

JEWISH LITERATURES AND
JEWISH CULTURE



The Short-lived Blossoming of the Yiddish Press in the Netherlands

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The *Dinstagishe un Fraytagishe Kuranten* (Amsterdam, 1686–1687) was the world’s first Yiddish newspaper. The only other Dutch Yiddish newspaper that is known to us is the *Vokhentlikhe Berikhtn* (January 10, 1781). Why and how did the Yiddish press begin in the Netherlands, why did the Dutch Yiddish newspapers display such little “Jewish” content, and why were they so short-lived?

We do not know when the first issue of the Amsterdam *Dinstagishe un Fraytagishe Kuranten* appeared. The first extant issue probably dates from August 9, 1686, with the last issue dating from December 5, 1687. This makes the *Dinstagishe un Fraytagishe Kuranten*—the “Tuesday and Friday Newspapers”—the oldest known Yiddish newspaper in the world. One hundred issues of the newspaper were bound into a book that was acquired in 1902 by David Montezinos, book collector and librarian of Ets Haim, the library of the Portuguese synagogue in Amsterdam.¹

The first publisher of the *Kuranten* was the Ashkenazi printer Uri Faybesh Halevi. Halevi was one of the leading Jewish printers and publishers not only in Amsterdam

1 J.S. da Silva Rosa, *David Montezinos, de stichter der ‘Livraria D. Montezinos’ (1 Thebet 5589–5674)* (Amsterdam, 1914), 4, writes that Montezinos bought the book from a street pedlar while observing the fire in the Floratheater in Amsterdam. This theatre, in the Amstelstraat, burned down in 1902: see J. van de Kamp and J. van der Wijk, *Koosjer Nederlands* (Amsterdam, 2006), 158). S. Seeligmann, “Über die erste jüdische Ansiedelung in Amsterdam,” in *Mitteilungen zur jüdischen Volkskunde* (ed. M. Grunwald; Breslau, 1906), 7, indicates that Montezinos acquired the *Kuranten* shortly (*kürzlich*) before the time of writing (1902); see also *ibid.*, 7–8; M. Weinreich, “Di bobe fun der yidishe prese,” in *Di Tsukunft* (1928), 679. David Montezinos donated his collection, including the book containing the *Kuranten*, to Ets Haim in 1889. After his death in 1916 the book remained in the library, surviving World War II. At some point in the 1970’s, however, when it was transferred with other books from the Ets Haim library to the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem, it disappeared without trace. Photos and photocopies of the papers can be found in the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana of the Universiteit van Amsterdam, while microfilms are kept in the Municipal Archives in Amsterdam and several libraries.

but also throughout the world, Amsterdam being the centre of Hebrew and Yiddish book printing during those years.²

Background

The publishing of Yiddish books was a growing business in the early modern period. Although only a few individual Ashkenazi Jews lived in Amsterdam until the seventeenth century, increasing numbers started to arrive in the city from Germany following the beginning of the Thirty Years' War in 1618. Chmielnicki's pogroms and the Swedish war further generated a stream of refugees from Poland and Lithuania in the 1650's. In general, these Jews were poor and rather simple people, especially in comparison to the Portuguese Jews who arrived in the Netherlands at the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century in flight from the Inquisition.³ Around 1690, an estimated eight thousand Jews were living in the Netherlands, about six thousand of them in Amsterdam, three thousand of whom were Yiddish-speaking Ashkenazim.⁴ While the Sephardim were still more prosperous than the Ashkenazim, there were some wealthier merchants among the Ashkenazim as well.⁵ It was in this climate that the *Kuranten* came into being. Before we go further into this matter, however, let us take a look at the general Dutch press in the seventeenth century.

The first handwritten newspapers were published in Venice in the sixteenth century, followed soon afterwards in the Low Countries. Intended primarily for businessmen, they mainly contained international news.⁶ They used correspondents, frequently businessmen, or—in the case of military news—soldiers.⁷

Amsterdam was among the first cities in the world to publish and print newspapers. In 1618 and 1619 two printed newspapers appeared in Amsterdam. This was not accidental. With the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War in 1618, an urgent need for news was a natural phenomenon.⁸

Since Amsterdam was becoming the most important political and commercial centre

2 L. Fuks and R. G. Fuks-Mansfeld, *Hebrew Typography in the Northern Netherlands 1595–1815* (Leiden: Brill, 1984–1987), 234–247.

