

Henri Lambert

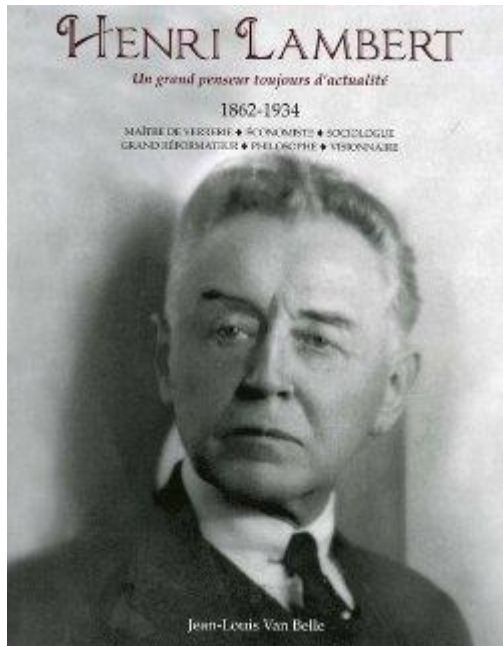
A profound thinker and still relevant

(1862 - 1934)

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Preface



The best possible preface to this work on the thinking, social analysis and major reform projects for which Henri Lambert campaigned all his life – even in his pacifist interlude during the First World War – is the thought he placed at the start of each of his three major publications: *"A contribution to the search for solutions to some important questions of my time and of all time."*

His work in this spirit followed three main reform themes inspired by his emerging general finalist philosophy for humanity.

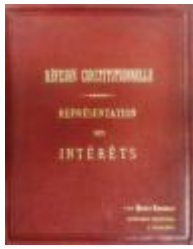
[His reform project for a responsible capitalism](#)



The first theme, which he developed in the late 19th century, was the necessity of individual economic responsibility in business and labour organisations. A scathing opponent of the extraordinary double privilege of "limited liability" and "anonymity" that business communities had given themselves since the mid-19th century, he never ceased his agitation against the increasingly negative consequences of these privileges in subsequent decades: overly accelerated social upheaval as rural people were drawn into the industrial cities with their urban poverty, a legal phenomenon that greatly facilitated the concentration of economic entities, injustice and consequent abuse of power, violent political backlashes, and successive financial and economic crises...

A century later, the current capitalist system, fundamentally flawed by people availing themselves of "limited liability" (the privilege of anonymity having gone or disappearing), has developed in such a way that from its base to its top decision making we now have generalised "irresponsible capitalism", so much so that recent weak efforts to regulate the financial sector at the margins can never seriously be expected to achieve a lasting correction. No major economic, legal or political observer since Henri Lambert has even noticed the existence of exorbitant privileges of limited responsibility, let alone challenged the adverse consequences of limited liability. Indeed, none of today's better thinkers or political leaders even seems to be aware of them.

[His reform project for an electoral system in the general interest](#)



The second theme developed by Henri Lambert and appearing in parallel, is that of a truly thought out organisation for democracy and democratic electoral systems. Since the widening of parliamentary and electoral regimes dating from the late 19th century, various legislative bodies (Parliaments, Congresses, Chambers, and other more or less advisory bodies) have mostly been just special interest groups seeking to consolidate their positions, in constant conflict with one another. The general interest of the population is virtually ignored by these struggles between competing interests, and the deals and compromises inherent to these systems – some even pushed to the absurdity of extreme and paralyzing proportional representation. The designer of an original electoral system, conceived to create parliamentary entities necessarily geared to the general interest, and therefore more stable and better able to carry out major reforms in the general interest, Henri Lambert devoted himself from the late 19th century, and especially throughout the early 20th century, to promoting and seeking recognition of his electoral system. His effort seemed well under way in Belgium in 1914, but was abruptly halted by the Great War and then abandoned in the postwar period, lost under the thrust of socialism and simple universal suffrage, with purely proportional representation of voters' ideological tendencies and parties, and the inevitable rise of "partitocracy".

A century later, today's various "democratic" legislative systems – almost everywhere lame, torn from within by conflicts of interest, and tainted by their funding sources – are in the greatest difficulty, and in fact incapable of initiating major reforms in society, despite great need for them in most countries.

What thinkers of our time, what movement in political economy (a traditional discipline, but now almost abandoned) is today seeking to reform our supposedly "democratic" electoral systems so that they might promote the general and public interest?

[His reform project on international trade](#)



Finally, Henri Lambert's third major theme was that of his truly tireless battle against the protectionism, economic nationalism and exacerbated national rivalries that became ever more serious, especially since the second half of the 19th century, at the approach of World War I, and then again as World War II approached.

Faced with general incomprehension of the fundamental and decisive importance of economics for the relations between rival states, with the ignorance in economic matters of the main political leaders of his day, and even their lack of general intelligence, he nevertheless came close to a breakthrough of global significance at the highest levels of the American government when, in 1917-18, it was preparing the "Peace Treaty" which was to seal the end of World War I. Through his approach to Colonel House, chief advisor to US President Wilson, he had dared to hope that peace would be based on European and global economic disarmament and that President Wilson's famous "14 Points" would have this as their first and most essential "Point". With Colonel House he had succeeded in introducing this "Point" (to begin with only in the eleventh position, and finally in third position) but not as the lead position.

Subsequently, the Armistice was negotiated in November 1918 directly between the United States (President Wilson and Colonel House) and Germany (the Social Democrats) on the basis of the "14 Points". Henri Lambert proffered significant advice to Colonel House in this context.

Tragically, however, President Wilson completely abandoned the "third Point" at the disastrous "Peace Conference" in Paris in 1919. Already weakened by vascular disease, overwhelmed by Clemenceau for the French and by Lloyd George for the Commonwealth and an infinite variety of claims from around the world, obsessed with his over-riding dream of a saviour "League of Nations", and very weakened politically in the United States, had he ever really believed in the capital importance of the "third Point"? His aura and authority in 1919 could nevertheless have imposed it on the ex-combatants at the end of the War. It took a new generation and another even more terrible World War before leaders, first in Europe, then worldwide, began to realise the importance of dismantling and removing national economic barriers. Very gradually, the removal of national economic boundaries has been taking place since throughout the world over great regions and between regions...

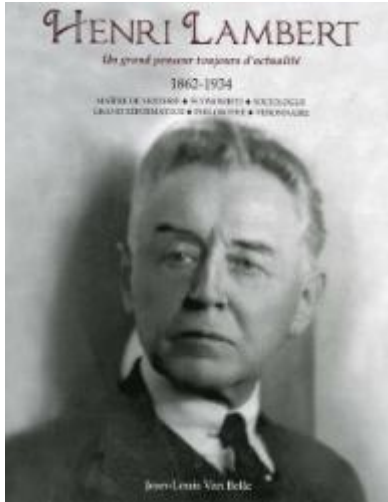
[His philosophic and metaphysical vision](#)



No economist or serious politician any longer doubts the importance of this fundamental economic goal for the realisation of peace among nations. Last but not least, it should be noted that the tireless work of Henri Lambert on these three themes was based on his humanist, positivist, spiritualist and finalist philosophy, based on his very original and daring "Hypothesis", finally revealed in extenso by his son Valentin, and published post mortem in 1935. Thereby offered discreetly to the thoughts ... of a very few ... that work sets forth with a new clarity the possibility of a finality of purpose for humanity.

Pierre Casimir-Lambert

1. Portrait of a Man (1862 - 1934)



"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."

Henri Lambert (letter to Frank Wright Garrison – August 26, 1922)

1. Portrait of a man (1862 - 1934)

His family and industrial progress



On leaving university in 1886, Henri Lambert, an engineer like his father, had taken on the family glassworks. Typical of his character, he immediately undertook significant innovations that had the honour of being mentioned in the specialist press.

Witness: "We learn with pleasure that the continual glass melting furnace of Mr. Casimir Lambert, installed in the 'Planche' glass works, is now operational. The start-up has been splendid and the current operation continues to be brilliant and giving best results. This furnace has significant improvements over the continuous melting furnaces built until now, mainly due to the dimensions of the furnace. Until now, all ideas and tests were carried out for a great length of the furnace, and this, in order to arrive at a perfectly refined glass perfectly to be culled at the end ports. Henri Lambert realised that by some shortening of the length of the furnace, but increasing the width, the melting glass flow would have a slower advance, and so would arrive at the culling ports having melted the same number of hours in the furnace; in this way, a significant reduction in the cost of installation would be achieved. By this principle he calculated that the width of his furnace should be internally eight metres, with a length of fourteen. The conservation of the walls would also be better assured, providing a considerable benefit when it came to repairs."

Differing views arose within the family. His sister, Aline, and especially her husband, Georges Despret, had their focus and interests elsewhere, and neither of his brothers, Florent and Paul, actively supported him. It was in a climate of years of simmering family tensions that at the very least paralyzed action and prevented the taking of urgent decisions, that must be found the genesis of "Barnum", his very own great new personal glassworks that he had



built in 1901. Henri Lambert had no other choice, if he wanted to develop his activities, than to strike out on his own and forgo the family glassmaking heritage of his father and grandfather, Casimir Lambert. We therefore think that as soon as 1896, his father having died, Henri Lambert realised he had to consider leaving the family business, which he had fundamentally overhauled only a few years earlier, and go in search of a site for the construction of his new facility where he could finally realise his goals and ambitions. All this forced him to change course. The family enterprise of his father was therefore soon transferred to his father-in-law, Leon Mondron, an important glass master, and his wife, Valentine Lambert (a second cousin).

In 1900, "Barnum" arose in Lodelinsart (Charleroi). Its construction was financed by the inheritance Henri received after the death of his father.

Thus relieved of his obligations vis-à-vis the family business, Henri Lambert chose a lengthy site, in a hollow, along a creek in Lodelinsart, on the outskirts of Charleroi, on which to build his plant. Most of the project was carried out in 1901, but work began as early as April 1900. On February 12, 1902, in accordance with his economic ideas, especially in regard to their social and moral dimensions, he used his own money (his inheritance) to create, not a limited liability company (SARL), but a limited partnership, "Henri Lambert and Co.", of which he was the sole general partner. That is to say, he undertook all its management and assumed unlimited financial liability at the risk of his own funds. He was thus alone responsible to undertake its prudent and efficient management, aided by a very good and involved team, very low debt levels, and prudent growth.

The founding statutes reflected and embodied the entirety of Lambert's thinking. They state that "Mr. Henri Lambert is the manager of the company and the only partner with unlimited liability. He alone is responsible for its management and the sole contractual signatory. The most extensive powers are given to him to manage and administer the company... "The management of the company will be for the lifetime of Mr. Lambert, in a purely personal capacity, and can never be divided or shared without the consent of the majority of partners."

It appears from reading this act that it was indeed his work, a business in which he has all the powers, but also assumes all the responsibilities, having invested nearly all his assets in it. The design of the glass melting furnace, of great width, but also now of great length, more rational and therefore with greater efficiency and melting power, provided optimal conditions. With ample space and everything in line, both the furnace and the plant were very modern for their time. Most earlier glassworks had been gradually enlarged over time, their buildings erected around one or sometimes two furnaces of medium size, without much order, because sites were often too tight and did not lend themselves to rational use of space, and especially to achieving the best qualities and lowest production costs.

Getting the very large furnace started up was difficult: a strike was affecting glass making in Charleroi. The nearly 50 metres long furnace was not only the largest in the world, but, due to the homogenous quality of the melting, provided the best opportunity for high quality window glass (from blown cylinders). In 1903, in his work on "Glass in the twentieth century", Jules Henrivaux, a chemical engineer and former director of Saint-Gobain, wrote that "recently we were able to visit a new glassworks, in Charleroi (Belgium). This glassworks, built by Henri Lambert according to his own plans and under his direction, contains, we believe, the largest glass melting furnace on the Continent. The economical and efficient construction of this plant makes it in our opinion the most advanced of its type." This comment of a foreign expert stands testimony to the reputation that the "Barnum" works rapidly acquired soon after its opening.

The business quickly became one of the most efficient glassworks in the world, if not the best. Its modern facilities attracted visits from authorities and engineers alike.



But a technological revolution was soon to take place, with the invention of vertical mechanical glass drawing by the Belgian engineer, Emile Fourcault, and somewhat later, the American Libby Owens horizontal process.

In April 1927, Henri Lambert announced his decision to turn his glass furnace into a large mechanical glass drawing facility. "M. Henri Lambert," says a chronicler of the time, "is one of the few Belgian glassmakers who financially helped Fourcault to build the Dampremy Glassworks, which brought him, as well as other subscribers, certain advantages in regard to his own use of mechanical drawing. Until now, Mr. Lambert had refused to take advantage of this contract, for reason of honour. He felt duty bound not to abandon his workers, as long as the old process remained viable. But now the time has come. This is a landmark in the history of the glass industry because the plant in the hollow at Lodelinsart is the most modern and best equipped of the glass blowing works. This is the one that had the lowest cost. If the best can no longer remain viable, what is one to think of the rest? It was enough that the crisis continued to knock-out the old process, now that many mechanical furnaces were in operation. In this regard, Henri Lambert's decision is symbolic." At this point he adopted the Fourcault process – the last to do so. "This transformation of the equipment of one of the strongest Belgian glassworks represented a serious danger to the Fourcault Group," because Henri Lambert was an "independent industrialist and original economist who enjoyed a very justified reputation for Manchesterism and uncompromising economic liberalism." True to his conscience, he had refused to be part of a cartel and so led it a hard life. During its three years of existence (1927-1930), this cartel had to compete with the Libbey-Owens group, Henri Lambert, and the exporters.

In 1930, the situation was as follows: two Belgian groups of glassworks operating two different patents (the American Libbey Owens process and the Belgian Fourcault process, respectively 30% and 70% of Belgian capacity) but recently united by restrictive agreements. The Fourcault group now found itself "under the recent, but extensive control of the three largest banks and their subsidiaries, that is to say, three holding companies specifically created to control the Fourcault mechanical glass industry." Faced with this revolution, glass blowing works could no longer pull their weight. Only one large Fourcault independent resisted: Henri Lambert, whose powerful factory, "well equipped and with large financial resources, had continued to refuse to be taken over." The only one of the Belgian "Fourcault" units running, the "Barnum" plant had continued at full production and with profit, despite the deepening economic crisis.

Meanwhile in 1924, the family name "Lambert" became "Casimir-Lambert".

The concentration Union of Mechanical Belgian Glassworks (UVMB or "Univerbel") in 1930.

