

‘Defense through Tears’: Jewish Diplomacy and Contentious Politics in the Memorandum of the Jewish Delegates of Tuscany (July 23, 1799)

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Abstract

This study examines the Memorandum written by the Jewish delegates of Tuscany on July 23, 1799, in the aftermath of the starkly violent anti-Jewish incidents that marked the Tuscan counter-revolution. The analysis is focused on Jewish defense against discursive and physical manifestations of anti-Judaism, and proposes to consider Jewish diplomacy as an essential component of European contentious politics.

Keywords

Jews – Tuscany – counter-revolution – Jacobinism – anti-Judaism – defense – diplomacy – contentious politics

Introduction

Archival sources show strong evidence of a range of defensive actions enacted by Jews across history. Jewish defense can be generally found in public actions on behalf of the Jewish cause, in responses to anti-Jewish speech, most frequently in legal actions aiming at settling disputes with the non-Jewish majority, or in diplomatic negotiations pursuing the goal of a daily relationship with the established power institutions. Maintaining a constant communication with sovereigns and their ministers was for Jews both a necessity and a propensity: it was considered as instrumental in the pursuing of Jewish survival and continuity in the *galut* (exile). Jews held their capacities of negotiation

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as a pre-condition for long-lasting security, and, to a certain degree, historical experience had taught them that security depended on a give-and-take relationship with power: to satisfy the requests of the sovereign was then believed to be an action that deserved to be fully accomplished, as it constituted grounds for claiming protection or for obtaining official condemnation of anti-Jewish abuses.¹ By means of example, one shall consider the fact that Jewish community archives are generally filled with royal rulings, rescripts and dispensations, that have been preserved with the utmost care for centuries: in fact, Jews regarded these documents as highly important because they constituted proofs of legitimation and served as legal foundations for Jewish recognition and citizenship.² These same documents also constituted some proof of Jewish diplomatic success, since they originated from Jewish intense petitioning, a practice that demanded a certain knowledge of jurisprudence, politics, and diplomacy, and that required appropriate language, contacts with the power elites, a certain level of agency, and negotiation skills. Thanks to this know-how, Jewish minorities could sometimes perform high-level forms of legal and political communication in spite of their status.³ Still, maintaining this kind of alliance with the sovereign required a constant and complicated work of communication: the precondition for a Jewish diplomat was first to acknowledge power relations and play submission, and second, to know the legal system and to be able to refer to both the general unified law and to the thick web of local norms.⁴

1 In his well-known essay on royal alliance, Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi highlighted the delicate mechanism of reciprocity of interests between the sovereign and the Jews, see Y.H. Yerushalmi, *Servants of Kings and not Servants of Servants: Some Aspects of the Political History of the Jews* (Atlanta 2005). See also A. Groppi, 'Les deux corps des Juifs. Droits et pratiques de citoyenneté des habitants du ghetto de Rome, XVI^e–XVIII^e siècle,' *Annales. Histoire, Sciences sociales* 73, no. 3 (2018) 591–625; M. Kriegel, 'Not Scepticism, but Certainty: A Different Plea for Toleration in Late Medieval Spain,' in M. García-Arenal and S. Pastore, eds., *From Doubt to Unbelief: Forms of Scepticism in the Iberian World* (Cambridge 2019) 19–33. On reciprocity between sovereign and subjects, see C. Nubola and A. Würzler, eds., *Suppliche e 'gravamina'. Politica, amministrazione, giustizia in Europa (secoli xiv–xviii)* (Bologna 2002).

2 On this specific aspect related to Jewish community archives, see D. Mano, 'Plaintes juives et contentieux judéo-chrétien. Le cas de Pitigliano dans le Grand-duché de Toscane au XVIII^e siècle (1745–1803),' *L'Atelier du Centre de recherches historiques* 13 (2015) 139–174.

3 D. Biale, *Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History* (New York 1986); P. Birnbaum, *Face au pouvoir. Les Juifs et le politique* (Paris 2010).

4 Experience in institutional roles within the Jewish community proved to be a valuable prerequisite for Jewish diplomats, see E. Oliel-Grausz, 'Dispute Resolution and Kahal Kadosh Talmud Torah: Community Forum and Legal Acculturation in Eighteenth-Century Amsterdam,' in Y. Kaplan, ed., *Religious Changes and Cultural Transformations in the Early Modern Sephardi Communities* (Leiden 2018) 228–257. On rabbinical attitudes toward non-Jewish law, see D.J. Elazar, ed., *Kinship and Consent: The Jewish Political Tradition and Its*

In Hebrew sources, such a Jewish public activity within royal courts is usually called *shtadlanut* (literally meaning ‘struggle’) and its representatives *shtadlanim*. In light of its many elements of political acculturation to the majority political and legal systems, *shtadlanut* has been defined by Aaron Klieman as a ‘Statecraft by the Stateless,’ or an aptitude to build a political body in conformity with the State, acted by actors denied of citizenship.⁵ Through diplomacy and defensive communication, Jews used to testify to their determination to fight anti-Jewish abuses and negative representations of Judaism within the Christian world.⁶ Accordingly, Jewish notables intervened in public debates to counterpoint anti-Jewish arguments with Jewish apologetics; prominent examples of Jewish apologists can be found in Early-Modern Italy, including the rabbi and physician David de’ Pomis,⁷ the Venetian rabbis Leon Modena⁸ and Simone Luzzatto,⁹ and the Roman rabbi Tranquillo Vita Corcos.¹⁰ While their distinguished defenses finally became printed books or pamphlets dedicated

Contemporary Uses (Lanham, MD 1983); M. Walzer, M. Lorberbaum and N. Zohar, eds., *The Jewish Political Tradition*, vols. I–III (New Haven/London 2000–2018).

- 5 A. Klieman, ‘Shtadlanut as Statecraft by the Stateless,’ *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 2 (2008) 99–113. See also F. Guesnet, ‘The Politics of Precariousness – Josel of Rosheim and Jewish Intercession in the Holy Roman Empire in the 16th century,’ *Jewish Culture and History* 19, no. 1 (2018) 8–22; D. Trom, *Persévérance du fait juif. Une théorie politique de la survie* (Paris 2018).
- 6 On Jewish defense, see C. Facchini, *Infamanti dicerie. La prima autodifesa ebraica dall’accusa del sangue* (Bologna 2014).
- 7 David de’ Pomis published in 1588 a Latin apologetic treatise entitled *De medico hebraeo enarratio apologica*, that served as a public defense of Jewish physicians and a general demonstration of their competence and reliability. See D. de’ Pomis, *De medico hebraeo enarratio apologica* (Venice 1588); G. Bartolucci, ‘Hebraeus semper fidus. David de’ Pomis e l’apologia dell’ebraismo tra volgare e latino,’ in S.U. Baldassarri and F. Lelli, eds., *Umanesimo e cultura ebraica nel Rinascimento italiano. Convegno internazionale di studi. Palazzo Rucellai, Firenze, 10 marzo 2016* (Florence 2017) 59–89.
- 8 Leon Modena was the author of the *Historia de’ riti hebraici, vita ed osservanze de gl’Hebrei di questi tempi*, an Italian vernacular dissertation on the rites and customs of Judaism, written in the 1630s and expressly addressed to Christians with the aim of countering anti-Jewish stereotypes. See L. Modena, *Historia de’ riti hebraici, vita ed osservanze de gl’Hebrei di questi tempi* (Paris 1637; Venice 1638); English translation, *The History of the Rites, Customs, and Manner of Life, of the Present Jews, throughout the World* (London 1650).
- 9 Simone Luzzatto advocated Jewish utility in international trade and insisted on their full reliability and respect of the laws of the State in his most celebrated *Discorso*. See S. Luzzatto, *Discorso circa il stato de gl’Hebrei et in particolar dimoranti nell’inclita città di Venetia* (Venice 1638); English translation, G. Veltri and A. Lissa, eds., *Simone Luzzatto, Discourse on the State of the Jews* (Berlin/Boston 2019).
- 10 Tranquillo Vita Corcos was the author of quite a number of public defenses, several of whom against blood libel. See M. Caffiero, *Il grande mediatore. Tranquillo Vita Corcos, un rabbino nella Roma dei Papi* (Rome 2019).

