

P R E F A C E This book appears in the year in which we commemorate / 7
the tercentenary of Comenius's death. This was a powerful stimulus to me
to push on vigorously and complete the work in time.

When it came to collecting material I confined myself from the outset to
everything relating to Comenius and the Low Countries, but in the course
of time the quantity of the material collected accumulated to such an extent
that I repeatedly had to change and simplify the arrangement. If now
I compare the eventual choice with what I originally intended to deal with,
the proportion is that of a book to a series of publications, a task for
a team, indeed.

But even in its present form the book could never have been written without
the moral support and the practical aid of many. A few of those I should
gratefully like to name in particular.

My promotor, Prof. J. M. van der Linde, stimulated me in my work and
continuously guided me with his valuable critical remarks. The friendship
that grew during this co-operation is for me a continuous 'promotion' to
human and Christian life.

Writing history is something quite different from the elaboration on a classic
subject, a thing for which I was trained. My colleague, Dr. C. S. M. Rade-
maker, who specialized in the history of the seventeenth century in
connection with his study on G. J. Vossius, constantly helped me with his
valuable advice. In Prague I was helped by Dr. Marta Bečková, Dr. Josef
Brambora and the professors Josef Polišenský and Antonín Škarka.

Though I repeatedly searched for data in the town on the Vltava myself,
I depended on Mrs. Vlasta Weissová's courier services once I had returned.
Never have I asked her in vain for a specific article or book.

When the manuscript of this book was completed for the first time, Prof.
Z. R. Dittrich and Prof. S. van der Linde have made critical remarks which
helped to improve the second version of the text considerably.

The first person of the small army that accompanied me on the long road
with its ups and downs whom I should like to mention is my mother who
always enquired sympathetically after the progress of the work in her own
way. I thank Mr. F. Kubart and his wife who helped me in my studies
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who typed hundreds of pages for me; the ladies Nell and Dora van Kray
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8 / translated the manuscript into English, and Mr. D. Howes Smith of the Institute for English Philology and Literature of the State University of Utrecht, who supervised the English text.

As to me personally, I intended this study to be an aid in fitting myself for oecumenic work and as a partner in the dialogue between Christians and Marxists in Czechoslovakia.

May the Czech people that have become so dear to me through Comenius and many friends accept this book as a mark of honour to Comenius who in the past suffered so much at the hands of the Catholics.