The negotiations were tough, long and often interrupted. Throughout, Henri Lambert sought to keep his freedom. But he was subjected to intolerable pressures by the financiers, various threats, including the fomenting of social unrest and strikes fomented to bring his glassworks to a standstill.

The final and almost complete concentration of Belgian Fourcault glassworks was sought, in fact, by the financial groups to rescue their speculative investments in the mechanisation and take-over of many small and medium glass works from 1920 to 1928.

Finally, because of some (inadequate) improvements in his percentage of the "UVMB" and above all by the purchase at a good price by the three financial groups of a minority stake in his company (by now an LLC) Henri Lambert gave way! More aware than others of the socio-politico-economic disaster which would befall Europe in the later 1930s, of the great likelihood of another world war, of the entry of America into a depression, and of the threat of fascist and communist movements in Central and Eastern Europe, he had finally agreed to painful conditions. His son Valentin Casimir-Lambert (managing director) had fiercely refused, preferring to shut the plant down (threats of a strike) rather than give in. Henri Lambert had promised his son and only child, Valentin, not to give in. This was the origin of a great family drama between father and son.

The banks got what they wanted: the concentration of all plants using the Fourcault drawing process. This period had witnessed in Belgium a full industrial revolution characterised by consolidation among the glass producers, the creation of a common sales group, and finally, following the intervention of banks, the elimination of competition between producing companies. One can only guess how hard to take was the decision of Henri Lambert, extracted under pressure and by the use of threats, from a man who was fiercely independent and against any blow to free competition. All the more so because he saw himself thereby forced to renege on the promise he had made to his son never to give in.



Valentin Casimir-Lambert

- Vice President and Managing Director of "Univerbel" (1935-1962)
- Director and Member of Executive Committee of "Glaverbel" (1962-1971)
- Member of the Supervisory Board (1947-1967) and Board Director (1968-1971) of Solvay et Cie.
- 'The Responsible Democracy', (USA, unpublished, ca. 1946)

Henri Lambert had brought the unifying industrial keystone to "UVMB", and on becoming a Vice President, the only industrialist among financiers, while his management team (Georges

Henry and his brother-in-law, Edgar Brichard, both brilliant engineers), would soon assume its general and technical management, and later that of “Glaverbel”, well after World War II.

What was he to do? Save his company, his work of a lifetime, from growing international risks, or stand to lose the confidence and attachment of his only son? This was a dramatic dilemma, the various consequences of which, as well as the subsequent economic disaster of “UVMB”, tarnished, alas, the last years of his life from 1930 to his death in 1934. Significant recovery had to wait until the years following World War II. Then, the merger of "Glaver" (plate glass and window glass) and "Univerbel" (advanced window glass) created the important Belgian glassmaking group "Glaverbel", still under the duo of Henri and Brichard, which had become a European and global flat glass leader, until a new disaster – that of the take-over of “Glaverbel” by BSN in 1972...

Henri Lambert (April 1913)

1. Portrait of a Man (1862-1934)

His work for peace

The root causes of the war



Henri Lambert spent 1915 away from his glass business in Lodelinsart, preoccupied in two directions: on the one hand, in the root causes of war and how to stop it and achieve a lasting, "eternal" peace; on the other, with the case of this particular conflagration, its causes and possible solutions for a quick peace. A kind of back and forth between theory and practice. For him, Germany had made the mistake of not clearly articulating the real motive and purpose of its declaration of war, namely its wish to get "its place in the sun" among the great European nations who had carved out colonial empires, during the period, while under the heavy leadership of Bismarck, Germany had become unified "by iron and blood."

But it was so that **"Germany stuck to these fatal and inseparable errors: protectionism and political militarism – entailing, logically, autocracy, "Kaiserism", and imperialism. If, in declaring war, Germany had articulated its reasons, a serious debate on the issue would have immediately arisen in all countries, belligerent and neutral, and, as from discussion comes light, there is no doubt that throughout the world – Germany included – a strong majority among educated, conscientious and serious people would have recognised the merit of Germany's case, while condemning her war. An agreement and a solution would thence have been feasible in terms of a free trade agreement or free trade area, ensuring all nations equal treatment regarding the colonial possessions of Great Britain, France, Russia and, of course, of Germany herself. Another convention, on Germany's colonial expansion, would probably have followed, stipulating, of course, that her new colonial territories would remain open to trade with all countries. And the opportunity would have arisen to engage Germany on the path of free trade relations between home countries."**

– Henri Lambert, November 1915.

1. Portrait of a Man (1862-1934)

His work for peace

His contribution to Wilson's 14 points



The war he so dreaded broke out in early August 1914. Within a few days, the spark lit in Sarajevo had become a general conflagration. Henri Lambert constantly strove to hasten the end of this deadly madness. He multiplied his contacts, including within pacifist circles and among social democrats, and especially at the end of 1916, when the United States was still neutral, with Colonel House, President Wilson's right hand man. Despairing of Europe's leaders, he saw in Wilson the only hope. His position as a free agent, a person above the fray, had allowed him to address the belligerents on both sides. Everyone knows that in such circumstances the supporters of the parties involved each hold exclusive friendships and that therefore Henri

Lambert's position, alone and apart, was not very easy to maintain. He nevertheless defended his ideas and his analysis with tenacity, developing and constantly repeating them, sometimes writing articles in newspapers or magazines, sometimes more substantial studies, and all this in English and French as well as in German.

Meanwhile, from late 1916 to the end of 1918 he came into continuous personal contact with Colonel House. Through him, Henri Lambert exercised a discreet but strong influence through the introduction of the key provision of economic openness (Point 3) in the famous "Fourteen Points" of President Wilson, announced in his speech of January 1918. The "14 Points" was to be the basis of the armistice agreed on 11 November 1918. "Point 3" should have provided the essential basis of the "Peace Conference" of 1919 and of the Treaty of Versailles.

During this same year 1917, in the USA Henri Lambert published two editions of his *Pax Economica* under the title *Pax Economica: freedom of international exchange the sole method for the permanent and universal abolition of war, with a statement of the cause and the solution of the European crisis and a sketch of the only possible conclusive settlement of the problems confronting the world*. New York, 1917. During his stay in America that lasted until late December 1918, over almost two and a half years, he wrote about fifty letters to Colonel House, was received by him at the White House, and was honoured with a mention in House's memoirs. When one knows how very charged House's diary was and how many famous names filed into his office, as his memoirs attest, one can see that the relations between the two men had become more than cordial.

If the memory and role of President Wilson have remained in the public mind, those of Colonel House are now gone except among historians. Fortunately, therefore, the remarkable new book – very precise, detailed and balanced – by historian Godfrey Hodgson reminds us of House's extremely important role from 1913 until 1918-19 vis-à-vis President Wilson. We can do no better than to quote the words of this eminent Oxford historian: *"The importance of Colonel Edward M. House in 20th century American foreign policy is enormous: from 1913 to 1919 he served not only as an intimate friend and chief political adviser to President Woodrow Wilson but also as national security adviser and senior diplomat. Yet the relationship between House and the president ended in a quarrel at the Paris peace conference of 1919 – largely because of Mrs. Wilson's hostility to House – since when House has received little sympathetic historical attention."*



To illustrate his influence, we reprise below an extract from a letter from Henri Lambert addressed to Colonel House dated March 12, 1917, and an excerpt of a reply from Colonel House to Henri Lambert a few months later, October 24, 1917.

– From a letter of Henri Lambert to Colonel House – March 12, 1917:

"... I persist in my hopefulness. Of course, today's international law of neutrality is not founded on true international ethics. Even so, the only thing to do is to apply it as it is, according to the letter of it. Surely also the whole international 'law of war' entirely lacks true fundamental principles. But the Germans have to abide by the law which they have made, or accepted, and the only reasonable thing they can do is to trust the President of the United States to take the right next step for peace. I am not without some confidence that V. Bernstorff will clarify the political atmosphere and the minds in Berlin in this respect. I would like to be allowed, dear Colonel House, to draw your special attention to what appears to me to be a very important aspect of the European problem – namely, that freedom of nationalities and freedom of the seas cannot serve as causes of peace, they can only be its consequences. When it comes to practical policy, various important considerations make it impossible, when dealing with the peace problem, to neglect or be silent on these two very important questions. Nevertheless, they are not fundamental questions, they will not serve as the 'foundations' of the edifice of a reconstructed peaceful civilisation. This edifice must, I think, be understood in this way." Liberty (national and individual) can only be preserved if grounded on security. This is what Sir Edward Grey meant in 1915, when he said that Great Britain was ready to discuss the question of 'freedom of the seas' but that the condition making this freedom possible had first to be established. Fundamental security is economic security..."

– From a letter of Colonel House to Henri Lambert, October 24, 1917:

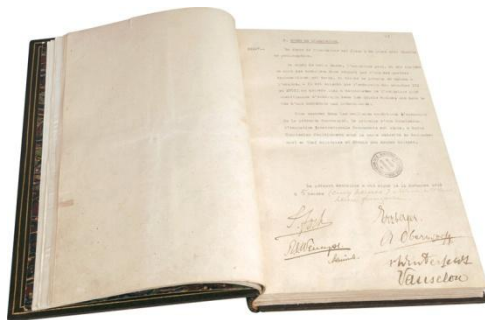
"The President and I had a long talk last night alone. We went over the situation carefully. He again expressed pleasure that I was to represent him, and declared once more that he would not be willing for anyone else to do so. In the course of the conversation, I expressed the opinion that if such a war as this could be justified at all, its justification would be largely because it had given him a commanding opportunity for unselfish service... Then he had laid down the principle that no nation should acquire territory without the consent of the

governed. Now he should lay down the doctrine that nations should be equally unselfish regarding commerce. There should be complete freedom of commerce upon the seas, no preferential tariffs or transportation rates upon land, making the staple products and raw materials of the world accessible to all. The President's eyes glistened and he rose to the argument sympathetically."

In this surely, the ideas shared by Henri Lambert in his many letters and interviews with "dear Colonel House" had borne fruit.

On January 8, 1918, in a major speech to Congress President Woodrow Wilson proposed, his 14 Point Peace Plan, (the "Fourteen Points" largely developed by "The Inquiry" of Colonel House), the second of which concerned the freedom of navigation on the seas, and the third freedom of international trade (i.e. the removal of economic barriers and commercial equality for all nations) for the drafting of which Henri Lambert had worked tenaciously in the background, ever hopeful that the latter would be included as the first Point and the foundation of peace. He sent a telegram to the President which read as follows: ***"This day, Mr. President, will be recorded as that of the greatest, noblest and grandest utterance and act in the history of mankind. Respectfully, Henri Lambert, manufacturer in Charleroi, Belgium."***

In the words of his son, Valentin, there is no doubt that Henri Lambert had hoped and fought for this Point to be first of the fourteen. It only first appeared at eleventh place, finally arriving at third. But the outcome was not a foregone conclusion. Thus, as of January 9, 1918, the day after the declaration, House noted that: *"I then suggested the removal, as far as possible, of trade barriers. He [the President] argued that this would meet with opposition, particularly in the Senate."* The President expressed reservations, having in mind the fierce protectionism of the American Republicans, led by Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, Wilson's political enemy, and the very pronounced strength of American protectionism, even among Democrats.



On November 11, 1918 the Armistice was signed, the Kaiser and the Reichstag having accepted the "14 Points", with England and France having no choice but to rally to it. The die was cast. On January 18, 1919 the Paris Conference began that was to lead to the disastrous Treaty of Versailles, signed on June 28, 1919. Henri Lambert returned to Charleroi to January 20, 1919. He resumed his industrial activities and attended to the repair and restarting of his plant, after his long period of absence. Meanwhile, House came to stay in Paris in late 1918 to organise the long and ultimately catastrophic negotiation of "the Peace".

1. Portrait of a Man (1862-1934)

His work for peace

The Treaty of Versailles – a grave failure, but pursuit of his action

The year 1919 began under extravagant hopes for Henri Lambert. While President Wilson's "14 Points" were on the agenda of discussions, he could legitimately expect to see the beginning of the realisation of his objectives. But the "14 Points" collapsed with the bitter taste of failure.

In this regard Henri Lambert wrote an article in December 1919 entitled *"The international bankruptcy of the leaders and the defeat of the winners."* ... *"How is it that President Wilson has abandoned his 'third condition', which stipulated the gradual abolition of customs barriers in favour of economic equality for all peoples? The explanation probably lies in an understandable error: the President was focused above all on the formation of the League of Nations, which would lead to the introduction of international economic equity, in the form of gradual free trade (which he knew to be the necessary foundation for peace). However, as the author of these lines continued to argue throughout the war, and as demonstrated by events, to establish a League of Nations it is essential to first introduce free trade, at least in principle – even applying it in stages, over ten or twenty years for example. To associate peoples, we must first remove their fundamental antagonisms – and not do the opposite. The failure, so regrettable, of Wilsonian policy derived from the lack of this logic."*



Despite this sad observation, Henri Lambert's unrepentant optimism in man pushed him perhaps to expect a challenge to the treaty, a revision he hoped for with all his heart. This showed his strength of character, his ardour in attack, the persistence and perseverance of his striving. It is perhaps in this context that one should see the publication in 1920 of his two volumes *Pax Economica* and *The New Social Contract*, which reprise over a quarter century of his diverse publications (though not all, and often slightly modified from the original text).



If these two books or collections allowed him to bring together articles published here and there and in various countries, they also gave him the opportunity to take stock, following his five year distant absence from his business, a time for reflection, meditation, and writing. Given that the articles had appeared in various journals and newspapers, often liberal leaning, and had met with some resonance, these two works – synthetic, larger, more imposing, and published by a major Paris publisher – ought by right to have been taken up in magazines or newspapers of all persuasions. The public reached was larger and more geographically diverse. But if politicians, in fact, did not hear his voice, others, renowned intellectuals, immediately echoed his views. Thus the famous Danish writer Georg Brandes (1842-1927), a specialist in European and in particular French literature, wrote in 1916, three years after

the publication of the booklet *Pax Economica* in April 1913 by the League of Free Trade, that Henri Lambert's thesis of was "the only healthy solution" to the conflict. Henri Lambert was not the kind of man to give up after failure. He continued his fight for peace after the war, always with his weapon of free trade pacificism.

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.*"

1. Portrait of a Man (1862-1934)

His correspondents and contacts



Eugene Baudoux

The events of 1886 (the workers' uprising) were at the start of the birth of Henri Lambert's talent as an original thinker. They had shown very acutely the problem of universal suffrage, and the role of unions (The Glassworkers Union). Precisely these are the first two subjects of reflection from a long list, and this only a few years after leaving university and just as he took over the family business. These years were doubly decisive. On to his paternal influence was grafted that of Eugene Baudoux (an important Belgian glass master) from whose friendship and transgenerational affection he benefited, and with whom he reflected on

various social problems and published various studies, particularly regarding the law of association, a cornerstone of his future work, *The New Social Contract*.