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to sovereigns or influential persona, ordinary Jewish defensive writings mostly remained in manuscript and were brought to the attention of the relevant authorities in the form of *gravamina* (grievances) or memoranda (records).¹¹

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The document examined in this study is a memorandum (hereafter: Memorandum) written in Italian by a group of four Jewish delegates from Tuscany – two representatives of the Jewish community of Florence (Ezechia Tranquillo Vita Baraffael and Cesare Lampronti) along with two colleagues from the Jewish community of Leghorn (Isac Franchetti and Salomone Tedeschi). Dating back to July 23, 1799, the Memorandum is found in a manuscript,¹² and was addressed to ‘His Royal Highness,’ the Grand-Duke Ferdinand III of Tuscany, at the time of his exile in Vienna. The document reflects the usual style of the *gravamen* and it is composed of an original introduction, a collection of records of anti-Jewish violence from Monte San Savino, Arezzo, and Siena, and a closing statement giving expression to a complaint as well as to a request for protection and reparation.

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It is one out of a significant number of defensive memoranda produced at the very end of the 18th century by Tuscan Jews as a reaction to anti-Jewish attacks. The Memorandum was, in fact, redacted on the immediate aftermath of the counter-revolutionary uprisings that marked the breakdown of the Napoleonic occupation and the temporary victory of the Second coalition. It highlights the precarious transition that followed the French retreat: the summer of 1799 was in fact a period of intense diplomatic efforts made by a number of representatives, among whom several delegates of the Jewish communities of Tuscany, wishing to re-establish connections with Grand-Ducal officials and to influence the emerging legal and political framework. The document thus reflects the attempts of the four Jewish delegates to reacquire State protection in a time of great insecurity for Tuscan Jews, through the re-establishing of their personalistic alliance with the sovereign, exactly when this latter was regaining the throne of the Grand-Duchy. Their personal investment is furtherly demonstrated by the fact that they took the road to Vienna in order to hand over their Memorandum to Ferdinand III.¹³

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11 As regards the study of supplications, *gravamina*, and petitions, see L.H. Van Voss, ‘Petitions in Social History,’ *International Review of Social History* 9 (2001) 79–106; Nubola and Würgler, *Suppliche e ‘gravamina’*, 7–20; S. Cerutti and Massimo Vallerani, ‘Suppliques. Lois et cas dans la normativité de l’époque moderne – Introduction,’ *L’Atelier du Centre de recherches historiques* 13 (2015) 5–17.

12 Archives of the Jewish Community of Florence (ACEF), D.5.1, III (7), *Memoria*, July 23, 1799.

13 G. Sonnino, ‘Gli Ebrei a Livorno nell’ultimo decennio del secolo XVIII,’ *La Rassegna Mensile di Israel* 12 (1937) 46–47.

I will examine this extraordinary document, testifying to the talents and versatility of Tuscan Jewish diplomats, from within the conceptual framework of *contentious politics*, a notion developed by Wayne Te Brake ‘to evoke the most fundamental of political relationships: the on-going “interaction” between those who occupy positions of governmental authority and those who are nominally subject to their authority,’¹⁴ and to highlight ‘the political action of ordinary people in relation to the transformation of the cultural and political landscape of Europe.’¹⁵ I will thus consider Jewish diplomacy as an essential component of European contentious politics. This statement is even more relevant when the transition from the early modern to the modern period is taken as the main object of study.

The Political Context behind the Memorandum

The Memorandum offers a detailed account of the first revolutionary period in Tuscany from a Jewish perspective.¹⁶ The Grand-Duchy of Tuscany was the theatre of one of the most inconsistent political overthrows of 1799, justified in terms of *raison d'état*: the French Republican armies occupied Tuscany in late March, but maintained supremacy on the region only for three months;¹⁷ differently from other Italian regions, here French armies did not bring about the

14 W. Te Brake, ‘Petitions, Contentious Politics, and Revolution in Early Modern Europe,’ in C. Nubola and A. Würigler, eds., *Operare la resistenza: Suppliche, gravamina e rivolte in Europa (secoli XV–XIX)* (Bologna 2006) 20.

15 W. Te Brake, *Shaping History. Ordinary People in European Politics 1500–1700* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 1998) 6. See also M.P. Hanagan, L.P. Moch and W. Te Brake, *Challenging Authority: The Historical Study of Contentious Politics* (Minneapolis 1998).

16 Napoleon’s Italian campaign between March 1796 and June 1799, which historians refer to as the ‘Italian first revolutionary period,’ has been generally presented in Italian historiography as a confusing and unsettling period of time, overwhelmed by disillusion, contradictions, frustration and violence. Still, it is undeniable that this experience contributed in generating a global historical rupture and must be regarded, despite its many discontents, as a structuring event of the Italian republican history. See C. Capra, *Letà rivoluzionaria e napoleonica in Italia (1796–1815)* (Turin 1978); A.M. Rao and M. Cattaneo, eds., *L’Italia e la rivoluzione francese: 1789–1799* (Florence 2003); B. Gainot, ed., ‘L’Italie et la Révolution française,’ Special issue, *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 339 (2005); M.P. Donato, D. Armando, M. Cattaneo and J.-F. Chauvard, eds., *Atlante storico dell’Italia rivoluzionaria e napoleonica* (Rome 2015); G. Turi, *Guerre civili in Italia: 1796–1799* (Rome 2019).

17 Regarding revolutionary and counter-revolutionary Tuscany, see G. Turi, *Viva Maria. La reazione alle riforme leopoldine (1790–1799)* (2nd ed. Bologna 1999); C. Mangio, ‘Tra conservazione e rivoluzione,’ in F. Diaz, L. Mascilli Migliorini and C. Mangio, eds., *Il Granducato di Toscana. I Lorena dalla Reggenza agli anni rivoluzionari* (Torino 1997) 474–509.

