as an punishment, no man has to smother his joy about it [...]. Out of the sorrow, separation, expulsion, hunger, illness and death several pieces of writing were born, that have value not only as historical and psychological documents, but that also bring the happiness of a real, art marked by life, that is even able to live on ruins.’

(‘[w]ie zou om ‘t mooiste boek van de wereld te winnen, één leven durven krenken, één hart kunnen breken? Maar nu we den oorlogsgeselsel als een feit hebben aanvaard, als een straf ondergaan, hoeft geen mensch er zijn vreugde over te smoren [...]. [U]it de smart, scheiding, verbanning, honger, ziekte en dood zijn toch wel eenige werken geboren, die niet alleen als historische of psychologische

¹⁰⁷ Franskiljon was used as a term of abuse for people in Flanders who used the French language, see: Reginald de Schryver and others, (eds.), *Nieuwe encyclopedie van de Vlaamse Beweging* (Tielt, 1998), 1201.

¹⁰⁸ Molkenboer, ‘Letterkundige kroniek’, quotes on 492, 495.

dokumenten waarde hebben, maar ook de verheuging brengen van een echte, doorleefde kunst, die ook op puinen groeien kan.¹⁰⁹⁾

Although Molkenboer devoted considerable attention to the atrocities of war, quite shortly after the conflict had ended he reflected positively back on the war. Belgium not only had to fight the German invader, the greatest part of the country had increasingly suffered from the occupation that had lasted for four long years. Especially the deportation of an estimated 120,000 Belgian men to Germany where they were forced to work in German labour camps in the period 1916-1918, which had a profound impact on many men and the families they left behind. At this stage, the occupation had become humiliating for the Belgians, as historian De Schaepdrijver puts it.¹¹⁰ To be sure, Molkenboer did not trivialise the impact of the occupation on Belgian society. Still, he reflected in a positive way looking back on the war. This is explicable, as he had been an inhabitant of a country that had managed to remain neutral throughout the conflict.

1.1 War?

Another intellectual who referred to Flemish authors in an article in 1919 was Gerard Brom (1882-1959), who was born in Utrecht and studied at the Bishopric College in Roermond, after which he enrolled as a student of medicine in Utrecht. Soon, however, he switched to become an arts student. In 1907 he obtained his doctorate, cum laude, with a dissertation dedicated to the work of the Dutch poet and playwright Joost van den Vondel (1587-1679). Probably in this period, he became a teetotaller, which he persisted for the rest of his life. After his promotion, Brom taught the Dutch language in Maastricht and Haarlem and in the years 1911 and 1913 he travelled to Italy. Shortly before and during the international conflict of 1914-1918, Brom was a teacher in Apeldoorn and Nijmegen. In these years he became a speaker and organiser of the social and cultural life and he became known as one of the leading men of the temperance movement. From March 1916 onwards, he published numerous articles in *De Beiaard* about topics such as the Liturgical Movement, contemporary events, and the Catholic university (that had to be founded). From his student years onwards, Brom was in touch with numerous Flemish prominent figures, Luykx even argued that he should be seen as the successor to Alberdingk Thijm as the main figure that cultivated the connections between the Netherlands and Flanders.¹¹¹

For Brom it was, in an article published at the beginning of 1919, more important to stress the relation between Dutch Catholics and Flamings rather than explicitly reviewing certain books as Molkenboer. He considered both groups to be in a similar emancipation process, as both demanded equal treatment within society at large. Yet, Brom argued the Dutch had long been blind towards the

¹⁰⁹ Molkenboer, 'Letterkundige kroniek', quotes on 507.

¹¹⁰ De Schaepdrijver, *De Grote Oorlog*, 242. Serrien, *Oorlogsdagen*, 306-307.

¹¹¹ Paul Luykx, 'De Vlaamse contacten van de Nederlandse katholieke heraut Gerard Brom (1882-1959)', *Ons Erfdeel. Vlaams-Nederlands Cultureel Tijdschrift* 59:1 (2016), 188-193; Luykx, *Heraut van de katholieke herleving*, 75-150; L.J. Rogier, 'Herdenking van Gerard Brom', in: L.J. Rogier, *Terugblik en uitzicht* (Hilversum, 1964), 381-420.

struggle of the Flemish people because they themselves were more orientated towards the French. Whereas the Flemish people were defending themselves against French predominance by propagating their own language, the Dutch had a ‘convulsive fear’ for the hegemony of the German civilisation: ‘we were anxious about the proximity of the Prussian, therefore we rather sought contact with the French spirit, that seemed safe to us due to its distance, and twice as inviting because of the pungent contrast.’ (‘de dichte nabijheid van de Pruis werd ons overbenauwd en des te liever zochten we kontakt met de Franse geest, die ons door een veilige afstand onschadelijk en door het pikant onderscheid dubbel aantrekkelijk gemaakt werd.’¹¹²) So while the Dutch focused on the French spirit, they were blind of the fact that this same spirit suppressed the Flemish people.

Brom continued that this changed with the introduction of the Flemish priest and poet Guido Gezelle and his ‘heralds’ Stijn Streuvels and Hugo Verriest to the Netherlands. To this ‘time of love’, Flanders and the Netherlands owed their feelings of kinship. What is more, the city of Leuven, where the prominent Catholic university was located, he considered crucial for both Flanders and the Netherlands: ‘Leuven still is the heart in the blood circulation of full-blooded Flanders. In fraternally embracing the Flemish people we feel the salutary beating of this heart. When will we make ours feel? Too literally, Belgium and Holland are, for the time being, one heart.’ (‘Leuven is nog het hart in de bloedsomloop van ’t volbloedig Vlaanderen. Bij een broederlike omhelzing van ’t Vlaamse volk voelen wij dat hart weldadig kloppen. Wanneer zullen wij ’t onze laten voelen? Te letterlijk zijn België en Holland voorlopig samen één hart.’) For as long as this Dutch Catholic university was lacking, Leuven’s university embodied the beating heart that reassured the Dutch Catholics.¹¹³

Obviously, Molkenboer and Brom wrote rather diverse articles. Notwithstanding these differences, some similarities become evident. They discussed solely Catholic Flemish authors and underlined the importance of the ties between the Netherlands and Flanders. Brom and Molkenboer were committed to the Flemish speaking people and their struggle to increase the stature of their language. The latter even claimed that those Flemish people who maintained to make use of the French language were more damaging to Flanders than the *temporary* German invasion. With the choice for discussing these Catholics and by their way of arguing they also showed their own opinions as Catholics. This observation underscored earlier observations made by Luykx and others that the Flemish connections of the editors were mostly Catholics. Crucial to this study is that the war faded into the background.

Theme II – Belgian demands

A topic absolutely not treated light-heartedly by the men of learning associated with *De Beiaard* were the Belgian demands. Some of them took note of these demands with bitter disappointment, yet they responded with quite different articles. All three of these should be understood in light of the Greater

¹¹² G.B., ‘Kroniek en kritiek’, *De Beiaard* 2 (1919), 67-77, there 70.

¹¹³ Brom, ‘Kroniek en kritiek’, quote on 75.

Netherlands. Since this case highlights the importance of this ideal to these authors, these articles are discussed in detail. But before it is possible to understand their content properly, it is necessary to briefly introduce the historical context of these Belgian demands.

2.1 Historical context

In 1839, the detachment of Belgium from the Netherlands was formally arranged. But from this moment onwards, many Belgians continued to feel they had been given too little. During the war some Belgians argued it was about time to get what they were entitled to. Two events at the end of the international conflict added fuel to the fire. The former German Emperor, William II, asked for political asylum from the Dutch government on 10 November and obtained it a few days later. In addition, the Netherlands granted permission to 70,000 German soldiers on their way home to Germany to travel through Limburg on 14 November. Both events infuriated the Allied Powers, who consequently perceived the Dutch as pro-German. Furthermore, an old false rumour went around: the Dutch were accused of having allowed the advancing German army to travel through Limburg in August 1914. This had not happened, but it further attributed to the pro-German image of the Dutch that arose after the war. In the same period, on 12 November, the Netherlands was startled by Pieter Jelles Troelstra (1860-1930), who called for a revolution, causing great unrest amongst the Dutch political leaders. It had been especially the confessional parties, which were able to mobilise their followers against this threat.

