

Too Little, Too Late

Why we should see Franciscus van den Enden as a follow-up of Pieter Corneliszoon Plockhoy instead of the mastermind behind Benedictus de Spinoza

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Historian and Spinoza-specialist Koenraad Oege Meinsma once argued: if you are neither burning down cities and churches during your lifetime, nor building statues for yourself, nor signing thousands of papers, it could happen that after a while, despite all your achievements, you enter the shadows of the caverns of history (Meinsma 1896, 125). In such cases, like in the case of Spinoza's Latin teacher Franciscus van den Enden, there is fruitful ground for the most glorious rumors. For example, some suggested that Van den Enden played a role in the diplomatic settlement between the Dutch Republic and the Spanish Empire in the period 1645 – 1648 (Meinsma 1896, 128 – 129). Others claimed that Van den Enden was offered a chair as professor at the age of eighteen, still being a student (Meinsma 1896, 126). It has also been suggested that he rejected an offer to become an employee at the court of the Hungarian King (Meininger & van Suchtelen 1980, 13). In addition, the Dutch expert on seventeenth century philosophy Wim Klever claimed that Van den Enden was 'the hidden agent behind Spinoza's genius' (Klever 1991, 631). He argued that Van den Enden had a major influence on the young Spinoza. This influence is twofold. According to Klever, Van den Enden had a mediating role between the philosophy of René Descartes and Spinoza and Van den Enden convinced Spinoza of his own political views (Klever 1991, 617; 631).

In this paper, I will first give a short biography of Franciscus van den Enden and try to shine a different light on who he actually was. Second, I will outline the claim of Wim Klever that Van den Enden was the 'hidden agent' behind Spinozism. Third, I will attempt to counter this argument. This will be based on the facts that there is too little evidence and that the political awakening of Van den Enden came too late to back up the claim

of Klever. Fourth, I will give also a short biography of the political idealist Pieter Corneliszoon Plockhoy and I will argue that it is more fruitful to see Van den Enden as a successor of this contemporary, if we want to get a better understanding of what Van den Enden actually tried to accomplish in his two books. In that paragraph I will show that the political awakening of Van den Enden came after he met Plockhoy in 1661 and not before met Spinoza in 1655. Finally, I will close with the conclusion that Van den Enden was most likely triggered by Plockhoy to develop a political career that would eventually end at the gallows.

About Franciscus van den Enden

In this chapter I will give a biography of the main character of this paper: Franciscus van den Enden. He was born in Antwerp in 1602, on February the 9th. In his youth, he became a Jesuit and therefore he left Antwerp to become a 'noviciate' at Mechlin in 1619. In 1629, he went to Louvain to study grammar and theology, only to be dismissed four years later from the Jesuit order (Mertens 2003, 295). Between 1633 and 1642 his whereabouts are unknown.

The first time we hear from Van den Enden again is in 1642. In this year he gets married to Clara Maria Vermeren (Meinsma 1896, 127). Together they had five children (Klever 1991, 618). In 1645 he arrives in Amsterdam for the first time, only to leave it again shortly after his arrival (Meinsma 1896, 127 – 128). According to Meinsma, we do not know how he fed his family in the meantime (Meinsma 1896, 128). This is also the basis for the first rumor mentioned in the introduction. Perhaps he was earning some money working as a diplomat for the Dutch

Republic in Madrid (Meinsma 1896, 128). The only source that confirms this rumor is a poem by Antonides van der Goes (Meinsma 1896, 128).¹ Theoretically, it is possible that he worked as a diplomat in Spain, because he spoke Spanish (Israel 2002, 181). In addition, it is noteworthy that he was abroad between 1645 and October 1648. The poem of Van der Goes suggested that it might have been connected to the negotiations leading up to the Peace of Münster (Meinsma 1896, 129). After he returned to Amsterdam he opened a bookshop (Meinsma 1896, 129). When he had to close down his bookshop, he opened a Latin school. This undertaking showed to be more successful. After a while his school had a better reputation than the official Latin school in Amsterdam (Meinsma 1896, 130). In the Latin school, Van den Enden expressed some very progressive ideas concerning education. According to Van den Enden, the easiest way to learn something is to learn it playfully (Meinsma 1896, 132). For example, in the mid-fifties of the seventeenth century he taught his students Latin by letting them perform a play in a theatre (Meinsma 1896, 134).