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foundation of a Tuscan (or Etrurian) Republic.¹⁸ Moreover, the organization of Republican parties encountered many difficulties, were rebuffed by the local population, and could be held only in the presence of armed contingents;¹⁹ through with such militarized ceremonies, the French hardly succeeded in promoting the values of political *régénération* that included Jewish emancipation. Like their coreligionists in the Sister Republics of Northern and Central Italy, although in a much more ephemeral way, Tuscan Jews were offered legal and political emancipation, but their becoming citizens over such a short period of time was merely epitomized by their conscription in the national guards. Yet, such an improvement, emerging from a situation of extreme tension, generally aroused scandal among Christians and exposed Jews to popular hatred.²⁰

The presence of French armies being considered as transitory, as the largest majority of Jews, like most Christians, opted for caution and pragmatism as forms of resistance. As regards political affiliations, only a few individuals from among Tuscan Jewries showed their revolutionary sympathies overtly; as regards the community chiefs, though displaying conventional obedience to the French power, they generally remained reluctant to the revolutionary shift, first and foremost because it threatened the continuity of Jewish autonomy and interrupted old privileges.²¹

As an outcome of the military victories of the Second coalition, the French retreat from Tuscany and from most parts of Italy became a reality between May and July 1799, with tragic consequences for Jews and Jacobins alike. The Tuscan counter-revolution reached its zenith with the uprisings of Arezzo and the following establishment of military governments in the entire region:²² popular upheaval brought about stark violence, vendettas, and public punishment on Jacobins and other *deviants*, as much as it enhanced utopian ideals of restoration, Catholic mystical fervor and revival of old penitential

18 The Republican shift in Tuscany was merely epitomized by the temporary establishment of eleven municipalities in Florence, Arezzo, Cortona, Leghorn, Pisa, Pistoia, Pontremoli, Prato, Volterra, Siena, and Massa. See I. Tognarini, 'La repubblica negata. La Toscana e la Rivoluzione francese. Saggio introduttivo,' in I. Tognarini, ed., *La Toscana e la Rivoluzione francese* (Naples 1994) XV–CVII.

19 Turi, *Viva Maria*, 159–199.

20 R.G. Salvadori, 1799. *Gli ebrei italiani nella bufera antigiacobina* (Florence 1999).

21 Mangio, 'Tra conservazione e rivoluzione,' 473–477. For comparison with Italian territories under Hapsburg control, see P. Bernardini, *La sfida dell'uguaglianza. Gli ebrei a Mantova nell'età della rivoluzione francese* (Rome 1995).

22 Turi, *Viva Maria*, 279–322. For an broader perspective on the Italian reactionary phenomenon, see A.M. Rao, ed., 'Le insorgenze popolari nell'Italia rivoluzionaria e napoleonica,' Special issue, *Studi storici* 39, no. 2 (1998).

manifestations.²³ Moreover, in Tuscany as in other parts of Italy, the reactionary movement showed a very important anti-Jewish aspect: since Jews were accused *en masse* of Jacobinism and political intelligence with the Republican regime, during the uprisings they were sentenced to popular punishment.²⁴ Jewish homes, quarters, and ghettos in Monte San Savino, Arezzo, Pitigliano, Siena, Leghorn, and other smaller places, were systematically attacked and pillaged; in Siena, thirteen members of the local community were ferociously assassinated and burned at the stake on June 28, while one further Jew tragically fell victim to the counter-revolutionary fury in Pitigliano.²⁵

The subsequent restoration of the Grand-Duchy of Tuscany inaugurated a long-lasting phase of popular unrest, indiscriminate violence, legal abuses and religious fervor. Beginning from late July 1799, the establishment of the so-called *camera nera* (black room) for political trials considerably intensified the atmosphere of suspicion, turbulence, and insecurity.²⁶ In response to the extreme violence they had suffered and to threats they still were subjected to, Tuscan Jewish community chiefs produced a number of written memoranda, some for internal use in community commemorations and some others for external use to be brought to the attention of power institutions.²⁷ The Memorandum of the Jewish delegates of Tuscany examined here clearly belongs to the second category, since it is a *gravamen* addressed to the Grand-Duke asking for his intervention.

23 The anti-French or anti-Jacobine venture manifested itself as deeply religiously-motivated, as many believed it developed under the protective wing of the Virgin Mary – from which the entire movement drew the name of *Viva Maria*. See Turi, *Viva Maria*, 239–278.

24 Counter-revolutionaries bore the conviction of the existence of a diabolical project, planned first and foremost by Jews and Jacobins, aiming at the destruction of Christianity. See D. Mano, ‘Révolution. La “contagion française” et la “jacobinerie juive” dans l’Italie contre-révolutionnaire,’ in B. Delaurenti and T. Le Roux, eds., *Contagions. Influence, contamination, propagation. Regards pluriels sur un processus historique* (Paris 2020); L. Guerci, *Uno spettacolo non mai più visto nel mondo. La Rivoluzione francese come unicità e rovesciamento negli scrittori controrivoluzionari italiani (1789–1799)* (Turin 2008).

25 Salvadori, 1799, 97–110.

26 Town administrations engaged soldiers from the Tuscan army or from the Second coalition contingents in order to ensure order, to the extent that militarization overwhelmed public space and social relations. See A. Zobi, *Storia Civile della Toscana dal 1737 al 1848*, III (Florence 1851) 379–393; C. Mangio, *I patrioti toscani fra Repubblica Etrusca e Restaurazione* (Florence 1991) 304–312.

27 Jewish memory of 1799 consists of *gravamina*, *memoranda*, family accounts and liturgical compositions in Italian and Hebrew. See A. Salah, ‘Ktiva pratit u-khtiva tzibburit: hibburim shenikhtevū be-Italia be-‘iqvot pra’ot 1799,’ in Y. Shapira, O. Herzog and T. Hess, eds., *Qanoni Ufopulari* (Tel Aviv 2007) 99–108, 227–231.

Reaffirming Jewish Submission, Reliability, and Adaptability

Translating the Jewish cause into a legal statement and a persuasive account was first and foremost a question of balance: it needed to combine different rhetorical intensities and to balance opposite elements, submission and revindication, formal and informal speech, apolitical and political. Even more than so, it had to play reliability and normalization. In addition, defensive memoranda needed to pursue didactic and moralizing purposes: Jews had to define Judaism to the Christian authorities, to confirm Jewish loyalty through detailed portraits of what a Jewish community was. Accordingly, the Memorandum of the Jewish delegates of Tuscany starts out with a presentation of the universal qualities of diasporic Judaism, without any regional specificity:

It is undeniable and well known that the Jewish Nation, scattered all over the surface of the earth, excluded from all lucrative civil employment, had to limit its abilities to manufacturing and commerce in order to acquire its subsistence. This necessity has produced two advantages in the States where this Nation is either invited or accepted: the first is the development of an important branch of public happiness; the second is that, of the money earned with sweat, the Nation is, so to speak, only the depository, since it is always ready to transmit it to its own respective Homeland for any good purpose, and for the needs of the State. Without ever having wished to increase in number, nor to rise to power, it secures tolerance with the submission to governments and to laws, and gains defense through tears.²⁸