In January 1919, the Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs Paul Hymans (1865-1941) officially expressed the Belgian demands in Paris: free shipping traffic on the Scheldt and the annexation of Limburg and Zeeland Flanders. A special British-French commission studied these demands in Paris on 12 and 13 February. This commission decided, in the beginning of May, that it could not grant the transfer of territories of a neutral country. The dispute between the two countries had to be resolved in a separate bilateral meeting where the 1839 Treaty had to be reconsidered.

The Allied forces, especially Great Britain and the United States, were not inclined to approve the Belgian demands. Moreover, Hymans, on behalf of the Belgians, took an unworkable attitude by not being open to compromise, while options were limited. The Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Herman van Karnebeek (1874-1942), on the contrary, eloquently expressed the Dutch position regarding the Belgian demands. Hereafter, the Allied forces decided the matter between Belgium and the Netherlands had to be discussed after the Treaty of Versailles was composed. This was exactly what the Dutch government had hoped for, as the peace negotiations at Versailles embodied the real threat for the Dutch: they were suspected of being pro-German and they were not officially taking part

in the negotiations that took place in the wake of the war. However, if negotiations with the Belgians would take place after the conflict, two equal parties met.¹¹⁴

2.2 Correspondence

Before the editors published articles on the Belgian demands, they at least discussed them in a few letters. From a letter by Schrijnen to Brom dated 6 February 1919, it seems Schrijnen was mainly concerned with Limburg:

‘I have been to Belgium [...] and have spoken various people on the Limburgian question there [...]. The opinion of all was, that Limburg should continue, or rather should say more outlined than so far, what it wants and not wants. To my objection, that those in Belgium and France would not care so much about it [...], they answered that those would at the peace congress. Could you reserve four pages in De Beiaard’s March issue for me?’

(‘Ik ben in België geweest [...] en heb daar verschillende mensen over de Limburgsche kwestie gesproken [...]. Aller meening was, dat Limburg moet doorgaan, of liever meer omlynd dan tot nog toe moet zeggen wat het wil en niet wil. Op mijn tegenwerping, dat men zich daar in België en Frankrijk toch niet veel van zou aantrekken, [...] werd geantwoord, dat men dit wel op het vredescongres zou doen. Kun je mij dus een viertal bladzijden reserveren in Beiaard van Maart?’¹¹⁵)

However, two days later, Schrijnen asked Brom to make a ‘protest issue’ about the Belgian demands.¹¹⁶ So, urged by his acquaintances, Schrijnen formulated his protest in the journal. From his letter, it becomes clear he was mainly focusing on Limburg, but by suggesting to publish a whole issue dedicated to the Belgian demands in general Schrijnen tried to strengthen this protest.

On 9 February 1919, Brom wrote to Hoogveld about Schrijnen’s proposal, which Brom himself opposed. Since the armistice was in sight, Hoogveld had frequently asked Brom in his letters to address world events in their periodical (and he would continue doing so throughout 1919). On the 8 January 1919 he wrote: ‘[I] get exasperated with the fact that we remain stubbornly silent about the greatest events in world history.’ (‘[I]k erger me dood, dat wij over de grootste gebeurtenissen der wereldhistorie maar hardnekkig blijven zwijgen.’¹¹⁷) The claims expressed by Belgium were such a world affair. Also with respect to other topics Brom responded reservedly to Hoogveld requests. In this letter he did so by arguing that suitable people able to write on world events were unavailable. Yet, simultaneously Brom admitted he preferred spontaneous and original articles on less topical and less vital themes for he believed intellectuals had ‘to serve their people’ instead of talking about current events. ‘Each in accordance with his strength. Didn’t Goethe do practical work by studying the evolution, while the world was full of wars? First people, then subjects. At the newspapers this is

¹¹⁴ Remieg Aerts and Gita Deneckere, ‘Inleiding’, in: Remieg Aerts and Gita Deneckere (eds.), *Het (on)verenigd koninkrijk, 1815-1830 > 2015: een politiek experiment in de Lage Landen* (Rekkem, 2015), 9-21; Van Tuyll van Serooskerken, *The Netherlands and World War I*, 266-320.

¹¹⁵ Letter Schrijnen, 6 February 1919, Archief Brom, inventarisnummer 1161.

¹¹⁶ Letter Schrijnen, 8 February 1919, Archief Brom, inventarisnummer 1161.

¹¹⁷ Letter Hoogveld 8 January 1919, Archief Brom, inventarisnummer 2146.

different, we are, thank God, free in our choice.’ (‘Ieder naar zijn kracht. Deed Goethe geen prakties werk met de evolutie te studeren, terwijl de wereld vol was van de oorlogen? Eerst mensen dan stoffen. Bij de dagbladen is dat anders, wij zijn Goddank vrij in onze keus.’¹¹⁸) So he, in contrast to at least Hoogveld and Schrijnen, considered it the task of journalists to write on what they considered world events. Cultural leaders like themselves had to reflect spontaneously on original themes. Apparently, Brom felt confident enough to mirror themselves with people like Goethe, and apparently he had the last word, as a special issue on the Belgian demands was never published.

2.3 Willem Mulder SJ

Nonetheless, *De Beiaard* published three articles on this matter in the same period. The first to be discussed is a writing by Willem Mulder SJ (1875-1936), who obtained his doctorate in 1907 on the view of the Maastricht penitentiary Dietrich van Nieheim (ca. 1345-1418). Two years later he was ordained priest. From 1913 to 1920, he was a Dutch Language and History teacher in Nijmegen. During the war the Jesuit published mainly on Irish questions in the journal *Studiën*.¹¹⁹ Mulder wrote a rather long article, consisting of 28 pages, about the Belgian territorial demands at the expense of the Netherlands, which was published in the beginning of 1919. He argued that he analysed this ‘political spectacle’ as a ‘neutral spectator’ to determine the true motives underlying the Belgian territorial demands. At the time Mulder wrote his article, the demands made by Belgium were expressed in Belgian, French and British newspapers, however Hymans had not yet officially announced the Belgian claims at the peace negotiations in Paris.

Mulder claimed that in the provinces concerned, Limburg and Zeeland Flanders, people expressed themselves anything but pro-Belgian: they asked for elucidation by the Belgian government and the organisation of a protest was in full swing. Motives for some Belgians demanding Dutch territory, Mulder claimed, were both strategic and economic. However, underlying these motives were irredentist motives, ‘based on a misunderstood past’, that were equally important. The treaty of 1839, they argued, had abstained Belgium from parts it was entitled to: Southern Limburg and Zeeland Flanders. Mulder explained that this resembled the irredentist way of thinking, stemming from Italy. After Italy was unified in 1870, it still was considered incomplete; territories lying outside Italy had to be added to it. Irredentism, the author went on, starts from the ‘unproven and unprovable preposition’ that areas that have once belonged together, should be politically united. Mulder warned for such reasoning, as irredentists selectively use linguistic, historical, political or cultural arguments that provide them with the desired outcome.

At this point, Mulder wondered on what basis Belgian irredentists demanded Dutch territory. For this end, he elaborately described the history of both countries and he highlighted the importance of the Eighty Years’ Revolt, which he considered the ‘break between twins’, and the revolution of 1830,

¹¹⁸ Letter Brom, 9 February 1919, Archief Hoogveld, inventarisnummer 212.