It was in this period that he became the Latin teacher of Spinoza (1655 – 1657) (Klever 1991, 628). The first year Van den Enden was nothing but a teacher to Spinoza. But this changed when the young Spinoza's life fell to ruin. His family business, which consisted of importing and selling Mediterranean fruits, got bankrupted (Van Bunge 2003, 931). Shortly after that, he was kicked out of the Jewish community in Amsterdam for reasons we still do not know. It was Van den Enden who looked after him and gave him a place to stay (Klever 1992, 21). That year, Spinoza became a really close associate of Van den Enden (Klever 1991, 628). According to Klever, this must be the period in which Van den Enden influenced Spinoza on a large scale.

It was only during the second half of his adult life that Van den Enden began to utter his political ideas. Contemporaries considered him to be an atheist (Israel 2002, 175). According to historian Jonathan Israel, he was considered to be the leader of the philosophical 'atheists' in the city of Amsterdam (Israel 1998, 788). The Amsterdam magistrates also forbade him to discuss his ideas in public (Israel 2002, 175). In 1662 he published his first book called: *Short Narrative of New Netherland's Situation, Virtues, Natural Privileges, and Special Aptitude for Population; Together*

with Some Requests, Discourses, Deductions, etc. for That Purpose at Various Times around the End of the Year 1661 Presented by Some Interested Persons to the Honorable Lords Burgomasters of this Town, or their Honorable Lords Delegates, etc. See more broadly after the Preface the Short Contents, together with the Warning to the Booksellers, next to this on the other or opposite side (Klever 1991, 622).

Fortunately, the title has been mostly shortened to *Short Narrative of New Netherland's* (Klever 1991, 622).² In this work Van den Enden presented the idea of settling a commonwealth in North America (which was actually not his own idea, but an idea of Ploekhoy) (Israel 2002, 177). The ideological fundament of this ideal state was, as he described it, 'the foundation of strict equality' (Klever 1991, 623). It should be noted that he did not intend to implement a leveling system in his commonwealth (Klever 1991, 623). Nonetheless, the commonwealth was based on the idea that all laws were commonly profitable to all people (Klever 1991, 624). Van den Enden presumed that all people strive for the highest level of well-being, even if this harms the well-being of another person (Klever 1991, 624). In order to deal with this negative side effect of pursuing maximum well-being, Van den Enden proposed complete openness of affairs. In this way it is impossible to become corrupted (Klever 1991, 624). In addition, people should receive proper education (Klever 1991, 624), because 'reasonable, enlightened' inhabitants, understand that pursuing the 'common best' is also in their own best interest. Finally, within Van den Enden's commonwealth, there should also be freedom of speech and religion (Klever 1991, 624). If all features of his ideal society are summed up, it must be concluded that his ideas were surprisingly modern. The same can be said about his second work as published in 1665 (Israel 2002, 175).

His second work *Vrye Politijke Stellingen (Free Political Institutions)* was strongly egalitarian and democratic in voice, which also made it anti-monarchical. Moreover, it was also anticlerical (Israel 2002, 175). He was not so much anti-monarchy for the perversity and arbitrariness of kings; rather, he argued that monarchy and proper education could not exist next to each other (Israel 2002, 176). Through good education he wanted to overcome inequality, because he believed that when you enlighten the

people, you will destroy the preconditions of a monarchy, which, according to Van den Enden, are greed, superstition, and obsequiousness (Israel 2002, 176). When the people are all equal and, moreover, enlightened, this would be a problem for organized religion, because organized religion, a statement which Van den Enden copied from people like Machiavelli and Vanini, is just a political instrument to control the people (Israel 2002, 176). Thus, a free commonwealth and organized religion are not compatible with each other. To come back to his idea about equality, he did not only want to pursue this for men, but also for women, boys, and girls (Israel 2002, 177). This far-reaching idea about equality was probably based on his high expectations of the capabilities of mankind (Israel 2002, 177). He was convinced of the idea that someone's private interest would be much alike the common good in his utopian commonwealth (Israel 2002, 177). But his belief in the capabilities of the everyday man was even greater. Van den Enden believed that when you translate knowledge from disciplines such as medicine, science or philosophy from Latin into the everyday language, it would also be understood by the common everyday people, and not only by experts (Israel 2002, 176). Thus every human being is not only equal from a moral point of view, but they are also equal in their capabilities.

