

INDEMNIFICATION

by

ANNEXATION



AMSTERDAM 1945

L. J. VEEN'S UITGEVERSMAATSCHAPPIJ N.V.

POST-WAR PROBLEMS OF THE NETHERLANDS

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NEDERLANDER

(E. VEEN—ZAANDAM)

translated by

Dr W. VAN DOORN — BILTHOVEN

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POST-WAR PROBLEMS
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Now that the end of the war is in sight at last, it would appear incumbent on those who have the future of our country at heart, to form some idea of the task that awaits both the nation and the Government, if famine, unemployment and chaos are to be prevented or remedied, and everything repaired or replaced that five years of horrible warfare have destroyed or wiped out. In view of the extent of these destructions, in view, too, of the way the war has affected the mentality of many of our countrymen, this may be considered a wellnigh superhuman task, impossible to perform, unless all of us set to work in a spirit of concord and constructiveness; unless, more over, we loyally support the Government, as far as is at all consistent with our convictions. In the process all constructive criticism will be welcome, but all waste of energy that internal dissensions would tend to produce is to be avoided; and, while keeping in view the main lines of this policy, we should be on our constant guard against the possibility of oldfashioned party interests usurping the rightful place of the commonweal. Only in that case can a Dutch Government representing the popular will, feel sure of its footing when negotiating with the victorious Allies. Personal preferences for some special plan or system, likewise personal views of any kind, will have to be set aside in favour of the interests of the Dutch nation as such.

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The far-reaching measures to be taken would stamp any other attitude as disastrous, as obstructing the return of our prosperity, nay, as endangering our very existence as a nation.

An idea of what we shall have to do in the next ten or fifteen years will be gathered from the following survey, which contains only the principal points that will have to be dealt with, points that admit of considerable additions.

REBUILDING THE NETHERLANDS 1945—1955

Politically:

Liberating the East Indies.

Co-operation with Belgium and with Western Europe.

Far-reaching International co-operation and treaties.

The Cession by Germany of territory in order to indemnify Holland for injury inflicted.

Shall we have a share in the Government of what will remain of Germany?

Economically:

Re-incorporating emigrated Labour.

Repairing towns, factories, fields, roads, shipping.

Adjustment of our industry to Customs Union with Belgium.

Turning to account newly-acquired territory.

In the Legislature and Financially:

Reorganisation of Dutch Finance:

Withdrawal from Circulation of Banknotes and Recovering War Profits,

Reorganisation of Taxes and Rates,

Excises and Customs on a Common Footing with Belgium.

Hunting down and Punishing Profiteers.

Changes in the functioning and sphere of action of Municipal Councils.

Legislative control of economic Life.

A more summary dispensing of Justice.

Socially and Culturally:

Amalgamation of social laws and uniformity in defraying expenses.

Solution of the Problem of Unemployment.

Reorganization of our education and our scholastic institutions.

In the following paper we will discuss in greater detail one of the most important of the questions given above, viz. *that of the way Germany will have to indemnify Holland.*

A similar treatment of the other issues would certainly be a very desirable thing, as this would inevitably call forth constructive criticism, just as the present paper is expected to do; it would be the most profitable way of utilizing the present time of waiting and forced inaction, and prepare the way for the far-reaching measures that time and circumstances require.

THE NETHERLANDS TO BE

Ever since 1672, when 'Bommenberend', — 'Bombing Bernard' — the Bishop of Münster, together with his fellow-dignitary of Cologne, joined the Franco-English alliance and made war upon the Republic of the United Netherlands, — right up to the outbreak of the second world war, — our relations with our Eastern neighbours were excellent and really 'neighbourly'. To put it more strongly: Holland was always the most helpful neighbour Germany could have had or imagined. In times of trial for Germany, as in the year 1918 and after, we did not, unlike Belgium, Denmark, Czecho-Slovakia, Poland and France, claim pieces of German territory; — on the contrary, we did our level best to put Germany, impoverished by the war, on her legs again.

Countless German children were, even before the war was at an end, hospitably received in Holland, and owed their preservation to Dutch care; Holland, too, was an active participant in the floating of loans intended to assist German industry; not to mention the numerous private loans in almost every department, — loans which, thanks to the crisis of the Reichsmark, benefited the German borrower at the expense of the Dutch lender.

In addition to this, Holland did her best to get the stipulations of the Versailles Peace Treaty mitigated, and was, among other things, a staunch upholder of the principle of free navigation on the Rhine.

Furthermore we proved our neighbourliness by welcoming any German immigrant that had crossed our border, and by treating him virtually like a countryman. Also, in the mother country as well as in our oversea territories we followed, being convinced free-traders, the policy of 'The open door', so that German and other foreign goods could enter unimpeded. Preferential or prohibitive duties were unknown here, and — apart from quotaing measures from 1932 to 1939, during the years of crisis in the Dutch East Indies, — we admitted foreign manufactures on the same terms with articles of Dutch origin. Nevertheless our export to Germany was made more and more difficult. In spite of the fact that a great number of articles, such as vegetables, eggs and butter, were offered below cost price, Germany, with her policy of prohibitive duties and frontier-closing, restricted our export to her in the most drastic way, owing to which the agricultural crisis in our country, with its concomitant of unemployment, was brought to a head.

This unequal policy brought about that German imports in Holland were twice the amount of what Germany bought from us. Thus, in 1939, whereas there was an import from Germany amounting to 308 million Dutch guilders, there was on our part only an export to her to the value of 159 million. Well-nigh the whole of the balance in favor of Germany on her ex- and imports was paid by Holland in high-class currency. There cannot be many countries in the world that would view such disproportionate things year after year with equanimity, but this country could permit herself a liberal policy with respect to Germany, and did so, too, trusting to promote neighbourly feeling thereby.

Those who expected that this exceedingly accommodating and conciliatory policy would be appreciated by

our neighbour Germany and would be requited by an absence on her part of any attempt to violate our sovereignty during her war with the Western European powers, reckoned without their host, or, rather, without 'National Socialism', which took account only of German interests and thought to serve the latter by a surprise attack on an inoffensive and friendly neighbour. While we were lulled by a false sense of security, since we were 'at peace', the Germans, under cover of night, without any valid cause, without a previous declaration of war, and aided by a number of satellites — both German and Dutch — inside our country, burst upon little Holland, which, fighting against hopeless odds and terrorized by devastating bombardments from the air (Rotterdam), was overrun and overpowered in a few days. Surely the five years that followed have taught us what end the Germans had chiefly in view. It was not the safeguarding of their Western frontier, nor even the desire to fight out their quarrel on a neighbour's territory. On their part it was pure and bare-faced robbery; the desire to bleed 'das steinreiche Holland' white. And their regular and systematic looting was nothing if not 'gründlich', thorough, with German thoroughness! And lasting, all through the war!¹ Merely the officially recognised requisitions — which, it was alleged, would be paid for, if only at the ridiculously low prices ruling in Holland immediately before the invasion — would justify us in claiming 5500 million guilders, inclusive of about a milliard that the Netherlands Treasury was called upon to pay instead of Germany. One of the most arrant satellites of Germany in Holland — Rost van Tonningen — has even managed to increase this amount by making the Netherlands Bank the refuse-heap of Europe,

¹ As early as August 1940 the Germans transported, chiefly from the Zaanland district, 70 million kilogrammes of oil for human consumption!

where Germany could get rid of her debased marks. The cost of maintaining the German army of occupation has been sent up to the crazy figure of 120 million guilders a month!

