

1. Portrait of a Man (1862-1934)

His work for peace

The International Free Trade League



"My dear Senator and friend, I am glad to see you give free trade its due importance. This principle is not the whole of pacifism, but it is the necessary basis. The democratic organisation of states, the independence or true political autonomy of natural nationalities cannot be based other than on the principle of economic security, progress and peace."

– From a letter from Henri Lambert to Henri La Fontaine (February 27, 1917).



In the USA, Henri Lambert did not content himself only with making contact with Colonel House. He also came into relationship with another renowned Belgian exile, whom he had known for many years, Henri La Fontaine, a champion of pacifism like himself, who in Boston in 1916 published *The Great Solution. Magnissima Charta. Essay on Evolutionary and Constructive Pacifism.*

On January 5, 1917 he also visited Philadelphia, where he stayed with one of the grandsons of the famous American abolitionist **William Lloyd Garrison** (1805-1879), probably Frank Wright Garrison. From many exchanges between the Garrison brothers and Henri Lambert, we learn that in three months Henri Lambert had made friends in the USA, including Samuel Milliken who served on the board of the future *International Free Trade League*. Garrison himself had drawn President Wilson's attention to his ideas by sending him a copy of Henri Lambert's study on *The Economic Solution of the European Crisis*. Henri Lambert thus entered into

relationship not only with the community of supporters of free trade – Frank Wright Garrison was also to become part of the future League – but also with the American Quakers, a

veritable hotbed of pacifism. Through William Lloyd Garrison (1874-1964), brother of Frank Wright, he also later came into contact with *The Free Religious Association of America*, of which William Lloyd Garrison was a member. Founded in 1867 by a group of liberals such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, this movement had strongly influenced the Quakers. Thus a truly interactive dialogue arose between the Garrison brothers and Henri Lambert. Frank Wright Garrison was also a supporter of Georgism and so also sent Henri Lambert his tract on *The Single Tax* and another by his brother called *The New Abolition*.

It was in this environment with its rejection of violence, and in which were to be found many conscientious objectors, that Henri Lambert sought to recruit followers of his theory, but above all to give a rational basis to their feelings in order to give them greater efficacy.

Beginning in 1918, Henri Lambert was to be at the start of the creation in Boston of *The International Free Trade League*. He had some years earlier participated in the creation in Paris of another



League of Free Trade. He wrote in January to its originator, the American Kenneth Elliman, former secretary of "*The American Free Trade League*" from 1916 to 1917, that "*The circumstances for starting your or rather our League are exceptionally favourable following the President's last message.*" It is he who suggested that Elliman write to Henri La Fontaine inviting him to join the committee of this league. A suggestion La Fontaine took up. The journal of the League, *The International Free Trader*, published many contributions by Henri Lambert who was clearly one of its mainstays. In fact, he was not only one of the co-founders of the League but its standard-bearer, even its spokesman. Its creation was important for Lambert because in his view it was called on to play the role of "*starting point and link for similar organisations in Europe.*"

On the penultimate day of the year 1918 Henri Lambert left the US, leaving his friends, but having devoted body and soul to his credo of saving humanity from a new disaster. He had been active at the highest level, with policy (House), religion (Quakers and the Clergy Club), and the world of liberal thinkers (*International Free Trade League*). He had alerted the press, published pamphlets, given lectures, refined his thinking, and yet he was convinced that on returning to Europe his work in French (*The New Social Contract* and *Pax Economica*), which were then being printed, would not be read and would have no influence on the destiny of Europe. Thus, three years after his return from the USA, Henri Lambert wrote to his friend Frank Wright Garrison: "*My life has been extremely hectic since my return to Europe: a life of business frequently confronted by difficulties and conflicts, sometimes serious, and that I have not provoked, a life of intellectual effort and absorbing but generally unrewarded propaganda, due to indifference and incomprehension on the part of those one wants to save from themselves... I am desperate for our children who are innocent of our mistakes. You and I and some others have done our duty; that is our only consolation, considerable though it is.*"