In 1661, Plockhoy and his followers, who wanted to establish a community based on the principles of equality and liberty (Mertens 2003, 796), asked Van den Enden if he could be their spokesman in the negotiations with the Amsterdam city government for the establishment of a new state in North America (Israel 2002, 179). Both were part of a larger group (a radical tradition if you will), who called themselves 'Collegiants'. Among them were people like Jarig Jelles, a longtime friend of Spinoza, and Adriaan Koerbagh, who advocated the democratic idea of a 'government by the people' (Van Bunge 2012, 13; 17; 23). To return to the request of Plockhoy: Van den Enden accepted and, moreover, he was successful. In 1663, a group of 'Plockhoyists' went to North America to establish a new state. This, however, ended in a tragic disaster as they were overrun by the English army a year later (Israel 2002, 179). In addition to this expedition, Van den Enden also wanted to launch his own expedition, but he failed his attempt (Van Bunge 2011, 35). However, the dream of establishing a 'free republic' was still alive (Israel 2002, 181).

In 1668, the Amsterdam magistracy summoned him to leave Amsterdam because of his 'malign influences in the city' (Israel 2002, 181). In 1671, he left Amsterdam and went to Paris, where he opened a Latin school (Israel 2002, 181 – 182). During his time in Paris, he, along with some French noblemen, came up with the idea to liberate Normandy from the kingdom of France (Israel 2002, 181). In order to achieve this, he tried to persuade the Spanish governor in Brussels to collaborate (Van den Enden at the age of 72(!) actually went to Brussels to meet him) (Israel 2002, 182). But, King Louis XIV got wind of this idea and when Van den Enden returned to Paris he was arrested with his fellow conspirators (Israel 2002, 182 – 183). The noblemen were beheaded, because this was 'the more elevated' form of execution (Israel 2002, 183 – 184). Van den Enden, however, was not a nobleman and was executed by hanging (Israel 2002, 184).

Wim Klever's claim

I have to admit that Van den Enden was a very remarkable man. He had some very progressive ideas for a seventeenth-century Latin teacher and he was also involved in some very interesting political activities. Based on these facts, Klever can easily conclude that Van den Enden was a 'radical democrat' (Klever 1991, 625), but the question is: is there more than meets the eye? According to Klever, there is. About the relationship between Van den Enden and Spinoza, Klever argued that we must interpret Van den Enden as 'Proto-Spinoza' (Klever 1991, 630). He even called Van den Enden 'the hidden agent behind Spinoza's genius' (Klever 1991, 631). And after that, he proclaimed the following about Van den Enden:

The origin of Spinoza's anomalous philosophy is no longer a riddle. It was a former Jesuit, sent down on account of his errors, who inculcated the principles of reason in Spinoza's mind and who was the mediator between Descartes and Spinoza. (Klever 1991, 631).

How did he come up with that conclusion? He uses four arguments to prove his point which I will present in the following paragraphs.

First, there are great similarities between the works of Van den Enden and the works of Spinoza. When we look at the political theory of both authors, we can only conclude that the foundations are quite similar (Klever 1991, 627). According to Klever, both authors are political realists and both favor democracy (Klever 1991, 627). However, there is more. Klever mentioned ten different similarities in the introduction of his translation of Van den Enden's *Free Political Institutions* (Klever 1992, 102 – 109). I will name the four most important ones. Firstly, both in the vision of Spinoza and that of Van den Enden, God and nature are the same. Spinoza stated in his book *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* that: "if we say that everything happens according to the laws of nature or by the power of God, we say the same thing"³ (Spinoza 2008, 138). Van den Enden has a similar phrase in his work *Short Narrative of New Netherland's Situation*, which predate the works of Spinoza, namely "of God or nature's way"⁴ (Klever 1991, 628; 1992, 102) (Van den Enden 1662, 69). Besides that, it is unquestionable that there are some traces of determinism in the ideas of Van den Enden. He said: "The necessity (Nootdwang) is of a kind that it is not possible for a human being that he could have done something else, then that he did"⁵ (Van den Enden 1992, 231). The third similarity is revealed in Van den Enden's rejection of the idea of Descartes that mind and body are two substances (Klever 1991, 629). Van den Enden said about this:

A man consist of body and soul and because of that he strives after two forms of well-being, but these are that much intertwined, that if one of them has a lack of well-being, the whole human being more or less is suffering,... (Van den Enden 1992, 144).⁶

Maybe the quote is a bit ambiguous, but to Klever this proves that Van den Enden rejects the mind-body dualism of Descartes. Finally, according to Klever both authors had the same ideas about the so-called three kinds of knowledge (Klever 1991, 629). Both authors also used the same names for these kinds of knowledge, namely 'fancying', 'believing' and 'clear knowledge'. Therefore, it is indeed possible to conclude that there are, besides the political matters, some similar ideas in the works of Van den Enden and Spinoza. However, this still does not mean that

Van den Enden was the great inspirer of Spinoza. Are there any arguments that could substantiate that claim? According to Klever there are.

In his second argument Klever stated that Van den Enden was already involved in some political matters in the early fifties of the seventeenth century, long before Spinoza published his political ideas (Klever 1991, 628). There are three sources that suggest some political interest of Van den Enden. The first is the poem of Van der Goes. This poem claimed that Van den Enden was a diplomat during the war and that he had some interaction with the court of the Hungarian king. But there are no other sources that can confirm this. In other words, the credibility of this source can be questioned. The second source is a political pamphlet. Van den Enden republished a political pamphlet in 1650, when he worked as a publisher in his bookshop. This political pamphlet is titled *Korte verthooninge* (Klever 1992, 18). In this pamphlet, which dates from 1587, you could find a defense of the sovereignty of Holland against the tyranny of the Spanish Empire (Klever 1992, 19). Klever argued that this proves that Van den Enden was already interested in political matters in the 1650s (Klever 1992, 19). The third source is a letter from 1665 in which Van den Enden explains to *grootpensionaris* (the highest civil servant in the Republic) Johan de Witt that he had been involved in political negotiations concerning, what we nowadays call, Lithuania (Klever 1992, 67). Klever argued that this was probably during the Nordic War in 1659 -1660.

Besides, in 1657 Van den Enden wrote and conducted a play called *Philedonius* in Amsterdam (Klever 1991, 630). According to Klever, Van den Enden expressed in that play a great deal of anthropological knowledge (Klever 1991, 630). For example, it contains a theory of the passions which is comparable to that of Spinoza (Klever 1991, 619). In the *Ethica* of Spinoza we can find a theory in which human behavior is explained by human passions (Klever 1992, 105). The play *Philedonius* is a great representation of that idea. However, this play was written some time before Spinoza became known as a philosopher. In addition, the two political works of Van den Enden, in which this theory of the passions is also expressed, are from an earlier date than the works of Spinoza (Klever 1991, 630; 1992, 105). For that reason, Klever argued that Spinoza was indeed inspired by Van den Enden.

Finally, according to the contemporaries Jean Charles du Cauzé de Nazelle and Olaus Borch Van den Enden was an excellent debater (Klever 1991, 630). As we know, his first work appeared in 1662. However, this does not mean that he did not express his ideas to his pupil Spinoza in the late fifties (Klever 1991, 630). In his time, he was seen as man of the spoken word, rather than a writer (Klever 1991, 630). Therefore, it is not impossible that Van den Enden uttered his political and anthropological ideas and influenced the young Spinoza in his Latin School long before he published his first work.

The arguments of Klever reconsidered

I think that there are just two arguments that are necessary. If Van den Enden really is the hidden agent behind Spinozism and Spinoza's genius, then the second argument, that Van den Enden was politically active before he met Spinoza, and the third argument, that it is possible that he taught Spinoza on metaphysical and anthropological matters, have to be true. Because if these arguments are not true, then we have to conclude that the remaining arguments may be important, but it is not enough to prove that Van den Enden is the hidden agent. In that case, you can only prove that there is a connection and that they might have influenced each other. If Van den Enden is the hidden agent, then he has to be a forerunner on political, metaphysical and anthropological matters. Thus, if I want to test how strong the argumentation line of Klever is, I have to try to falsify the second and the third argument.