But this was only one way of sucking the country dry; indeed, German ingenuity excelled itself in devising more and more insidious methods of extortion. There was the seizure, without anything in the way of compensation, of businesses owned by Jews. There was the repeated imposition of outrageous fines. (We mention only the fine of five million guilders imposed on the Capital, Amsterdam, a sum, which had to be paid in shares of the Royal Dutch Iron Steel Works, if you please!) There was the grabbing of a million bicycles, likewise of a million radio-sets, of 100,000 motor-vehicles; of motor-cycles, pleasure-boats, blankets, clothing (all to be paid for by the Dutch Treasury); of household effects, either wholesale or in part; the systematic looting of evacuated places like Arnhem, Oosterbeek, Breda and others. At a time of imminent famine (autumn 1944) the greater part of the stores on hand in our food-producing factories was seized upon and carried away; of which 1500 tons only in the Zaanland district. Carried off likewise were the contents of all garages; the petrol still remaining in reservoirs; 150,000 litres of tar-oil in Uithoorn; the fixtures of many hospitals and nursing homes, the empty shells of which remained . . . In short, anything movable has been removed, to a value of a few milliards, at lowest estimation.

These, however, are only losses in goods, whether for use or consumption. Our losses in *fixed capital* are even more serious, since it may take us years and years to recover what we lost, and all these years we shall be left more and more behind by other nations. The process set in already in the first years of the war, when there was

wholesale and forcible transplanting to Germany of various occupations, such as duck-farms, mussel-beds, glass-houses for the growing of vegetables (the Germans did not scruple to engage Dutch labour for the purpose of digging up the *humus* or mould and removing it to Germany together with the rest of the plant!) One would hardly be able to suppress a smile when thinking of the projected settlements in the *Ostmark* (the Ukraine), which, under the expert guidance of Messrs. Rost van Tonningen and Gips, were to be financed by Dutch capital and built up by Dutch labour, — a smile, if it was not for the reflection that this experiment, too, must have defrauded the Dutch people of millions and millions . . .

When the Germans realized that the war was lost, they started gutting our most modern and best equipped factories, all of which had to give up to Germany their machinery and plant. We mention:

- the Philips Works at Eindhoven;
- the Rayon Factories at Breda and Arnhem, (the latter had just been enlarged, with German help, for 20 million guilders)
- the brand-new steelworks of the Royal Netherlands Iron and Steelworks, to the value of 10 million guilders (it was transferred to the Hermann Göring Works at Brunswick);
- the Fokker Aeroplane Works, at Amsterdam;
- the Electromotor Works at Dordt (had to surrender upwards of 1000 motors);
- the extensive 'Werkspoor' turnery at Amsterdam;
- the State Artillery Works at Hembrug;
- the 'Van Gelder' Paper Works at Wormer and Velzen¹;

¹ There were factories the management and employees of which refused to bear a part in suchlike demolitions. Then the Germans installed a regular gutting gang, the members of which cleaned the works out entirely

the entirely up-to-date Hosiery Factories at Schijndel; Radio-Works at Hilversum; various factories at Breda and elsewhere, — a maddening list!

The direct losses can be trusted to exceed a milliard guilders; the indirect losses, on the other hand are beyond all computation.

As a matter of fact, the year immediately succeeding the war will find us wholly unable to produce paper in any considerable quantity; likewise unable to manufacture the machinery and motors required, let alone a sufficient supply of sugar; since so many factories have been destroyed and the seed of the sugarbeet all carried off by the Germans.

And as if all these outrages were not more than enough, to crown all came, in the year 1944, a perfect orgy of wanton and intentional destruction on the part of the Germans. They had thoroughly wrecked the Royal Residence The Hague, with their 'fortifications' during the first year of the war, with the result that the town received a gruelling bombardment from the Allies, since the Germans had not scrupled to install the apparatus for their execrable V I's en V II's in the built-up areas of our towns, thereby exposing them to repeated explosions. Add to this that they had deprived The Hague of practically her entire fire-service, having transported it to Germany. No wonder that the Residence, being wholly dependent upon the fire-brigades of other towns (that did not succeed in obtaining any oil from the Germans for their purpose), suffered out of all proportion on the 3rd of March 1945.

— for their own benefit! A fine driving-belt, for instance, being afterwards bartered for a packet of tobacco. These 'gutters' were paid at the rate of 24 guilders a day (foreman sixty guilders); the Dutch Treasury had to foot the bill!

Moreover the coastal area was destroyed in its full length, inclusive of Helder and IJmuiden. As recently as February 1945, only in Velzen another 1600 houses were razed to the ground by German command! Similar treatment was meted out to various parts of the 'Westland' district, of the province of Utrecht, the province of Groningen, of each of the eleven provinces. A prominent military officer of the Germans qualified these destructions as one half war-madness and one half pure sadism ('Quälerei'). Let us make only a passing mention of villages (like Putten and Berkel) reduced, either quite or in part, to ashes; and the countless houses of perfectly innocent people which were set on fire by way of 'reprisals'. These barbarities were even surpassed in our opinion by the inundation of entire regions, partly even with salt water, which spoils the soil for years and years¹. Cattle had to be hastily slaughtered; farmhouses and villages have disappeared; orchards have become cemeteries of dead fruit-trees; harvests have been destroyed, crops have been left to perish. The damage inflicted on our food-growing areas can be made good only by the cession of land.