3 J.I. Israel, "De Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden tot omstreeks 1750—Demografie en economische activiteit," in *Geschiedenis van de joden in Nederland* (ed. J.C.H. Blom; Amsterdam 1995), 100–103.

4 Israel, "Republiek," 111; Hubert P.H. Nusteling, "The Jews in the Republic of the United Provinces: Origin, Numbers and Dispersion," in *Dutch Jewry: Its History and Secular Culture (1500–2000)* (ed. J. Israel and R. Salverda; Leiden/Boston/Köln: Brill, 2002), 53.

5 Israel, "Republiek," 112.

6 M. Schneider and J. Hemels, *De Nederlandse krant 1618–1978* (Baarn, 1979), 23–24.

7 Schneider and Hemels, *Nederlandse krant*, 25–30.

8 Schneider and Hemels, *Nederlandse krant*, 40–45; F. Dahl, *Dutch Corantos 1618–1650: A*

of Europe, many papers were published—in Dutch, but in other languages as well.⁹ The fact that the Dutch Republic enjoyed a large measure of freedom of expression also contributed to this circumstance. Papers were not only published in Amsterdam itself. At the end of the century, the leading papers were the *Amsterdamse Courant* and the *Haarlemse Courant*, later the *Oprechte Haarlemse Courant*, established in 1656.¹⁰

In the second half of the seventeenth century, while many Sephardim were fluent in Dutch most preferred to write—and read—in Spanish or Portuguese.¹¹ Most Ashkenazim could understand Dutch but were only able to read Yiddish. No wonder, then, that both groups felt the need for a paper of their own.

In 1672 (or maybe earlier), printer and publisher David de Castro Tartas published the first issue of what is considered the first Jewish newspaper in the world, the *Gazeta de Amsterdam*.¹² Contrary to the assertion of some, it was written in Spanish not Ladino. De Castro Tartas began his career in the oldest Jewish printing business in Amsterdam, that of Menasseh Ben Israel. In 1662 he founded his own printing house, becoming especially known as the printer of newspapers, not only the *Gazeta* but also—apparently non-Jewish—Italian and French newspapers.¹³

De Castro Tartas being a Sephardic Jew, the *Gazeta* is considered a Jewish newspaper.

Bibliography Illustrated with 334 Facsimile Reproductions of Corantos Printed 1618–1625 and an Introductory Essay on 17th Century Stop Press News (Göteborg, 1946), 36, 57.

- 9 Schneider and Hemels, *Nederlandse krant*, 46, 54; F. Dahl, *Amsterdam, Earliest Newspaper Centre of Western Europe* ('s-Gravenhage, 1939) (offprint from *Het Boek* 25, 1939); D.H. Couvée, “Van couranten en courantiërs uit de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw,” in *Het model voor de uitgever*, August 1951, 11; O. Lankhorst, “Newspapers in the Netherlands in the Seventeenth Century,” in *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe* (ed. B. Dooley and S. Baron; London/New York, 2001), 153. On French newspapers, see E. Hatim, *Les gazettes de Hollande et la presse clandestine aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles* (Paris, 1865) (reprint Geneva, 1969); *La Gazette d'Amsterdam: Miroir de l'Europe au XVIII^e siècle* (ed. Pierre Rétat; Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2001). On English newspapers, see F. Dahl, *Amsterdam, Cradle of English Newspapers* (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1949); idem, *A Bibliography of English Corantos and Periodical Newsbooks 1620–1642* (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1952).
- 10 Schneider and Hemels, *Nederlandse krant*, 54; W.P. Sautijn Kluit, “De Amsterdamsche Courant,” in *Bijdragen voor Vaderlandsche Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde* (1868), 209–292 (reprinted as a brochure, no publisher, pp. 1–84); idem, “De Haarlemsche Courant,” in *Handelingen en Meededeelingen van de Maatschappij der Nederlandsche Letterkunde* (1872–1873) (reprinted as a brochure, Leiden: Brill, 1873), 3–132.
- 11 Y. Kaplan, “De joden in de Republiek tot omstreeks 1750,” in *Geschiedenis van de joden in Nederland* (ed. J.C.H. Blom; Amsterdam, 1995), 156.
- 12 For the *Gazeta*, see Shmuel Schnitzer, “Uvekhoh zot habekhora shayekhet la-‘Gazeta’,” *Kesher* 2 (1987): 3–10; C.P. Burger Jr., “De Gazeta de Amsterdam,” in *Het Boek* 12 (1923): 57–74. All extant issues of the *Gazeta* are held in the Amsterdam Municipal Archives.
- 13 Fuks and Fuks-Mansfeld, *Hebrew Typography*, 339–348.