The second argument that is used by Klever is weak, for it lacks sufficient evidence (just two if we disregard the poem). Besides, I think that there are two major problems with this argument. Firstly, the sources that Klever uses do not demand Klever's interpretation, but allow different plausible explanations. Secondly, Klever has denied a source in which Van den Enden himself denies the claim.

According to the first problem, the explanations of Klever of the evidence are just plausible explanations. It is also possible to come up with other plausible explanations for the two events. Let us first look at the publication of that pamphlet. I think that if we add some context there,

it is possible to come up with an explanation that is much more suitable to the situation of Van den Enden than stating that he was involved in political matters. When we look at what happened in that period, we can name two important things. First, in 1648, the Peace of Münster was signed (Meinsma 1896, 129). Besides that, there is the bankruptcy of his bookstore on September 12th in 1652 (Meininger & Van Suchtelen 1980, 22). Another possible purpose of the publication of the pamphlet could have been a last attempt at saving his bookshop. This possibility is backed by the fact that the research of Frank Mertens proved the popularity of the pamphlet. He stated that in the year 1650 there were at least three editions published of the same pamphlet (Mertens 1994, 728). This could be proof of the idea that he was trying to make some money out of it, instead of being 'politically active'. Secondly, we have to look at the claim that he was involved in some political matters during the Nordic war of 1659 – 1660. To state this, the literal words of Klever are: "The interference with 'Lijf-land' or Lithuania could have taken place during the Nordic War in 1659 – 1660"⁷ (Klever 1992, 68). Accordingly, even Klever himself is not that sure about this and he is not able to back up this thought with evidence. Besides that, this still took place after he tutored Spinoza. Thus, even if it is true, this cannot be counted as evidence that Van den Enden was already involved in political matters in the early 1650s and that he therefore must be the influence on Spinoza on this topic.

Lastly, I want to talk about the second major problem of this argument. In his claim that Van den Enden was already involved in political matters in the early fifties, Klever did not speak about the fact that Van den Enden himself had said something about that. In the preface of the book *Free Political Institutions*, Van den Enden said that there were some shy people who asked him to help with some interaction with the City of Amsterdam, because they wanted to become colonists in New Netherland (Klever 1991, 621; Van den Enden 1992, 125). But before this he said something about his political interest in the period before this encounter, and I quote: "Before the end of the year 1661, I did not think about writing something about political matters and publish it one way or another..."⁸ (Van den Enden 1992, 125). So even Van den Enden denies some involvement in political matters in the fifties. Therefore, I think we can conclude that the second argument supporting Klever's claim is falsified.

To falsify the third argument we have to prove that Van den Enden did not have any metaphysical or anthropological knowledge whatsoever in 1655 or that Spinoza did already have that knowledge before that time. We have to admit that there are some metaphysical and anthropological traces in his play *Philedonius*. In this play we can read about the rejection of the so-called *Deus Procul*. This means that he did not believe that there was a god in a far place (Klever 1992, 102). Later this will be translated in his work as *God or nature*. He also talked about the idea that a human being is capable of holding different types of knowledge (Klever 1992, 103). Much later we will see a similar reasoning in the work of Spinoza (Klever 1992, 104). Thus, if this argument can be falsified, than there is just one way to do that. We have to search for some sources that prove the idea that Spinoza already had some philosophical background before he met Van den Enden.

He met Van den Enden in 1655 shortly before he was banned from the Jewish community (Klever 1991, 628). Is it possible to find traces of the philosophical works of Spinoza before this year? In fact it is. Jarig Jelles, a friend of Spinoza who already knew him before he was banned from the Jewish community, proclaimed that Spinoza immersed himself in Cartesianism before he turned against his teachers in the synagogue (Israel 2002, 164). But what is more striking than the deposition of Jelles are the words of Spinoza himself. In his oldest surviving work, *Improvement of the understanding*, he tells us that in his youth he was already becoming a philosopher ('highest good'), but he did not want to break with the everyday life (that was all 'vain and futile'), because he did not want to give up his life that was certain for a life full of uncertainties (Israel 2002, 164). Finally, the son of the publisher of Spinoza once stated that in the year of 1656, when Spinoza met people like Van den Enden, Spinoza already had enough philosophical knowledge to persuade others (also Van den Enden) to adopt his views (Israel 2002, 171). I think this is not enough to claim that Van den Enden did not influence the young Spinoza and vice versa, but the third argument cannot back up the claim of Klever anymore. Because there was already some philosophical knowledge in the mind of Spinoza, for example Cartesianism, we cannot say that Van den Enden is the mediator between Descartes and Spinoza and therefore the hidden agent behind Spinoza's genius anymore.