Colonel Edward M. House

It is through American pacifist circles at a very high level, in the person of D. S. Jordan, President of Stanford University, that Henri Lambert came into contact with Colonel House, about which he wrote on November 30, 1916. This was to be the beginning of a correspondence between the two men and a relationship marked by frank cordiality, and indeed friendship. Henri Lambert was thus aiming at the apex of the American state, the decipher level. We already know how great was the role of Colonel House as the top rank informal adviser to President Woodrow Wilson.



Edmund Dene Morel

"...for Henri Lambert – and I very largely agree with him – one of the fundamental "causes" of this war is the protectionist and monopolistic policy adopted in economic matters by many governments; above all, in a certain measure, by Britain herself, despite Bright and Cobden's great achievement. For Henri Lambert, freedom of trade is the true road to permanent peace among nations. He does not discount other approaches, but he says, in effect, "Neglect this one, and your efforts are vain." And here I am in complete accord with

him." (Morel, E. D., *Truth and the War*, London, 1916, pp. 191-194.)



Emile Zola

On January 8, 1898, five days before the famous *J'accuse*, Henri Lambert wrote to Emile Zola the following letter. ***"Dear Sir, I cannot refrain any longer from expressing my admiration for your beautiful, your noble, your wonderful attitude in the Dreyfus affair. Once again you have proven yourself to be what is called: a man. And, with some other men, you have shown the world that there are still people in France who have preserved their precious heritage intact: the feeling of generosity, jealous concern for the good reputation of their country, the cultivation of justice and truth. You comfort those of us who follow with sadness what happens to a people one cherishes and who, despite the atrocious crime that the French prepare, cannot withdraw their esteem for the French nation. Thank you! But what a monstrous soul that of some of your country!"***

Henri Lambert.

PS: I read the indictment. But all that is but a tendentious trial!



Charles de Broqueville

In late May 1913 the Belgian government led by de Broqueville set up a commission known as the XXXI, a grouping of personalities from various backgrounds, to reflect on the question of municipal and provincial elections. From the outset, the intention was only to find a system for elections of smaller constituencies. The Commission consisted of 12 deputies or former deputies, 10 university professors, 3 senators, 2 provincial governors, 2 ministers, and 2 industrialists (Paul Trasenster of Liege and Henri Lambert of Charleroi). The presence of the latter did not go unnoticed. He spoke at the third meeting, Wednesday, October 22, 1913, to propose a municipal and provincial electoral system based on three lists of candidates. The first category would be composed of the highest taxed and correspond to the interests of property and capital. The second would include the average taxpayer and represent intermediate and complex social interests. The third would consist of small taxpayers and non-taxpayers and would be representative of the interests of labour.



Yves Guyot

On October 12, 1895, Henri Lambert contacted, for the first time it appears, the former minister and eminent French economist Yves Guyot (1843-1928) who expressed his agreement with Lambert's theories. Guyot published two articles in *Le Siècle*, a Paris newspaper extolling the merits of his theory, and going so far as to say, that their authors "are right not only for Belgium but also for France."



Hector Denis

Though Janson and Lorand had supported him, it was especially so of Hector Denis (1842-1913), an eminent Belgian sociologist and former rector of the Free University of Brussels (1892-1894), who in 1894 was elected as a deputy head of a cartel involving Liège socialist-liberal progressives, a position he held until his death. The latter proposed a bill of this persuasion in parliament and at a meeting on May 2, 1908, three weeks after the publication of his article, stated that an ***"enlightened industrialist, who is concerned about internationalisation, M. Lambert, has remarkably highlighted certain beneficial effects resulting directly from such a solution."*** His ideas were thus benefiting from a link to the level of power. Although his

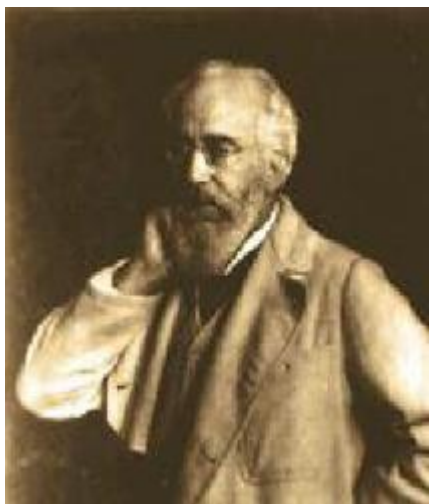
theories on the representation of interests and associations could find application outside Belgium, this is the first time that he tried to influence international politics directly. It would not be the last.



Sir Edward Grey

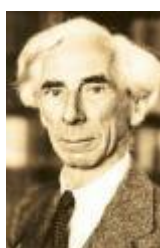
From 1913 to 1920 Henri Lambert launched into the writing of fifty articles published in Europe and the United States. He began in April 1913 by alerting Sir Edward Grey, British Foreign Secretary, through a long open letter outlining his basic moral considerations and highlighting their economic origin, that the root cause of a great menacing conflict was generalised nationalist economic protectionism. He therefore proposed that Grey launch an economic conference to begin the disarmament of such protectionism. In 1918, Henri Lambert wrote that: ***"I proposed this solution to Sir Edward Grey in an open letter, published by the League of Free Trade in Paris, which was read, I think, by most governments and leaders in Europe."*** No

doubt it was read, but it was unfortunately misunderstood or underestimated by them, starting with Sir Edward Grey, and of no known effect or reaction among major European leaders.



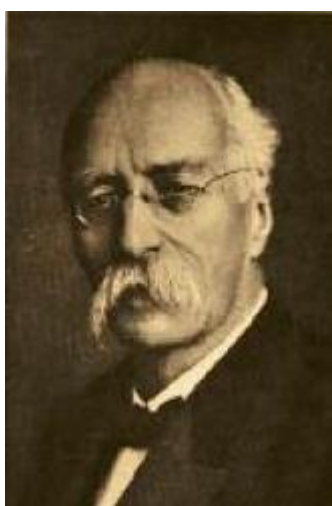
Lujo Brentano

Persuaded that to win you have to convince, Henri Lambert disseminated his research wherever he could in milieu likely to influence public opinion and its leaders on both sides. Thus, he had sent his 1914 open letter to President Wilson to Lujo Brentano (1844-1931), a prominent liberal economist and pacifist professor at the University of Munich. This well-known thinker replied with an open letter in whose preamble he pointed out that the open letter of Henri Lambert, a citizen of a country that had suffered a bloody invasion, had “no harsh words for his enemy” and so was deserving of “the greatest admiration.”



***Norman Angell – E D Morel –
Romain Rolland – Bertrand
Russell***

Henri Lambert participated in the action of the Union of Democratic Control (December 1915). This lobby was founded in England in August 1914 by leftist intellectuals and pacifists in order to call for negotiations to end the war and to conduct foreign policy without secret diplomacy. Among the leaders were Norman Angell and especially E. D. Morel, who was the secretary-treasurer with whom Henri Lambert had corresponded in the matter of the Congo a few years earlier. Also orbiting this committee was the French writer Romain Rolland, who received the Nobel Prize for Literature the following year in 1916, and the philosopher and mathematician Bertrand Russell, who later won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1950.



Henri La Fontaine

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 (and Nobel Prize winner), who in Boston in 1916 published ***The Great Solution. Magnissima Charta. Essay on Evolutionary and Constructive Pacifism.*** On February 27, 1917, Henri Lambert wrote: **"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."**



Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi – Paul van Zeeland

A letter to Coudenhove-Kalergi June 30, 1932 tells us that in the company of Paul van Zeeland, of Evence Coppée, Leo Greiner and Andre Peltzer, four important leaders of Belgian economic and political life, Henri Lambert attended the Pan European Committee meeting which took place on July 4 and 5. Although not sharing its view, and preceded by that reputation, he was nevertheless invited to participate in the European Congress in Basel (October 1932) where, on October 3, he gave a paper entitled ***About the "Pan-Europa" and "the United States of Europe"*** of Messrs. Briand, Herriot, Coudenhove-Kalergi and others. After having systematically taken the counter position to Edouard Herriot (1872-1957), he proclaimed that, ***"I believe that European political federation is not only impossible, but also undesirable. That it is impossible is clear to me and I feel no need to show it. But I want to show it is not even desirable. If there is an incompressible need, if there is a legitimate aspiration, which is irresistible in the history of Europe and the world, it is the need and the will of nationalities to govern themselves, to live in freedom and independence. In this regard, the "self-determination of nationalities" was a true and fair principle. But President Wilson made the grave mistake of not seriously insisting on providing its essential precondition: the economic and political security of peoples in the liberty of their relationships. The disposition toward freedom could not precede international economic freedom: it had to be its gradual and natural outcome. The truth, the future, and progress are also not to be found in political centralisation, in the creation of vast units, or in the formation of customs unions, even if European; they do not lie in "Pan-Europa" or the "United States of Europe": the truth, the future, and progress lie in political decentralisation, together with the gradual disappearance of all customs borders."***



Guillaume De Greef

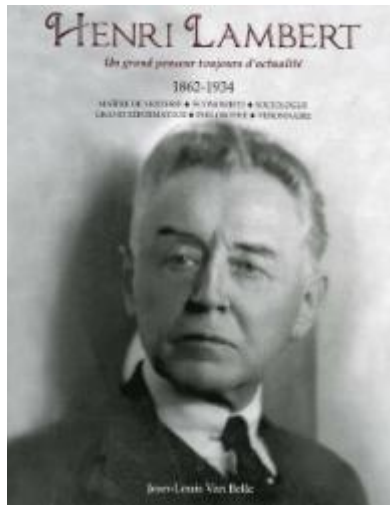
De Greef, the "father" of Belgian sociology, wrote that ***"Under this modest title (Pax Economica) one of our great industrialists – breaking with the practice of major international business as well as the ideas of sociological and philosophical theorists – has just published a volume of paramount importance, but unfortunately too deeply thought to procure the attention of a general public that feeds on lighter, more digestible literature. This is one more reason and a duty for us to draw attention to his work on the part not only of competent specialists, but also statesmen and legislators. This publication from an industrial philosopher is more interesting than similar publications that have appeared in major European countries and the United States of America, all having roughly the same view in terms of both philosophy and practice and whose source is wide experience in industrial and commercial affairs. These works are essentially and generally scientific and, for that very reason, disinterested and lacking any concern for petty or party politics, but are at the same time inspired by deep patriotic feelings, dominated by a higher view of the needs of our new humanity..."***



Jules Destrée

Jules Destrée, a brilliant Belgian intellectual and Charleroi attorney and a former Socialist minister, wrote in the *Tribune Libre du Soir* (March 26, 1932): ***"He's right, Mr. Lambert; he is absolutely right. He is so right that in these crazy times, probably no-one will listen to him. That's why, without illusion that it will be of much effect, I intend to give him my support "***

2. Reform of capitalism



"Individual interests are naturally concordant, they align with the common, general and public interest (that of consumption), whenever individuals are left to develop their activities in full liberty, responsibility and solidarity. When human activities unfold under the regime of full individualism, it is enough for each man to further his own happiness in order at the same time to contribute to the well-being of all. Under such a regime, societies will prosper and last, civilisations will rise and perpetuate themselves, because they fulfil their cause and their purpose: the general progress of individuals, the condition for accomplishing the final cause of phenomena."

– Henri Lambert

2. Reform of capitalism

The socio-economic context at the end of the late nineteenth century

The depression at the end of 1885, the new wage cuts and more severe working conditions imposed by the bosses of the glassworks, driven to take such unpopular measures by the increased competition consequent on the introduction and extensions of the continuous glass melting furnace, inflamed the world of workers, causing riots to suddenly flare up in the industrial areas of Liege and Charleroi.



Serious workers' strikes broke out on March 26, 27 and 28, 1886 in Liege and then in Charleroi. Henri Lambert finished his university studies while major labour riots shook people to their core with their degree of violence and bloodiness. They spared no one in the glass-making region of Charleroi.

After the shock of 1886, in Belgium there was a significant dual evolution: that of worker organisations and that of capitalism, particularly in the glass industry. "The window glass industry did

not remain outside this development, but it had certain special characteristics: labour became grouped in associations eerily reminiscent of the corporations of the *ancien régime*, while firms, under the deceptive legal appearance of limited liability companies employing a large number of workers, remained family businesses in their essence and their methods." Thus, the labour union Glassworkers Union and in 1894 the New Glassworkers Union, profiting from the relative scarcity of skilled labour (blowers), developed and conducted a veritable policy of *ancien régime* corporatism. "They firmly shut the doors of plants to non-union labour, monopolised apprenticeships, and stood between the boss and the worker in the negotiation of employment contracts. Traditionally, this brotherhood had been purely professional, with politics strictly excluded." Henri Lambert was thus in direct contact with this particular problem linked to the law of association and its applications. This is all the more so in parliamentary circles began to worry about the problem.