¹¹⁹ Th. Baader, ‘Prof. Willem Johannes Maria Mulder S.J.: necrologium’, *Historisch Tijdschrift* 15 (1936), 306-314.

which had ended the ‘second Greater Netherlands’. Although the Belgians’ demands for revolting could have been reasonable, Mulder argued, they were unable to justify an armed revolt. Yet, this division, once approved, had gained justification over the course of time and now the same Belgians, ‘who themselves, ninety years ago, have left the old traditions of the Greater Netherlands’ (‘die zelf, voor negentig jaar, de oude tradities van Groot-Nederland hebben verlaten’), asked the Dutch, ‘the bearers of the old traditions, the maintainers of the national spirit, the direct heirs to the Dutch civilisation’ (‘de dragers der oude traditien, de handhavers van den nationalen geest, de rechtstreekse erfgenamen van de Nederlandse beschaving’), to give up parts of their country. This, Mulder contended, was impossible since the Dutch harbour what a rich and mature past has given them: their own language, their own character and their own historical hospitality.

Thus, Mulder tried to refute the demands of Belgium by dismissing them as irredentist. Like the publicists Tames addressed, he referred, although somewhat superficially, to justice and to specific Dutch characteristics, such as their proverbial cool-headedness, honour, language and character. Near the end of his article, Mulder continued theatrically, although he regretted the division between the Netherlands and Belgium: ‘we do not wish to reconcile with those, who left us voluntarily and without salute’. (‘wij wensden geen hereniging met hen, die ons vrijwillig en zonder groet verlieten’.) To conclude, Mulder noted that the Dutch were hoping to live together with the Belgians on friendly terms.¹²⁰

2.4 Joseph Schrijnen

Schrijnen wrote the shortest article of the three, also published in the beginning of 1919, but he seemed to have held the strongest views regarding the matter:

‘We from Limburg wish and demand it as our holy and inalienable right the province Limburg to remain politically united with the Netherlands, in order to satisfy our legitimate national aspirations, by virtue of the right of self-determination stemming from the inviolable principal of nationality.’

(‘Wij Limburgers wenschen en vorderen als ons heilig en onvervreemdbaar recht, dat de provincie Limburg met Nederland politiek vereenigd blijve, ter bevrediging van onze rechtmatige nationale aspiraties, krachtens het recht van zelfbeschikking, dat voortvloeit uit het onaantastbare nationaliteitenbeginsel.’¹²¹)

By opening his article in this way, Schrijnen referred to concepts, such as justice, that had been prominent in the public debate, as described by Tames. He also brought up the Dutch right of self-determination originating from the principle of nationalities. It shows, again, that Schrijnen was clearly influenced by the ideas of Wilson.

Limburg’s protest, Schrijnen noted, harboured no feelings of bitterness or aversion, although many of ‘us’ (people from Limburg) felt hurt by the same people that were welcomed in the

¹²⁰ W. Mulder SJ, ‘Nederland en het irredentisme’, *De Beiaard* 1 (1919), 53-80, quotes on 56, 76 and 79.

¹²¹ Jos. Schrijnen, ‘Limburgs’ eisch en protest’, 82-87, there, 82-83.

Netherlands at the beginning of the conflict. But he did not blame the Belgian annexationists, as the Dutch knew such opinions were formed in a state of war psychosis and only circulating in some badly informed circles. Brom thought exactly the same about this, for he noted that the annexationist claims had to be seen in the context of a ‘irritable mood, in which tortured Belgium randomly grabs victims because of its disappointment.’ (‘prikkelbare stemming, waarin ‘t gefolterd België wildweg slachtoffers voor zijn teleurstelling grijpt’.¹²²)

What is more, returning to Schrijnen’s observations, historically Limburg belonged to the Netherlands. Limburg became a unified part of the Netherlands in 1815, after which prosperity in the region increased. Ever since it had been a unity that had contributed to the existence of solidarity in the province. Limburg’s existence was only legitimate within the context of the Dutch state.

At the end of his article, as a gesture of conciliation, Schrijnen claimed the Dutch intended to be on good terms with Belgium. This would be in the interest of both the Netherlands and Belgium alike, as the cultural unity of North and South was at stake:

‘behold the actual task of all Belgians and Dutch people who consider themselves brothers from a household, behold what in these stirring times is felt and expressed so superbly in particular by men such as Frans van Cauwelaert, who sticks to his vocation as representative, as Fleming, and also as editor of *De Beiaard*.’

(‘ziedaar in waarheid de taak van alle Belgen en Nederlanders die zich beschouwen als broeders uit een huisgezin, ziedaar wat in deze bewogen tijden met name zoo voortreffelijk gevoeld en geuit wordt door mannen als Frans van Cauwelaert, trouw aan zijn roeping om Volksvertegenwoordiger, van Vlaming, en ook van Beiaardier’.¹²³)

2.5 Henricus Huijbers

The third, and last article, on this topic published in *De Beiaard* was written by Henricus Huijbers (1881-1929), who was born in Utrecht and studied Dutch literature and history in the same city. In 1907, he finished his studies and from 1910 onwards he taught at several schools. Throughout these years he also worked on his dissertation about Don Juan of Austria (1547-1578), a Spanish army commander and governor of the Netherlands at the beginning of the Eighty Years’ Revolt. He received his doctorate, cum laude, in 1913. During the war, Huijbers mainly occupied himself with composing history textbooks and writing book reviews.¹²⁴ He wrote an article of six pages concerning the Belgian demands.

In his article, published somewhat later in 1919, Huijbers analysed a historical plan (1828) for the rearrangement of Europe, which, according to him, still influenced the contemporary demands made by Belgium. The great European powers of that time were concerned with the Eastern Question: what

¹²² Brom, ‘Kroniek en kritiek’, 68.

¹²³ Schrijnen, ‘Limburg’, 87.

¹²⁴ J. Kleijntjes, ‘Prof. Dr. H.F.M. Huijbers’, *Handelingen van de Maatschappij der Nederlandsche Letterkunde te Leiden en levensberichten harer afgestorven medeleden 1928-1929* (Leiden, 1929), 38-42, there 38 and 43; <http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/bwn1880-2000/lemmata/bwn1/huijbers> Accessed 7 December 2015.

to do with the territories of the Ottoman Empire as soon as it would collapse? Out of this question grew an alliance between Russia and France, which was crucial to Huijbers' argument. The French politician Jules de Polignac (1780-1847), envoy in London at the time, considered it possible to solve, together with Russia, all European questions together. For this reason, Polignac composed a draft for the new Europe, stipulating: ousting the Turks from Europe; giving Moldavia and Wallachia to Russia; adding Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austria and making Constantinople the new capital city of a Greek empire under the rule of the King of the Netherlands. In addition, Prussia would receive Saxony and the Northern Netherlands, France would obtain the Southern Netherlands and Luxembourg, and Great Britain would be pleased with gaining the Dutch colonies. Polignac assumed this plan acknowledged the 'natural borders' and respected the rights of the nationalities. The plan never became reality due to the July Revolution of 1830 that ended the reign of the then French king Karel X (1757-1836) and the Franco-Russian alliance.

Huijbers referred to concepts such as justice, Dutch characteristics, freedom and pride that were overlooked by Polignac. He considered this plan unfeasible, mainly because of the treatment of the small nations, in a similar way as Struycken had argued while writing about the role of the Netherlands in the war. Huijbers stated that Polignac 'kills them [small nations] in his mind.' ('vermoordt ze [small nations] in gedachte.'¹²⁵) Here he also referred to the self-determination of all nations, suggesting Huijbers seemed to have been influenced by Wilson's ideas regarding the future of Europe like Schrijnen and so many other Europeans in those days. Nonetheless, Huijbers saw the future with confidence: 'Gods Providence leads them there, where God wants it, not there, where they want to go.' ('Gods Voorzienigheid leidt hen daarheen, waar God het wil, niet waarheen zij willen.'¹²⁶)

By ending his article in this way, Huijbers' writing differs from Struycken's accounts regarding the future of the League of Nations. The latter, although he regretted the absence of the neutral nations at the drawing board in Versailles, argued from a judicial perspective that the League could grow to a better developed institution in the future, whereas Huijbers showed more of his Catholic background by expressing his confidence in the help of God.