What is left are the following two arguments: that there are many similarities in the works of both authors and it was told that Van den Enden was an excellent debater. But I think this is not enough to claim that Van den Enden was the hidden agent behind Spinozism. All the more because these similarities are not systematically constructed and applied in the works of Van den Enden like they are in the works of Spinoza (Van Ruler 1992, 50). Actually, the ideas that were considered similar to those of Spinoza are sometimes a little vague in the works of Van den Enden, when you compare them to the same ideas in the works of Spinoza (De Dijn 1994, 74). Thus, we cannot see Van den Enden as if he was the mastermind behind Spinozism, but if we look at his work and his remarkable life story we also cannot see him just as a regular Latin teacher in the seventeenth century. To put him in the right perspective I think we should compare him to Plockhoy. But before we do, I think it is necessary to explain who Plockhoy was and what were his ideas.

About Pieter Cornelisz. Plockhoy

Earlier, we saw that the first forty-five years of Van den Enden's life were quite a mystery to us. We know some characteristics but that is about it. But compared to what we know about Plockhoy, it is quite a blessing. It is assumed that he was born in Zierikzee, because of his name: Pieter Corneliszoon Plockhoy van Zierikzee, and he is probably born in the 1620s (Mertens 2003, 794). We first hear from him when he arrived in Amsterdam in the late forties or the early fifties of the seventeenth century (Mertens 2003, 794 – 795). In this period, he also became famous because of his ideas (Mertens 2003, 795). One of these ideas was his controversial stand on polygamy. He defended, on biblical grounds, the idea that a married man could easily sleep with other women (Mertens 2003, 795). An intriguing thought to say the least, but for this paper his political ideas are far more interesting. When he was in London in the mid-50s he met Oliver Cromwell (Van Bunge 2011, 34), who was Lord Protector at the time (Mertens 2003, 795). Cromwell was really interested in the idea of Plockhoy to establish some cooperative communities in England. However, Cromwell died in 1658, before the plan was executed (Van Bunge 2011, 34).

A year later Plockhoy published this idea in a pamphlet which he calls *A way propounded to make the poor in these and other Nations happy*. In this pamphlet, he explains his political ideas. The reason why Plockhoy wants to establish a 'little Common-wealth' is because of the great inequality he has seen in the world (Plockhoy 1659, 3). He wants to build a community for 'Husband-men, Handy-crafts people, Mariners and Masters of the Arts and Sciences' (Plockhoy 1659, 3). Because in the world he lives in they are not only suppressed by kings and rulers, but also by clergymen who think that they can persuade the good people by telling them that they can take care of their souls and therefore that they have to toil for such a clergy-man (Plockhoy 1659, 4). According to Plockhoy, it is time for a change, because he said: "... to the end that we may the better eschew the yoke of the Temporal and Spiritual Pharaohs, who have long enough domineered over our bodies and souls..." (Plockhoy 1659, 3). Plockhoy thinks that those who are now suppressed would benefit more from mutual love instead of suppression (Plockhoy 1659, 4).

So this is the problem he wants to solve with his new society, but what is this society going to look like? The society he wants to create is what we would call nowadays a 'socialist society'. Except for the day of the Lord, everyone who is able to should work six hours a day (Plockhoy 1659, 4). The socialist aspect is most present in the healthcare system. Where the rich have to pay for healthcare it is free for the poor (Plockhoy 1659, 7). There are also some socialistic tendencies in his economic policies, because everyone gets the chance to get the job which is most suitable for her or him and every product will be sold for such a price that it could be bought by anyone (Plockhoy 1659, 8). But that is not all. Every six or twelve months the things that are overproduced (above necessity) will be given to the people. So everyone is able to give something to the poor or to give something as a gift to a friend (Plockhoy 1659, 9). He also thought about the children of the poor. They should have the same treatment as the children of the rich, so the poor do not have to work harder or even will be forced into slavery to give their children the same education (Plockhoy 1659, 11). Besides the socialist tendencies of his work, there are also some democratic tendencies. Every year a man about forty years old should be chosen as chief Governor