But now we come to what is perhaps the most atrocious outrage of all: the wanton annihilation of the apparatus in our harbours, our docks and shipyards, in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Flushing, Kinderdijk and elsewhere. This disgusting vandalism — or, rather, 'Germanism'! — cannot be defended on any plausible ground. This striking

¹ At the end of April 1944 the Germans had the brutality to pierce the dykes of the newest and largest "polder" in the world: that of the Wieringermeer, being the N.W. part of the Zuiderzee, which was in full exploitation. They flooded this polder of more than 100,000 acres with salt water, about 12 to 15 feet high, which it will take about 9 months to have pumped out. There was absolutely no military reason for this barbarism in this remote part of North-Holland! — Nearly all the dykes of the other Dutch polders had been undermined, but our underground forces succeeded in saving them.

at the roots of our national welfare, this wasting of our resources, with all the misery it brings to us, will not shorten the war by a moment. When we, for instance, reflect that the greatest Amsterdam shipyard is committed to a permanent weekly payment of 85,000 guilders in totally unremunerative wages, and that it will take at least two years before there is any possibility of this yard — and other yards that find themselves in a similar position — resuming work for the urgently needed completion of our sorely depleted merchant fleet; that every crane, most landing-places and deepwater riverside-walls have been demolished; — that the extensive and up to date installations of our greatest Colonial Steamship Line in the Amsterdam harbour have been thoroughly destroyed; — that the largest port of the Continent, Rotterdam, the construction of which has cost hundreds of millions florins, has been ravaged by the base and wicked agency of German destructiveness and German envy; that this orgy of devastation intended to extend itself to our great electric power stations (some of them have been blown up), to our chief railway stations and workshops and to the dykes of our Holland-polders — all these 'military objects'(!) had been sapped and undermined by German destruction-squads (though their work has been partly made undone by our underground-forces), — that all the bridges in the large estuary, which the low countries form, have been destroyed by the Prussians, amongst which some of the newest and largest bridges of the world, — then it need not be argued that Germany will have to expiate this vandalism with at least an attempt to pay for the damage and havoc wrought in cold blood on the territory of inoffensive and friendly neighbours, damages running into milliards!

And finally we mention the disafforestation of this

country, caused, first, by the unending German requisitions — (their petrol having to be spared for air-attacks, their motor-transport was largely dependent upon woodgas generators) — secondly by the coal-famine, which reached its climax in the winter just behind us. This disafforestation means a great impoverishment, culturally too, and will in all likelihood bring a worsening of our climate in its train. On that distressful winter itself we need not comment: it has impaired national health and vitiated national morals to an almost incredible extent, as is plain to every observer.

Up to this point we have restricted ourselves to an enumeration of the damage that could be expressed in figures. But the indirect damage inflicted on our national economy is no less great! We refer to the fact that, for five years and upwards we were cut off from our foreign connections; to the suppression of concerns owned by Jews — and of many more, owned by Gentiles! To the forcible 'Germanisation' of others . . . to the way we were deprived, during the years of occupation, of the labour of half a million young people, most of them skilled; — this apart from the razzias or, rather, slave-hunts, the object of which was the abduction of all men from seventeen to forty (and upwards!) that they, the Germans, could lay their detestable hands on, — 40 000 being taken only in Rotterdam, to be packed, higgledy piggledy, like animals, in Rhine craft, — destination unknown — that their labour might help the foe against their own country! To the imprisonment and execution of innumerable eminent fellowcountrymen (only in Vught 13,500 of our best men!). To the moral (or immoral) pressure brought to bear, on our nation by means of Gestapo, 'Landwatch', and terrorization. To the killing of our free associations (apart from the political ones) by compelling us to be

indoors after eight o'clock P. M. (since March 5 p. m. for great parts of the country!); to the way the health of the population was affected first by systematic underfeeding¹) afterwards by the German authorities wilfully *creating* a famine, chiefly in our larger towns, alleging that the general strike of railwaymen, ordered by the Dutch government, was responsible for it²; all these execrable measures aim at breaking up and ruining our people, real

¹ The daily rations allowed — always ridiculously low — were, in November 1944, *officially* reduced to

bread	per person	140	grammes
potatoes	„ „	286	„
sugar	„ „	9	„
cheese	„ „	7	„
butter and fat	„ „	0	„
oil	„ „	10	„

These rations were further reduced (in January 1945) to:

bread	per person	100	grammes (= 3 o.z.)
potatoes	„ „	140	„ (= 5 o.z.)

the allowances of sugar, cheese, butter, fat, and oil being stopped altogether, whilst the bread and potatoes as often as not were not forthcoming!

² It was not the strike that caused the famine, but the Germans, by commandeering every vehicle they could lay hands on, even such as were carrying food for the population. Not one percent of our wheat or rye, our flour or potatoes, our sugarbeets etc. was transported by train; nearly everything was conveyed by river-craft, save for a small percentage that was entrusted to motor-lorries. The railway-strike, therefore, is not the cause of the famine; the fault lies with the Germans, with their persistent requisitioning of ships, motorlorries, farmers' waggons and horses — and bicycles! Likewise with their stripping us of our last reserves of food and allowing them to rot in the warehouses and docks if they could not be transported to Germany. Also the 'Beauftragte' — the German commissioner — of each province prohibited the removal of products to other provinces with the solitary exception of potatoes. The consequence was that e.g. Friesland could not supply Holland with butter, large quantities of which were confiscated when attempts were made to transport them. The Western part of the Netherlands were thrown on their own resources, a fact which in itself means famine! Meanwhile the Germans grabbed all the rolling stock of our railways and removed it to Germany; the other railway-plant likewise. This means the wholesale murder, in cold blood, of some millions.

and genuine methods of warfare having nothing to do with them; to say nothing of the much-advertised 'European interests'!

In conclusion we may draw attention to the moral degeneration of the people as such, owing to 'love-affairs' with German soldiers (with their sequel of *Mutterheime*, — Maternity establishments) — owing likewise to the contagious example, of German looting and of German 'frightfulness', with its flagrant disregard for the value of human lives.

HOW THE DAMAGE CAN BE MADE GOOD HOW TO BALANCE THE ACCOUNT

This lengthy introduction — one indictment from beginning to end! — was required in order to found and formulate the claim we have on aggressive Germany! The indictment is one long series of German misdeeds which, in the eyes of posterity, will seem well-nigh incredible. And it fully justifies the Dutch government in London (as the mouth-piece of the entire nation) when it insists on being indemnified for our wrongs; always postulating that ways and means can be found. In the case of Holland, which, in spite of the most solemn promises, has been treated far worse than any other occupied country in the West, this claim can be urged with particular cogency. The only question is — the form that this indemnification will take.

Four ways might be suggested, viz.:

- Payment in money or in goods.
- Manual and other Labour.
- Objects of Art.
- Cession of Territory.

Before we proceed to investigate the way Germany would be best able to discharge her debt to us, it will be well for us to realize the greatness of the debt she owes to all the allied powers together. It is to be expected that this total debt will be a formidable sum, running into astronomical figures, since on the one hand there are the expenses incurred by the allies in waging the war, and on the other the havoc and ruin inflicted on well-nigh an entire continent, the reparation of which will cost millions of millions. In addition there are the official — but highly problematical — clearing-debts incurred by Germany for the compulsory supplies yielded by the occupied countries. The last published figures (those of ultimo 1943) were:

Clearing-debts			
to Holland	4	milliards	of guilders (florins)
„ Denmark	2	„	„ kroner
„ Hungary	1	„	„ pengö
„ Croatia	2	„	„ dinars
„ Slovakia	2	„	„ kunas
„ Belgium	49	„	„ B. francs
„ France	100	„	„ Fr. francs
„ Rumania	30	„	„ lei
„ Greece	196	„	„ drachmas
			etc.

