

the general oppression, the Polish protestant church was virtually obliterated, a few continued and still continue but it is only a very tiny remnant.

Poland also had a strong Unitarian community under the leadership of Socinius (Sozzini, 1525-1562) and his nephew-successor, Faustus. This was a work in its day with more than 300 churches at its peak and a considerable influence. It survived the first Jesuitic attack and gained a number of refugee conversions with a hybridized reformed unitarianism (a very unlikely combination). Eventually (1638) the move was crushed and in 1658 membership in the body was made a capitol offense. The core document for the group is the Racov confession.

II.9.c Counter-
Reform Failures

Counter Reformation Failures

Netherlands, the Low Countries

The struggle for the reformation in the Low Countries would eventually leave the states of the Netherlands protestant and the Belgic territories Catholic. In brief we sketch the events:

Low Countries

During most of this time (the age of the Reformation) the Netherlands were under the technical administration of Spain. They were part of the Empire as inherited territories under the Spanish crown and so were personal possessions of Charles V. These were vigorous states with an economy that was both agrarian and mercantile with burgeoning populations and every sort of business. Their cities were the merchandising capitols of the time, in many ways, and whatever happened in other parts of the world was soon known in the Low Countries.

Consequently the movement of Lutheran and Reformed ideals filtered in quickly and by 1531 there were Dutch Bibles and other bits of Christian literature. In 1561 the Belgic confession of faith would be written and the Dutch Reformed Synod would come to pass in 1571 and all of this in spite of interference by the Spanish crown and lots of imperial intrigue. After 1556 Philip II was determined to hold the Low Countries for Spain and to extirpate protestantism in whatever form it was found. He left for Spain in 1559 and allowed his half-sister to rule while implementing inquisitorial practices...a device that tended to unite the Dutch bodies in opposition to him. War was soon on all sides with atrocities.