2. Reform of capitalism

Deficiencies in the system – his analysis

Central to Henri Lambert's analysis, and at fault, is the privilege of limited liability. This extraordinary privilege of the capitalist system, widespread since the mid-19th century, was – moreover – accompanied by the privilege of the association of capital under forms of anonymity. The full expression of this huge double privilege, bearer shares and liability limited (to the sole original investment in the case of bankruptcy) is thus the direct or indirect source of the fundamental flaw of contemporary capitalism and consequently of almost all the evils, for which he provided the following lamentable nomenclature:

*"– a tremendous increase in predatory and parasitic activities, because of the excessive importance of **speculation** and manipulation at the expense of real work in the production of wealth; the growing tendency towards concentration of industrial and commercial interests and the centralisation of management; **the development of hegemonic monopoly by major financial institutions**, with, to put it at its mildest, their anti-individualistic training, paving the way for general nationalisation; the loss, in the face of these huge centralised entities, of local and regional banks, so useful for lending to small businesses, both agricultural and other; the gradual disappearance of careers in industry where people can profit from the unfolding of their own initiatives, talents and character;*



*– **the imbalance in the allocation of capital**, preferring companies likely to adopt the form of anonymity and take advantage of the bearer share, particularly in view of **stock market speculation**; the subsequent development, as excessive as it is harmful and artificial, of so-called "industrial" activities to the detriment of agricultural activities; insufficient development of agriculture in new countries, whose product provides the true foundation of economic and social life and should constitute the starting point, long the mainstay, of new societies and new civilisations; the rural emptying and depopulation of the countryside; the locating of a numerous industrial proletariat in large manufacturing cities generally in large urban centres, with all the evils and dangers they entail;*

*– **the spread of industrial and commercial monopolies** in the form of unions, cartels and trusts, organisations whose purpose and effect is to ensure, by various appropriate means, but always by the regulation of production, the artificial maintenance of prices and profits as high as possible (such organisations are favoured by their support of tariff protection); **the increasing cost of living**; inadequate participation of the working classes in the increasing amount of general wealth (N.B. whether as producer or consumer, the worker has a fundamental interest in free competition between entrepreneurs of industry and in freedom of trade both domestic and foreign, the two conditions essential to full expansion of economic activity, high wages and a good standard of living);*

*– **the excess profits of capital**, almost everywhere where it is invested; the **Maldistribution of wealth**; the growing inequality of wealth situations; the mammonism, or rule of money, that is*

*to say the enrichment, success and prestige, and social and political influence of the clever or "skillful"; the example, on their part, of **the contagion of easy gain**, the life of leisure, pleasure and extravagant **ostentatious luxury**; the continued decline of morality among the propertied classes and the disappearance of serious ideals in life, because of their lack of instruction and true education; the ever more pronounced incapacity of these classes to fulfil their leadership mission; their failure to exert decisive and beneficent, because enlightened, domestic and foreign policies on nations;*

*– **the neglected education of the lower classes**, which are mainly what they are made to be, and what the so-called "higher" classes may actually be; consequently, an ignorant universal suffrage, without compass and without control, that threaten Scylla and Charybdis;*

*– **the domination of national politics by a coalition of powerful private interests**, much more financial than industrial or commercial, in antagonism to the general interest (and in whose service is generally attached a press that is as despicable as it is influential); the unholy traffic in political influences; the politics "of business";*

*– that is to say, of special interests – and the social expedients that they necessarily engender: tariff protection laws, in favour of industry, and "social protection" laws, in favour of the workers, to compensate them from the spoiling privileges granted to businesses at the expense of everyone else. In other words: **the protectionism or socialism of the rich, and the socialism or protectionism of the poor**;*

*– colonialism combined with monopolist protectionism, which, piggybacking on each other, are the two main, if not exclusive, causes of **militarism and imperialism**, with their disastrous consequences in the present and their abominable threats overshadowing the future;*

*– the great squandering, by both governments and individuals, of **capital withdrawn from productive labour**, while the economy (consisting as it does of savings and the useful application of capital), should be ensuring constant growth in production, which is one of our first duties both public and private;*

– current social perceptions among the working masses, as well as in many "intellectual" circles, oriented towards statism, communism or anarchic syndicalism, consequent on the anti-social and uneconomic outcomes of industrial and trade policies of "employer" authorities, and the domestic and foreign policies – equally detrimental to the general interest – followed by governments."



What a damning litany of accusations as to the misdeeds of those privileges! And none of it is any less true now, in the early 21st century, than it was in the early 20th. Nearly 30 years before the Great Depression of the 1930s and more than a century before the great recession that burst forth with the collapse of Lehman Brothers on 15 September 2008, followed by a systemic crisis of all financial systems, culminating in today's debt crisis in such states as Greece, Portugal, Ireland, Spain..., Henri Lambert identified a set of drifts and deviant behaviour that enjoyed free reign in society.

Everyone will understand that he has pointed the finger above all at the exorbitant privileges of limited liability in the association of capital, and those furthermore under anonymity. Of course, he recognised that this privilege was a way to "force" or hasten the development of certain industries, but it was at the expense of other industries; "because you cannot increase the totality of human activities or the common wealth of mankind by expedients. To do so only leads to displacements."

2. Reform of capitalism

And yet...

Henri Lambert and Eugene Baudoux recognised census abuses (eligible voters), without regarding them as aggressive, however. They had already fingered the exorbitant privileges of capitalists! However, rather than unions, that officially introduce the principle of a struggle, they wanted the workers to form companies or cooperative associations.

In 1896, to prevent or modify the legislative outcome of a proposed bill on associations, Henri Lambert became active in this field, increasing his contacts with the press on the one hand and with politicians on the other.

Prior to the bill's explicit formulation in 1914, the ideas of Henri Lambert had twice almost found their way on to the statute book.



First in France. On November 14, 1899, Pierre Waldeck-Rousseau filed a bill on associations amending his Act of 1884. In France its formulation came closest to the thought of Henri Lambert. But the French Parliament passed a tougher law that departed from the principles of its promoter and led to the law enacted on July 1, 1901. This was the famous law of separation between church and state.

In Belgium, at a meeting of May 6, 1908, Paul Janson, as we have seen, proposed to the office of the House of Representatives a bill on "the simple or sponsored workers collective company" and on February 3, 1909 another on "the organisation of the law of association" in which he declared that he wanted "to translate the theories of Baudoux and Lambert into a legal text," a project that reflects these theories "only imperfectly".



The intransigence of the principles of Henri Lambert, and their severity, alienated those who, fans of the possible, saw in them the expression of a utopia, as well as those who perceived in them a threat to privileges of all kinds. There was no doubting, however, that unbridled freedom, without limits or effective responsibility, could only lead to excesses.

Although Henri Lambert did not really have disciples, in Henri Janne (1908-1991) – a young doctor of philosophy and letters at the time, a future professor of sociology at the Free University of Brussels, and a future Rector of it, and also a future minister – he had a follower of his theories, and in particular that of the law of association. Requested by the Belgian Society of Political Economy to come and "defend his original ideas", Henri Lambert finally accepted to give a lecture in 1934. However, his death prevented him from doing so.

Henri Janne agreed to give it instead on February 26, 1935: *The reform of capitalism through the law of association*. After explaining the concept of Henri Lambert, to which he adhered and which he considered fundamental, he said that for him any reform of the law of association *"will necessarily be some sort of reform of the regime and would have extremely profound even revolutionary repercussions if the reform is radical."* After explaining the theory and answering various objections to it, he concluded that *"the crowd begins to speak, to proclaim, to shout that at the head of the economy is an oligarchy that is not an elite, but parasitic, "amateur" and dishonest; the day when what should be the elite of society turns its back on criticism; this society – bear in mind the eighteenth century – is virtually doomed...*

We are at a crossroads; it suffices to study today's economic world to see in which direction it should be modified: towards a sense of responsibility. I think, with Henri Lambert, that for the men of our time this is "something that has to be done"."

But in Europe the boots were beginning to tramp. Totalitarianism of all stripes: communism, nazism, fascism were all sharpening their weapons under the helpless gaze of democracies afflicted by incompetence. Truth has its moment. It was not yet that of the vision of Henri Lambert...

2. Reform of capitalism

General principles – the law of association, responsibility

The law of association

To eradicate the flaws he described, Henri Lambert postulated the need to reform contractual association, which once reformed ought to meet four criteria, namely:

1. The contract must be set for a fixed term, which does not preclude the right to indefinitely renew the original contract.
2. The contractors must have given their consent and have the capacity to do so.
3. The purpose must be clearly determined in order to prevent the legal establishment of secret societies.
4. The purpose must be lawful, that is to say, it cannot be antisocial or harmful to the public or general interest.

Continuing to its logical conclusion, Henri Lambert wrote the text of a bill that would correspond to these requirements. He was not content merely to formulate principles, but he always gave them concrete expression. His engineering background probably had something to do with this.

ART. 1. – Any combination of two or more persons, pursuing a lawful purpose constitutes a moral being whose existence and civil capacity the law recognises under rights of "contractual association." Contractual association is the moral being, born in all fields, by virtue of the contract of association, existing, developing or even disappearing, a moral being capable of possessing and having the competence to defend the collective rights of the partners. The association is governed as to its validity, creation, operation, renewal or dissolution only by the principles of law common to all contracts and obligations.

ART. 2. – The agreements, in the form of social statutes, will be passed by deed. The statutes indicate the aim of the association, its conditions of association and mode of administration and management, the use of its resources, how it will be represented in court, the name of the company and its official address, as well as the names and contributions of its founders. They stipulate the conditions under which new partners may be admitted into the society and those whereby partners can leave and relinquish their participation. They also determine the mode of dissolution and final liquidation.

ART. 3. – Once a year at least there will be a meeting of shareholders at the registered office, at a day and time fixed by the statutes. The annual balance sheet and statement of income and expenditure will be presented to the AGM. There will be kept at the registered office a special book containing the names, occupations and domiciles of the members appointed to the administration of the association and all the associates with details of their respective shares in the assets. This book will be numbered and initialled by the officer designated for that purpose.

ART. 4. – Any agreement of association shall be formed for a definite time; in the absence of any stipulation regarding its duration, the association may be dissolved at any time by the will

of any one party. The duration of the associations created under this Act may not exceed ten years; upon expiration of this time, the association may be extended for a further term of ten years, and so on.

ART. 5. – The associations will not be dissolved as a matter of right by the death, prohibition, bankruptcy or insolvency of any partner, but his heirs or representatives can seek reimbursement of his share in the company's assets according to the latest accounts. They will not have seals affixed to the company's assets, nor require the inventory. They can choose someone to represent them.

ART. 6. – Any contract of association based on a cause or purpose that is illegal or unlawful shall be null and void, without prejudice, where appropriate, to the application of penal provisions.

ART. 7. – The contributions of partners may consist of real or personal property, or of intellectual or material cooperation in the social purpose. The property owned by the associations may consist of securities or property, without any limitation of extent or restriction as to form. Associations can receive gifts in the form of donations and bequests, according to the rules and conditions applicable to single individuals.

ART. 8. – Unless otherwise agreed, the shares of the partners in joint ownership shall be determined, upon dissolution, according to his contribution. In the event of a failure to do so, each partner will be entitled to a larger share.

ART. 9. – The rights to pay tax at the foundation, during the existence, upon dissolution or upon renewal of the association are those currently set for commercial companies.”

Responsibility

These general principles understood, in case of bankruptcy a private economic association cannot benefit from a limitation of the economic responsibility of its individual members, under cover of anonymity. Individual holders of shares of the association must therefore assume full responsibility for their shares. Their profits are not limited if successful, so their losses should not be limited in the event of failure and/or bankruptcy, nor should the identity of their holders be hidden. Only the eventual association under the of hybrid form of limited partnership may depart from this principle of full responsibility (full responsibility for partner-managers, but limited liability for partners in partnerships).

Current Analysis

The appearance of serious taxation, the introduction of certain complex regulations, improvements in public education and improvements in general living standards – these have mitigated the evils for which the capitalist system is largely responsible in advanced countries. But worldwide the fundamental flaw of irresponsible capitalism remains, along with its chronically negative excesses, imbalances and periodic profoundly disastrous, effects.

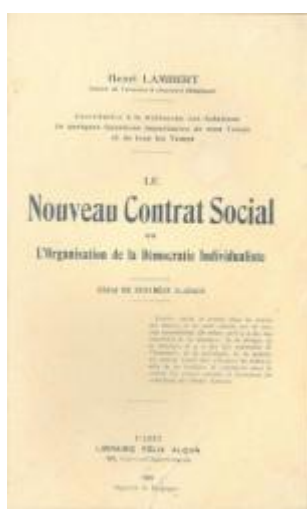
2. Reform of capitalism

The New Social Contract



"There can be no true democracy without economic freedom and equality, marked by an absence of privileges and monopolies, justifying the motto: each according to his services. This motto of fundamental equality and justice is the motto of individualistic democracy."

– Henri Lambert



With Eugene Baudoux, he reflected on various social problems and published various studies, especially regarding the law of association which is one of the pillars of one of his three major publications: *The New Social Contract or Organisation for Individualist Democracy*.

Vision of an era

In his day, Henri Lambert witnessed an excessive accumulation of progress in science, technology and industry but without corresponding and compensating advances in the realm of international economic morality. *"And yet, the economic relations between people are their only fundamental relationships."*

His pessimistic view of the society of his time, despite the fact that he was fundamentally optimistic about human nature, made him fear the disappearance of a civilisation that had for too long *"ignored the international moral principle of free trade and the equality of fundamental rights."*

Since the economic needs of people (food, clothing, etc.) are primordial, these interests are too. They are therefore fundamental. So it should be on them that we *"base and organise our intellectual, moral and spiritual interests."* It is important that these economic interests are natural and healthy they can exert their immediate reason for being, namely: the creation of the security required for the development of human activities. *"Because in the nature of things, security is only achievable through justice and morality."* Thus, cascading, the physical environment creates the economic environment, which in turn generates the intellectual milieu from which then derives the moral environment. The primordial and fundamental moral truths are the truths of natural economic laws. The first intellectual truths are therefore those that provide the primordial and fundamental moral truths of the entire process of civilisation.



Based on an overall philosophy of man's place not only in society but also in the universe and of the finality of his existence, Henri Lambert's new social system reflects a search for positive morality whereby reason structures, provides roots, and gives actions solid justification in a way that religions, and Christianity in particular, cannot. His efforts focus on his desire to find an essential "scientific" basis, that guarantees religion, philosophy and metaphysics a degree of rational truth, allowing man something of a belief without faith, and adhesion to a system, whose overall explanation allows religion to merge into a general, highly spiritual and finalist philosophy in which physics and metaphysics are not in antagonism.

The 10 principles of individualist democracy

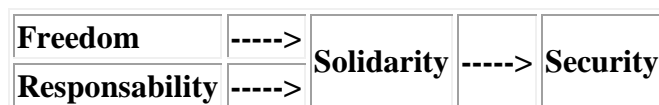
According to Henri Lambert, civilisation would follow a progressive uninterrupted course if a few elementary truths of economic philosophy and natural political morality were applied and above all were known by political leaders in particular. To that end, he identified a list of ten basic truths:

1. **The first virtue is labour, the producer of services and goods. The second, the economy which forms and saves capital. The third is the entrepreneurial spirit that makes the first two grow.**
2. **Natural resources are gratis.** The value of things lies entirely within the utility added to them by means of labour and capital. The last is nothing other than the saved product of previous labour. Therefore only the services of labour and capital must be paid for by the consumer.
3. **The origin of all progress, whether economic, intellectual or moral, is in the natural phenomena of division of labour and exchange.** The role of states should be limited to achieving the most favourable conditions for the development of economic activities by ensuring the freedom and responsibility of the actors. Thus, any barriers to trade inhibit the good functioning of society.
4. **The law of supply and demand determines price.** This is what establishes economic equilibrium, the legitimate price does not reside in the cost of products or in their cost price, but in the mutual service rendered by the producer and the consumer. The operation of the law of supply and demand implies the freedom and responsibility of the traders of goods and services, that is to say, the absence of all protection, privilege, and legalised monopoly in favour of the producer or the consumer – seller or buyer – of goods and services.” Fairer value, fairer prices, fairer wages, fairer benefits will result in greater equity in wealth distribution and the distribution of private property. This will generate more freedom, responsibility and equality between the signatories of contracts and thereby the most economic justice and therefore also social justice.