It is evident that Germany, almost entirely destroyed and totally exhausted by the war, cannot possibly discharge

the debt that these figures imply, nor anything resembling it or even the amount of interest due; apart from the warloans contracted by herself. This weight of debt — 37 milliards of *Reichsmarks* in 1939 — had mounted to as much as 348 milliards by ult. 1944, and was attended by a five-fold increased circulation of banknotes. Being sober-minded persons, we are bound to recognise that only a relatively small part of the bill we present is likely to be honoured. Unless a solution could be found that shall not only throw no obstacle in the way of a satisfactory settlement of the claims of the bigger allies, but shall also be adjusted to the financial load Germany can be expected to be able to bear. This solution is:

The cession to us, by Germany, of a certain, not immoderately large, stretch of territory. And it is the only solution, since *payment in goods or in money* would be sure to see us faced — as the allies were faced after the Peace of Versailles — by the necessity of granting Germany loans, the conquerors supplying the vanquished with money... And then another *Schacht* would be sure to arise, manipulating his sundry *Marks* in such a consummate way as to render both the payment of interest and the redemption of the principal illusory in just a few years. Already in 1919 it was a fantastic amount that Germany was called upon to pay! And now the sum total of the claims of the allies amounts to a multiple of the sum claimed then. The value of the goods and products delivered would be merely nominal; money would not be forthcoming to any appreciable extent. Germany might be made to part with some machinery, to restore to us some of the stolen rolling-stock and railwayplant, to supply us with a few million tons of coal from the Ruhr district, but all this would be as nothing compared with the 15 milliards we can in all reason claim.

The third course apparently open, viz. *payment by means of labour*, may likewise be ruled out. No Hollander will be anxious for Germany to place, for a certain number of years, half a million of labourers at our disposal, whose task it would be to repair the havoc wrought (directly or indirectly) by them, in a country that will have all the trouble in the world to set suitable and proportionate tasks to her own children. Nor can there be any wish to run the risk of even more marriages between immigrant Germans and Dutch men or women. There has, from such quarters, been treachery enough as it is.

About the possibility of *indemnification by means of objects of art* we can likewise be short. Apart from the fact that in this way only an infinitesimal part of the total debt could ever be discharged, apart, too, from the probability that fanatic Germans would certainly attempt their robbery or destruction in case such objects of art should be lodged in our public museums, apart, finally, from its being on the cards that these easily transferable objects of value will first of all be claimed by the United States and Great Britain; we shall be too impoverished to saddle ourselves with the luxury of even more treasures of art than are already ours, — though it is true that it will take us, as a nation, some considerable time to get accustomed to our poverty and adapt ourselves to it, learning to cut our coat according to our cloth.

Evidently there is only one way out: we must be indemnified by having German — or let us say *Prussian* — ground ceded to us, and this area must be cleared beforehand of its present occupants, who are to be transferred to what remains of Germany. The measure proposed need not occasion any outcry, the forcible removal of population being a policy inaugurated by *Hitler* himself. He called

the Germans back from the Baltic countries where they had settled centuries ago; he expatriated the South Tyrolese, to gratify his friend Mussolini; he gathered into his 'Teutonic' bosom the peaceful German Mennonites who had, from the time of the Great Catharine, looked upon South Russia as their land of Goshen. Perhaps more instances might be found. So the same policy may be made to apply to the occupants of Western Germany, that part of it which we would have seen annexed, with its sparse population — relatively speaking — of about one million two hundred thousand inhabitants.

It is not proposed to dispossess these inhabitants *without payment*. Their lands will be bought by us, the owner being remunerated on the basis of the values ruling in May 1940. But cash payment being out of the question, it would be best to follow the precedent set long ago by Germany. So we would, at the Hague, credit our account with her against our lawfully recognised claim on her. The assessment of the German soil to be expropriated — inclusive of buildings, public works, mines, etc. — would have to be done in the fairest possible way by a mixed committee of Dutch and German experts, a committee which could, as need arose, consult competent foreign opinion; an equitable settlement on a prewar basis would without any doubt be the result. This procedure, if given sufficient publicity in Germany as elsewhere, would obviate just grounds for rancour, and would stultify the argument that the measure proposed would set the Germans brooding on *revanche*. For that matter, all means imaginable — cinema, photos and graphics included — should be resorted to, in order to inform the German people of the measureless damage that their sons — more often than not without any military necessity, but wantonly, in cold blood, and up to the very last moment — have

inflicted upon a people that never in the course of history had done them anything but good. Indeed, many Germans will profess themselves ignorant of these outrages, will refuse to believe them; will, we fear, shut their eyes and stop their ears to the most overwhelming proofs; will din into our ears their well-known: "*es ist nicht wahr*". They must be convinced at all costs, even forcibly, if need be: the world's safety, the world's peace, the world's future, they are all at stake; they all depend upon the German crimes being brought home to the German people. Only in that case can we look forward to satisfactory relations between the New Netherlands now in process of formation and our Eastern neighbour. Also, it is expedient that the other European nations, too, should realize the blessings that National Socialism brings, should learn to appreciate 'The New Order' as we have learnt to value it!

In conclusion: it is evident from what we have set forth that we should actually have to pay Germany a possible balance, in case the money value of the areas to be annexed and expropriated, should exceed the amount to be fixed, beforehand, by us in putting forward our claim. This is a matter which chiefly concerns the present occupants. The better the condition in which they hand over their property on leaving, the higher the assessment of them will be, and the greater the balance to be paid by us to Germany. A balance, however, in favour of Germany is hardly to be expected. Putting the value of the, mostly poor, upper soil at 1500 guilders per *hectare* (about 3 acres), a transfer of 20 thousand square kilometres (or 2 million hectares) would represent 3 milliards of guilders; this would leave us milliards galore to pay for buildings, public works, coal-mines and the like. Figures like these should convey to the most casual reader something like an idea of the havoc the Germans have wrought here, and of their

depredations systematically carried out. We have been stripped in five years of the wealth we had peacefully amassed through centuries of assiduous and often arduous work. We have been robbed of at the very least fifteen milliards of guilders, a sum which comes to fifteen hundred guilders per head of our population, inclusive of infants in arms. In the thirties there were German 'experts' who made it their special study how to exploit occupied territory. Truly, their studies have borne fruit! But we are certainly not unreasonable in demanding adequate compensation.

THE CONSEQUENCES

It remains now for us to examine the pros and cons of such a settlement, to consider the consequences we might expect, for this country as well as for Europe, from a transfer of German territory as proposed by us. As for ourselves, they would be pure gain, politically, materially and from an idealistic point of view.

Politically, because our present artificial and zigzagging Eastern boundary, the legacy of former wars and of former episcopal claims, would be replaced by a natural frontier, viz. the Weser river, with the Lippe and the farther part of the Dortmund-Rhine Ship Canal (near the Emscher). This area, consisting of Oldenburg, the Western Part of the Province of Hannover, the Northern Part of Westphalia and a little part of the Rhineland (North of a line Kempen-Aix la Chapelle) is estimated to cover 20 000 square kilometers with a pre-war population of one and a half million, now diminished to 1,200,000 at most.