(Plockhoy 1659, 9). There should also be a Government of about ten to twelve men and women. Every six months five to six of them should be replaced by others. So the remaining six could teach the new governors what governing is all about (Plockhoy 1659, 10). Six months later the other governors should be replaced by other new governors, and so forth. To rule out corruption there is not just one man for the treasury. Three of the 'uppermost' in the government should have a part of the access to the treasure, so one or two are not able to open the locker (Plockhoy 1659, 9). Finally, everyone must be allowed the freedom of speech, even about things that are contrary to Scripture (Plockhoy 1659, 16). In this case, you cannot force others to embrace your opinion as their own (Plockhoy 1659, 16). Therefore, there is free speech in this commonwealth and there is even some sort of freedom to choose your own religion. When it comes to education in his commonwealth, children should not be taught humane forms of religion (Plockhoy 1659, 15). For example: there is no need to learn a clergy-man's opinion about Scripture. They only need to be taught the writings of the Saints, natural arts, sciences and languages (Plockhoy 1659, 15). Because when it comes to spiritual matters, only Jesus Christ can be considered as Master and not those clergy-men (Plockhoy 1659, 16).

In 1661 he went back to Amsterdam, where he met Van den Enden (Israel 2002, 179) (Mertens 2003, 796). Plockhoy had caught up the idea of a new ideal settlement, this time it was located in what is now known as the United States of America on the banks of the Delaware river (Mertens 2003, 796). Van den Enden helped Plockhoy and his friends to get into contact with the magistracy of Amsterdam (Israel 2002, 179). In 1663 they actually went with 41 so-called 'Plockhoy-ists' (including Plockhoy himself) to the New World (Israel 2002, 179). We do not know if they were able to establish their ideals, but they did establish a community there, so it was a quite success (Mertens 2003, 796 – 797). However, the village was overrun a year later as I mentioned above. The settlement was completely destroyed. It is said that Plockhoy survived the attack and lived in the vicinity of the destroyed town until 1682. The last time we hear about him is when he arrived with his wife in Germantown in 1694 (Mertens 2003, 797). After that he probably died in this village.

My claim

Again, like in the case of Van den Enden, we have to admit that Plockhoy was a remarkable man with some very progressive ideas and very interesting political deeds. But I want to go a step further. I think we should consider him as the influence on Van den Enden through which the latter is inspired to a political career. Here I will show that Van den Enden only became politically active after he met Plockhoy in 1661 and not before 1655 when he met Spinoza, like Klever argued. I will try to prove this with a comparison between the political pamphlet *A way propounded to make the poor in these and other Nations happy* of Plockhoy published in 1659 and the political pamphlet *Short Narrative of New Netherland's* of Van den Enden published in 1662, which were already mentioned earlier in this paper. But having the same ideas is not proof enough, like I stated when dealing with the claim of Klever. So I will use two other arguments that back up my claim and will be sufficient in my humble opinion.

First, both authors reveal some sort of an anticlerical voice in their books. Maybe Van den Enden does that in a more explicit way, but we can hear the same voice in the quote on page 22 of this article. There we can see that Plockhoy was very critical on the role of the clergymen. Secondly, both authors created thoughts about how they could rule out corruption. Van den Enden calls this 'Openness of Affairs' and Plockhoy creates a system in which the treasury of the city could not be unlocked by just one person. Thirdly, both authors advocate free speech in their books. Fourthly, both authors have some sort of leveling system when it comes to taxes, but I have to say that there are more social tendencies in the ideas of Plockhoy than in the ideas of Van den Enden. For example, according to Plockhoy medical care should be free for the poor (Plockhoy 1659, 7). Finally, despite of the anticlerical voice in both works, both authors advocate the opportunity to choose your own religion. So there are a lot of similarities, but this is not enough to say that Plockhoy influenced Van den Enden.

The second argument is that the works of Plockhoy predate the works of Van den Enden. The first political pamphlet of Van den Enden dates from 1662, the work of Plockhoy that is mentioned in this paper

dates from 1659, and there are even earlier works not mentioned here. Therefore there is no way that Van den Enden influenced Plockhoy, but this still does not mean that Plockhoy influenced Van den Enden.

