

## Foreign Correspondence

## A SYNTHETIC EXPERT—HOLLAND AND ISLAMISM.

By A. J. BARNOUW.

THE HAGUE, September 30

The *Frankfurter Zeitung* has always been noted for its disinterested love of Holland and the Dutch. Even in these expensive days of exorbitant paper prices, it devotes two long columns of its precious space to the disturbance in Djambi, a district on the east coast of Sumatra, where the native population has risen in arms against the colonial authorities. The article was from the hand of a certain Dr. Max Roloff, "a fully competent judge" of Dutch colonial administration, according to the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, "as for nearly thirteen years he had been adviser to the Netherlands Government on matters touching the Islam." This blunder of the *Frankfurter* has caused great amusement to the Dutch, for every Hollander who is interested in his colonies could have told the German editor that, during the period in which Dr. Roloff was supposed to have held that important office, from 1895 to 1908, no less a person than the famous orientalist Dr. C. Snouck Hurgronje was the official adviser of the Government at Batavia. But the blunder grew to farcical proportions when the real history of this "fully competent authority" was brought to light. In the year which, according to the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, marked the beginning of his advisory task, Dr. Roloff enlisted as a subaltern officer in the Dutch colonial army. His knowledge of Arabic, acquired during two years' service in the foreign legion in Algeria, might have helped him to a successful career, but in 1905 he had to appear before the court-martial on a charge of forgery and was sentenced to two years and ninety days' confinement. That is the man who gets the disposal of two columns of a leading paper to enlighten the German reader on Dutch colonial affairs. It seems as if the present search for substitutes, to which German inventiveness is driven by the British blockade, is not limited to foodstuffs, but has to supply a deficiency of "Deutsches wissen" as well.

If one were to believe Dr. Roloff, the systematic mismanagement of the colonies is responsible for the revolt in Djambi. But the picture he draws of Dutch colonial administration is one of bygone days, a copy of Multatuli's brilliant but tendentious novel, "Max Havelaar" (1860). Colonial authorities in Holland do not deny that part of the responsibility for the Djambi riots rests on the Government, but that extortion and systematic starvation of the natives, as Dr. Roloff asserts, has driven them to revolt is a downright lie. Dutch officials have sinned by leniency and an unwarranted trust in the loyalty of a newly pacified population. Only so short a time ago as 1907 was Djambi, after six years of fighting, reduced to a state of order and peace. The rule of the Sultan, who until then had been left in power under governmental control, had to make place for direct administration by Dutch officials; and four years later Resident Engelenburg could boast that Djambi had been reduced to order so far as to justify the abolition of various feudal rights and compulsory services which, before the war, had been

claimed as their due by the native princes. That step appears to have been a mistake. By this premature emancipation the natives, accustomed to slave for despotic masters, became unsettled, and the Government, by giving up all traditional control of native labor, lost its contact with the people it had to rule. Among a populace thus unsettled, preachers of discontent and revolt had an easy game. Fantastic rumors about the war in Europe and of Turkish successes stirred up the naïve imagination of the people. They were told that two Turkish men-of-war had appeared within sight of the coast, ready to land Turkish troops at the first summons of the rebels. It is not clear yet from the telegrams whether the action of the "Sarekat Islam," a native organization officially recognized by the Government, has had a hand in the matter. Dr. Roloff, better informed than any one in Holland, refuses to believe in Mohammedan or Turkish instigation, and adds the transparent hint that "the members of the former Sultan's house are living, for the greater part, at Singapore, where they receive hospitality from the English." The purpose of this remark is easy to see: The Hollanders, whom the intrigues of Herr Keil in Java have made suspicious of German machinations, are to understand from Dr. Roloff's insinuation that hypocritical John Bull is the real brewer of mischief in the Dutch archipelago. But the revelations in the Dutch press as to the antecedents of Herr Roloff are a sufficient antidote against the venom of his pen.