In fact, however, there is nothing Jewish about it. All the reports it contained appear to have been translated from Dutch papers. Nonetheless, as the average Spanish-speaker in the Dutch Republic was Jewish, it is quite probable that the paper was primarily intended for Jewish readers.

The *Kuranten*

It took some ten to fifteen years before a newspaper for the Dutch Ashkenazi community was published—the *Kuranten*. While many Sephardim were wealthy businessmen with a need for news, the majority of the Ashkenazim were poor people with simple jobs or no employment at all. Although “ordinary people” may also have been interested in news—especially international news, because they had relatives or coreligionists in the regions covered by the paper—they probably could not afford to buy a newspaper. We know nothing about the distribution and the number of subscribers—if the latter existed at all. They may have read the paper in the synagogue¹⁴ or borrowed it from others. The fact that the *Kuranten* were written in Yiddish limited the number of readers even more. On the other hand the paper, like many Yiddish books¹⁵, might have been exported to other countries, although we do not have any indication to date that this indeed happened.

The *Kuranten* appeared twice a week, on Tuesdays and Fridays, except for the period between December 6, 1686 and February 14, 1687, during which they were published only on Fridays. Uri Faybesh Halevi was himself probably the initiator of the *Kuranten*, although it could well be that the compositor, Moushe bar Avrom Ovinu, also played an important part in its foundation. As his name indicates, the latter was a convert to Judaism. He came from Nikolsburg in Moravia.¹⁶ Although he was initially referred to as *hamesader*—the compositor—it is likely that he also served as the editor.

Uri Faybesh Halevi ceased publication of the paper on June 6, 1687, possibly due to financial reasons. His economic position had deteriorated in the wake of his printing of

14 According to Shatzky, *nays fartseyler* (news distributors) were distributed in the synagogue in Amsterdam in 1776: Y. Shatzky, “Di letste shprotsungen fun der yidisher shprakh un literatur in Holland,” in *YIVO-bleter* 10, 253–254. While L. Fuks, “Joodse pers in de Nederlanden, 1674–1940,” in *Joodse pers in de Nederlanden en in Duitsland: Jüdische Presse in den Niederlanden und in Deutschland, 1674–1940* (ed. W. Scheur; Amsterdam, 1969), 8, assumes that Shatzky is referring to newspapers, according to Shatzky the *nays fartseyler* were a kind of advertising leaflets distributed by publishers.

15 Kaplan, “Joden,” 162; Fuks and Fuks-Mansfeld, *Hebrew Typography*, 183–184.

16 Moushe mentions his place of birth in a book he published while a printer himself: see M. Steinschneider, *Catalogus Librorum Hebraeorum in Bibliotheca Bodeleiana* (Berlin, 1852–1860), nr. 2623: *Birkat Hamazon* (Amsterdam, 1694).

a Yiddish Bible translation, a project that took him three years (1676–1679).¹⁷ David de Castro Tartas, the printer of the *Gazeta*, took over publication of the *Kuranten*. The compositor came as part of the deal: in the *Kuranten* published by De Castro Tartas, Moushe bar Abrom Ovinu's name is still mentioned at the end of every issue, although without the title *hamesader*. While De Castro Tartas made some changes in the layout—the heading was enlarged, the Amsterdam city arms were added, and the name was changed from *Kuranten* to *Kurant18*—the style remained the same. This is the main reason for assuming that the compositor was also responsible for the editing.

Although De Castro Tartas initially maintained publication on Tuesdays and Fridays, on August 5, 1687 it was announced that up until 1 Nisan (March) the paper would only appear on Fridays, “because the Tuesday edition sells poorly.”

The leading Dutch newspapers, the *Amsterdamse Courant* and the *Oprechte Haarlemse Courant*, collected their own news and made use of correspondents for news from abroad.¹⁹ Since neither Uri Faybesh Halevi nor David de Castro Tartas had the means to hire correspondents,²⁰ they had to resort to the Dutch newspapers, which were their main—and probably only—source of information.