To conclude the discussion about the Belgian demands, it is clear that these Catholics refuted the demands made by the Belgians – in distinct ways. Despite these differences, all three authors mixed up concepts that had been relevant at different moments during the public debate. They could do so because they discussed a specific case, whereas Tames analysed articles addressed to the position of the Netherlands with respect to the belligerents. Mulder, Huijbers and Schrijnen, on the contrary, pleaded for a specific case: that of Limburg and Zeeland Flanders at a specific moment in time. For this specific case, they could use several concepts simultaneously. Ironically, it resembled the case of Belgium at the moment its neutrality was brutally violated by the Germans at the beginning of the war.

¹²⁵ H.F.M. Huijbers, 'Onze koloniën aan Engeland', *De Beiaard* 1 (1919) 244-249, there 247.

¹²⁶ Huijbers, 'Onze koloniën', 249.

The Netherlands, after all, had been able to remain neutral throughout the conflict, which had guaranteed its sovereignty. But after the conflict, the Netherlands, by means of territorial demands, was ‘attacked’ by Belgium: a state demanding territories of another state did not correspond with international law – the same fact on the basis of which Belgium asked for territorial gains in the first place. In addition, because the Netherlands had lost nothing of its sovereignty, these authors could also refer to national characteristics such as honour and pride, in order to counter pro-German accusations that were made after the war. Thus, they were able to refer to concepts such as law and justice, to Dutch national characteristics and to ideals relating to democracy and self-determination simultaneously.

Theme III – Socialism and Catholics

Another theme that asked for consideration after the war had ended was the attempted revolution by Troelstra. It placed Socialism high on the Catholic agenda. Responding to this impending doom was important for Catholics, as it was associated with the overthrowing of the existing order, which Catholics aimed to maintain.¹²⁷ Brom raged against Socialism by arguing that it would become outdated soon, whereas Catholicism would retain its fixed value. In his eyes, Socialism consisted of no more than empty phrases, like a soap bubble, only capable of attracting a semi-civilised audience.

Due to its social danger, not for its intellectual value, Catholics had to render account of Socialism, ‘as the content of a bomb would not even be worth a chemical examination, if there was no infernal activity attached to it.’ (‘zoals de inhoud van een bom ook scheikundig geen onderzoek zou verdienen, wanneer er geen helse werking aan verbonden was.’) He further suggested that the tactics of Dutch revolutionaries consisted of prophesying and suggesting their revolution, as a result of which many came to believe that the revolution was indeed imminent. Still, Catholics should not be disturbed too much, since the Catholic church had been in tighter spots than this, it had even survived the downfall of the Roman Empire. Arguing that it was not necessarily true that the revolution was imminent only because the revolutionists claimed it, as Brom did, came also to the fore in the diaries studied by historian Kristel. Many of these diary writers argued the Dutch character was not suitable for a revolution. In addition, many of them feared the violence that accompanied revolutions. Brom did not utter himself in this way, which is perhaps due to the fact that writing a diary is a more private way of reflecting than a published article. Instead Brom pointed to the fact that a revolution would be illegal. Yet, the most important difference with respect to the diary writers is that Brom presented the one alternative to Socialism: Catholicism.

Catholics had to introduce the ‘much-needed social reforms, for these could not be entrusted to ‘strangers’. These strangers, the Socialists, made clear that Catholics had to accept their responsibility:

‘the Providence used all living creatures in his creation; predators and pet animals, because the wolves serve to bring the sheep closer together: but the herd has its

¹²⁷ Luykx, *Andere katholieken*, 230-231.

own order with its own goal. [...] [T]he November assault, which failure is a historical fact in the same sense as the relief of Leiden', made clear that Catholics must compose 'a positive program'. Socialism required a strong answer from Catholic leaders. 'Now or never! [...] Let socialists initiate the battle of the people with their drums, our Catholic weapons will be victorious.'

('[d]e Voorzienigheid gebruikte alle levende wezens in zijn schepping, roofdieren en huisdieren, want de wolven dienen tot nauwer aaneensluiting van de schapen: maar de kudde heeft een eigen orde met een eigen doel. [...] [D]e Novemberraanslag, waarvan de mislukking een histories feit is van gelijke betekenis als Leidens ontzet', made clear that Catholics must compose 'a positive program'. Socialism required a strong answer from Catholic leaders. 'Nu of nooit! [...] Laat socialisten de volkeslag met hun trom inluiden, overwinnen doen de wapens van ons, Katholieken.'¹²⁸)

These words by Brom have to be seen in their context. In the years before the war, many Catholic politicians had opposed the implementation of social legislation. Consequently, Catholic labourers organised themselves, to the displeasure of the Catholic clergy. It made Catholic leaders increasingly aware of the possibility that these labourers could opt for Socialist ideals. The failed revolution attempt came at the right time: the Catholics were able to organise a successful reaction to avert the danger, and they demanded the credits for it. The Catholic politician Jan Bomans (1885-1941) for instance argued, retrospectively, that the Catholics had countered the threat, 'as if we had done it alone'.¹²⁹ Even the Liberals publicly acknowledged the decisive role of the Catholics. The Catholics, as Brom argued as well, had to propose social legislation themselves, as the Socialists had bungled their chances. This way of seeing the Socialists, as the Catholics did, was not unique. Due to the failed revolution attempt and the revolutionary language they used, Social Democrats were distrusted by practically all political parties. It took until 1939 before the Social Democrats would participate in the government.¹³⁰

3.1 Ambivalence?

Notwithstanding the persuasive strength that surrounded Brom's writings, he also showed some of his ambivalence towards Socialism while discussing his encounter with the so-called *Bond van revolutionair socialistiese intellectuelen* that was formed in 1919. This society asked Brom to participate and apparently he pondered for a while, as he noted: 'I wanted to join an association for social issues, not an association, that was to study cases whose solutions were already given in Socialism.' ('Ik wou lid worden van een vereniging voor sociale vraagstukken, niet van een vereniging, die kwesties ging bestuderen, waarvan de oplossing vooruit in 't socialisme gegeven was'.¹³¹) As stressed before, Brom was actively involved in the temperance movement and he was a

¹²⁸ Gerard Brom, 'Revolutiepreken', *De Beiaard* 2 (1919), 311-329, quotes on 319, 328 and 329.

¹²⁹ Jos van Meeuwen, *Lijden aan eenheid. Katholieke arbeiders op zoek naar hun politiek recht (1897-1929)* (Hilversum, 1998), 21-74, 154-157. Quoted by Van Meeuwen on 156; Luykx, *Andere katholieken*, 252.

¹³⁰ Rob Hartmans, *Vijandige broeders? De Nederlandse sociaal-democratie en het nationaal-socialisme, 1922 – 1940* (Amsterdam, 2012), 27-28.

¹³¹ Brom, 'Revolutiepreken', 322.

teetotaller himself, as a result he had felt somewhat attracted to Socialism, as Rogier put it.¹³² So even though Brom acknowledged the danger of Socialism, he also showed some (initial) sympathy for it. It also further illustrates that in 1919, Catholics were well aware of the fact that they had to deal with social issues, as stressed in the previous paragraph.

Brom, Schrijnen and Huijbers also reflected, although briefly, on the counterrevolution of the Dutch Catholics as a response to the attempted revolution by Troelstra (the latter two in their aforementioned writings on the Belgian demands). According to Huijbers, the ties between the Dutch people and the monarchy were stronger than anywhere else, and Schrijnen emphasised the aid from Limburg: the Limburgers had protected the Queen against the ‘criminal hands’ that had intended to grab the crown. Brom, on his turn, asserted the Catholics had, in uniting their followers, saved the country. By doing so, he argued, Catholics had shown their capacity for the whole nation.