5. **Producer interests are personal and are therefore private.** Complete freedom is given to producers to join together on condition that their liberties entail also their corresponding and appropriate responsibilities. The general and public interest coincides with that of consumers. This is the only thing that the legislature should be concerned to "protect".

6. **We must produce before consuming. The ability to consume is limited only by the ability or willingness to produce.** (There can be no "overproduction" if everyone creates "surplus" and engages in free trade.) Wealth consists in the quantity of goods and services produced and offered for consumption.

7. **Societies cannot develop and civilisations cannot rise indefinitely except by the progress of the individuals within them.** These advances depend, above all, on the practice of economic, social and political freedom and responsibility. Free and responsible, the individual will realise the insecurity and helplessness in which isolation would leave him. In all areas, therefore, he will practice free and voluntary solidarity and cooperation. Cooperation and solidarity are benevolent and moral when practiced in freedom and responsibility. Social organisation and civilisation – alike natural, gradual and sustainable – in which moral progress balances that of utilitarianism, combine in a state of rights guaranteeing to the individual freedom (the condition of his striving, his initiatives and his progress in physical and material realms) and responsibility (the condition of his progress in terms of morality), from which naturally results solidarity – the condition of security born of voluntary mutual aid, as well as the development of free cooperation, and the source of sympathy and growing altruism.



8. **Human society is but a natural institution of mutual services, whose goal is the material, intellectual, moral and spiritual progress of the individual.** Thus the solution of the social question and the building of a real and sustainable civilisation consists in the "discovery and practical implementation of a universally applicable form of association which properly and perfectly unites, combines and reconciles, the freedom, responsibility and solidarity of partners."

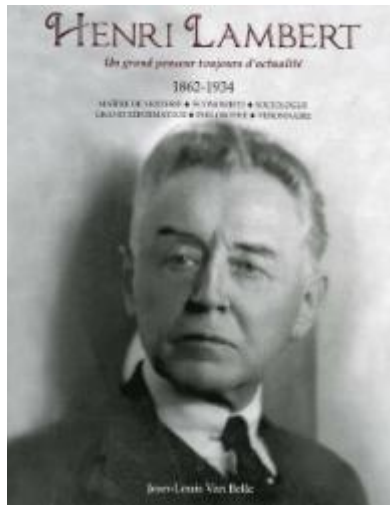
9. **The state, not being a natural form of society, should be endowed with an organisation where individual interests are dominated by the common interest, private interests are subject to the public interest and special interests are subordinate to the general interest.** The organisation of voting must therefore ensure the preponderance of the general and public interest over all special interests, including those of political parties.

10. **It follows from the principles set out above that the conditions of the natural order of society can be summarised in three key notions: *SOLIDARITY, FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY OF INDIVIDUALS*.** As the pillar of this philosophy stands, as its fundamental principle, the notion of responsibility from which derives morality. "Once therefore admitted," he says, "by all and without any possible doubt, that individual moral progress is an irrefutable need for societies and civilisations based on democracy, it is undeniable that among the principles that virtually determine the activities of men, it is that of responsibility which in democracies is essential and which may be the least violated with impunity: for if freedom is necessary to achieve progress in science, arts,

and industry, and if it is on solidarity that we must build the edifice of security; if it is by authority that we must ensure obedience to laws – it is by responsibility alone that individual morality develops and progresses. It is on individual responsibility that the proper operation, prosperity, and duration of democratic societies depends.” The earth is everyone’s shared foster mother, *EVERY MAN IS ENTITLED TO HIS PART OF THE UTILITIES OFFERED GRATIS BY THE PLANET*. Countries were not given to nations, but are only "entrusted" to them for the common benefit of all men born residents of the planet and natural citizens of the world. It is therefore necessary to abolish all monopolisation. Everyone should be free to come and go, even to settle at will around the globe. Laws should have no purpose other than to ensure order, safety and good mores. This tenth principle thus became the first in the philosophy of Henri Lambert. So, he adds:

"Individual interests are naturally concordant, they align with the common, general and public interest (that of consumption), whenever individuals are left to develop their activities in full liberty, responsibility and solidarity. When human activities unfold under the regime of full individualism, it is enough for each man to further his own happiness in order at the same time to contribute to the well-being of all. Under such a regime, societies will prosper and last, civilisations will rise and perpetuate themselves, because they fulfil their cause and their purpose: the general progress of individuals, the condition for accomplishing the final cause of phenomena."

3. Electoral reform in the general interest

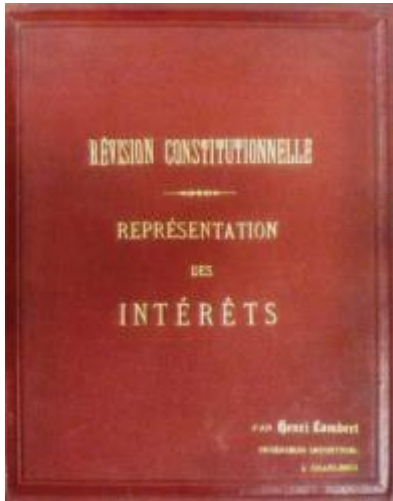


"Without freedom, no progress, no increase in well being; without solidarity, no security for the future, no happiness whatever the sense given to this word. The formula compatible with these two conditions – freedom of work, complete law of association – sums up the entire positive agenda of democracy."

– Henri Lambert (excerpt from letter to Waldeck-Rousseau, October 30, 1897)

3. Electoral reform in the general interest

Organised universal suffrage – a parliamentary system in the general interest (1892 – 1893)

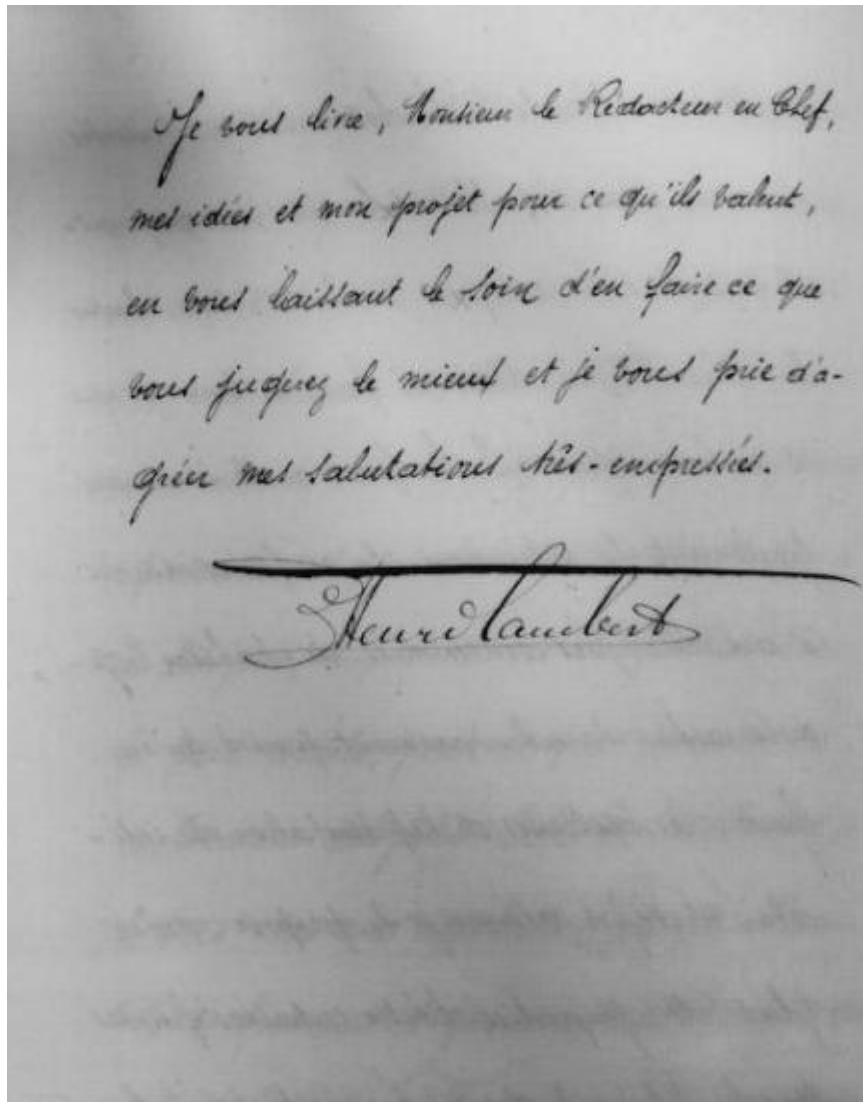


The bloody shock of 1886 would result in different consequences for Belgian society. The idea of universal suffrage resurfaced, but after such excesses the law of numbers, blind and brutal, frightened many. Should it be refused? Could it be prevented? If so, how? It is within this context that one should view the thoughts of Henri Lambert. These were to be his initial thoughts on society, the first reform project he would propose; the first of many.

Now, his mind always alert, would no longer stop to look for solutions to specific problems, but thence culminate in an original system of thought within a very broad and holistic context.

It is within this context of agitation, calculated procrastination, threats of general strikes, inflamed rallies, intimidation of all kinds, and acute social tension that one should place Henri Lambert's reflection in his publication, at the end December 1892, of a pamphlet entitled *Constitutional Revision – Representation of Interests*.

Its foreword is very significant. He writes, in fact, that: *"The internal political situation of our country is unquestionably very grave right now. The issue of constitutional revision concerns, rightly, all citizens who care to ensure social progress. Whoever believes he can shed some light, however feeble, on the debate, has a duty to do so. This is what induced me to communicate my ideas to the public about the solution of this problem: apply to universal suffrage the organisation necessary so that, in our country, it can serve the interests of civilisation. I speak to all men of good will, whatever opinion they hold."*



He first noted the lack of public interest (in 1893) in the system of representation by interests probably because of *"its extreme complexity"*. Therefore, his ambition became to present it in a simple way *"as becoming of really beautiful things."* For this, he says he found a new way of approaching the problem that would allow one to address this question *"in the simplest and most complete way, all towards facilitating the application of universal suffrage on an extremely wide basis."*

According to him, society is divided into three fundamental categories that take into consideration the following points of

view as to interests, namely:

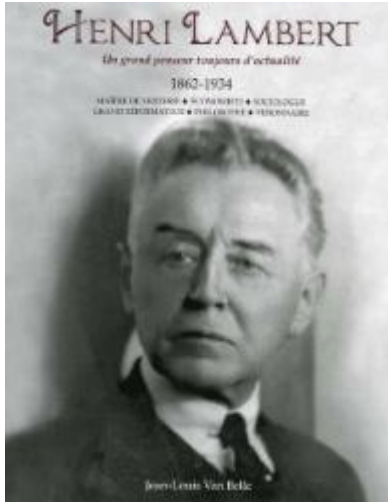
1. the interests of capital, which group industrialists, businessmen, landowners and owners of real estate,
2. the interests of labour, especially workers and manual labourers,
3. moral and intellectual interests, which concern the whole population and especially the liberal professions.

It would be perverse to say that these are competing interests, because then social problems would be insoluble by peaceful means. Properly understood, all citizens of one category also have interests in each of the other two categories. The class struggle dear to Marxists is thereby rejected. Since "if it is right that each person have a dominant share of involvement in the nomination of candidates responsible for the protection of his direct primordial interests, it is no less fair that every citizen should be asked to contribute to the choice of representatives of all interest categories, and the classification shall be in the body to be elected, not in the electorate." This is the basis of his system.

The Constitution should therefore determine the share of the total representation due to each of the three categories. This share should not be proportional to the number of individuals constituting each group, but to the importance of those interests. This would avoid the law of

numbers and the supremacy of one category over another. It addresses the fear of 'hardcore' universal suffrage, ensuring no monopoly of power by the masses. Those elected no longer therefore represent the voter, but one of the main interests. They cannot however ignore the interests of the whole, that is to say, the general interest. Thus, the candidates in each electoral district are divided into three groups, namely, **Capital, Labour** and **Knowledge**. Each voter votes for one candidate in each of the three groups. In each group the candidate is elected who secures an absolute majority. In the absence of an absolute majority, a second ballot decides between the two candidates with the most votes. These are the principles of Lambert's system for which he outlined its main rules of implementation, nuanced or modified following subsequent comments and criticisms. Hence, it is a parliamentary system of universal suffrage **organised in the general interest**.

4. Reform of international trade



"Protectionism and militarism, pauperism and socialism, the monstrous children of error and of the spirit of rapine or violence, mating in turn, re-engendering, increasing, enchaining and dragging European humanity towards the abyss... Protectionism is the socialism of the rich, socialism the protectionism of the poor."

– *Henri Lambert (Pax Economica)*

4. Reform of international trade

Protectionism: source of international conflict



"In the search for causes of the current crisis we have forgotten and are greatly losing awareness that, the phenomenon being global, it is necessary to find the causes, or at least one cause acting globally."

– Henri Lambert (1933)

Increasingly concerned since the early 20th century by the rising tensions and rivalries between European powers, informed by his contacts of an impending disaster from 1912 on at least, Henri Lambert apprehended the approach of a catastrophic conflict for Europe and the world. The premises and consequences of a war that would be monstrous were now at the heart of his anguish and his reflections as a pacifist clairvoyant concerning the root cause of the coming conflict. Thus, from 1913 to 1920 Henri Lambert launched into the writing of fifty articles published in Europe as well as in the United States. He began in April 1913 by alerting Sir Edward Grey, British Foreign Secretary, by a long open letter outlining basic moral considerations and highlighting that the economic origin, the root cause of the great conflict that was threatening, was generalised nationalist economic protectionism. He therefore proposed to launch an economic conference to begin the ending of such protectionism. In 1918, Henri Lambert wrote that: *"I proposed this solution to Sir Edward Grey in an open letter, published by the League of Free Trade in Paris, which was read, I think, by most governments and leaders in Europe."* No doubt it was read, but it was unfortunately misunderstood or underestimated by them, starting with Sir Edward Grey, and of no known effect or reaction among major European leaders.