The *Kuranten* did not copy all reports according to their geographical location from the Dutch newspapers. Due to the limited space at their disposal, together with the fact that they used a larger typeface, the editors were forced into a strict selection—not simply by shortening the reports but also in their choice of subjects. They included, for instance, all reports about wars, first and foremost the war in the Balkans between the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empires; like the Dutch newspapers, the *Kuranten* sympathized with the Habsburg side. Another popular subject was the plight of the Huguenots, for whom the *Kuranten* showed at least as much sympathy as did the Dutch papers.

To the extent that the Dutch papers wrote about Jews, the Yiddish newspaper followed them, its tone usually as detached as theirs. The one exception was a report

17 Fuks and Fuks-Mansfeld, *Hebrew Typography*, 237–249; Marion Aptroot, *Bible Translation as Cultural Reform: The Amsterdam Yiddish Bibles (1678–1679)* (Oxford, 1989), Ch. 1; E. Timm, “Blitz and Witzhausen,” in *Studies in Jewish Culture in Honour of Chone Shmeruk* (ed. I. Bartal; Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 1993), 39–66.

18 *Kuranten* (Dutch: *couranten*) signifies “newspapers” in the plural. The use of the plural *couranten* for the name of a newspaper is unusual in Dutch: see, for example, the *Amsterdamse Courant* and *Haarlemse Courant*. Perhaps Halevi, the first printer of the *Kuranten*, was unaware of the meaning of the word; he may have confused it with *Tijdingen* (“Reports”), also a common name for newspapers during this period. De Castro Tartas probably realized the peculiarity of the name *Kuranten* and changed it to *Kurant*. In this article, by *Kuranten* I refer to the papers published by both printers.

19 D.H. Couvée, “De nieuwsgaring van de eerste courantiers,” in *Pers, propaganda en openbare mening: Een bundel opstellen aangeboden aan professor dr. Kurt Baschwitz* (Leiden: Brill, 1956), 26–40.

20 Fuks and Fuks-Mansfeld, *Hebrew Typography*, 388.

from Lisbon, July 26, published in the *Kuranten* of August 23, 1686, concerning three Portuguese Jews who were burnt at the stake in Lisbon after they refused to renounce their faith. While the Dutch papers stressed the cruelty of the punishment, the *Kuranten* emphasized the fact that the three men decided to die as Jews, adding a prayer for the divine punishment of those who carried out the sentence.

There was also room for shipping news and piracy, reports about natural disasters and epidemics, and sensational features. While reportage concerning the Western European royal families, of which the Dutch papers were quite fond, is hardly mentioned in the *Kuranten*, the adventures of the king of Poland received comparatively extensive attention, possibly because Jan III Sobieski was popular among the Jews.²¹

The *Kuranten* thus primarily printed international news, given from a Dutch perspective but adapted for Jewish readers seeking to take part in the “real world” for whom language was otherwise a barrier. The adaptation was chiefly restricted to excluding non-Jewish elements or subjects considered uninteresting to Jews. No attempt was made to carry news from other sources about Jewish subjects. News about Jewish community life in Amsterdam is completely absent. This feature may be explained by the fact that since the community was small, the Amsterdam Jews probably did not require a paper to know what was going on; the important events found their way into the popular Yiddish chronicles.²²

The last extant issue of the *Kuranten* dates, as we have mentioned, from December 5, 1687. Although there are no indications that this was the very last issue, the paper probably did not last much longer. The compositor started his own printing house in 1688.²³ In 1694, he left for Germany, where he remained in the printing business until the end of his life. David de Castro Tartas, the second printer, remained in the business until 1697.²⁴ Publishing a Yiddish newspaper was probably in any case a risky trade, which may be the main reason that the *Kuranten* only lasted for a short period, whereas the *Gazeta* was published between at least 1672 and 1702.

21 J.I. Israel, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism 1550–1750* (London: Littman Library, 1998), 125.

22 L. Fuks and R.G. Fuks-Mansfeld, “Historiography in the Netherlands in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” in *Salo Wittmayer Baron Jubilee Volume 1* (ed. Saul Lieberman and Arthur Hyman; NY: Columbia University Press, 1974), 433–466.

23 Fuks and Fuks-Mansfeld, *Hebrew Typography*, 384–388; I.H. van Eeghen, “Moses Abrahamsz, boekdrukker in Amsterdam,” in *Studia Rosenthaliana* VI 1 (1972): 58–64.