On the one hand, the writings of Huijbers, Schrijnen and Brom indicate that they could live perfectly well with the monarchy. On the other hand, the Dutch monarchy as a subject was completely absent in the letters in the years 1915-1920 written by all prominent figures affiliated with *De Beiaard*. ‘The monarchy’ seemed thus mainly a means of achieving these goals: agitating publicly against Socialism and presenting themselves publicly as loyal inhabitants of the Netherlands, a conclusion that matches the views of historians such as Luykx, Monteiro and Bank regarding the relationship between Catholic intellectuals and the nation.

Theme IV – Germany

Two Catholics, Wenzel Frankemölle and Louis van Gorkom, expressed their thoughts regarding Germany. The first was correspondent for the Amsterdam *Tijd*. He also wrote incidentally for *De Beweging* before the war and from 1917 for *De Nieuwe Eeuw*.¹³³ In *De Beiaard* he published an article about the flight of the German Emperor to the Netherlands. He was clear about his intentions for he explained and compared two texts. The first was the *Authentische Darstellung* published by ‘conservative newspapers in Berlin’ on 27 July 1919. Yet, according to Frankemölle, this *Authentische Darstellung* was biased due to the tense political situation. It was mainly aimed against Prince Max von Baden (1867-1929), the new German chancellor from 3 October 1918 onwards, who wrote a counter memorandum on 7 August 1918. For these reasons, Frankemölle compared both publications and he held conversations with senior officials of the German Department of Foreign Affairs in order to reconstruct the events. In his article he analysed the developments concerning the flight of the Emperor to the Netherlands.

4.1 The flight of the Emperor

Although Frankemölle’s article, published in the beginning of 1919, mainly consisted of descriptive passages, it also contained a number of critical observations relevant to his research. He wrote that

¹³² Rogier, ‘Herdenking Brom’, 384.

¹³³ Knipselcollectie KDC Wenzel Frankemölle 5218.

from July 1918 onwards, the German army was pushed back slowly but surely. The commanders of the German army saw no way out anymore and urged the civilian government to ask, based on the 'known fourteen points of Wilson' for an armistice and peace. On 29 October the Emperor left Berlin for the headquarters, located at Spa at the time, as he believed it could protect him. Yet, the civilian government realised the unconditional abdication had become inevitable so the government sent a depute requesting for the Emperor to abdicate.

On 23 October 1918, Wilson had declared that after the abdication of the Emperor it would be possible to open up peace negotiations with Germany. From this, it appeared the international position of Germany would improve after the Emperor had indeed done this. But the Emperor refused, and according to Frankemölle this was the fault of the headquarters itself: without its plea for help to Wilson, the words of the president to the Emperor and his promise to the German people may never have brought the abdication crisis into such an acute stage. The Emperor refused to abdicate because he feared it would result in the collapse of the army.

Instead, on 8 November the Emperor formulated the idea to form an army to restore the peace in Germany. Yet, as Frankemölle argued, the workers' and soldiers' councils in the West and the South were in charge and many soldiers deserted. Eventually, the Emperor was convinced of the unfeasibility of this plan by his advisors, after which he expressed his hope that he could return peacefully, as army leader, to Germany. Frankemölle expressed his astonishment:

'It is remarkable to see, how the Emperor continuously somnambulated in his notion, that he had remained inviolable as "oberste Kriegsherr". First he wants to lead the army to reconquer his country, then he wants, also as a leader, to peacefully return with his army!'

('Het is merkwaardig te zien, hoe de Keizer aldoor slaapwandelde in zijn opvatting, dat hij nog altijd onaantastbaar de "oberste Kriegsherr" was. Eerst wil hij aan de spits van het leger zijn land heroveren, dan weer eveneens aan de spits van het leger vreedzaam terugkeeren!')

William II had not much choice but to accept a complete abdication. Then it was decided that the Emperor would go to the Netherlands. William II agreed after many doubts. Yet, Frankemölle made a stand for the former Emperor by highlighting the immense pressure he must have felt, and he concluded with: 'May soon the hate be silenced. Does the fallen monarch deserve punishment for guilt, he has been punished enough already.' ('Moge spoedig de haat zwijgen. Verdient de gevallen monarch straf voor schuld, hij is reeds genoeg gestraft.'¹³⁴) Obviously, such a conclusion differed from the reflections studied by historian Kristel. Of course, she studied diary notes of Dutch people written down in November 1918, whereas Frankemölle was a journalist who had official German documents at his disposal. In addition, he wrote his article somewhat later, probably at the end of 1918 or in the beginning of 1919, whereas these diary writers had written down their observations in the middle of the turmoil. At the time Frankemölle published his article, the former Emperor, William II, was still in

¹³⁴ Wenzel Frankemölle, 'Het drama van Spa', *De Beiaard* 2 (1919), 119-141, quotes on 126 and 141.

the Netherlands (he would ultimately stay until his death in 1942), but peace had settled in. Although Frankemölle tried to avoid taking a stand for or against the former Emperor, he did contextualise the Emperor's behaviour.

It would be interesting to learn more about what caused Frankemölle to write, and indeed the editors to publish, this article. What was his idea behind this article? Was it published due to a shortage of articles? Did it reflect the views of many editors? Did there exist a need for interpretation now it turned out the former Emperor would stay in the Netherlands for a while? Whatever their considerations were, they have left no traces in the letters between the editors.

4.2 The future of Germany

Louis van Gorkom, in an article published mid-1919, also raised Germany's position in Europe, yet from a totally different perspective. He was born in Utrecht and went to the neutral gymnasium there. From 1899 onwards, he studied Dutch language, history and law. Thereafter, he wrote a dissertation about the French-German war of 1870-1871. According to Luykx, Van Gorkom developed a strongly anti-French and pro-German attitude. After 1918, he became a member of a committee, headed by historian Nicolas Japikse, that studied the coming about of the conflict.¹³⁵

It was important to Van Gorkom to put the role of the Emperor in perspective: 'a villain he is not; he is overthrown by his fate: he seems, living in a proud dream of beautiful power, to perish due to an immense misinterpretation of the relations in reality.' ('een schurk is hij niet; hij komt ten val door zijn noodlot: hij lijkt, levende in een trotschen droom van schooner heerschermacht, te nietgegaan door een matelooze vergissing in de verhoudingen der werkelijkheid.') To blame William II for the outbreak of war, was like being wise after the event, Van Gorkom added. Decisions made during the war were made after much consideration, by people who were overloaded with data. 'Against the great objectivity of the circumstances, which has created a completely new era, lighting the fuse and with that breaking some matches, seems ultimately of less importance.' ('Tegenover de geweldige objectiviteit der omstandigheden, welke een geheel tijdperk heeft doen ontstaan, lijken het aansteken van de lont en het daarbij breken van een paar lucifers ten slotte van minder beteekenis.') In other words, Van Gorkom put the acts of decision makers such as William II into perspective by arguing that they were determined by their context.

Of course, as Van Gorkom put it, Germany had committed faults, but now the archenemy, France, intended on destroying Germany in order to occupy the leading role on the continent again. Yet, as Van Gorkom argued, this new balance embodied a major derogation from the real equilibrium, which would have negative effects in the future. The French culture was old, it has become dilapidated, whereas the Germans and the Anglo-Saxons were young: they had the future. At this point in his argument, Van Gorkom mentioned the Treaty of Versailles. From his viewpoint, fear for a resurgent Germany had caused the great contradiction and ambiguity of the treaty. Hence, this treaty

¹³⁵ Luykx, *Heraut van de katholieke herleving*, 47.

could not convince that it would be the foundation of a new and improved world order. On the contrary, it reflected France's wish of destroying Germany. Nobody could possibly agree with this, Van Gorkom claimed. As with many other Dutch people, as indicated by the historians Tames and Van Diepen, Van Gorkom considered the treaty of Versailles way too severe.