From a political point of view it would likewise be an

advantage if the glaring discrepancy between the Dutch mother country and her colonies as regards extent were somewhat remedied.

A *drawback* it would be, politically speaking, if those were right who fear that the rectified frontier we have in view would keep rankling in the German heart and be a source of future wars. But it is evident that such an argument can be countered by observing that Holland's perfectly blameless past with respect to Germany did not prevent our Eastern neighbour from overrunning and robbing us as soon as it suited her book to do so. Not even the most timid and scrupulous refraining on our side from appropriating any particle of Prussian soil would be any safeguard against Prussian rapacity, in case, after, say, thirty or forty years, having recovered sufficient strength, Germany should contemplate a repetition of 1940. Nor would there be lacking on her part, any more than in 1940, a 'sufficient' array of trumped up 'arguments' to justify aggression. It is true that Denmark, which had obtained German territory in 1918, was overrun as we were, but this was done for other reasons.

But this is not all. It is on the cards that practically all neighbours of Germany will demand — and get — rectified frontiers at Germany's expense. On this subject Belgium and France have already had their spokesmen. Likewise we have heard it announced — unofficially, it is true — that the Ruhr territory is going to be 'internationalized'. Bavaria and Austria will, in all likelihood, be combined, so as to form one South German state. Czecho-Slovakia, which in the twenty-five years of its existence as an independent state gave such abundant proofs of vitality, will see its independence fully restored and as likely as not see its territory extended. Poland lays claim to extensive areas (chiefly in Poznan and Silesia),

and her claims have already been, in principle, guaranteed, the more so as Russia's claims will be largely at the expense of Poland. On the assumption that Denmark will remain in possession of the areas ceded to her in 1919, we see that every neighbour of Germany will have its territory enlarged with adjoining areas previously German, the only exception being Switzerland, that fortunate country whose neutrality the Nazis refrained from violating. Should we, on our part, abstain from advancing any claims to parts of Western Germany, we may be sure that Belgium will not be so squeamish as we, and will see her claims allowed, unless some mandatory power is entrusted with the charge of the areas. Obviously there is no reason whatever for our country to be an exception after suffering so cruelly from the rapacity and vandalism of the Germans, whilst the density of our population and its steady increase are sufficient guarantee that the territory ceded to us will be most efficiently cultivated and exploited, so as to ensure in the long run, a far higher yield than the present. Germany has not by any means developed its Western part agriculturally as it ought to have done. A glance at our provinces of Groningen and Overijssel will convince any observer that the interests of all Europe will be served if the neglected German areas are handed over to us.

As to the density of the European population, we solicit your attention for the statement on page 27 with its very instructive figures, both as regards density and increase of population, the latter being seldom taught at school.

Holland heads the list. It is true, Belgium (with Luxembourg) is populated as densely, but the yearly increase of its population is far less than ours. From 1900 till 1938 the number of our inhabitants grew from somewhat more than five millions to more than eight millions and a half, an increase of $3\frac{1}{2}$ millions! Whilst the increase in Belgium

A SURVEY OF THE DENSITY OF THE POPULATION AND OF ITS INCREASE
in the following European countries from 1900 till 1938

	Areas (net)		Number of Inhabitants		Inhabitants per square kilometre		Increase (per cent.)
	1900	1938	circ. 1900	circ. 1938	1900	1938	
Netherlands	32,600	32,908	5,104,137	8,639,539	154	262	70
Belgium with Luxembourg ¹	32,037	33,030	6,929,502	8,660,220	217	262	21
Denmark ²	38,478	42,315	2,449,540	3,749,000	63	89	53
Switzerland	40,003	40,003	3,315,443	4,183,150	83	105	26½
Ireland (N. and S.)	81,896	82,459	4,458,775	4,229,753	54	51	5
Austria	300,005	83,843	26,150,708	7,302,000	87	87	0
Portugal	91,944	91,944	5,423,132	6,825,883	59	74	25½
Great Britain	228,327	228,327	36,999,946	46,010,500	162	201	24
Norway	309,633	309,633	2,221,477	2,908,000	7	9	31
Italy ³	286,610	310,177	32,475,233	43,578,000	113	141	24
Sweden	411,012	411,012	5,136,441	6,266,888	12	15	22½
Spain	497,226	497,226	18,618,086	24,583,096	37	49	32
Germany ⁴	540,743	468,705	56,387,178	68,072,000	104	145	39
Greater Germany ⁵	—	583,280	—	78,790,000	—	135	—
France ⁶	536,464	550,986	38,450,788	41,510,000	72	75	5

Observations concerning 1938: ¹ Eupen and Malmédy inc. ² Part of Sleswick incl. ³ Istria included. ⁴ *Minus* areas ceded. ⁵ Austria and Sudeten incl. ⁶ Alsace-Lorraine incl.

Figures derived from the *Annuaire international de statistique* (W. P. van Stockum, The Hague) and, occasionally, from Hubner's *Weltstatistik* (L. W. Seidel & Sohn, Vienna).

was 21 percent, that in Germany 39, and the figures for Great Britain, Italy and France were respectively 26%, 24% and 5%, our percentage was 70! And no encouragement by the State had anything to do with this; we did not know about maternity-allowances; we were innocent of any excessive remission of taxes in case a marriage proved fruitful; we did not — like some European governments desirous of plenty of cannon fodder — award premiums to young couples; we did not follow any of the methods of fascism, of nazi-ism, or of Japan! Any country practising such methods, stimulating an increase of population which afterwards must serve as a pretext for complaints about 'Volk ohne Raum' — people without elbow-space, — loses the right to raise such complaints. Our record in this respect is perfectly clean; and our increase of seventy percent is due, not to an excessive number of births, — which from 1880 till 1940 diminished by no less than about 50 per cent — but to our greatly improved sanitary conditions which have made our death-rate the lowest in the world. For that matter, all our demographic figures bear comparison with those of any other country. As a nation we are averse from self-advertisement, a national trait which has its drawbacks.

We can also plume ourselves on providing, for those hundred thousand additional mouths annually, an adequate number of 'covers' on the national board, accommodating the owners of those mouths inside our boundaries. We were enabled to do this by intensive cultivation of our soil; likewise by extending our arable land to the limit of our power. We mention, besides our reclaiming of heaths and moors, and our methods of draining watery grounds and of re-allotment of fields, our great national work: the conversion of the Zuiderzee into fertile polders now flooded by the Germans at the very last moment. Our country

grew, but we grew faster — she was unable to keep up with us, who simply burst out of our clothing. And withal we never looked askance and with itching hands at the adjoining lands of our neighbours . . .

