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**FRIEDRICH EDLER**

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NO. 2

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY STUDIES  
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Under the Direction of the

Departments of History, Political Economy, and  
Political Science

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THE DUTCH REPUBLIC  
AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

BY

FRIEDRICH EDLER, M.DIPL., PH.D.

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## PREFACE.

Nearly all phases of the American Revolution have been carefully investigated. This is, to some extent, true also of the influence which European powers exercised upon its development. Little attention, however, has been paid to the important part which the United Provinces of the Netherlands played in the contest. Their aid to the Americans, though mostly clandestine, or indirect, and often based upon selfish principles, was nevertheless remarkably effective. Some Dutch historians, like Colenbrander and Blok, have at some length dealt with the relation of the United Provinces to the young American commonwealth. They did so, however, when writing the history of their own country, and consequently considered matters entirely from a Dutch point of view. In America no complete account of the assistance given by the Netherlands to the Revolution has been written. It seemed, therefore, desirable to add this missing link.

While the subject is presented in this essay chiefly from a diplomatic standpoint, matters of political economy, as the commercial and financial relations between the two republics, have not been neglected. Consideration is also given to military and naval affairs. A discussion, however, in how far the governmental system of the United States is derived from Dutch sources was deemed beyond the scope of this monograph and consequently omitted.<sup>1</sup>

The material needed for a thorough study of the subject was found in the United States. The archives of Europe have been—and are still being—searched by Americans for

<sup>1</sup> This question has been repeatedly treated. See: Douglas Campbell, *The Puritan in England, Holland, and America*; William Elliot Griffis, *The Influence of the Netherlands in the Making of the English Commonwealth and the American Republic*, and other writings of the same author on Holland; Henry William Elson, *History of the United States of America*, Chapter "Colonization—New York."

everything connected with the history of their country. Copies made abroad are easily accessible at public libraries in the United States. The archives of the Netherlands, England, France, and Prussia are thus literally brought to the door of the student in America; Sparks' collection of transcripts in the library of Harvard University, Bancroft's similar collection in the New York Public Library, Sparks' Dutch Papers in the library of Cornell University, and Stevens' Dutch Papers in the Library of Congress, together with the published and unpublished manuscripts in the possession of the Department of State at Washington, furnished most of the information for this monograph.

In conclusion I wish to express my sincere thanks to Professor J. Franklin Jameson, Professor William Ray Manning, and Dr. William Elliot Griffis for their valuable suggestions and kind assistance and to my wife who for many months helped me in the tedious work of arranging notes and preparing the manuscript.

## THE DUTCH REPUBLIC AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE UNITED PROVINCES AT THE BEGINNING OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

"All Europe is for us," wrote the American commissioners at Paris in 1777.<sup>1</sup> This had been true even in the earlier stages of the struggle between England and her American colonies, though perhaps less known. It was the outcome of the British policy of the last two decades, which had resulted in the isolation of England in Europe.<sup>2</sup> France had been compelled to accept most humiliating conditions from England in the treaty of Paris of 1763, ceding thereby Canada, the island of Cape Breton, and her African possessions on the river Senegal. In India property and territories were restored to their ancient limits, but the French were to send thither no more troops and consequently lost all influence. Naturally France was looking for an opportunity to retrieve these losses, to wipe out the disgrace, and to pay England back in her own coin. Her attitude was fully understood in England. "A dismemberment of the British empire," wrote a prominent Englishman of the time, "was an idea that now offered itself to her [the French] councils, in all the splendor of well-founded expectation. To deprive

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<sup>1</sup> Benjamin Franklin and Silas Deane to the Committee of Secret Correspondence, April 9, 1777 (Wharton, *The Revolutionary Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States*, II, 287).

<sup>2</sup> "Every nation in Europe wishes to see Britain humbled, having all in their turns been offended by her insolence, which in prosperity, she is apt to discover on all occasions" (Benjamin Franklin and Silas Deane to the Committee of Secret Correspondence, March 12, 1777, in Wharton, II, 289).