He also addressed the region of Alsace-Lorraine. According to Van Gorkom it was not hard to imagine that the renewed loss of the old city of Strasbourg and of Alsace, with its German Middle Ages, German castle ruins, Germans family names, and German dialects, would be like a wound that refuses to heal. He compared the situation with the Flemish Question: 'We Dutch people, who cannot appreciate Flemish people being pro-French, ought to have a certain empathy and awareness of that what hurts the Germans with respect to pro-French Alsatians.' ('Wij Nederlanders, die onder de Vlamingen het Franskiljonisme niet kunnen waardeeren, behooren althans een zeker medegevoel en besef te hebben voor wat de Duitschers ten opzichte der Fransch gezinde Elzassers moet pijnigen.') Van Gorkom wondered why so many of his compatriots were inconsequent by arguing that Alsace should be French, but protesting against a French cultural domination of Flanders. The question was the same, he claimed. The German loss of Strasbourg and Alsace would have severe consequences: in the future, he warned, there would be another fight for this region. Apart from the alleged similarity between the two cases that seemed rather different (the Flemish case and the case of Alsace-Lorraine), his references to the Flemish case highlighted his assumption that his readers possessed knowledge concerning this matter. What is more, he considered his readers pro-Flemish, as himself.

Concluding, Van Gorkom expressed his hope for the future of the German people: hopefully, the imminent humiliation would bring the Germans to Christianity. God, after all, put the ones he loves to the test. And this, according to the author, was necessary because the German pride had been neo-pagan; a German victory would have been a disaster for Christianity in Germany. 'We look forward to the future of Germany; we look forward to the future of the German Catholicism.' ('Wij zien uit naar de toekomst van Duitschland; wij zien uit naar de toekomst van het Duitsche Katholicisme.'¹³⁶) So Mulder, as did many other authors involved in *De Beiaard*, drew strength from his faith in God.

Theme V – Catholics and the future

As stressed repeatedly, the conflict had not been so bad for Dutch Catholics; the crisis years had accelerated their emancipatory process. It was Brom who expressed their growing confidence like no one else, especially with regard to their task for the future. In two articles published mid-1919, Brom addressed the future; one began as follows:

[m]ust we suffer even more painfully than during the war? As Catholics and as Dutch people we were doubly neutral [...]. Humiliating for the spirit was that daily question: how can humanity destroy itself systematically, use its progress for its own demise. For the Christians it wasn't a matter of life, because we did not

¹³⁶ L.J.C. van Gorkom, 'De toekomst van Duitschland', *De Beiaard* 2 (1919), 467-482, quotes on 467, 468, 481 and 482.

speculate recklessly about evolution, we never let time determine our principles and we did not follow the direction, pointed out coincidentally by our people. In addition, we trusted anything but the noble nature of the human, nor believed in a future state as heaven on earth. [...] How deeply overwhelmed by general distress, how deeply also sympathetic towards the victims, we had no reason to revise our religion, after the many who felt their religion disappear in the earthquake. Rather this disappointment about the people pushed us closer to God and the hostility between the states made us a more thankful child of our church.’

(‘[m]oeten wij nog pijnliker lijden dan onder de oorlog? Als Katholieken en als Nederlanders waren we dubbel neutral [...]. Vernederend voor de geest was die dagelijkse vraag: hoe de mensheid zich stelselmatig kan vernietigen, zijn vooruitgang zelf gebruiken tot eigen ondergang. Wel was ’t voor Christenen geen levenskwestie, want wij speculeerden niet vermetel in evolutie, wij lieten ons beginsel nooit door de tijd bepalen en volgden niet de richting, die ons eigen geslacht toevallig wees. Ook vertrouwden wij allesbehalve op de edele aard van de mens, geloofden evenmin in een toekomststaat als een hemel op aarde. [...] Hoe diep ook verpletterd door het algemene leed, hoe sterk ook met de slachtoffers begaan, wij hadden geen reden om onze godsdienst te herzien na de velen, die hun levensbeschouwing in de aardbeving voelden verdwijnen. Eerder dreef deze teleurstelling over de mensen ons dichter tot God en maakte de vijandschap tussen de staten ons dankbaarder kind van onze Kerk.’¹³⁷)

From these words it becomes clear that he expressed a Catholic vision on the conflict and that it, according to him, had brought Dutch Catholics closer together. What is more, because Rome was kept out of the war, ‘we Catholics’ had a clear conscience. In addition, Brom put the war in perspective: for Catholics death was not the great evil, but sin was. With respect to other Dutch confessions, however, Brom’s attitude contrasted sharply. The historian Enne Koops showed Dutch Reformed pastors focused on the disruptive effect of the conflict on their flocks in their reflections. The historian further argued that, indeed, the number of people leaving the church rose from five to fourteen percent, in the years 1909-1930. This image presented by Koops contrasts with the accounts written by Brom. Brom namely argued that the war had brought Catholics and God more closely together. Apparently, he seemed, different from the Reformed pastors discussed by Koops, to imply that the future was – finally – to the Catholics.

More important than the numerous people that died, was the spiritual death caused by practices such as birth control and divorce. ‘Blood stains have a horrible effect, but who will sand the rust of venereal diseases off our society?’ (‘Bloedvlekken maken afschuwelijk effekt, maar wie schuurt de roest van de geslachtsziekten uit onze maatschappij weg?’) Brom considered these the real problems of his time. Indeed, as historians have argued, the ancient practice of *coitus interruptus* increased in the course of the nineteenth century. What is more, near 1900, people increasingly made use of modern Neo Malthusian means, such as the condom, to prevent pregnancy. The church was opposed to these interventions and it seemed that most Catholics obeyed, as the birth rate among Catholics remained relatively high. Yet, before World War I already, fertility among Catholics slowly

¹³⁷ G.B., ‘Kroniek en kritiek’, *De Beiaard* 1 (1919), 468-474, there 468.

decreased.¹³⁸ In Brom's mind these structural problems were more important than a temporary war. Thus, although Brom presented this view in a cultural journal, he did not hesitate to compare the impact of societal developments and the war, respectively.

Although Brom admitted Catholics barely contributed to the peace movement, he observed pacifism was finally winning ground. Now the world could accustom to peace, which suited Catholics very well. 'Catholic', as Brom reminded his readers, stood for an international, universal and cosmopolite orientation. For this reason, neither the church nor Dutch Catholics could be overlooked while constituting the peace. What is more, the Dutch had a special task of cooperating with the church:

'but in a pressing way Holland conveys the message of a suffering people to the whole Church: precipitate the hour of reconciliation by praying, help restoring the unity of Christendom by sacrificing! To this Holland the Providence has apparently given the task [...] to indeed prepare the joining of both parties.'

('[m]aar dringend brengt Holland de boodschap van een lijdend volk aan de hele Kerk over: verhaast biddend het uur van verzoening, help offerend de eendracht in de Christenheid herstellen! Aan dat Holland heeft de Voorzienigheid blijkbaar de taak gegeven [...] om metterdaad de vereniging van beide partijen voor te bereiden.')

Put differently, the Dutch had the special task to restore the unity of the Church again. Apparently, for Brom, (the universal pretensions of) Catholicism had not lost credibility although various nations had fought one another while claiming God was at their side. Historian Brolsma, as explained in the first chapter, showed that the war had led to the florescence of humanitarian idealism in the Netherlands. Intellectuals, who cherished such ideals, as a response to the war, dismissed Christianity as a universal and peace making power, as the churches in the Netherlands had backed the policy of the government during the war. On the contrary, Brom held on to these pretensions of Catholicism and to Catholicism itself. In doing so, he was not alone, as historians have distinguished this paradox: despite the support for the war of the churches, Christians argued that their faith had to unite Europeans again after the war.¹³⁹ Obviously, this paradox especially applied to inhabitants of former belligerents.