Try to grasp the meaning of the following figures:

In 1800 Holland had two million inhabitants.

In 1850 the number had increased to three millions.

In 1900 it had increased to five millions.

In 1950 it will, most probably, be as many as ten!

An increase, respectively, of one, two and five millions. There is, of course, a bare possibility, that, thanks to further technical improvements, a *miracle* may come to pass, enabling us to cope with such a considerable increase of population, so that the newcomers shall have their fair share of prosperity¹. But the years of crisis (1930—1937) have thrown a glaring light on the smallness and precariousness of the foundation on which we built. Even if a repetition of our methods should be crowned with success, we should be more and more dependent on the foreign consumer, since any equilibrium between our industries on the one hand and our agriculture, horticulture and nurserygardening on the other, would be a sheer impossibility. If our population should continue to increase at the present progressive rate, the managers of our state affairs might soon come to realize the necessity of *restricting* births instead of encouraging them.

Perhaps it wouldn't be fanciful to see the hand of Providence in the fact that, with Germany crippled — the

¹ The inhabitants of what will remain of Germany will, of course, be faced by similar problems, with the solution of which we, whom they plundered, harassed and starved, and whose best sons they imprisoned, enslaved, tortured and shot, have small concern, — though *they* might do worse than adopt our methods, and also try to intensify their industry, specialising as formerly in autarcic products: substitutes.

number of her sons halved thanks to their blindness in fighting to the bitter end for a lost cause — there is for us a way out. It will be impossible for the Germans to till and improve their lands as they ought to be tilled and improved. And not only have they laid our fields waste, but they have spoilt much of the soil, rendering it useless for years and years; the soil of a harmless and already overpopulated neighbouring state. We, on the other hand, have proved that as cultivators of the soil we need not yield the palm to any nation in the world.¹ This side of the question concerns all the allied powers, since most of them, having closed their doors to immigrants, irrespective of *calibre*, helped to prevent our surplus population from finding an outlet. It is of vital importance to them that the question should find its definitive and satisfactory solution. As regards Great Britain we have Anthony Eden's ministerial word for it that Dutch claims for an extended Eastern frontier will receive British support.

From a political point, too, the change will be all to the good. The reduction of Germany to little more than Prussia, its nucleus and the creation of some powerful states to the West of her, will make for security and peace, since it will deprive her — to borrow the expressive saying of an underground paper — 'of a few front-teeth'.

And finally we can bring the argument into play which the Dutch Government advanced when still in London,

¹ The question whether our country is really overpopulated might furnish abundant food for debate. Statistics relating to this question and published in the Series of 'Fascinating Statistics (by the Netherlands Society for Statistics) leave it undecided. *But these are prewar figures!* The destructions caused by the Germans have dealt such a severe blow to our productive capacity, that there cannot be any doubt about the Netherlands being overpopulated *now*. It must be borne in mind that almost all our crops yield a higher return than anywhere else, likewise that the Dutch cow is the best milker. (Cf. Dr. A. Frost on Dutch agriculture in 'Die Holländische Landwirtschaft', 1930.)

to wit: Germany, the common enemy, must be punished. But how? It is to be expected that she will profess herself unable to pay our country any indemnification. How then to act? It would be madness to let the aggressor go unpunished. It would be silly to show too much leniency to a people that overran their neighbours like so many wolves and snatched the food from before their hungry children's eyes. It would amount to an invitation to repeat the procedure. The punishment we suggest, viz., cession of territory, is indubitably just, necessary and expedient, and it should be possible to bring this justice, necessity and expedience home to the German people.

On the *material advantage* that would accrue to us, if the above proposals were accepted, we need not expatiate. The world-war has caused immeasurable losses everywhere, and it is only our own unaided efforts that we can rely on, if we wish to raise ourselves out of the pit into which adversity has flung us. Assistance from the side of the Allies has indeed been freely given, but it is to be expected that this assistance will not be bestowed on us free, gratis and for nothing: it will most likely be in the shape of loans, on which interest must be paid, loans, that must be paid off by annual instalments. It is only unremitting toil on our part combined with unflinching parsimony, (not only ready to refrain from all luxuries but willing to stint itself in cheap and harmless pleasures that we have come to consider necessities) that will enable us — in the long, long run! — to make good our losses. Let us hope that the Netherlands East Indies, recovered from the Japanese, will lighten our task! The more we produce, the sooner we shall be out of the mire. And the acquisition of some two million *hectares* of arable land and pastures, together with a number of mines, whether coal or otherwise, will

mean a considerable increase of our productive capacity. A rough assessment of the returns to be expected from the new areas will look somewhat as follows:

Netherlands 1938	Hectares	Percentage of the Whole		New Areas Hectares	Expected Returns guilders
Pasture	1,336,459	40½	20	400,000	f 120,000,000
Arable	929,894	28	40	800,000	„ 204,000,000
Forest	258,482	8	10	200,000	pro mem.
Waste ¹	269,820	8½	24½	490,000	pro mem.
Public	114,525	3½	1	20,000	pro mem.
Buildings	103,702	3	1½	30,000	—
Nurseries	94,045	3	1	20,000	„ 6,000,000
Foreshore and water ²	86,767	2½	2	40,000	—
Roads	68,084	2			—
Saltings	25,384	1			—
Reeds (Fens)	11,467				—
	3,298,629			2,000,000	f 330,000,000

¹ Incl. peat moors.

² Incl. bogs.

To the above returns must be added the nett return of the available quarries and mines, whilst it must not be forgotten that the costs of tilling and working should be viewed in the light of an unemployment fund. Besides, what we ourselves produce we needn't import; an additional million tons of grain (as expected) every year would mean a hundred million guilders saved to the country. Such things are of immense importance to a nation of debtors as we are likely to be for years. And as regards the labour required: in 1935 there were as many as 160,000 agricultural labourers in the Netherlands without a job! Agronomists like Messrs. Mesu and Westhoff managed to *reclaim* respectively 500,000 and 700,000 hectares in ten years.