From these very first lines, the reader is confronted with a very accurate narrative, written in a high stylistic register, fitting with the juridical and political language, and evoking themes of civilization. Following an apologetic tone, the narrative suggests the image of Jews as a civilized and peaceful people, a well-ordered, submissive and loyal minority, gaining ‘defense through tears’ – that

²⁸ ACEF, *Memoria*, Italian original: ‘E’ incontestabile e noto che la Nazione Ebraica in generale sparsa nella superficie del globo esclusa da qualunque lucroso impiego civile, ha dovuto limitare i talenti suoi all’industria ed al commercio, onde procurarsi la sussistenza. Questa sua necessità ha prodotto due vantaggi in quei stati dov’è o richiamata o accolta; il primo è lo sviluppo di un importante ramo di pubblica felicità; Il Secondo che dell’argento acquistato co’ suoi sudori è per così dire soltanto depositaria, per versarlo all’uopo in seno della sua Patria rispettiva, e per i bisogni dello Stato. Giammai bramosa di aumentarsi in corpo, d’erigersi in potere, colla sommissione ai governi ed alle leggi, si procura la tolleranza e colle lacrime la difesa.’

is to say obtaining protection through prayers and supplications. Quite interestingly, this first passage is directly related to the commercial sphere: the Jewish minority produces general wealth and its presence in trade is beneficial to the economy of the majority. This echoes the traditional discourse on Jewish utility.²⁹

More explicitly, in the following passage, the authors of the Memorandum emphasize Jewish submission and loyalty to the political system of the majority. The Jewish nation is thus portrayed as a perfectly adaptable and almost unpolitical group within the State:

Considering, then, what the Jews might be among the political bodies, they are only imperceptible atoms turning in the vortex formed by the revolution of a big planet; and, wisely, it has been said by a famous author that the Jews are like the chameleon, who takes all the colors that the sun gives him according to its position, and that, in all the States where they cohabit with other Nations, they are like them faithful subjects and perfect citizens. Yet, in past times, there had been ferocious enemies who unceasingly rose against them with the dark colors of calumny (...)³⁰

Jews as a whole are thus epitomized by their universal flexibility, by their outstanding capacities of adaptation to different contexts and by their full acceptance of the established power relations.³¹ Still, when dealing with the problematic issue of Jewish political affiliation, the delegates make use of an

29 Though not explicitly quoted, the main reference here is the *Discorso* by Simone Luzzatto. On Jewish utility, see for instance J. Karp, *The Politics of Jewish Commerce: Economic Thought and Emancipation in Europe, 1638–1848* (Cambridge 2008); F. Bregoli, 'The Port of Livorno and its Nazione Ebraica in the Eighteenth Century: Economic Utility and Political Reforms,' *Quest: Cities of the Jews and Modernity* 2 (2011), online: <http://www.quest-cdecjournal.it/focus.php?id=227>.

30 ACEF, *Memoria*, Italian original: 'Considerato poi ciò che siano gli ebrei tra i corpi politici questi sono solamente atomi impercettibili che girano nel vortice formato dalla rivoluzione di un gran pianeta; e giudiziosamente fu detto da celebre autore che gli ebrei sono come il camaleonte che prende tutti quei colori che a seconda della sua posizione il sole gl'imprime e che in tutti gli stati ove coabitano colle altre nazioni sono egualmente a loro, sudditi fedeli, e perfetti cittadini. Non mancò per tanto nei tempi andati sollevarglisi contro fieri nemici che colle tinte nere della calunnia gli avventarono colpi di accuse (...).'

31 Once more, the *Memorandum* paraphrases some passages from Luzzatto's *Discorso*: 'But the Jews, under every form of government and rule, have always been industrious, obedient, and inclined to remain subjected,' and furthermore: 'The Jews, however, were always willing to obey public commands with swift compliance, for they are dispersed and scattered all over the world and deprived of any source of protection,' in Luzzatto, *Discorso*, 21v–22r; *Discourse*, 57.

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IX evasive metaphor, that of the *chameleon*, which they borrow from Isaac de
 2 Pinto's *Apology for the Jewish Nation*, a treatise published in Amsterdam in 1762
 3 as a response to anti-Jewish remarks by the French philosophe Voltaire.³² By
 4 paraphrasing de Pinto's metaphor, the Tuscan delegates wished to focus their
 5 defense on the couple of submission and adaptability: if, politically speaking,
 6 Jews were only subjects, at the same time, they could not avoid being influ-
 7 enced by political regimes and from being in need to acknowledge powers
 8 according to each political situation and development.

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11 Reasserting Jewish Political Loyalty as against 12 Jacobinism Allegations

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14 After this presentation of Jewish universal qualities, the authors of the
 15 Memorandum introduce the particular history of Tuscan Jews by highlight-
 16 ing their specificities, namely their perfect happiness and longstanding obedi-
 17 ence to the Grand-Dukes. At this point, they come to introduce the object of
 18 their defense by portraying in dark colors the historical moment they have just
 19 lived. They first scorn the French republican power in Tuscany as ephemeral
 20 and false:

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22 The fatal day when the French armies expelled from Tuscany our beloved
 23 Sovereign with prepotent trickery, this was the exact beginning of the
 24 general calamities, especially for the miserable Jews. They witnessed
 25 everything and cried bitterly in secret. The heavy forced exactions, the
 26 damages to private business, the entire breakdown of commerce and
 27 manufacturing, made them very often turn their gaze in sad and silent
 28 attitude and look to their polar star, in his travel far from the native sky. If
 29 they would have preferred to give all their goods and lives to their excel-
 30 lent Sovereign with all the heart, they protested against the smallest sums

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35 32 'Le Juif est un caméléon, qui prend par tout les couleurs des différens climats qu'il habite,
 36 des différens peuples qu'il fréquente, & des différentes formes de gouvernement sous
 37 lequel il vit,' in I. de Pinto, *Apologie pour la Nation Juive ou Réflexions critiques sur le pre-
 38 mier chapitre du VII tome des Œuvres de M. de Voltaire au sujet des Juifs* (Amsterdam 1762)
 39 12. About the author, see A. Sutcliffe, 'Can a Jew Be a Philosophe? Isaac De Pinto, Voltaire,
 40X and Jewish Participation in the European Enlightenment,' *Jewish Social Studies* 6, no. 3
 41 (2000) 31–51.

