

Twentsche Bank, 1861-1964

Textile origins, 1861-1917

Originally a notary public in Enschede, Benjamin Willem Blijdenstein Jr. (1811-1866) moved into the banking business in 1841. His primary target group was the textile industry in the Twente region in the eastern part of the Netherlands. With the growth of textile exports to south-east Asia he opened a branch in London in 1858 which was managed by his son and successor B.W. Blijdenstein. Today it is the oldest surviving branch of a foreign bank in the City. This British connection greatly facilitated financial transactions between London (import of raw materials and sales to south-east Asia), Enschede in the Twente region (production) and Amsterdam (exports to the Dutch East Indies).

Twentsche Bankvereniging was established in Amsterdam on June 24, 1861 as a partnership. The name was changed in October 1869 to Twentsche Bankvereniging B.W. Blijdenstein & Co. (TBV). In the early decades, TBV concentrated on the rapidly expanding cotton industry in the Twente region and on financing textile exports to the Dutch East Indies. Slowly but surely the bank spread its wings. Wissel- en Effectenbank was established in Rotterdam in 1879, followed by Stichtse Bank in Utrecht in 1884 and Bank voor Effecten- en Wisselzaken in The Hague in 1893. In the 1890s TBV also set up subsidiaries in neighbouring Westphalia (Germany), which was undergoing much the same pattern of economic development as the Twente region. TBV ran a foreign exchange office from 1875 to 1884 in Paris, after the take-over of a British bank. In 1909 it reacquired an interest in this bank which in the meantime had been renamed Banque Jordaan. Like other large banks, TBV obtained interests in several provincial banks at the start of the 20th century. They included Bergsma & Dijkers of Hengelo (1906), Lissesche Bankvereniging of Lisse (1907) and D.A. Wisselink of Alkmaar (1911).

Set for growth, 1917-1945

Despite initial opposition from B.W. Blijdenstein and W.B. Blijdenstein, son and grandson of the founder, TBV became a limited liability company as of January 1, 1917 and was renamed Twentsche Bank (TB). The financial limitations of a partnership had become too much of a handicap for TB now that it had developed from a family-run business to a full merchant bank. At the same time, the subsidiaries Wissel- en Effectenbank and Bank voor Effecten- en Wisselzaken were changed to TB branches. The same happened one year later to Stichtse Bank in Utrecht.

After this period of expansion the bank consolidated its growth. Towards the end of 1925, subsidiaries in the Twente region such as B.W. Blijdenstein Jr. of Enschede and Ledeboer & Co. of Almelo – which had existed as separate legal entities – were wound up and turned into TB branches. At the end of December 1930, the various institutions in which TB had acquired an interest since 1907 lost their independence. As of January 1, 1931, the branches of these local banks such as Provinciale Bank voor Limburg, Lissesche Bankvereniging, Geldersch-Overijsselsche Bankvereniging, Groninger Bank, Bank van Wisselink and Haarlemsche Bankvereniging, were turned into TB branches.

Continued growth, 1945-1964

The concentration of banking in the Netherlands resumed after the Second World War. TB's first major post-war take-over was Van Ranzow's Bank in Arnhem in 1950, followed in 1952 by Van Mierlo en Zoon in Breda. The latter, however, continued to trade under its own name.

TB had always been at the forefront of innovations in Dutch banking. In the late 1950s, for example, it introduced personal loans in the Netherlands and in 1953 it took over Industriele Disconto Maatschappij (est. 1923) which specialised in consumer credit.

On October 3, 1964 Twentsche Bank merged with Nederlandsche Handel-Maatschappij to form Algemene Bank Nederland (ABN Bank).