Just now we called ourselves a debtor nation, — an

unusual thing for us to be, who for ages were a nation of creditors. But the boot is on the other foot now, and we shall have to be mindful of the fact. The behaviour of our valutas must be keenly watched; our imports must be reduced to what is absolutely necessary; pleasure trips abroad are not to be thought of¹ etc. etc. Our merchant navy, which could be depended upon to contribute an annual 100 million guilders to the national income, has suffered cruelly in quality and tonnage, whilst, by destroying our large and important shipyards, German Vandalism has effectively deprived us of the means to repair our losses in ships and bring the strength up to pre-war standard in the strenuous and feverish years that are coming. The East Indies, too, thoroughly pillaged and drained by the Japanese, will be slow in making contributions. Our transit-trade, our Rhine navigation, they have been dealt terrible blows, what with German grabbing of our river-craft, what with the decay of the *binterland* we served. Our Stock-Exchange is out of joint, our money-market nothing but chaos, after five long years of German tutelage directed from Berlin, tutelage that was as light-fingered as it was inquisitive; tutelage that enabled the Germans to gather plenty of information regarding our business-connections and to discover plenty of trade secrets. Our air-fleet is antiquated; its routes have been closed to it; the splendid work of its founders in undone. Our industries have been most murderously hit, German rapacity having gutted factories and works of machinery and plant. Our stock-farming has suffered a smart setback, owing to the slaughtering not only of wellnigh all

¹ There will be some compensations, because the possibilities of inland tourism will be greater. The scenery between the Lippe and Weser rivers being so unlike Dutch scenery proper, that region should draw trippers who in more plentiful times would have made a temporary escape across the frontier.

our ducks and poultry, but of the greater part of our cattle as well, likewise to the requisitioning of tens of thousands of horses. As to agriculture properly so called, — have we not seen the Germans wreaking their fury upon our fruitful soil and rendering it unfit for use for years and years? The maddening enumeration of all those grievances makes a settlement as proposed above doubly imperative.

The ground to be ceded is nothing to boast of, but we Dutch have made poorer soil productive, and our farmers will no doubt eagerly avail themselves of any chance to show their mettle and their ability. That the annual returns of the new areas could be anything like what we have for years been accustomed to in our polders, is of course out of the question. But we may depend upon it: there will be a *marge*, a yearly balance, however small; a *marge* that will grow as year succeeds year; a balance that will materially help to lighten the national burden¹. The same observation holds good for the natural wealth hidden in the earth: the coal-mines of the Northern Ruhr; the quarries; the peat-moors; it applies likewise to the woods and indeed to anything exploitable that is to be found in that part of Western Germany.

In conclusion we may point to the non-material side of the question; to the *ideal benefits* we shall reap from the extension of our territory, as advocated by us. Until 1940 our position, internationally, was nothing to boast of; in our poky little country we were, as a nation, only too conscious of our unimportance. We were afraid to lift up

¹ Putting the areas to be ceded to us at 2 million hectares, 1,2 million of which is suitable for reclaiming, with a clean yearly return of 100 guilders per hectare, — taxes, rates, etc. being subtracted — this would mean an annual gain to the country of 120 million guilders. Putting the devastation wrought by the Germans and their robberies proper at 15 milliards, it would take us 125 years to get our slate clean, if there were not other means of raising ourselves to anything like our former prosperity.

our voices; we were anxious to escape notice. We fondly imagined that *that* way lay safety for us. But our expectations have been falsified by the march of events, and our policy of 'playing possum' has been of no avail. Our situation as a so-called buffer-state between two of three powerful states, was far too exposed for us to be spared war and chaos. Irrespective of any thought of aggrandizement, this meek and passive attitude on our part, this policy of submissiveness, will at any rate have to cease. And this refers to our colonies just as well. Our national existence is at stake, and we must assert ourselves in self defence.

As a matter of fact, far too many of our compatriots continue to be obsessed by the mistaken idea that the day of peace will necessarily see an automatic return to the conditions prevailing before 1940. An eastward extension of our territory will perforce put an end to this state of mind, make us alive to new responsibilities, and stiffen our backs. The task of bringing a considerable area to a higher level of prosperity than it enjoyed whilst in German hands, that task is a great and a stimulating one. It will nerve us for stupendous efforts. This would apply first of all to our farmers, who, thanks to the annexation, would find their agelong land-hunger appeased at last¹. This will enable our farmers to set up their sons on farms of their own. Agriculture being the most stable foundation of national prosperity everywhere, and farming being the work for which their hands itch and for which their great professional knowledge renders them pre-eminently fit,

¹ Compare the conclusion of our agronomist Dr. D. J. Maltha in his paper in 'Agriculture as an Economical Factor in the Netherlands' (Published by the 'Netherlands Economical Institution' — Het Nederlands Economisch Instituut): 'The all-important question as regards our agriculture is: how, with the present shortage of reclaimable soil, to provide our surplus farming population with land.'

the population of our cities and towns will soon cease to be out of all proportion to the peasantry.

Next, an important task awaits our traders and manufacturers, such of them, that is, as will establish themselves in the newly opened-up areas, which, however, must first be vacated by their present occupants; then will come the turn of our architects, whose task it will be to rebuild the towns that the war has destroyed, towns that from henceforth are to bear a Dutch aspect, — and the turn of our roadmakers, whose job it is to develop, to the East of our present boundary, a system of roads that can vie with the splendid system that has sprung up to the West of it; the turn of our soil-reclaimers, who are to transform the miles and miles of desolate moorland of which the new areas largely consist, into a region as smiling as the congested 'Peat Colonies' of Groningen; — the turn of our literary men and our poets, who will have to hit upon suitable Dutch names for the reborn towns and villages, and to inspire our workers with song; — the turn of those in authority, whose perspicacity, ability and perseverance will be taxed to the uttermost.

In fact, the whole Dutch nation will find a new and congenial sphere of action that should appeal by the grandeur of its scope. The task will raise us, in a body, to a level, from whose altitude our former dissensions will seem paltry and contemptible to us, so that for very shame we shall lose no time in resigning them to oblivion.

It is an advantage of a large-scale enterprise like this, that it invites large conceptions: no vested interests will hamper, no worn-out traditions will hinder us, when — as is to be expected — we set to work methodically and systematically, not only where agriculture is concerned, but also where new industries are to be called into life. If we only know how and where to find the right guides —

men of ability, energy and probity, — we shall be in a position to turn the new areas into an ideal region, from whose large spaces with their unlimited possibilities, unemployment, the curse of modern times, shall be banished, banished for good and all. And why should we despair of finding such guides, since the past decades have seen so many first-rate organizers come to the fore in our country, and in such a variety of fields: agriculture, horticulture, industry, aviation, traffic, postal services, mining, etc. etc.? Do not their respective spheres of activity testify to their power of turning Dutch farming, Dutch mining, Dutch railways, etc. etc. into models of efficiency and productiveness, for nearly all the world to imitate?

DRAWBACKS

The policy developed above is nothing if not drastic, and we need not close our eyes to the dark side of the picture we have drawn. As many as 300,000 families will have to be displaced to make room for our settlers, and we must not underestimate the distress that such a forcible uprooting entails. These people have to bid farewell for ever to their native surroundings; and though, of course, our future Board of Assessment will see to it that they get fair payment for their condemned houses and fields, their sorrow will hardly be lessened thereby. Alas for them, Nazi domination in Germany has borne bitter fruit! For the people cannot be separated from their rulers, whom, after all, if they did not set them up in authority, they cheerfully submitted to, — and fought for! They will have to bear their share of the punishment which the

crazy ruthlessness and bad faith of their rulers, whose willing instruments they were, have so richly deserved. On the other hand, their fighting to the bitter end for a lost cause, their protracting of the struggle and agony, — merely to lengthen the worthless lives of a number of scoundrels, — through the medium of 'Volkssturm' and the like, must have halved the male population of Germany, whilst it is on the cards that part of the remaining half will be claimed by the Russians for reparation work, and will not be released for a number of years to come. It is clear that the persons to be displaced will be chiefly women and children. They must be conveyed, gradually and in batches, to the other side of the Weser river.