To prove my claim, I need a third argument. For that occasion I want to use the moment that Van den Enden became politically active. Earlier in this paper, when I falsified the claim of Klever, I showed that there is no evidence that Van den Enden did have any political activities in the fifties of the seventeenth century whatsoever. As far as we know, he became politically active with his first writing in 1662, shortly after he met Plockhoy. So he was most likely not involved in politics before he met Plockhoy. Van den Enden himself stated that the first moment he became involved in politics is the moment when he met Plockhoy and his friends (Van den Enden 1992, 125) (Mertens 2003, 796).

I think that these three arguments, a lot of similarities in the works of both authors, Plockhoy's work predating the writings of Van den Enden and the exact moment that Van den Enden became involved in political matters, delivers enough proof to claim that Plockhoy most likely influenced Van den Enden to a political career.

Conclusion

To sum up, Van den Enden was not the mastermind behind Spinoza. There is too little evidence that could back up that conclusion. The major problems with Klever's conclusion are that the political awakening of Van den Enden came too late and the philosophical awakening of Spinoza came too early. From this paper we draw another conclusion. We can say that Plockhoy did most likely influence Van den Enden to a political career. However, we have to add that this does not mean that Plockhoy was 'the mastermind behind Van den Enden's genius', whatever that means. Plockhoy was most likely the man who gave Van den Enden a push in the right direction. Shortly after that, they ended their mutual contact. Later on, Van den Enden developed in his writings his own political vision, which differs on certain points with the vision of Plockhoy.

If this paper proves anything, I think that we can say that it is not very fruitful to talk about a certain mastermind who influenced someone else on a major scale. It was definitely not Van den Enden who was the hidden genius behind Spinozism and we also cannot say the same thing about the relationship between Plockhoy and Van den Enden. None of them was a radical thinker on his own. They were all part of a certain radical tradition. Plockhoy, Van den Enden, Spinoza and other thinkers in that period, who are not mentioned in this paper. But we have to make an exception in the case of Spinoza, because we have seen in my critique on Klever's claim that several contemporaries saw him as a great philosopher and as someone who could influence other thinkers like Van den Enden. Moreover, until this day he is seen as the man who developed his own systematical philosophy, which cannot be said about the others. Therefore, when we look at the life and works of Van den Enden, we cannot see him anymore as the big influence on Spinoza's work, but he is part of a radical tradition in which he is most likely pushed in the right direction by Plockhoy to develop a political career which would eventually end at the gallows in Paris.

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Notes

1. The original Dutch version of a part of the poem is as follows (Meinsma 1896, 128):
 "Schoon Spanje (een ander heft daer d'eere van genoten)
 Op uwen raet alleen, den vrede heeft gesloten
 Nae zoo veel stormen, met het vrye Nederlant;
 En d'oorlogsrazerny geslagen in den bant"
2. In Dutch it is called *Kort Verhael van N. Netherlandt*.
3. Translated by the author. The original Dutch version of the quote is as follows: "Of wij dus zeggen dat alles geschiedt volgens de wetten van de natuur, of dat alles door Gods besluit en leiding beschikt wordt, wij zeggen hetzelfde."
4. Translated by the author. The original Dutch version of the quote is as follows: "Godt, of Natuirs wegen..."
5. Translated by the author. The original Dutch version of the quote is as follows: "Welke nootdwangh sich zodanigh heeft, dat geen mensch (zulx zijnde als hy voor die tijt is) anders kan doen, als hy doet..."
6. Translated by the author. The original Dutch version of the quote is as follows: "De mensch uit Ziel, en Lichaem bestaende, heeft dienvolgende dan ook, tweederley interesten van welvaren. Echter zodanigh onderlingh verknocht zijnde, dat d'een of d'anders welvaert komende te missen, den heele mensch min, of meer te lijden heeft..."
7. Translated by the author. The original Dutch version of this quote is as follows: "De bemoeienis met Lijffland of Litouwen zal zich hebben afgespeeld ten tijde van de Noorse oorlog, 1659 – 1660."
8. Translated by the author. The original Dutch version of this quote is as follows: "Voor het laest van 't jaer 1661. had ik noch geenh de minste ghedachte, van oyt eenige de minste letter schrifts over politijke zaken in 't licht, of aen den dach te geeven..."

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