Before Brom concluded his article, he expressed his bitter disappointment at scientists of all warring nations, for they brought science into discredit by supplying their military commanders with arguments to justify war objectives. As a consequence, scientists were no longer in contact with each other. Hence, the Dutch Catholic University, which had to be established soon, had to organise a scientific congress; it would be the 'complete legitimation' of its existence. It was about time, according to Brom: '[w]e slowly start to realise our legitimate place in the Netherlands, and

¹³⁸ Luykx, *Andere katholieken*, 238; Marloes Schoonheim, 'Het kleine Roomse gezin. Geboortebeperving onder Nederlandse katholieken, 1950-1970', *Tijdschrift voor sociale en economische geschiedenis* 3 (2006), 2-28, there 3-4.

¹³⁹ Carlos Reijnen and Marleen Rensen (eds.), *European encounters. Intellectual exchange and the rethinking of Europe 1914-1945* (Amsterdam/New York, 2014), 16; Lätzel, *Die katholische Kirche im Ersten Weltkrieg*, 148-157.

immediately become aware of what could be the size of our task in the Catholic world, when we make full use of the powers that God let us save during the war in order to stimulate peace on earth.’ ([w]ij beginnen langzamerhand het besef te krijgen van onze rechtmatige plaats in Nederland en worden meteen bewust, hoe groot onze taak in de Katholieke wereld kan wezen, wanneer wij de krachten volop gebruiken, die God ons in de oorlog liet sparen tot werkzame bevordering van de vrede op aarde.’¹⁴⁰)

5.1 Lack of articles

It should be clear, Brom expressed his own opinions on war-related topics. However, this does not necessarily mean that he was the most committed editor or author in this Catholic milieu. To illustrate this, it is necessary to look back at what occurred, behind the scenes, in preparation to Brom’s articles. Most of them, Brom wrote for the rubric *Kroniek en Kritiek*. In at least five letters sent between Hoogveld and Brom, written in 1919, they reflected on this rubric. Their contemplations made one thing abundantly clear: the editors were in urgent need of articles. Brom sent Hoogveld articles for this rubric with explanatory remarks such as: ‘[h]ere an improvised or forced Kr. & Kr.’ ([h]ier een geïmproviseerde of geforceerde Kr. & Kr.’¹⁴¹) With respect to his text on Socialism, Brom wrote, after lamenting the shortage of articles:

‘[n]ow I have to breed a troop of reviews or deliver a second article. The latter is the lightest, although two pieces of a person are less appropriate. Well then, it is topical about Bolshevism or more accurately about a Bolshevik. Was there no need of articles (the first time!), then I would have published it as Kr. & Kr.’

(‘[n]u moet ik of een troep recensies fokken of een tweede artikel leveren. ‘t Laatste is ‘t lichtste, al zijn twee stukken van een persoon minder gelukkig. Enfin, ‘t is aktueel over ‘t bolsjewisme of juist over een bolsjewist. Was er geen kopienood (de eerste maal!), dan liet ik het als Kr. & Kr. zetten.’¹⁴²)

Ultimately, it was not necessary that Brom wrote another article, yet these letters underscore once again that many of his articles were born out of necessity.

The correspondence also indicates that Brom, encouraged by Hoogveld and forced by the shortage of articles, wrote about topics he was normally not eager to write about. As Luykx has emphasised more than once, Brom tried to distance himself from politics as much as possible. Yet, this uneasiness with or lack of interest in politics, as indeed appeared from these letters, is totally absent in the articles he wrote. One wonders why Brom did not ask Hoogveld to write about world events himself or why Hoogveld did not decide for himself to take up his pen. Did he consider himself unsuitable for the job? Whatever the case may be, it is striking to determine that in the year 1919, Hoogveld relentlessly asked Brom for more articles on international topics, whereas Hoogveld himself did not write a single piece on a topic related to world events. Instead, he accused Brom of ignorance,

¹⁴⁰ Brom, ‘Kroniek en kritiek’, quotes on 469, 472-473 and 474.

¹⁴¹ Letter Brom 13 June 1919, Archief Hoogveld, inventarisnummer 212.

¹⁴² Letter Brom 24 November 1919, Archief Hoogveld, inventarisnummer 212.

even though no other author wrote more (publicly) about world events in 1919 than Brom did. It highlights, once more, what kind of struggles, not meant for the outside world, could hide behind the published articles.

To conclude, Brom's account indicates that he viewed the war, retrospectively, from a Catholic perspective. His self-confidence was limitless: he proposed that Dutch Catholics, because of their pure conscience, should initiate the coming together of Europe's scientists. In addition, it had to be the Dutch Catholics cooperating with the Vatican for securing peace in Europe. This underscores earlier observations made by historian Rogier, who argued that in the years 1900-1925 Dutch Catholics experienced their coming of age, and by historian Peters who, with respect to Catholics in the war, concluded that it had accelerated this process. All in all, Brom used the war, in a similar way as the bishops had done during the war, to justify the future role he ascribed to Dutch Catholics.

Conclusion

Although the outcome of the conflict appeared more relevant to these prominent figures than the war itself, it is important to stress, again, that within the context of all published articles in 1919, the outcome of war was only of secondary importance. Again, this is an important but not surprising notion, as the articles concerned were published in a cultural journal. The thoughts of those who actually reflected on the conflict's outcome are thematically analysed in this chapter. 'Literary relations' was the first theme that was examined. Both Molkenboer and Brom discussed Catholic Flemish literature and explicitly, or otherwise, stressed the relations between the Netherlands and Flanders. Hence, the conflict faded into the background. In the case of Brom this becomes evident due to his ignorance. Molkenboer, more explicitly, argued that Franskiljons harmed Belgium more than the temporary invasion by the Germans. Thus, in their own ways, both authors put the conflict into perspective.

The second theme, the 'Belgian territorial demands' was given the most attention in this chapter. At first glance it seems that this issue was of paramount importance to these cultural leaders. This is true, although the discussion of the letters showed that not all were equally concerned with the matter. Brom, for instance, argued that such events were topics to be discussed in the newspapers rather than by intellectuals like themselves. Schrijnen, Mulder and Huijbers wrote articles on these demands. The analyses of these articles revealed that the authors made use of concepts that had been relevant in the national debate on Dutch identity and neutrality. Law, justice, national characteristics and the ideas of Wilson were important to them, concepts that they could use simultaneously while they were discussing a specific issue shortly after the conflict. They were deeply disappointed by the Belgians demanding Dutch territory, which should be seen in light of the importance they attached to the Greater Netherlands. Nonetheless, they all looked confidentially to the future: ultimately, the Dutch and the Flemish people would find each other again.

'Socialism and Catholics' was the third theme under scrutiny in this chapter. Socialism had been

threatening to the Catholics from its beginning, as it could attract Catholic labourers. In order to keep the Catholic labourers with them, Catholic leaders asked for social reforms. This Catholic attitude towards Socialism, which became highly topical with the attempted revolution by Troelstra, came to the fore while analysing Brom's considerations. Brom endeavoured to persuade his readers that Socialism did not stand for anything. Catholicism, nothing but Catholicism had the future.

The fourth theme is concerned with Germany, a theme which stands somewhat on its own with respect to the other topics, for, especially in the case of Van Gorkom, it bears witness of some kind of preferences with respect to warring parties. Although Frankemölle did not explicitly show pro-German sentiment, he did contextualise the behaviour of the former German Emperor. Van Gorkom did so as well, but he went much further. According to him, the Treaty of Versailles was full of French resentment which had led to the severe measures imposed on Germany. He lamented this and argued that the future belonged to the Germans.

Brom explicitly addressed this future, the fifth theme of this chapter. His self-confidence seemed limitless. Yet, one wonders whether Brom was actually engaged with the outcome of the conflict. Indeed, he wrote a number of articles related to the outcome of war. However, parts of his correspondence show that he was anything but eager to write articles. It was the lack thereof that urged him to actually grab the pen. Once writing, he deduced arguments from the conflict to argue that Catholics should occupy the leading positions in the Netherlands.