24 Fuks and Fuks-Mansfeld, *Hebrew Typography*, 344–346.

Aftermath

After the publication of the last issue of the *Kuranten*, the Yiddish press in the Netherlands—as well as abroad—disappeared from the scene.²⁵

The first real Yiddish newspaper after the *Kuranten* of which we have knowledge is the *Dirnfurter prifilegirte tsaytung*, published in Dyhernfurth near Breslau. The two surviving issues are Number 2, dated Friday, December 13, 1771, and Number 9, dated Friday 5 Shevat 5532 / January 10, 1772.²⁶ Like the *Kuranten*, this newspaper primarily published international news.

Nine years later, the only other known Dutch Yiddish newspaper appeared, the *Vokhentlikhe Berikhtn anlangende di yettsige umshtendig heytn den 10 yanvari 1781* (Weekly Reports Concerning the Current Situation, January 10, 1781). Published by the well-known printer, bookseller, and publisher Proops in Amsterdam, it consisted of one sheet, of which three copies are known. One copy, currently in the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, was discovered in a Hebrew book in which it had been used to strengthen the binding.²⁷ Another copy is kept in the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem,²⁸ while of the third one only a photocopy is left. The original of the latter may have been held in the YIVO library in Vilna before World War II.²⁹

According to an announcement printed at the bottom of the *Vokhentlikhe Berikhtn*, the paper was published twice a week, on Tuesdays and Fridays. It is unclear why such a paper was called “Weekly Reports”—or, for that matter, why it appeared on January 10, which was a Wednesday. Be that as it may, from the announcement we can conclude that the *Vokhentlikhe Berikhtn* was a newspaper rather than a once-only edition.

Although we do not know when the first issue of the *Vokhentlikhe Berikhtn* was published, it was probably not much earlier than January 10, 1781. On December 20, 1780, England declared war upon the Republic of the United Netherlands, initiating the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War. Unfortunately, the Dutch Republic was no longer the superpower of the Golden Age, and by January 1781 England had already captured

25 Although some titles of papers now lost have been suggested, it is unlikely that these were real newspapers. Shatzky shows in *Baylage 3* the title page of the *Naye Tsaytung* from Prague, 1716: Y. Shatzky, *Zamlbukh lekoved dem tsvey hundert un fuftsikstn yoyvl fun der Yidisher prese, 1686–1936* (NY: YIVO, 1937); see also note 15.

26 Both are kept in the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York; a copy of number 2 is also kept in the Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek in Frankfurt am Main: see Y. Rivkind, “A naye umbakante Amsterdamer Idishe tsaytung fun 1781,” in *Tsukunfi* 1939, columns 50–55.

27 Rivkind, “Naye tsaytung,” c. 55.

28 Apparently this copy was also used for strengthening the binding of a book: it shows marks of the floral pattern of a book cover—marks that are lacking, by the way, on the copy in New York. I was able to see the copy in Jerusalem in July 2005, and the New York copy in January 2007.

29 Fuks, “Joodse pers,” 9, 43.

more than two-hundred Dutch merchant ships.³⁰ As soon as the war erupted, many new newspapers and journals began publication in the Netherlands.³¹ It is quite possible that the *Vokhentlichke Berikhtn* was one of these.

In the interim, the Dutch Ashkenazi Jewish population had grown dramatically. In 1781, between 15,000 and 20,000 Ashkenazi Jews were living in Amsterdam.³² While a small elite of bankers and merchants spoke Dutch and French fluently,³³ the majority of Ashkenazi Jews consisted of small tradesmen and peddlers who understood Dutch quite well and spoke a highly dutchified form of Yiddish, but had difficulties reading the Latin alphabet.³⁴ Like their non-Jewish compatriots, the Jews were badly hit by the economic crises in the sixties and seventies. The uprising of the American colonists against England created new possibilities for overseas trade with the insurgents.³⁵ Since this trade was one of the occasions for the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War, it is obvious that Jewish tradesmen were interested in news about this war.

Only part of the Yiddish reports in the *Vokhentlichke Berikhtn* can be traced back to the Dutch newspapers. Nonetheless, since all the reports are written in the same formal style, we can assume that the *Vokhentlichke Berikhtn* took all its coverage from Dutch publications. In some cases these might have been pamphlets or official announcements rather than newspapers.