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exacted by the Republicans, who vainly claimed to repay them with the counterfeit money of a chimerical liberty.³³

In order to finally tackle the issue of Jewish political affiliation, the Tuscan delegates introduce a further category – that of the *transgressors* – into their repertoire of Jewish representations.³⁴ Explicit mention is given to the presence of a small group of Jewish Jacobins within the communities, who are described as *lost sheep* deserving severe punishment:

With such painful feelings in their hearts, they saw the ephemeral Republican ceremonies in the towns and the respectable lands of their dwellings, and it was then that few young Jews, seduced by the example of many non-nationals, showed a certain attachment to the French, rather for juvenile caprice than for malevolence towards sovereignty. Call Tuscany to testify, if in Florence they are more than four or five individuals, if in Siena they are so many, and if in Livorno a small number did join the so-called Patriots, all undisciplined, naïve and for the most part extremely poor, the whole Nation was seething with impatience for not being allowed to discipline and punish these few proselytes of fanaticism, but the harsh circumstance of an imposing force obliged them to keep quiet. These imprudent individuals provoked the propagation of false opinions among the Tuscan people, already malevolent toward the Jews. And thus, the fault of the few becomes the fault of all the Jews.³⁵

33 ACEF, *Memoria*, Italian original: 'Il dì funesto che dalle Armi francesi con prepotente inganno fu allontanato dalla Toscana il suo Adorato Sovrano, quello fu il principio delle calamità generali e segnatamente dei miseri ebrei. Essi se li videro bene e ne piansero amaramente in segreto. Le forzate gravi contribuzioni, i danni particolari, la totale cessazione del commercio, e delle arti, gli facevano bene spesso rivolgere i propri sguardi in attitudine trista e muta verso la loro Stella Polare, che seguiva il suo viaggio lungi dal cielo natio. Se con abbondanza di cuore avrebbero donato tutti i propri averi e le proprie persone all'Ottimo loro Sovrano, all'incontro reclamavano anco le più piccole somme richieste dai Repubblicani che in vano ostentavano ricambiarle colla falsa moneta di una chimerica Libertà.'

34 On transgressors in Jewish communities, see D. Mano, 'Les juifs de Pitigliano à l'épreuve des réformes éclairées: les conflits intracommunautaires (1744–1796),' *Revue historique* 690 (2019) 335–369.

35 ACEF, *Memoria*, Italian original: 'Con tali sentimenti nel cuore videro l'effimere cerimonie repubblicane nelle rispettive città e terre di loro dimora, e fu allora che pochi giovinastrì ebrei, sedotti dall'esempio di molti non nazionali mostrarono qualche attaccamento ai francesi più per giovanile capriccio che per mal talento verso la Sovranità; si chiamò in testimone la Toscana tutta, se in Firenze si contano più di quattro o cinque Individui, se in Siena se ne contano altrettanti, se in Livorno un ristretto numero che si unirono ai

IX The political issue is raised here in full knowledge and consideration of the
2 trials being prepared against Jacobins all around Tuscany at that time. The
3 political affiliation of Jews being put into question, the delegates present
4 Tuscan Jewries as prominently loyal to the Grand Duke, but they also choose
5 to validate that some followers of Jacobinism have been found among them,
6 though in almost insignificant number. Communities have remained predomi-
7 nantly loyal and the only few blunders have come from *deviant* individuals,
8 mostly belonging to the transgressive, undisciplined youth or to the poor.³⁶
9 This particular narrative, confirming Jewish political loyalty but also incorpo-
10 rating a description of Jews having embraced Jacobinism, was intended to add
11 credibility to the general defense and to strengthen the most important part of
12 the Memorandum, dedicated to the description of the extremely unjustified
13 violence suffered by Tuscan Jews in 1799.

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16 **Recording Anti-Jewish Violence with Urgency, Sentiment,
17 and Precision**
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19 Although appeals and memoranda were a common practice among Tuscan
20 Jews, only very few are the expression of such a united, collective effort as in
21 the case of this Memorandum. The majority of the Jewish communities of the
22 Grand-Duchy – Florence, Leghorn, Siena, Arezzo, and Monte San Savino – finds
23 here representation, and the particular experience of most of them during the
24 counter-revolutionary uprisings of 1799 is reported in detail. In addition, the
25 Memorandum is one of the very few examples of an instantaneous diplomatic
26 reaction to most recent incidents against a number of Jewish communities.
27 Allegedly, urgency was the feeling that united most communities and moti-
28 vated them to redact a unified record. The document is in fact the result of a
29 close correspondence within the space of two weeks: in describing incidents in
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31 sedicenti Patriotti, tutti scostumati, leggeri, e la più parte miserabili, fremeva la Nazione
32 tutta per non poter correggere e punire questi pochi proseliti del fanatismo, ma la dura
33 circostanza di una forza imponente la costringeva a tacere. Questi imprudenti cagiona-
34 rono l'ingiusta e falsa opinione nel popolo toscano già proclive a odiare gli ebrei a loro
35 danno universale. Ecco si forma d'essi tutta una massa.'

36 ³⁶ On the question of Jewish youth as Jacobin-oriented, see C. Mangio, 'La communauté juive
37 de Livourne face à la Révolution française,' in B. Blumenkranz and A. Soubol, eds., *Les Juifs
38 et la Révolution française. Problèmes et aspirations* (Toulouse 1976) 191–210. For a broader
39 Italian perspective on this aspect, see Turi, *Guerre civili in Italia*, 109–114; G. Symcox, 'The
40X Jews of Italy in the Triennio Giacobino, 1796–1799,' in D.N. Myers, M. Ciavolella, P.H. Reill
41 and G. Symcox, eds., *Acculturation and Its Discontents: The Italian Jewish Experience
42 between Exclusion and Inclusion* (Toronto 2008) 148–163.
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Monte San Savino, Arezzo, and Siena, the four delegates were copying community reports they had received just some days before from their coreligionists in those towns, as evidenced by several letters that survived in the archives.³⁷ They significantly highlight similarities and differences in Jewish experiences depending on places and times: the records concerning anti-Jewish incidents in Monte San Savino, Arezzo, and Siena are put at the forefront, whereas the full description of the attacks on the Jews of Leghorn and Florence is reserved to other separate memoranda.³⁸

The first account deals with the expulsion of the Jews from Monte San Savino, marking the end of this community.³⁹ This was the first Jewish community to experience the mounting of anti-Jewish violence in 1799, even before the Jews of Arezzo:

Once the fortunate and nonetheless terrible counter-revolution erupted in the heart of the Valdichiana, a raging people unjustly addressed against us, the miserable Jews, all the hatred they harbored. The Jews of Monte San Savino, most of them extremely poor and all completely unable to imagine or perform even the smallest political intrigue, were the first ones to suffer the sad consequences of this; a big crowd misled by false prejudice assaulted them ferociously with the intention of sacrificing them in the name of a murderous zeal. (...) Almost in the same manner were treated the Jews of Arezzo, who in the last three months have languished in the horrors of jail, threatened each hour with the ultimate massacre.⁴⁰

37 Regarding these letters, see L. Neppi Modona Viterbo and S. Oberdorfer, '1799: Un pogrom in Toscana,' *La Rassegna Mensile di Israel* 53, no. 3 (1987) 249.

38 Concerning the incidents in Leghorn and Florence, two additional memoranda are found in the archives of the Jewish community of Florence, see ACEF, D.5.1, III. Incidents against the Jews in Pisa and Pitigliano are inexplicably not included in this collection, and no Jewish deputy is mentioned in relation to other minor contexts such as Montepulciano, Cortona, Prato, Pistoia, Grosseto, or Portoferraio. This can be partly explained by the need for immediate action, by difficulties in the communication or by the absence of an organized community in those localities.

39 On the Jews of Monte San Savino and their expulsion in 1799, see M. Perani, J. Arbib and R. Giulietti, eds., *La Nazione ebrea di Monte San Savino e il suo Campaccio* (Florence 2014).