To abolish war and establish peace, it is necessary to trace and address the root causes of antagonisms. Thus for Henri Lambert it is economic circumstances that dominate national and international relations. It is therefore necessary to increase awareness and understanding of those great economic truths, both at the level of peoples and that of their leaders, who are so often in ignorance of the operation and effects of economic mechanisms. It is this mission that he undertook in the spring of 1913, a mission to which he kept ceaselessly throughout the course of his struggle.

The act of exchange and division of labour are put at the heart of the problem, as they are central to his *New Social Contract*, as well as his finalist philosophy. For Henri Lambert the division of labour and international free trade are essential: *"for the full implementation" of the destinies of humanity calling for an irresistible progress to take place in social and international peace, whether because of ideas or because of the violence of wars and uprisings.* Thus, he was convinced that *"in the conditions of modern warfare, there cannot be a powerful nation in terms of arms that is not, at the same time, a major economic power. Inevitably, such a nation will, or will eventually, become a free trader. Due to its needs and its power of expansion and penetration, it cannot develop otherwise. The strength of its arms, will sooner or later, place it in the service of free trade. It will require free entry amongst others, and being economically strong, and at the same time will not hesitate to grant it at home. This nation will not be long, indeed, in realising that the indefinite enrichment of a country is only possible through the enrichment of other countries, that are its customers or suppliers: free trade will find itself introduced through arms, and progress will be established by war. But at what cost in terms of humiliation and suffering for the vanquished!"* For him, therefore, the enemy is protectionism, an economic and social system that is "regressive, violent, and almost barbaric", but that will be defeated by ideas or by force. This is this dilemma that faced Europe in 1913. It is the scope of this dilemma that he sought to explain to Sir Edward Grey.



4. Reform of international trade

Morality and international exchange



"The final cause of natural phenomena, in the form of some matter passing into the spiritual state, began on our planet, as occurred the first exchange of goods or services. This gave birth, in both traders, to a striving for equivalence, equity and justice. A natural but superior strength, evolved from energy, this striving created on Earth, the first "moral force". The first exchange was the first "moral phenomenon"."

– Henri Lambert

Moral principles of international trade

At the beginning of the war Henri Lambert took refuge in Holland and then went to England where he met the English pacifist movements. With Arnold Lupton (1846-1930), former professor at the University of Leeds, he wrote a draft peace treaty. For Henri Lambert, to be a free trader automatically generates pacifism. He was to become an uncompromising militant. For this dual cause he spared no effort to disseminate his ideas concerning both among the belligerents. So it was that during the autumn of 1915, a particularly fruitful period for his reflections, he completed the writing of a 30 page article on "*Morality and International Trade*", in which he especially argued that:

- for peoples and individuals alike, economic rights are the primordial natural rights,
- economic freedom is the fundamental freedom,
- economic justice and morality are the primordial justice and morality,
- economic cooperation between peoples is the fundamental principle of international morality.

According to him, "*The economic interests of men are their primordial interests. Their economic relations are their fundamental relations. This is true in the lives of individuals and groups within national communities. It is also true in the life of nations in international society. The economy is necessarily the basis for all policies. National economic policy is the basic national policy.*"

"...we need (therefore) to make the difficult transition from military civilisation to economic and peaceful civilisation.

The first is characterised by:

1. *expansion of states by conquest, federation by force of arms, centralisation by the power of authority;*
2. *enrichment, progress and unity of nations through the pacific system of free trade as applied to intra-national economic relations and,*
3. *the warlike system of "balance of trade" and protectionism applied to international economic relations;*

4. *order among nations maintained more or less by hegemony or the "balance of power".*

Economic civilisation is characterised by:

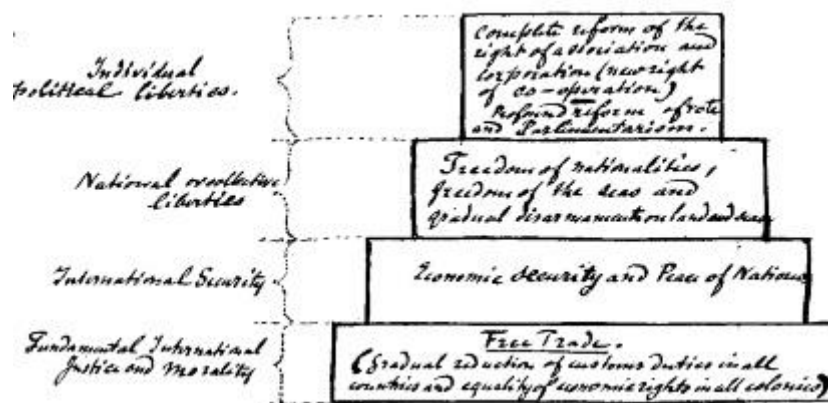
1. enrichment and general progress of peoples under the peaceful and pacifist system of free trade applied to international as well as to domestic relations;
2. the gradual voluntary splitting up of large states, political decentralisation and the self-government of their constituent nationalities, according to ethnic, ethical, political or simply regional affinities and aspirations;
3. increasing interpenetration and meeting of peoples, the mixing of temperaments and characters (favoured by the reduction in size of political units and the economic association of these smaller units);
4. international solidarity assured by the unity of interests and moral aspirations: the cooperative association of peoples in material, intellectual and moral domains."

The pyramid of freedoms

On September 18, 1916, he left for the United States where in pacifist circles he met David Starr Jordan, the former leader of the American Peace Society (1910-1914) who introduced him, in November 1916, to the *eminence grise* of President Wilson, Colonel House. Between the two a current passed. There followed numerous meetings and exchanges of letters, such that one can write that the proclamation of President Wilson's 14 points on January 8, 1918 was influenced by the empathy if not actual friendship between these two men. In a letter dated March 12, 1917 to Colonel House, Henri Lambert explained his conception of freedom and peace.



I would like to be allowed, dear Colonel House, to draw your special attention to what appears to me to be a very important aspect of the European problem – namely, that freedom of nationalities and freedom of the seas cannot serve as causes of peace, they can only be its consequences. When it comes to practical policy, various important considerations make it impossible, when dealing with the peace problem, to neglect or be silent on these two very important questions. Nevertheless, they are not fundamental questions, they will not serve as the ‘foundations’ of the edifice of a reconstructed peaceful civilisation. This edifice must, I think, be understood in this way.” Liberty (national and individual) can only be preserved if grounded on security. This is what Sir Edward Grey meant in 1915, when he said that Great Britain was ready to discuss the question of ‘freedom of the seas’ but that the condition making this freedom possible had first to be established. Fundamental security is economic security...”



Hierarchy of freedoms according to Henri Lambert	
<i>Individual political liberties</i>	Complete reform of the right of association and corporation (new right of co-operation) Pround reform of vote and Parliamentarism
<i>National and collective liberties</i>	Freedom of nationalities, freedom of the seas and gradual disarmaments on land and seas
<i>International Security</i>	Economic security and peace of Nations
<i>Fundamental International Justice and morality</i>	Free Trade (Gradual reduction of customs duties in all countries and equality of economic rights in all colonies)

In the manner of Maslow, who 30 years later presented his hierarchy of needs, he presents here, his hierarchy of freedoms. Individual political freedom is not possible if there is no freedom of nations, requiring in turn a secure international context, itself dependent on free trade. Note also that in 1915, in his article written with Lupton on *Morality and International Exchange*, he had already grasped the hierarchy of needs well before Maslow formalised it. For Henri Lambert, the hierarchy of needs was a hierarchy of freedoms.

"Any policy must be based on morality, and morality itself cannot but have an economic basis. Romantic ideas and customs create romantic politics. Positive politics can only proceed from the principles of positive morality. These derive from the nature of things, that is to say, from the rational interpretation of natural moral phenomena.

Positive morality is natural morality. Moreover, it is natural primordial morality that manifests in the economic relations of men, from which they satisfy their physiological and vital needs, the spirit of man cannot be free, our intellect and our higher aspirations cannot flourish unless those needs have first been satisfied. "Economic morality" appears as fundamental for all activities and relations: individual, social, national, international."

In an article, *The Economic Cause and Solution of the European Crisis* published in January 1915, he further clarified his thoughts. For him the root causes of the crisis lay beyond national psychological factors, which certainly played an undeniable role, but did not provide

an adequate explanation. The general and permanent peace that everyone aspires to can only be determined using justice, not weapons. True justice in international relations is fundamentally formed by a policy favourable to the economic development of all nations without exception. "Thus the increase in material well-being of peoples is both the condition and the means of their intellectual and moral advancement – can civilisation really be the product of misery? Their right to develop economically, to an extent corresponding to the full richness of their soil and their capabilities, is an inviolable law of nature: a divine right. Moreover, the economic development of a nation is inseparable from the practice of increasing the extent of its trade with other nations. Trade thus appears as the essential fact and law of international relations. Any impediment to trade is a violation of international law. Free trade is the tangible manifestation and certain criterion of a true state of justice in the relations between peoples. Otherwise, international law – and the pacifism, which identifies itself with it – will continue to lack a solid and realistic foundation. Peace will be assured by law when the nations shall know truth and practice international law, characterised by free trade and thus likely to be recognised by all because respectful of everyone's basic interests. Until international law and international justice become one, humanity will continue to know only periods of more or less precarious peace, which necessarily depend on the will and interests of those nations that possess arms."

4. Reform of international trade

Pax Economica

The first version of his prescient *Pax Economica* appeared in late April 1913. Thereafter, in Germany, the USA, and in England he published pamphlets, before publishing his work of synthesis, *Pax Economica*, in 1920.

To abolish war and establish peace, it is necessary to trace and address the root causes of antagonisms. Thus for Henri Lambert these are the economic circumstances which dominate national and international relations. It is therefore necessary to increase awareness and understanding of the great economic truths, both at the level of peoples and of their leaders who are so often ignorant of the operation and effects of economic mechanisms. It is this mission that he undertook in the spring of 1913, a mission to which he held ceaselessly constant throughout the course of his struggle.



"There is undoubtedly a general and synthetic natural law," he declared, "governing the universe in all its universality, and to which all phenomena must answer, in expression of the final cause. It can only be a law of progress linking matter, by means of energetic properties that are attached to it, to a work of transformation and ascension, slow but relentless to be sure, towards the True, the Beautiful, and the Good. There is no one who can claim the whole universal design as aimless, as possibly "without purpose." There is no one who is able to conceive all things and phenomena for any other purpose, any other reason, than our improvement, development and indefinite progress towards the True, the Beautiful, the Good – and Happiness. The entire universe, as each of its parts, is subject to and must correspond to this final cause.

The general law of progress dominates the destinies of mankind. There can be no harmonious social life, no harmonious relations between societies, outside the conditions allowing this Law of laws to accomplish its effects: any attempt at obstruction will be a rebellion, a crime against Nature herself, and will become, sooner or later, subject to a rectifying penalty, automatically applied, and manifested in the form of what we would call a "punishment". He continued, stating that "the most characteristic natural phenomena, and the most essential and fundamental condition for human progress, are the division of labour with the exchange of the products of labour. Suppression of the division of labour and of exchange would mark the return of man to the most primitive state. Any impediment to the development among members of a community becomes fatally reflected by the stopping or slowing of improvements in the economic and moral condition of the individual and of the society in which he finds himself. Similarly, barriers to the fulfilment of this natural phenomenon among individuals belonging to different human communities have resulted in the slowing or halting of their economic, social and moral progress. Their regression to a state of barbarism is, therefore, to be feared. War appears as one of the penalties or punishments that will end by striking down nations, when, by creating barriers between them to the development of the division of labour and exchange, they fail in their

mutual mission of accomplishing the economic, social and moral progress, indefinite, parallel and adequate, which nature assigns to humanity."

Once again, the act of exchange and division of labour were put at the heart of the problem, as they were to be central to his *New Social Contract* and to his finalist philosophy. For Henri Lambert the division of labour and international free trade are essential: *"for the full implementation" of the destinies of humanity calling for an irresistible progress to take place in social and international peace, whether because of ideas or because of the violence of wars and uprisings.*" Thus, he was convinced that *"in the conditions of modern warfare, there cannot be a powerful nation in terms of arms that is not, at the same time, a major economic power. Inevitably, such a nation will, or will eventually, become a free trader. Due to its needs and its power of expansion and penetration, it cannot develop otherwise. The strength of its arms, will sooner or later, place it in the service of free trade. It will require free entry amongst others, and being economically strong, and at the same time will not hesitate to grant it at home. This nation will not be long, indeed, in realising that the indefinite enrichment of a country is only possible through the enrichment of other countries, that are its customers or suppliers: free trade will find itself introduced through arms, and progress will be established by war. But at what cost in terms of humiliation and suffering for the vanquished!"*

For him, therefore, the enemy is protectionism, an economic and social system that is "regressive, violent, and almost barbaric", but that will be defeated by ideas or by force.

This is the dilemma that faced Europe in 1913.

Faced with this imminent threat, pacifists, according to Henri Lambert, seem *"not to take sufficient account of this truth of paramount importance. Also, there is reason to fear that their noble efforts are ineffective, or at least very insufficiently operative. Preaching the spirit of reconciliation, harmony, political honesty of states, international justice, arbitration, and disarmament, pacifists do not address the cause. They seem not to see that the warlike spirit, international nationalist inequities, arms and even the alleged "hostility of races", at least between the major European states, are caused by the hostility of those interests generally entertained by protectionism. Similarly, the efforts of the organised proletarian pacifists might more usefully be ranged against protectionism than in furtherance of internationalist and anti-militarist propaganda.*

In fact, no military disarmament is possible or even desirable, without economic disarmament. Furthermore, no conception is more internationalist than free trade, which is, necessarily, the fundamental institution of all realistic internationalism. In many respects, rightfully considered by the proletariat, the abolition of customs borders soon amounts to the removal of political boundaries, making the latter pointless. Workers do not appear to suspect, moreover, that protectionism represents inequities and damage inflicted upon labour on the part of capital.

His strong belief in free trade led him, as is often the case with those who are certain they have found the key to a problem, to reduce events to a single cause.

If free trade is the fundamental solution to the problems of humanity, protectionism is one of the main causes of *"socialism, erroneous doctrine, certainly, and regression of the means of*

social reform which it advocates, but a justified and necessary protest against the errors and abuses of capital, which are not only the result of protectionism.

Protectionism and militarism, pauperism and socialism, the monstrous children of error and of the spirit of rapine or violence, mating in turn, re-engendering, increasing, enchainning and dragging European humanity towards the abyss."