Next it might be objected that, owing to the absence of adequate means of living, what remains of Germany after the projected amputation will be unable to feed itself or to stand on its own legs, and that it is sure to develop into a focus of unrest in Central Europe. A certain amount of validity may be conceded to this objection, although Germany's powers of recuperation, which after the first world war proved to be astoundingly great, should on no account be underestimated again. To be sure, the problem of Germany's economical regeneration is a difficult one, the more so as there are more countries than ours, which, after similar sufferings at the hands of the 'Herrenvolk', will put in their claims for compensation. Nor has there been a lack of German experts and public persons, who, even before Germany's war of conquest was resolved upon, faced this problem and traded on their expectations of the dilemma on whose horns the Allies, if victorious, would find themselves. For that matter, it would seem an unsolvable problem, how to make Germany pay for wrongs inflicted on inoffensive nations whilst enabling her at the same time to make a speedy recovery from her

own wounds, — wounds that she has only her own rapacity, faithlessness and lust of world-domination to thank for! Where payment is insisted on, the debtor-country, if unable to give goods in settlement, must either place labour at the disposal of the party aggrieved, or — part with some territory. But then — would the cession of an area of 20,000 square kilometres, an area devoid of important mines, towns or harbours, an area without first-class roads for traffic, an area that does not yield anything special in the way of agricultural products; covering only 4 % of the pre-war surface of Germany, containing less than 2½ percent of Germany's pre-war population, — would such a cession really and truly cripple German economic life? The question admits of only one answer — in the negative. Surely the Dutch demands are anything but exorbitant! It might even be reserved for us, while sitting at the round table, to check with a clear conscience, such of our fellow-allies as are really after the mining centres, the 'heavy industries' and the important agricultural areas!

But this does not mean that we should set the others an example of disinterestedness, abnegation and self-effacement, by withdrawing from the scramble altogether and refraining from any demands. Our claims are well-founded, just and moderate, and there is no reason for us to view with equanimity a possible future in which Germany's Western regions, which ought to be ours, would be peopled and tilled, say, by Belgians, by neighbours whose sufferings were decidedly less than ours. Our children and grandchildren, forced to emigrate from our congested areas, would be justified in reproaching us with want of foresight and neglect of duty in failing to provide, when the time was ripe and the political situation favourable, for the future of our progeny. They would wonder at

our blindness in putting so-called European interests before the interests of their own country, interests with which the interests of all Europe are inseparably bound up. They might curse us even for our shortsighted, so-called ethical, policy, which has driven them out of the country, and causes the country itself to groan, perhaps for a hundred years, under a crushing burden of taxes and costs of repairs!

It may even be argued that not only our own interests but those of Germany herself will be better served, and our claims the more readily allowed, if, at the conference-table we do not sit mum, but oppose the moderateness of our demands to the possible exorbitance of the claims made by other parties.

There remains one other objection for us to dispose of; it is the 'financial argument' put forward by a chorus of opponents. The line these people take is: that we shall be unable to finance both the rebuilding of our own devastated areas and the development of the newly obtained regions. What a *testimonium paupertatis*! Look at the achievements, all over the globe, by Britain with her 45 million inhabitants during the past five years; consider what Germany, fighting for a bad, an execrable cause, has been able to accomplish in the late war; and admit that it is time the Dutch were saddled with a task that is at least equally arduous! Our people can boast of plenty of latent strength. The task will cause that strength to become manifest; it will arouse the national pride and energy; it will show the world, as it has done time and again, what metal we are made of! And besides, shall we not have our East Indies returned to us?

Other people there are who, averse from annexations, would like to see a mandates system established in Germany (as recommended in 1943 by the English author

W. B. Currey), and Holland one of the mandatory states. This is sheer nonsense, *unless we are granted extension of territory first*. The work of a mandatory state ought to be in the interests of the actual occupants of the land. We admit that this duty has been repeatedly and consistently violated by more than one mandatory power after the first world war (Japan!). But the Dutch would not be likely to follow such bad examples, since we have always been scrupulous in observing our international responsibilities. It follows that, in the case of non-annexation, we should be simply working for the benefit of the Germans; our own interests, even the most vital ones, would suffer in consequence; the rebuilding of our towns and farms and public works be hampered and retarded; our congested areas remain as overcrowded as before and the problem of getting rid of our surplus population more urgent than ever. We shall be willing to accept a mandate only after our claims have been allowed and after a moderate but adequate share of enemy soil shall have been handed over to us.

One question to wind up with. Was not until now every lost war attended by modifications of frontiers? Why then should an exception be made in 1945? But it is our bounden duty not to lose heart, not to give way to defeatism; on the contrary, we ought to back and support the Crown and Government that have been, and are still, doing such splendid work for the country. We ought to do so, even though we should not see the full extent of our wishes either taken over by them or realized; and even though some of their proposals and decisions should fail to command our unqualified assent. After having for five years been amen-sayers to the masterful Germans, we should not be betrayed into making the blunder of being over-critical where our own men are concerned. As it is,

our Government will be faced by a well-nigh superhuman task!

In adopting this line of conduct it may be desirable not to go the whole length of the well-known British adage, 'Right or wrong, my country'; on the other hand we may be expected to show at least *some* appreciation of our common Dutch interests. Let us trust that broader acres will bring broad conceptions in their train! And let all of us who will presently be called upon to do 'their bit', be fully alive to the magnitude and beauty of the task that the popular will has laid on our shoulders! It is a grateful task, bringing us the final solution of so many knotty problems, and besides, the satisfaction of seeing that the chaos and welter of war and its innumerable sufferings will at long last be productive of good, since it will have steeled our national character and raised the hearts as well as the minds of our sorely-trying people to a higher level.

And now, reader, a personal word with you. In view of the fact that the pillars of our national prosperity, which it took centuries of strenuous work to raise, have been demolished, at any rate for a considerable time, by a ruthless and faithless foe, so that the whole of our national economy is, for the time being, out of gear and in disorder; — in view, too, of the fact that we are offered an equally unsought as invaluable opportunity of getting our house shipshape again by exacting from the enemy a stretch of anything but rich and fertile land, which he himself, moreover, has practically denuded of men, and assuming that, therefore, you are of one mind with us, — propagate our views wherever you can! Point to the justice of the transaction we have advocated, viz. the factual purchase of a stretch of Prussian soil! And after our just claims have been complied with, — after the area in question has

been handed over to us and compensation obtained, — join forces with whoever is willing to exert himself, and help to justify the contemplated annexation in the eyes of all the world, to the benefit of Europe and of the worlds peace!

Winter 1945.

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