40 ACEF, *Memoria*, It.or.: 'Allora che s'accese la fortunata e d'altronde terribile controrevoluzione nel seno della Valdichiana, allora fu che un Popolo furibondo spiegò l'odio ingiusto che covava contro i disgraziati Ebrei; Quelli del Monte S. Savino la più parte miserabili e tutti incapaci d'immaginare, nonché d'eseguire il minimo politico maneggio, furono i primi a provarne i tristi effetti; Una folla ingannata da falsa prevenzione li assalì ferocemente coll'intenzione di sacrificarli all'entusiasmo di un micidial Zelo; (...) Presso a poco

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If anti-Jewish hatred in Monte San Savino and Arezzo is expressed through threats, pillages, expulsions, and detentions, the massacre of Jews in Siena stands out as the most extreme incident of 1799, escalating from threats to physical violence. It involved thirteen victims, numerous wounded, severe pillage in many Jewish homes, and damage to the synagogue furniture and the Torah scrolls. The tragic event is described in full details in the Memorandum:

Still, what has been exposed so far is nothing compared to the tragic scene in the town of Siena. On June 28, the troops of Arezzo suddenly entered in that town and during the time that they were busy to drive out the few Republicans who were still found there, some murderers together with others from the people of Siena, attacked the enclosure of the Jews to commit the most inhuman excesses (...) There were thirteen murdered, and among them four people from Monte San Savino who just came and found a shelter, and as many wounded, and if the commander of the troops of Arezzo had not rushed to intervene, the complete massacre of that miserable Nation would have surely occurred.⁴¹

The detailed account of the extreme violence in the ghetto of Siena takes an important place in the document.⁴² The precision in describing murder and devastation pairs with the attention in expressing emotion through the use of oxymorons and other literary formulations. The historical approach is also used to associate the dark violence of 1799 with violence from distant past: 'The smoke and the stink spreading around the town covered the face of the sun, that since time immemorial had not seen such execrable victims, so abhorred from the Divinity.'⁴³

nell'istessa maniera furono trattati gli ebrei d'Arezzo che fino da tre mesi languiscono nelli orrori di una carcere, minacciati ad ora ad ora dell'ultimo eccidio.'

41 ACEF, *Memoria*, It.or.: 'Ma l'esposto fin qui è nulla a fronte della scena tragica che presentò la Città di Siena. Il di 28 Giugno entrarono improvvisamente le Truppe Aretine in quella città e nel tempo che si occupavano a scacciare i pochi repubblicani che colà si trovavano, alcuni assassini uniti ad altri del popolo senese, investirono il recinto degli ebrei per commettervi i più inumani eccessi (...) Tredici furono gli uccisi nel qual numero si contano quattro del Monte S. Savino, che colà si erano procurati un rifugio, ed altrettanti feriti, e se non accorreva il Comandante delle Truppe Aretine, in breve ora seguiva il totale eccidio di quella disgraziata Nazione.' The text quotes a separate memorandum produced by the chiefs of the Jewish University of Siena, see ACEF, D.5.1, III.

42 See the entire text of the Memorandum in the appendix.

43 ACEF, *Memoria*, It.or.: 'Il fumo ed il fetore spargendosi per la città oscurava la faccia del sole, che da tempo immemorabile non aveva veduto queste esecrande vittime tanto dalla Divinità abborrite.'

The Memorandum shows how the tragic events in Siena put Tuscan Jews as a whole into a situation of tremendous fear and insecurity. The four delegates call for urgent help and protection as against the risk that similar attacks may follow in the two major towns of Florence and Leghorn, where most of the Tuscan Jews live:

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If the true and tearful history of Monte San Savino, Arezzo, and Siena makes humanity and religion tremble, the worries for that same Nation in Florence and Leghorn are not less frightening. As against the providential steps taken by the local governments in our defense, the bad mood of those peoples manifests itself from hour to hour and puts our lives at constant risk.⁴⁴

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Quite interestingly, the Jewish delegates of Tuscany offer a portrait of counter-revolutionary anti-Judaism as a largescale phenomenon, involving the entire region. They describe it as a mix of old and new: old immemorial religious hatred – for ‘this infectious hatred against the poor Jews is not new’ – matching with contemporary ignorance – since ‘some relentless enemy spreads poisonous tales’ and ‘the gullible populace endorses them.’ Anti-Jewish violence perpetrators are mostly described as coming from the lower strata of society, belonging to the most ignorant populace, whereas the Tuscan government and the counter-revolutionary troops are generally presented as ‘wise’ and ‘compassionate’ toward Jews. Deference to the established power is incontestably a rule throughout the document.

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Asking for Justice, Acting from within the Judicial Process

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Written in the immediate aftermath of the *Viva Maria* uprisings, the Memorandum of the Jewish delegates of Tuscany served first and foremost as an act of complaint against the brutal violence of 1799. In addition, the document was intended to be a persuasive act of defense against calumny, namely against allegations of Jewish Jacobinism. Such a call for listening to Jewish arguments was meant to refute these allegations on legal grounds, and

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44 ACEF, *Memoria*, It.or.: ‘Se la veridica e lacrimevole Istoria di Monte S. Savino, Arezzo e Siena fa fremere l’umanità e la religione, i timori per la nazione istessa di Firenze e Livorno non sono meno spaventevoli. A fronte dei providi passi, presi dai rispettivi Governi in loro difesa, il male umore dei popoli si manifesta ad ora ad ora e li pone in continovo pericolo.’ The situation in Leghorn was particularly alarming, see ACEF, D.5.1, III.

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it had to reach the Grand Duke in Vienna even before his power was restored in Florence. The Jewish delegates of Tuscany thus offer documentary proof,⁴⁵ stress their innocence through reference to recent judicial history,⁴⁶ call for law and justice to stand up against anti-Jewish calumny and persecution.⁴⁷ They show particular attention in denouncing ‘impotence’ and false rumors against the Jews.⁴⁸

In fact, toward the end of the Memorandum, the four delegates come to address the social issue by focusing on the dreadful, long-lasting consequences of calumny. They claim for the legal right to defend and safeguard the Nation’s name and dignity. In their eyes, calumny is a moral crime, even worse than physical violence: it must be contrasted with rulings reinforcing State protection and legal rights for Jews:

The only remedy that remains to this unfortunate Nation is its own innocence and the human heart of the righteous, pious, and excellent Ferdinand III, to whose clemency they appeal in prostration, pleading for those many vexations and false calumnies being ceased with a fast and persuasive sovereign speech, and if ever those calumnies unfortunately came to the royal throne’s knowledge, shall he grant place and time for the defense of these pleaders and for the legal distinction between the guilty few and the innocent totality. Surely it will be an easy task for them to prove with ample evidence the falsity of those accusations (...).⁴⁹

45 ‘Nothing can better illustrate the persecution against the Jewish Nation than the issued edict that we are enclosing here (document 1). This edict inflicts the exile from that land to the miserable rests of that Nation, elderly, women, children, and infirm (...)’ in ACEF, *Memoria*.

