

A FRENCH VIEW OF THE NETHERLANDS INDIES

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NETHERLANDS INDIES

BY

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To the Memory of

JOOST VAN VOLLENHOVEN

Governor-General of Indo-China

and French West Africa .

Born in Rotterdam on July 21, 1877

Died for France at Parcy-Tigny on July 20, 1918

FOREWORD TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

THE present work is the English edition of *La Politique Musulmane et Colonial des Pays-Bas* (Paris, 1939). The first part of the French edition has here been omitted, and an abridged chapter dealing with Moslem policy has been substituted in its stead. A new addition is the chapter on the international position of the Netherlands which appeared in outline form as an article in French. The text of the French edition has undergone little revision, partly because critics have found little fault with it. I have added a few notes and have altered or deleted passages only in exceptional cases. Although this book is published under the auspices of the International Secretariat of the Institute of Pacific Relations, it should be understood that the Institute does not accept responsibility for the facts and opinions expressed herein. For these I am wholly responsible. I wish to add, however, that though I have had an opportunity to read and criticize the English manuscript, I assume no responsibility for the translation.

Since my return to North Africa some months ago, I have found no reason to alter my views. In fact, a recent trip to Morocco has left me with the impression that the material achievements of the French in that country within the space of a few years are quite as astonishing, if not more so than those of the Dutch on the far side of the Equator. And, spiritually speaking, I find the superiority of French colonization ever more striking. During my visit to the Indies I frequently had occasion to repeat one of the opening lines in *Iphigenie auf Tauris*:

Und es gewöhnt sich nicht mein Geist hierher

G. S. BOUSQUET

Kinas el Wa'ila, Mustapha supérieur

June 10, 1939

FOREWORD TO THE FRENCH EDITION

WHEN I originally outlined my doctoral thesis on the Netherlands, and even when some fifteen years later I came to the Netherlands Indies to study Moslem questions on the spot, I did not expect to write a book in which an examination of Dutch colonial policy would occupy an important position. Nevertheless, almost in spite of myself, I have written just such a book.

One reason for my having done so is that there has been no work in French on this important subject since the fundamental study by Chailley-Bert, *Java et ses Habitants*, published in 1900 and now quite out of date. Moreover, foreign authors have, on the whole, written little on Dutch colonial policy, the best work to date being by the American Amry Vandenbosch, whose *Dutch East Indies*, published in 1934, I heartily recommend. His book, far longer than mine, is well documented and touches at least in passing on every problem. The present work is of a different nature: its range is more restricted, yet it deals more fully with certain questions, especially the Moslem questions which Vandenbosch almost wholly ignores.¹

My real reason, however, for having discarded my original plan is that it seemed impossible to confine myself strictly to Moslem questions in considering the native policy of the Netherlands. Interesting as these questions are, they play a very minor rôle in the Indian political scene, even though nine out of ten Indonesians are Moslem. Political questions related to Islam tend to become confused with nationalist questions, yet the only urgent problems are those of nationalism. To consider native policy in only its Moslem aspects is to attack the problem from a false and narrow point of view. How does Dutch authority today react to the nationalist movement? To answer this question it appeared necessary, not merely to enumerate measures taken by the authorities, but to examine the whole problem of colonial policy.

I regret that I am unacquainted with French Indo-China, which—except, of course, in the realm of Islam—would surely have afforded more accurate and interesting comparisons than are available in North

¹ Thus suggesting that these questions do not dominate policy.

Africa. Since I realize that in five months one cannot hope to acquire a deep understanding of the vast problems with which this book deals, I do not claim to be infallible.² My aim has been to set down the facts plainly and precisely as I saw them.

There is no point in concealing at the outset that I do not admire everything in the Netherlands Indies and that in many respects my impressions were not what I had hoped they would be. I regret this particularly because of the high opinion which I had of Dutch colonial policy upon my arrival in the Indies, and because the authorities were everywhere most kind and helpful. They made it possible for me to appreciate the admirable features of their colonies, and I am grateful for having had that opportunity. With regard to the reservations just mentioned, it suffices to say that as far as practical suggestions are concerned, I recommend the adoption of the reforms which Mr. Colijn, now President of the Council of the Netherlands, proposed ten years ago. The earnestness, the professional morale, the enthusiasm for work which characterize all of the Dutch in the Indies are qualities which Frenchmen would do well to cultivate.

G. S. BOUSQUET

Netherlands Indies
April—September, 1938

²If some reader should use this admission as a basis for denying the validity of my criticisms, I would simply inquire whether, when foreign visitors are full of praise (which is so avidly sought in the Indies), it is required that they be familiar with the Dutch language and spend a half-year in the country.

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