To conclude, his striking aphorism: "*protectionism is the socialism of the rich; socialism is the protectionism of the poor.*"

4. Reform of international trade

Economic peace agreement



"How to explain that after four years of the most terrible of lessons, leaders have not yet realised that there is no other effective "strategic defence", no other lasting security than justice? O Mankind, heal thee of "great men" for whom such obvious ideas remain those of dreamers... "In the near already visible future, men will know still less security than they experienced in the past. Within perhaps ten years a new international catastrophe, combined this time and complicated by social cataclysm, will appear inevitable if not imminent."

– Henri Lambert (April 8, 1919 – *Rotterdamsche Nieuwe Courant* – *Gazette Charleroi*).

During the crisis of the thirties, Henri Lambert took up his pen again to denounce the incompetence of politicians and of the League of Nations. For him *"The forces of association remain helpless when left in the presence of energies of dissociation that are greater or likely to appear more pressing and more violent. Association, if it occurs, will then remain inconsistent and unreliable. This is the case with the League of Nations, as at present established. It is ineffective, inoperative, because the economic causes of discord generally outweigh the political motives of concord. Based on errors or equivocal economics and thus not able to reclaim or even inspire, clearly, openly, the realistic and fundamental needs, of all stable and sustainable international agreements, its own policies become, directly or indirectly, a cause of insecurity and war."*

As the establishment of a disarmament conference approached in February 1932 he wrote in December 1931 that *"That is why, given also the urgency for Europe to take decisions, the author of these lines proposes, in place of the "Conference on Disarmament," ...a meeting of delegates of the states, with a view to the free and voluntary execution of the following international convention that would give to the last treaty – that of Versailles – the moral basis and validity that it lacks."*

ECONOMIC PEACE AGREEMENT

The European nations, inviting all other nations to follow in the path of progress, morality and economic peace, agree:

Article 1

The colonies of European nations will, within three months from the date of signing this treaty, open to the trade and general activities of nationals of all European and non-European countries under conditions of absolute equality with respect to economic rights.

This implies that trade, industry and the establishment of people shall enjoy complete freedom, that is to say, the regime of "open door".

(N.B. Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa (and, where applicable, British India) may take part as independent states outside Europe, not as "colonies".

Article 2

The European states agree gradually to phase out their present metropolitan customs duties during the ten years from this date. They give up all other provisions allegedly protecting the interests of their nationals and disruptive of free international competition. They will defer to the Bill of Rights and Duties of Peoples.

For the gradual abolition of customs and other protectionist measures, each state will choose the ways and means best suited to the particular conditions of its economy, so as to lead to their abolition by the end of ten years. In any event, customs duties cannot be reduced by less than 5% annually.

Article 3

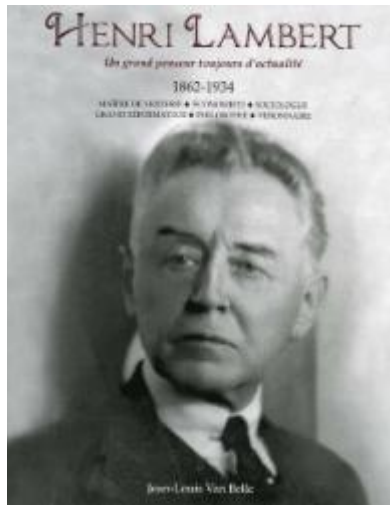
The European nations, inviting all other nations to join them, will convene, within three months after signature of this agreement, a conference to consider – in the spirit of good will, good faith, loyal cooperation and solidarity now possible – all issues of common interest whose solution is considered necessary to the economic, social and international prosperity of humanity.

This conference may be held under the auspices and forms of ordinary sessions of the League of Nations, it acquires, by sections 1 and 2 of this agreement, the foundation and character necessary for effective and fruitful collaboration of the peoples, now really "partners".

Certainly, he declares, *"some observations may be made concerning this draft convention of economic peace. But the questions to ask about it are, above all, these: Is there any other way that economic peace can resolve the international crisis and avoid the renewal of a general European war, with all its consequences? Can one imagine economic peace in a form other than international economic freedom? In the event that the answer to both these questions is negative, would it not be better, would it not be more intelligent to endeavour to accept the project than to invent objections to it?"*

Thus, Henri Lambert launched his final appeal: political peace could not be established except on a basis of economic peace. Once again he was not heard... Meanwhile World War II was in preparation...

5. Reform of colonial regimes – Internationalisation



"Who could dispute that in provoking the internationalisation of the Congo, the Belgians would have sided with the noblest and most worthy, as well as the wisest and most patriotic, and that they would have enjoyed the high regard and sympathy of all peoples? Man in our time no longer has the right to hinder human progress, even if it appears in endless visions. There certainly is no reason that can be devised that one day, the international work of ideal colonisation being accomplished or in process of accomplishment, the other "Congos" – Portuguese, English, French, maybe other neighbours – will be spontaneously joined to the "Belgian Congo" in the purpose of enlarging the first "human colony", this first

"international state".

– Henri Lambert

5. Reform of colonial regimes – Internationalisation

The Belgian political context (The Congo)

When very young, the future king Leopold II very quickly developed “an almost obsessive interest in overseas affairs, for enrichment thanks to the great politico-commercial combinations.” His “sense of how evil the diplomatic game can sometimes be” served to support his Pharaonic dreams, helped by the rivalry between the great powers of the time, Great Britain, France, Germany and also Portugal. In the mid-1870s, Central Africa, known only by a few explorers, allowed all dreams. Leopold called upon Stanley to make them come true and his epic became famous.

In this context, already on December 12, 1876, King Leopold II, who the Americans called “The King of Business”, convened a geographical conference at the Palace of Brussels in order to announce an impulse to exploit the discovery of unknown lands in Africa, to which end was founded the International African Association, under his leadership. Two years later in 1878, the Committee to study the Upper Congo was formed. In 1884 the king founded the International Congo Association. On November 15, 1884, the Berlin Conference opened. The closing document on February 26, 1885 concluded with the aim of neutralising the Congo basin and putting all nations on an equal footing. Some time later Leopold II created, *motu proprio*, the Congo state and on April 16, 1885 requested to the Council of Ministers of Belgium that he become ruler of the new state.



By the early 1890s, the cruelties of the regime were beginning to be known: “the destruction of villages, summary executions, hostage-taking, various corporal punishments, etc.” Everything was admissible when it came to getting rubber and ivory now that the Congo had become profitable. Soon, however, voices – in particular that of U.S. journalist G. Williams Sheppard, a Protestant missionary – began to denounce these abuses.

Belgian public opinion now began to stir. In early 1906 some colonial law experts concluded that “the truth is that the state of the Congo is not a colonising state, it is hardly a state: it is a financial enterprise...” The colony

was not administered in the interest of the natives, or even in the economic interest of Belgium: but to provide the King-Sovereign with maximum resources. That was the aim of governmental activity.” To end this state of affairs, only one solution was obvious: namely the takeover of this state by Belgium. Parliament had therefore to be involved. Parliamentary debate on the issue of annexation began on February 20, 1906. At first, Leopold II firmly opposed the annexation. But, given the growing opposition of the British government who also saw in annexation the only way to remedy this problem, and faced with the threat of an international conference on the Congo, at the end of 1906 Leopold II changed his mind and

decided to accept the idea of annexation by Belgium of the Congo Free State, given an apparent sale of “his Congo” to Belgium...

5. Reform of colonial regimes – Internationalisation

Internationalisation of the Congo

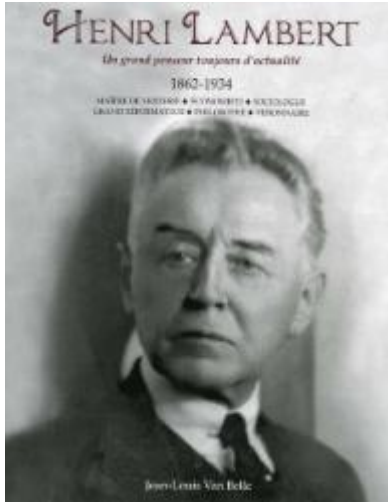
On April 8, 1908, one week before the opening of the debates, Henri Lambert wrote to the liberal newspaper, the *Gazette de Charleroi*, a letter explaining his position on the internationalisation of the Congo. But in fact as early as February 1895 he had already written in the *Gazette of Charleroi*:

"If the answer to the question of Congo is one of the recovery, a solution that the author of these lines, a convinced opponent of the Congolese adventure, deeply deploras... In short, the colonial problem would be for us to open up Africa in the shortest possible time, a centre of exchange and production. And it would obviously be to free trade that it would look for the answer." If this idea is not new, it is the first time it "is translated into a precise formula for achievement."

The Congo would be administered, in his conception, by a multinational governing council of nine members, comprising two delegates from France, two from England, two from Germany and three from Belgium. The costs would be incurred at a rate of 2/5 by Belgium and 1/5 by each of the other three nations. Henri Lambert pointed out that Belgium had no economic interest to make the Congo into a colony; it became one of the first economic powers without need of a colony, whose management would result in significant expenses and charges for the country. *"Why can it be in the public interest for Belgium to assume the burdens and risks of all kinds of owning this disproportionately large, and geographically and politically ill-located territory, whose wealth is now more or less exhausted or largely granted to individuals, both Belgian and foreign, vis-à-vis which our country has not made any kind of commitment? Are the Belgians ready, both in terms of men and money, to bear the cost of a navy and a colonial army, and to waive in effect their neutrality? What would they say, upon being asked, to what gains have resulted from such sacrifices?"* On the other hand can we ask the Belgians to give up everything? There is *"next to and above the economic enterprise, the humanitarian civilising enterprise, which was from the outset the main motive of the work from which the Belgians cannot now withdraw without forfeiture, or loss of dignity."*

While the proposal was gaining support in Belgian public opinion, and at a high political level in Belgium, the necessary support of Britain was ambiguous and never forthcoming, despite a draft law awaiting a vote of the Belgian Parliament...

6. Other reform proposals



"Without freedom, no progress, no increase in well being; without solidarity, no security for the future, no happiness whatever the sense given to this word. The formula compatible with these two conditions – freedom of work, complete law of association – sums up the entire positive agenda of democracy."

– Henri Lambert (excerpt from letter to Waldeck-Rousseau, October 30, 1897)

6. Other reform proposals

The multifaceted personality of Henri Lambert always found food for thought concerning the facts of society. This is clear to see from the analysis below of three examples in which Henri Lambert, armed with his philosophy of history and his key reading, reacts directly to movements in society as diverse as workers' incentive, primary education, railways, and even the radical reform of the electoral system: all this in just a few months.

1. Bill on "labour shares" (1913)

This bill (Belgium) in 1913 sought to connect more closely the interests of wages and workers to capital and thereby to interest the workers in business. Henri Lambert reacts and suggests that it should be the unions and not the individual workers that are involved. This, provided that the unions are transformed and that the law on professional associations which had created the kinds of "modern and secular congregations of combat, Labour institutions of chivalry, unable to survive except in an atmosphere of struggle," should be abolished. They would become thereby the kind of associations defined in his reflections on the law of association, "*Worker Companies*".

In this conception, the "*Worker Companies*" would be interested – or would be interested if they wanted to – financially in the businesses, at the same time as they provided their labour wholesale, by way of collective bargaining agreements. They would take part in the running of businesses, a part and an influence commensurate with the capital they have entrusted to them. Over time, this part and this influence would grow in importance and useful results; they could become dominant because by means of such necessary moral and material guarantees, capital will be attracted at fixed interest to workers companies. Thus brought together, the workers would rise to the rank of capitalist entrepreneurs, industrialists."

2. Primary education (1914)

Under the pseudonym of Aristidion, Henri Lambert published in early 1914 a pamphlet entitled *The Problem of Primary Education. The Liberal Solution*. Belgian Landernau politics was shaken by the proposal of the Catholic Minister, Poulet Prosper (1868-1937), who wanted to make primary education compulsory and free. This "Poulet law" promulgated on May 19, 1914, was passed by the Catholics in order to maintain the independence of their teaching. For Henri Lambert, the liberal and individualistic organisation of teaching must satisfy three principles:

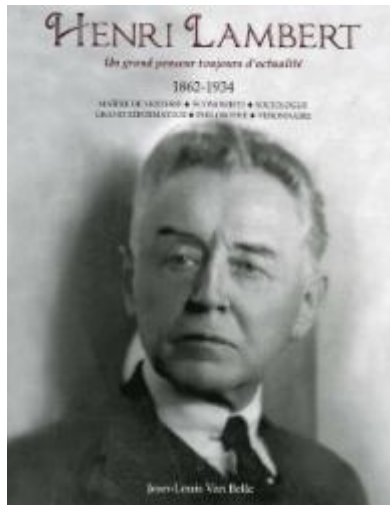
1. Education must be free and instruction compulsory.
2. The state must provide "good schooling" to the poor.
3. Municipalities must supplement with neutral instruction any education not provided by private initiative.

3. Railways (1914)

In the spring of 1914, given the financial constraints faced by the Belgian railways, major reforms seemed likely to be imposed. This was the recommendation of the Central Committee of Industrial Work to the Ministry of Railways. Henri Lambert proposed, as was his wont, a project that was clearly structured, right into the details. It included his humanistic and free

trade principles, "put in place in order to stimulate personal interest and personal responsibility, community involvement in the profitable results (not losses) from the exploitation of collective wealth; decentralisation of everything that is capable of being divided, centralisation of what it is advantageous to unify."

7. Visionary or clairvoyant



"I did not write this book for the people of today or even of tomorrow."

– Henri Lambert (*The New Social Contract*)

7. Visionary or clairvoyant

The Russian Revolution of 1917

Mid-March 1917

The first Russian Revolution broke out. Abdication of the Tsar, Social Democrat government, Kerensky took power.

September 24, 1917

Henri Lambert wrote another long letter to Colonel House that combined confidence and mental acuity. He described the situation in Russia, which since February 1917 had been overtaken by the events that we now know about. He wrote him that this situation *"is very nearly hopeless"* and added this incisive judgment, namely, that *"Kerensky may be the only possible man in Russia, but he is a sentimental much more than an intellectual idealist, and can therefore only be a second or third rate statesman – whereas a superhuman statesman is needed. That the Russian nation was going to be in anarchy for several years was very nearly a certainty from the first day of the revolution."* The facts would soon prove him right. Lenin would be this "superhuman", but at the terrible price that we now know.

November 1917.

The Russian Bolsheviks stepped up their pressure. Collapse of the army, chaos and disturbances of October. Takeover by Lenin November 7, 1917.