46 ‘As it already happened in past times in the scrupulous process filed in that same town against more than two hundred indicted of Jacobinism, among whom not a single Jew had been found,’ in ACEF, *Memoria*.

47 ‘Such an illegal procedure prejudices the sovereign right as much as it would offend the jurisprudence of the least civilized Nations, because there is no code of laws such indigestible as that permitting to prosecute people, and even punish them, on the ground of false popular claims,’ in ACEF, *Memoria*.

48 ‘The authors of this abominable crime, in order to cover up their barbarous act, even had recourse to imposture, spreading rumours that the Jews had taken up arms, which is completely false, even if that false assertion would sit on the mere case of some national guards, who might have been seen in that moment with the arms given to them for their service, the same arms they certainly abandoned at the first appearance of the Imperial flag. Besides that, the Jews were all unarmed, as it has been proven by the rigorous house search made immediately after,’ in ACEF, *Memoria*.

49 ACEF, *Memoria*, It.or.: ‘L’unico scampo che resta a questa sventurata nazione è la propria innocenza e l’umanissimo Cuore del Giusto, del Pio, dell’Ottimo Ferdinando III, alla

The Jewish delegates of Tuscany thus formulate a demand for justice, namely a demand for a judicial process from which they trust to obtain both royal protection and legal reparation. As evidenced by archival sources, this appeal to the Grand-Duke had positive outcomes: a rescript was issued in October 1799, in which the sovereign revoked all abuse, including some important fiscal exploitations against Jews, and accredited them with the right to appeal to court for judicial investigation and legal reparation.⁵⁰

A Jewish Culture of Lawfulness and Contention

The Memorandum of 1799 is a complex example of Jewish defense based on legal and political communication, in which the authors tried to express both credibility and normalization, while their Jewish communities were still living in a situation of deep distress. It is also an illuminating example of Jewish diplomacy, in which the cardinal themes of political loyalty and royal alliance have been used to obtain legal recognition and influence the judicial processes in course.⁵¹ Finally, it offers new original evidence on the crucial role played by contentious politics in Jewish history. One expression, in particular, summarizes the role of law and contention in Jewish thought and practice in the Memorandum: it is the expression 'defense through tears' – meaning the process of obtaining protection through both prayers (addressed to the heavenly almighty) and supplications (addressed to the earthly powers). As we have pointed out, in this extraordinary document the narrative follows a rhetoric process from historical apology to legal defense. Apologetics comes first in narratives of self-representation and self-justification: hence, the need to point out universalistic qualities (the obedient minority) along with particularistic ones (a diverse minority), but also the attention on political differentiation from the majority (the ghettoized community vs. the outside society) and within its own group (loyalists vs. Jacobins). The defensive discourse is subsequently built through public blame on dissent, namely on transgressive

di cui Clemenza prostrati ricorrono supplicando, che con un pronto autorevole Sovrano Oracolo ponga freno a tante vessazioni e alle false calunnie, e se mai per disavventura fossero giunte arditamente sino al Real Trono, conceda luogo e tempo alla giustificazione degli Oratori e alla distinzione legale dei pochi rei dalla totalità innocente, sicuri che facil cosa sarà per loro il provare ad evidenza la falsità delle accuse (...)'

50 Sonnino, 'Gli Ebrei a Livorno,' 47.

51 'The archives of Tuscan police abound with their outcries to the Throne as much as with the providential resolutions taken by the righteous and impartial government in order to defend them from such a persecution,' in ACEF, *Memoria*.

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youth or poor people. The call for the right of defense is finally pushed forward as a general declaration of trust in the legal process. This was meant to show Jewish determination to have their own dignity guaranteed, through the right to commit to trial and to request for reparation. This was also the way Tuscan Jewish communities both reasserted traditional forms of political alliance with the sovereign and introduced a judicial contention, while trying to exert some influence on the political transition and face the post-traumatic circumstances of the summer of 1799.

Memorandum

It is undeniable and well known that the Jewish Nation, scattered all over the surface of the earth, excluded from all lucrative civil employment, had to limit its abilities to manufacturing and commerce in order to acquire its subsistence. This necessity has produced two advantages in the States where this Nation is either invited or accepted: the first is the development of an important branch of public happiness; the second is that, of the money earned with sweat, the Nation is, so to speak, only the depository, since it is always ready to transmit it to its own respective Homeland for any good purpose, and for the needs of the State. Without ever having wished to increase in number, nor to rise to power, it secures tolerance with the submission to governments and to laws, and gains defense through tears.

Considering, then, what the Jews might be among the political bodies, they are only imperceptible atoms turning in the vortex formed by the revolution of a big planet; and, wisely, it has been said by a famous author that the Jews are like the chameleon, who takes all the colors that the sun gives him according to its position, and that, in all the States where they cohabit with other Nations, they are like them faithful subjects and perfect citizens. Yet, in past times, there had been ferocious enemies who unceasingly rose against them with the dark colors of calumny, who, in those days of ignorance, threw accusations, as false as puerile, with the purpose of calling into question their reputation and their existence, but the Heaven who protects the innocent moved those same Monarchs and High Pontiffs in their defense, and once accurately examined the causes, these latter uncovered all perfidy and inflicted punishment on false informers. Poland, France, and the Roman State, present this kind of incidents in big number and histories are so well-known that it would seem superfluous to cite them all here. These solid truths are only mentioned as a preamble to the subject of the present compassionate Memorandum.

The Jewish Nation who is well-established in the happy Tuscany since several centuries, the same Jewish Nation who, under the old government of the Medici, had obtained protection and privileges, the same one who was always regarded with a good fatherly eye by the glorious Sovereigns of the happy House of Austria, that same one who always fostered and preserved the most tender feelings of loyalty, affection and even adoration for these Monarchs, this same Nation, all flooded with tears, is forced today to extend its arms towards the Royal throne of the pious and magnanimous Ferdinand III and to implore a quick help and a solid shelter from his Royal and human heart, as against so many hardships it has suffered and still suffers.

The fatal day when the French armies expelled from Tuscany our beloved Sovereign with prepotent trickery, this was the exact beginning of the general calamities, especially for the miserable Jews. They witnessed everything and cried bitterly in secret. The heavy forced exactions, the damages to private business, the entire breakdown of commerce and manufacturing, made them very often turn their gaze in sad and silent attitude and look to their polar star, in his travel far from the native sky. If they would have given all their goods and lives to their excellent Sovereign with all the heart, quite the contrary they protested against the smallest sums exacted by the Republicans, who vainly claimed to repay them with the counterfeit money of a chimerical liberty. With such painful feelings in their hearts, they saw the ephemeral Republican ceremonies in the towns and the respectable lands of their dwellings, and it was then that few young Jews, seduced by the example of many non-nationals, showed a certain attachment to the French, rather for juvenile caprice than for malevolence towards sovereignty. Call Tuscany to testify, if in Florence they are more than four or five individuals, if in Siena they are so many, and if in Livorno a small number did join the so-called Patriots, all undisciplined, naïve and for the most part extremely poor, the whole Nation was seething with impatience for not being allowed to discipline and punish these few proselytes of fanaticism, but the harsh circumstance of an imposing force obliged them to keep quiet. These imprudent individuals provoked the propagation of false opinions among the Tuscan people, already malevolent toward the Jews. And thus, the fault of the few becomes the fault of all the Jews. Some relentless enemy spreads poisonous tales; the gullible populace indorses them; the stories are amplified and reverberate; some reflections are raised, and very quickly, when arbitrariness prevails, the popular sentence brings about the discredit and the loss of the most innocent persons.