Thus, these intellectuals put the outcome of the war into perspective in different ways. Yet, two characteristics come to the fore. Firstly, it appears one theme was important to almost all of them: the Greater Netherlands. The end of the conflict, namely, made one thing – however far away due to the Belgian territorial demands – clear: it opened the possibilities of giving shape to this ideal again. Secondly, these cultural leaders did not write about a chaotic world in which traditional norms and values had disappeared. Instead they expressed their trusting in God or triumphantly and self-consciously claimed the future was theirs.

Epilogue

This master's thesis has provided a glimpse into a world that no longer exists; the heyday of the Catholic Church in the Netherlands belongs to the past. Its 'nearby otherness' was the starting point for this research. World War I and its outcome provided an excellent opportunity to place the realm of thoughts of Dutch Catholic intellectuals at the centre of attention. Yet, that is not all. The conflict occurred – however sinister this might sound – at an interesting moment in time: Dutch Catholics had been citizens with equal rights for more than a century, but from 1900 onwards the intellectual coming of age of Dutch Catholics was finally beginning to take shape. Thus, studying their reflections regarding the war and its outcome, a topic that concerned *national* interests, could help determine to what extent they had occupied a fully-fledged position within the Dutch society at large.

Returning to the research question: how did these Catholic intellectuals reflect on the war and its outcome? With respect to the conflict itself, it seems the observation by Pieter van der Meer de Walcheren is applicable. He wrote: 'The events taking place in Europe were too excessive, too wild for the plain average Dutch person.' After studying the articles and correspondence written in the context of the editorial activities, it is clear that the international conflict was not important to these men of learning. Reflections on the war only constituted a minor part of the themes they considered. As stressed before, this seems logical, as *De Beiaard* was a cultural journal. Nonetheless, the editors considered politics relevant enough to address politics in a rubric and to ask a politician to become an editor, namely Van Cauwelaert. Furthermore, Hoogveld repeatedly broached the lack of interest in world events. Thus, Hoogveld, one of the key editors, considered *De Beiaard* suitable for such articles.

Two features of the studied reflections catch the eye. Firstly, those who did underscore the significance of the conflict did not necessarily do so wholeheartedly. Obviously, Van Cauwelaert explicitly addressed the case of Flanders, but he did not reflect on the position of the Netherlands. Instead, he had a clear goal with his reflections on Belgium: he tried to justify Belgium's attitude. What is more, his need for money and the exhortations of the editors were needed to write articles in the first place. Despite further requests by Brom after his third article was published, Van Cauwelaert would not publish anything more for the journal.

Van Schaik systematically assessed the policy of the Dutch government in the war, but he had not been the editors' first choice. In addition, Brom repeatedly asked him for more reflections as the conflict progressed. Ultimately, Van Schaik did utter some of his concerns regarding the effects of the crisis on the Dutch society: he was worried about the moral decay, he even feared that people would continue to be more individualist than they had been before. His concerns make clear an important feature of most intellectuals involved in *De Beiaard* reflecting on the war: they did so in a distinct Catholic way. Even compared with another Catholic intellectual, Antonius Struycken, whose writings were analysed by Tames, Van Schaik and the others saw the war more from a Catholic perspective.

Secondly, the other authors who reflected on aspects of the war did so from their own

backgrounds. Molkenboer reflected on literature and architecture, Leeuwenberg on literature and Schrijnen addressed language and the diversity of different nations. While discussing the just war, Schrijnen seemed really touched. However, he was mainly annoyed by the misconception that according to Christians a war could never be just. In addition to their backgrounds, most explicitly in the case of Van Cauwelaert, but also in the writings by Molkenboer, Steenhoff and Schrijnen, the connection with Flanders becomes evident. While writing articles, the ideal of the Greater Netherlands was never far away.

With respect to the reflections on the outcome of war, the observation of Van de Meer de Walcheren seems less suitable. Although it was only one of the many themes addressed by the discussed thinkers, the topics related to the outcome of the conflict received more attention when compared to the attention given to the conflict throughout the years 1916-1918.

Again, two elements come to the fore. Firstly, in almost all the reflections the concept of the Greater Netherlands played a crucial role. While discussing Flemish literature, Molkenboer and Brom mentioned the war, but it was of secondary importance to them. Logically, the Greater Netherlands was most prominently present in those articles that addressed the territorial demands made by the Belgians at the expense of the Netherlands. During the first months of the war, the Netherlands had welcomed many Belgian refugees. In addition, Schrijnen warmly wrote about the ties between the Netherlands and Flanders. Now the conflict was over, he and his fellow editors were confronted with frustrated southern neighbours.

Thus, Schrijnen, Mulder and Huijbers expressed their deeply felt disappointment regarding the Belgian claims. They agreed the claims were not justified; yet Schrijnen and Mulder explicitly expressed the hope that in the future the Dutch and Flemish would find one another again. Yet, consideration of the correspondence reveals a more nuanced image: Schrijnen was mainly concerned with Limburg. So he, at least, was more occupied with his own interests while writing. Nonetheless, whatever the exact motivations were, the relation between the Netherlands and Flanders stood high on the agenda and the Greater Netherlands was not given up on.

The second striking element was that the outcome of the conflict was predominantly seen from a specifically Dutch Catholic perspective. By doing so, their reflections differed from reflections of other Dutch people, including the Catholic Struycken, studied by historians such as Tames and Kristel. Their reflections on the outcome of war differ even more from other Dutch intellectuals, as analysed by Brolsma. She argued that the humanitarian idealist had lost their faith in Christianity, for which reason they looked for alternatives, whereas the Catholic intellectuals involved in *De Beiaard* expressed their trust in God or triumphantly and self-consciously claimed the future was theirs, as Brom did.

The Socialist threat, embodied by the attempted revolution of Troelstra shortly after the war, was used to present the one and only alternative that would withstand the test of time: Catholicism. Dutch

Catholics made use of this opportunity to argue that they could provide Catholic labourers with legislation to improve their existence. Some intellectuals involved in *De Beiaard* did so as well. In addition, Brom derived arguments from the war to argue that the future was theirs. Catholics had been ‘twice as neutral’ in the war, as God had saved their power and due to the universal pretention of Catholicism, for which reason Dutch Catholics must be the ideal designers of the new Europe. Bringing together scholars from various countries should serve as the starting point; it would *en passant* be a perfect occasion to start a Dutch Catholic university. To the extent the conflict had indeed caused a chaotic Europe without fixed norms and values, it would be the Dutch Catholics who were to guide the confused.

As argued in the first chapter and illustrated in the two following chapters, the ideal of the Greater Netherlands could be considered the main goal of *De Beiaard*. It seems no coincidence that the journal was founded in 1916, at a moment in time in which it had become clear that the war would last longer than expected. As a consequence of this war, the contact between the Netherlands and Flanders was cut off – embodied by the *Dodendraad*, a 332-kilometre-long fence under lethal voltage that was constructed by the Germans, finished mid-1916, in order to deter people from fleeing occupied Belgium to the Netherlands. It is this way in which *De Beiaard* should be seen: the editors aimed to foster the cultural ties between the Netherlands and Flanders in a time of crisis. Because the connections were hampered by a worldwide war, they created their own space in which they were less inconvenienced by the war. During the war they hoped that as soon as the war had ended, they could expand their reach with Belgium, as Hoogveld repeatedly stressed in his writings to Brom. In their journal, they chiefly addressed topics related to theology, philosophy and arts. Yet, in some occasions they reflected on the war, which have been analysed in this thesis. In most of these writings, they reflected on the ideal that had been so important when the journal was founded: the Greater Netherlands. Besides the similarities and differences with respect to other editors and other Dutch people, their reflections embodied the phase of emancipation the Dutch had entered, and the accelerating role the war had had within this emancipatory process. Regarding their own position within the Dutch society at large, these Catholic intellectuals were not sober-minded. Especially their reflections on the outcome of the war illustrate that for Dutch Catholics the war and its outcome had been a blessing. In addition, the end of the war opened up the possibilities to foster the Greater Netherlands under normal circumstances again.

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