Nearly all reports in the *Vokhentlichke Berikhtn* concern the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War. It being a naval war, many reports deal with ships captured by, or escaped from, the English. A lengthy appeal to buy shares in a “privateering company” which would enable Dutch privateers (“legal pirates”) to attack English ships is also inserted. It is interesting to note that Jews were considered sufficiently patriotic (or maybe simply sufficiently rich?) to take part in activities of this kind.

The large measure of local news we find in the *Vokhentlichke Berikhtn* is due to the fact that the important war news was local in this case. Like the *Kuranten*, the *Vokhentlichke Berikhtn* scarcely mentions other local news, including the adventures of kings or noblemen.

30 J.W. Schulte Nordholt, *The Dutch Republic and American Independence* (trans. Herbert H. Rowen; Chapel Hill/London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 144–157; E.S. van Eyck van Heslinga, “De vlag dekt de lading: De Nederlandse koopvaardij in de Vierde Engelse Oorlog,” in *Tijdschrift voor Zeegegeschiedenis* I (1982): 102–105.

31 Schneider and Hemels, *Nederlandse krant*, 85–104.

32 According to Israel, “Republiek”, 111, about 14,000 Ashkenazi Jews were living in Amsterdam around 1750, out of an entire population of 200,000. In 1795, the first official census counted 22,000 Ashkenazi Jews in Amsterdam, out of a total population of 221,000: see R.G. Fuks-Mansfeld, “Verlichting en emancipatie omstreeks 1750–1814,” in *Geschiedenis van de joden in Nederland* (ed. J. C. H. Blom; Amsterdam, 1995), 183.

33 Fuks-Mansfeld, “Verlichting,” 181.

34 Fuks-Mansfeld, “Verlichting,” 180–182; A.D. Zwiers, *Kroniek van het Jiddisj: Taalkundige aspecten van achttiende-eeuws Nederlands Jiddisj* (Delft, 2003), 30–31.

35 Fuks-Mansfeld, “Verlichting,” 187.

How long the *Vokhentlichke Berikhtn* continued to be published is impossible to know. Many of the Dutch newspapers and journals that came into being in the first days of the war were short-lived.³⁶ This, added to the fact that only one issue (in three copies) survived, indicates a short, rather than a long, existence for the *Vokhentlichke Berikhtn*.

Epilogue

The *Vokhentlichke Berikhtn* was the last Dutch Yiddish newspaper of which we know, and almost the last of its kind in Western Europe. In 1789 and 1790, a weekly called *Tsaytung* was published in the French city of Metz. It surfaced decades later in a booklet about the French Revolution. This weekly informed the Jews about the decisions of the newly-formed Assemblée nationale. It apparently did not succeed in raising a sufficient number of subscribers and probably ceased publication after April 1790.³⁷

As far as we know, the French *Tsaytung* was the last Yiddish newspaper to appear in Western Europe. For some time, books and pamphlets continued to be published in Yiddish, such as the famous *Diskursn*, a series of polemical pamphlets published in Amsterdam in 1798 and 1799.³⁸ But from the beginning of the nineteenth century Yiddish began to decline in Western Europe. In the Netherlands, the Jews were granted equal rights in 1796, and Willem I, who became the first Dutch King in 1813, held the opinion that all Dutch citizens should speak Dutch. His language policy was highly successful and within a few decades Yiddish virtually disappeared in the Netherlands.³⁹ From then on the Jews could read the news in the Dutch papers. This, however, was not the end but rather the start of the real blossoming of the Jewish press. Halfway through the nineteenth century, several Jewish weeklies started to appear, Jewish in content, and written in the new language of the Jews of the Netherlands—Dutch.

36 Schneider and Hemels, *Nederlandse krant*, 85–104.

37 A. Speyer, *Bashraybung fun der ferendrung odr oyf ruhr in Frankraykh*, in Shatzky, *Yivo-bleter* 2, 49–71.

38 J. Michman, and M. Aptroot, *Storm in the Community: Yiddish Polemical Pamphlets of Amsterdam Jewry 1797–1798* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 2002).

39 B. Wallet, “Teloorgang van een taal: Jiddisj in het negentiende-eeuwse Koninkrijk der Nederlanden (I),” in *Grine medine: Een tijdschrift voor liefhebbers van de Jiddisje taal* 15 (Amsterdam, April 2004), 6–13; and idem, “Einde van het jargon-schandaal: Jiddisj in het negentiende-eeuwse Koninkrijk der Nederlanden (II)” in *Grine medine* 16 (July 2004): 2–7.