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Once the fortunate and nonetheless terrible counter-revolution erupted in the heart of the Valdichiana, a raging people unjustly addressed the hatred they harbored against us, the miserable Jews. The Jews of Monte San Savino, most part of them extremely poor and all completely unable to imagine or perform even the smallest political intrigue, were the first ones to suffer the sad consequences of this; a big crowd misled by false prejudice assaulted them ferociously with the intention of sacrificing them in the name of a murderous zeal. Some compassionate people from the civil body, together with the judge and the chief of clergy, disapproved that bloody execution and proposed to put those Jews in jail. That's where elderly, adults, and youths were transferred in the midst of insults, while being harshly beaten with strokes and covered in bruises. Six days lasted their miserable detention in the agony of death, from which they were freed miraculously. After this term, the most accurate inquiry and search notwithstanding, given that no shade of guilt had been found as regards the calumnies raised against them, they were released and restored to their desperate families. But since that evil-minded people clearly looked for pretexts in order to commit their barbarous plan, some families thought to leave for some days; part of them relocated in Siena, part in Florence, leaving all their goods and homes under faithful custody, without even taking with them the necessary to live for some days, because the people prevented them from doing it in that moment as much as at some future date.

In this time, the Government of Arezzo took power over all the Valdichiana and, as a consequence, its inhabitants searched for the poor Jews' merchandises and goods to be transported to Arezzo. Some homes and shops, in Monte San Savino as well as in other places where Jews used to live, were sacked and others were barred and sealed, so that in the course of three months two hundred people would have starved to death, if they did not receive some limited help from the Universities of Florence and Leghorn, and now lacking even this they are found in the most deplorable poverty.

Nothing can better illustrate the persecution against the Jewish Nation than the issued edict that we are enclosing here (document 1). This edict inflicts the exile from that land to the miserable rests of that Nation, elderly, women, children, and infirm, by the allegation of correlation with the French and other ridiculous, baseless, and unproven claims, and despite the complaints of the wise government of Arezzo as regards such an enormous injustice, they were obliged to leave because threatened of massacre by those fierce peasants.

Such an illegal procedure prejudices the sovereign right as much as it would offend the jurisprudence of the least civilized Nations, because there is no code of law so indigestible as that permitting to prosecute people, and even punish them, on the ground of false popular claims. But this infectious hatred against the poor Jews is not new among the people of Monte San Savino, who always vilified and oppressed them, and the archives of Tuscan police abound with their outcries to the Throne as much as with the providential resolutions taken by the righteous and impartial government in order to defend them from such a persecution.

Almost in the same manner were treated the Jews of Arezzo, who in the last three months have languished in the horrors of jail, threatened each hour with the ultimate massacre, if that compassionate Provisional Government would not divert the cruel sickle hanging above their heads.

Still, what has been exposed so far is nothing compared to the tragic scene in the town of Siena. On June 28, the troops of Arezzo suddenly entered in that town and during the time that they were busy to drive out the few Republicans who were still found there, some murderers together with others from the people of Siena, attacked the enclosure of the Jews to commit the most inhuman excesses. They shot the first found lost outside the enclosure, one of these miserables who thought to have found shelter in a church having being chased off and shot dead on the door. A wife and husband who run frightened in the street had the same sort. Another was dismembered still alive, while all the corpses and the still palpitant limbs were thrown into the flames in the middle of the public place. The smoke and the stink spreading around the town covered the face of the sun, that since time immemorial had not seen such execrable victims, so abhorred from the Divinity. The ashes of these unlucky were spread by the wind and the limbs of another thrown into the sewers. In the meanwhile, inside the enclosure of the Jews several people assaulted the synagogue, where six persons were praying; one single murderer furiously killed, with a short and knotty cudgel, a father with his son, an octogenarian and a child in tender age, two other boys remained half-alive and left for dead. Directing their anger even against the inanimate things, they broke lamps, candlesticks, woods, and marbles, and they sacrilegiously slashed and trampled on the books of the Bible kept in that sacred deposit, also worshipped by Christians.

In the midst of the blood and the wreck, they took to burgle the few silvers, the ornaments of the Bibles, and the public and charity cash boxes. In the same time, from within the enclosure, gun shots reverberated as much as cries of the unarmed and the wounded, who pleaded for life in

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vain with those who, barbarian and deaf to piety, did not spare the female sex, neither the teenager nor the revered old age. Even a pregnant woman was sacrificed to their fury, and together with her mother an innocent fetus died before ever being born. There were thirteen murdered, and among them four people from Monte San Savino who just came and found a shelter, and as many wounded, and if the commander of the troops of Arezzo had not rushed to intervene, the complete massacre of that miserable Nation would have surely occurred. Many houses were sacked and plundered, some shops pillaged, books of commerce and registers torn and taken away. Once this furious devastation was stopped, a heavy contribution was imposed, that they had to pay in two hours with the remaining properties. House searches were made but nothing was found corroborating their imagined accusations, as it already happened in past times in the scrupulous process filed in that same town against more than two hundred indicted of Jacobinism, among whom not a single Jew had been found.

However, the impositions and threats continued and those unfortunate are still plunged into misery and despair. The authors of this abominable crime, in order to cover up their barbarous act, even had recourse to imposture, spreading rumors that the Jews had taken up arms, which is completely false, even if that false assertion would sit on the mere case of some national guards, who might have been seen in that moment with the arms given to them for their service, the same arms they certainly abandoned at the first appearance of the Imperial flag. Besides that, the Jews were all unarmed, as it has been proven by the rigorous house search made immediately after.

If the true and tearful history of Monte San Savino, Arezzo, and Siena makes humanity and religion tremble, the worries for that same Nation in Florence and Leghorn are not less frightening. As against the providential steps taken by the local governments in our defense, the bad mood of those peoples manifests itself from hour to hour and puts our lives at constant risk.

The only remedy that remains to this unfortunate Nation is its own innocence and the human heart of the righteous, pious, and excellent Ferdinand III, to whose clemency they appeal in prostration, pleading for those many vexations and false calumnies being ceased with a fast and persuasive sovereign speech, and if ever those calumnies unfortunately came to the royal throne's knowledge, shall he grant place and time for the defense of these pleaders and for the legal distinction between the

guilty few and the innocent totality. Surely it will be an easy task for them to prove with ample evidence the falsity of those accusations, as well as the loyalty, the attachment, and the tenderness they had in the past and presently have for their beloved Sovereign. That is that.

Florence, July 23, 1799. The delegates of the Jewish Nation in Tuscany: Ezechia Tranquillo Vita Baraffael, Cesare Lampronti, Isac Franchetti, Salomone Tedeschi

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