The Djambi affair must not be regarded as a symptom of general discontent in the Dutch East Indies. Just a month ago, on August 31, Queen Wilhelmina's birthday, meetings were held in the principal towns of Java to demonstrate in favor of compulsory military service for both Europeans and natives, and representatives of the "Sarekat Islam" took an active part in these assemblies and supported the resolutions that were proposed. Not in all parts, indeed, of the Archipelago does the action of the "Sarekat Islam" run parallel with the wishes of the Government; an all too zealous activity of the Christian mission under the auspices of the former Governor-General has challenged the native's devotion to Islam, and it will require no small amount of skill and persuasion to allay the suspicions that have been raised in certain districts. An honest recognition of the native's right to choose his own creed might easily dispel these suspicions, but the Protestant zealots at home, who would decry such an admission by the Government as a betrayal of Christianity, form a powerful party in the state which the Government cannot ignore. I do not, therefore, urge the importance of the resolutions carried on August 31; but the events of that day have, at any rate, not demonstrated strong objections, on the part of the native population, to their taking a share in the defence of the country. That the duty of military service cannot be imposed on the Javanese without a simultaneous grant of civil rights is naturally recognized by the advocates of this new course in colonial policy. What is to be the extent of these grants will be a difficult problem to solve, but the Netherlands Government is, evidently, not deterred by the difficulties confronting it from striking out into this new untrodden road. Major J. van der Weyden, of the General Staff of the Netherlands Indian army, the chief advocate and writer of a book on "Compulsory

service for natives and the constitution of our defensive power in the Dutch East Indies," has just sailed for Batavia, for the express purpose, it is supposed, of paving the way for a military organization as proposed by him in the above-mentioned book. Forecasts of the total failure of his plans have naturally accompanied his departure. Your correspondent, Mr. J. F. Scheltema, who, in a letter to the *Nation* of July 20, expressed his disbelief in the realization of the noble intentions aired at The Hague, shares his skepticism with a great many of his countrymen. Greed and sloth are, indeed, the besetting sins of the European capitalist in the tropics, and his egoism and inertia are a drag on all progress. But does not the skeptic, while recognizing the need of reform, make himself the accomplice of the greedy and the slothful by submitting, with a shrug of the shoulders, to the ugly fact of their obstructing power? Drystubble, that odious incarnation, created by Multatuli, of Dutch mercantilism, is still alive, but why is a belief in the ultimate defeat of his selfish aims to be derided as grandiloquent enthusiasm?

## VENIZELOS LEAVES ATHENS—THE KING'S WORD—THE GREEK ISLANDS—AN OPPORTUNISTIC EDITOR.

By JOHN A. HUYBERS

ATHENS, September 27.

At last the great step has been taken and Venizelos has placed himself at the head of the revolutionary movement for national defence. Athens has been strangely quiet since the news became known, on September 25, of his departure from the Phaleron in the early hours before dawn for Crete. With him went Admiral Coundouriotis, commander-in-chief of the fleet. The quiet that reigns in Athens shows that something unusual has happened; silence has fallen even on the usually noisy cafés. The news is greedily read, but people are afraid to commit themselves, and publicly give no voice to their real feelings. It is a time of suspense for all, waiting for the portentous events that must now develop. That Coundouriotis should be with Venizelos is a heavy blow to the prestige of the King, for if Venizelos to his followers represents the brains, honesty, and strength of purpose of the Greek race, Coundouriotis, without distinction of party, represents to all Greeks the fighting qualities of their race and the best of their navy, of which they are rightly proud. His life has been devoted to service, not to politics, and his name has the glamour and carries the weight of that of a naval hero in Great Britain, or that of a Dewey after the battle of Manila with the American public. For Coundouriotis with the Greek navy played a most distinguished part in the war with Turkey, and he remains one of the popular heroes to-day. At the earnest request of the King, he was Minister of Marine in the Skoulioudis Cabinet, but took little part in its councils and professed open contempt for its policy.

More than seventy officers of all grades left Athens during the night of September 24 to join the Provisional Government of National Defence in Macedonia. On the Atromitos, which carried Venizelos and Coundouriotis, was Mr. Embirikos, the largest ship-owner in Greece, who has dedicated his fortune to the national cause. On the Atromitos and Hesperia went, besides the chiefs, Miaoulis, former