7. Visionary or clairvoyant

Belgium

September 26, in a long letter to Colonel House, Henri Lambert sets out his idea for the future of Belgium. It is worth quoting almost in full:

"...According to this evening's papers, Germany offers the restoration of Belgian independence (and consequently the evacuation of France) provided "economic concessions" are made to her. The desired guarantees chiefly concern Antwerp, where Germany has important and natural interests – this harbour being in the nature of things an outlet of very great importance for Germany. The guarantees may therefore not be illegitimately desired. The method of dealing with this question, therefore, is not by answering purely and simply that no guarantees of any kind are to be given to Germany. Of course, being stupid, this answer will very likely be made. But a truer, wiser attitude would be to say to the Germans: "You ask for economic concessions. What are yours?" And probably such a query is what Germany expects, awaits and is ready to answer.

Another German "condition" for the restoration of Belgium is that there be in the future an administrative division "between the Flemish and Walloon populations. This is desired by many Flemish and also by a not unimportant minority of Walloons. Of course, the Germans must not be allowed to try to pose as the benefactors of a part of the Belgian people. But in itself this suggestion is by no means unreasonable. The truth is that the "oppressed" are not the Flemish, but the Walloons. I have always refused publicly to take an interest in this issue but I have a very definite opinion about it: if absolute international security were established in Europe under the regime of an economic peace, the administrative separation of the two elements of the Belgian population would be a great and happy thing for both. Provided, of course, the two administratively separated parties were economically federated under a system of absolute free-trade..."



Five years earlier, another Belgian politician – Jules Destrée – with a coincidence known only to history, published in the same journal as Henri Lambert an article which adjoined Lambert's famous letter to the king of the Belgians advocating federalism. Jules Destrée, a man with socialist sensitivities, but who nevertheless had some sympathy and admiration for the courageous and idealistic attitude of Henri Lambert, probably would not disavow these remarks. The two men surely knew one another. Has either been influenced by the theories of the other?

7. Visionary or clairvoyant

World War II or European Construction

In November 1914, he wrote an article, *The Economic Cause and Solution to the European Crisis*, which was first published in French in London in January 1915, then translated into English for *Papers for War Time*, with the title *The Ethics of International Trade*, as also in Italian and German, and circulated freely in all the belligerent countries.

In this article, Henri Lambert tried to convince the leaders not only with theoretical arguments, but also moral and spiritual ones: *“they have a duty to God, to humanity, to strive to reconcile the warring peoples in truth and justice, because sooner or later after the incalculable sacrifices of men and things”* – he wrote three months after the start of hostilities – *“we must find a solution to the conflict and we know his proposals in this regard.”* Supposing, he says, *“that the victors impose unequal customs treatment on the vanquished, forcing them into economic inferiority, and that humanity goes back into the system of the slavery of peoples, in modern form.*

Is there a wise man, or one of common sense, who thinks one can reduce and maintain in slavery in any form or by any means whatsoever other peoples from now on, and which will be hundreds of millions before a century has passed? Half a century would not pass before a righteous reversal of the oppressed, favoured by the fatal dissensions of the oppressors – and what kind of alliances last half a century? The reversal of roles would take place to the applause of all peoples who have remained outside this conflict and foreign to its consequences.

A sad presentiment, marked by such lucidity, written at the very beginning of hostilities that all the world thought would be short. He polishes the solution to the European problem that he had already earlier outlined. This conference appealed to his wish to bring together immediately all the nations of the world in favour of an armistice, in a neutral country, convened in order to sign an agreement between all the colonising peoples opening the colonies “of all to free trade of all.” The British dominions would also take part as independent states. This conference should also seek to obtain a second convention *“by which nations, as many as possible, would undertake to gradually reduce their metropolitan customs duties.”* Both agreements would have a duration of one century and would also apply to future colonies. If all customs duties could not be removed overnight, at least everyone should be able to have equal economic treatment regarding all colonial markets. This would effectively internationalise the colonies, a solution he had already proposed for the Belgian Congo and all its common contractual zone a few years earlier in 1908.

And Henri Lambert adds in another text the same year:



“This (third) solution of the European matter is the only one of a lasting nature, that is to say allowing gradual and permanent disarmament, leaving some hope of avoiding revolutions, anarchy and the renewal sooner than later of a war (of revenge and justice) more terrible and more serious than the present one, which we will inevitably bequeath to our children.” A lucid and sinister prediction!

In a letter dated September 24, 1917 addressed to Colonel House, he also warned that the social situation in France, Belgium, Italy and England would become *“within a maximum of three years after re-establishment of peace ... very acute, maybe extremely grave. This is an absolute certainty. The only prospect and hope of not seeing a similar situation develop in Germany is through a peace without injustice and oppression – a “peace without victory”. If the peace concluded were oppressive and spoiliative, an extraordinary opportunity for a war of revenge and liberation would be afforded to Germany within 10 years.”* His lucidity was in no way delusionary. Its pessimism, which allowed for grasping especially stark wording, sadly only shortened the deadlines.

7. Visionary or clairvoyant

European construction

In autumn 1915, in his article *Morality and International Exchange*, he describes the main features of military and peaceful civilisation.

"Currently, we need (therefore) to make the difficult transition from military civilisation to economic and peaceful civilisation. The first is characterised by:

1. *expansion of states by conquest, federation by force of arms, centralisation by power of authority;*
2. *enrichment, progress and unity of nations through the pacific system of free trade applied to intra-national economic relations and,*
3. *the warlike system of "balance of trade" and protectionism applied to international economic relations;*
4. *order among nations whether maintained by hegemony or the "balance of power".*

Economic civilisation is characterised by:

1. *enrichment and general progress of peoples under the peaceful and pacifist system of free trade as applied to international and domestic relations;*
2. *the gradual voluntary splitting up of large states, political decentralisation and the self-government of their constituent nationalities according to ethnic, ethical, political or simply regional affinities and aspirations;*
3. *increasing interpenetration and meeting of peoples, the mixing of temperaments; characteristics favoured by the reduction in size of political units and the economic association of these smaller units;*
4. *international solidarity assured by unity of interests and moral aspirations: the cooperative association of peoples in material, intellectual and moral domains."*

He did not rule out the possibility of a subsequent process of re-integration, that is to say the political re-union of the peoples who are separated, and even the possibility of ultimate voluntary political federation of all mankind, when they would be unified economically, intellectually and morally. But he ruled out any possibility of such a political federation, total or partial, if it were not preceded by a long period of economic civilisation (characterised by political autonomy and the economic association of peoples), grounded moreover on absolute freedom of economic relations. The history of the difficult unification of Europe today tends to prove him right.

8. Philosophical and metaphysical vision



"H. Lambert has the ability to abstract and generalise to the highest degree, so we must pay him special attention, because, being a philosopher, he is necessarily a sociologist."

– Guillaume De Greef

8. Philosophical and metaphysical vision

Hypothesis concerning the physical and metaphysical evolution of energy



"In the long stage of thinking that led to this writing, a glimmer of synthetic truth has guided our reason; she has kept our hopes; she continues to illumine our minds. Why do not we propose it, why do not signal it, other than only in passing, to other pilgrims?"

– Henri Lambert (*Hypothesis concerning the physical and metaphysical evolution of energy*)



Henri Lambert waxes somewhat paradoxical. Immersed in concrete affairs by his activities, he has a mind that by nature is attracted to positivism, to the analysis of phenomena; but his intellectual approach leads him to transcend the particular case to reach the principles of causation leading to the gates of metaphysics. Initially, his thoughts are always anchored in a precise reality in that he tries, engineer that he is, to understand internal structures in order to find solutions.

This willingness to embrace a certain totality of problems and therefore to develop a holistic philosophical system is most clearly expressed in his publications when he writes, *"A contribution to finding solutions to some important questions of my time and of all time."*

"To build a new morality – that in effect, and inevitably, is our goal," he proclaims.

While as free agent he denies having tried to "offer to spiritualism, not more than to materialism, a new field of argument, but to open a wider, and perhaps fruitful path to the investigations of free examination without further worrying us about the contingent nature of their results." He leaves his system of thought as an engineer and moves towards "the character of general philosophy", and with originality, leaves the path made secure by the rigours of mathematics, to make a journey to his great "Hypothesis". This organised whole, whose functioning he wants to perceive, Henri Lambert cannot conceive of as a coincidence. According to him it answers to a logic coming from a Supreme Being:

"Where there is a law, there is a will," he writes. *"Where there are found the laws of progress and harmony, there is a will to progress and harmony. Universal and eternal laws demonstrate the existence of a Will and a Being, supreme, universal, eternal."*

But this Being, this God is not that of Christians. In his book on the *Hypothesis concerning the physical and metaphysical evolution of energy*, Henri Lambert sees it, with great daring and originality, "sitting in the atomic centres of hydrogen"; it *"is attractive immaterial energy and the "Pure Mind" operating from the nucleus of all atoms, of all molecules, in all cells,*

and therefore also of all living and "cerebralised" beings that make up the universe. It is not and cannot be otherwise, or elsewhere."

"Why, then, does attractive immaterial energy, the builder of Nature – organiser, coordinator, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, imperturbable, infinite and eternal – not substitute itself in our eyes for the abstract entity we call God? Why would it not be God? On what rational or even theological basis do believers in God refuse to admit that it is so? Is it not for them to show or even to define a different God than the one proposed to them here: that we "show" them?

He concludes, his hypothesis eventually becoming an affirmation of daring boldness:

"Truly, this is certain: the assertion of immateriality at the atomic centre of hydrogen or, rather, the immateriality of the source of attraction which it exercises, is the last, but perhaps also the sure haven of deism, of spiritualism and of finalism. God is the power that manifests in the centres of atoms."

Thus, the existence of God cannot remain a matter of indifference to man, because *"If there is a supreme will and a supreme purpose, if the universe responds to a final cause, there must be a preordained plan of universal phenomena – physical, chemical, biological, economic, sociological and moral – all of which necessarily contribute to the accomplishment of this will, of this design and of this End. That is to say, if there is a God, there must be a natural order of the world, including and affecting of course all human activities and enterprises."*

With this God – the great organiser and designer, casting and overshadowing everything like the watchmaker God of 18th century thinkers – Henri Lambert justified the existence of the soul. The soul is not given to man by the work of an Almighty, but by economic logic. Thus he says, *"we believe we can say [that] man is the being who, trading, became just and moral, acquired the knowledge of good and evil, developed a responsible and immortal consciousness: a "soul".*" He added: *"The first genesis of the human soul and the emergence of trade were concomitant. "The final cause of natural phenomena, as material passing into the spiritual state, began on our planet, when there occurred the first exchange of goods or services. This gave birth, in both traders, to a striving for equivalence, equity and justice. A natural but superior strength, evolved from energy, this striving created on Earth, the first "moral force". The first exchange was the first "moral phenomenon".*"

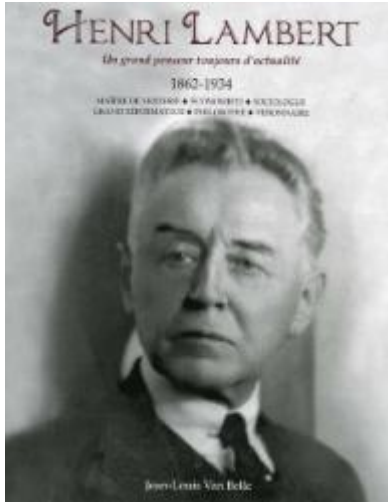
In this conception of a "natural finalist morality", this soul was accountable "as to its ultimate sanctions, they are needed and are regulated by the need for justice, which requires compensation of benefits and the "purging" of harm. But it is certain that absolute good and evil cannot be conceived on the part of human beings, since that would assume full responsibility on their part and this can only be the attribute of a perfect science. Human beings, as terrestrial beings, are and will ever remain capable only of relative good and evil. Consequently, therefore, their souls can only earn rewards and punishments limited in scope and time. (Even so, this extended time and scope may have no limit other than infinity.)

For Henri Lambert "what we call the "soul" can and does exist in human beings. It is the result of the action of moral forces on the nuclear substance of the cells of certain brain structures that have attained the state of life, of consciousness, of thought – a substance found in all living beings, but which in the human being is brought, under the influence of these

natural, but superior forces, to a state of subtlety, sublimeness and 'spirituality' that enables it to escape beyond the physical and natural environment and its forces, no longer to belong only to a qualified metaphysical and supernatural world (because we do not yet know the nature of the physical world). The soul, being no longer modifiable or even influenced by physical forces, is indestructible: it cannot perish, it is "immortal".

"It is therefore not only possible and legitimate, but imperative to seek to introduce into atomism a new hypothesis or hypotheses. And we consider ourselves at least as well entitled to make ours. We know it is as yet rudimentary, poorly specified; it remains uncalculated, perhaps incalculable, but we believe it could lead to a simplification of theories – even of calculations. Moreover – we are not afraid to admit – it responds to the initial desiderata and the basic needs of our new system of general philosophy taken as a whole. This – rational and scientific, as it should be – takes its starting point in the atom from which derive all phenomena, from those of physics, chemistry and biology, to those of the human psyche and morality. We also recognise that: if our atomic hypothesis is false, the philosophical system on which it rests is also invalid. It will vanish. But this would be a pity, because no other philosophy, whether from the past or the present, appears likely to meet rationally the current needs for moral guidelines, so urgently needed by human society, threatened, as it is, in its civilisation, if not indeed in its very existence, by revolutions and wars."

9. Publications of Henri Lambert



"In the search for causes of the current crisis we have forgotten and are greatly losing awareness that, the phenomenon being global, it is necessary to find the causes, or at least one cause acting globally."

– Henri Lambert (1933)

9. Publications of Henri Lambert







His publications

Henri Lambert promoted his ideas and achieved his goals in three ways:



1. He published generally a brochure containing the fruit of his reflections addressed to a range of personalities.
2. He wrote a series of articles explaining and nuancing his core document in various newspapers and magazines. For the most part these were liberal newspapers in Charleroi or Brussels and then later abroad.
3. He sought to convince political figures through correspondence – difficult for one who was not part of harem politics. But he understood that to win one must convince those in power.

But if debating ideas in writing was his passion, an area in which he would soon excel and where the pen of this ardent polemicist would soak up its best ink, he avoided large audiences, at least in his early stages. Oratorical cut and thrust was not part of his approach. His reflective thinking required the mediation of pen and ink.

Henri Lambert has left us a significant number of publications. It is not possible to detail them all here. However, the most significant of these have been scanned and made available for free especially by the University of North Carolina, Greensboro ([UNCG](#)) and the website [OpenLibrary.org](#).

Titles	Sources	Download
The false peace :protectionism means endless conflict (1919 ?)	UNCG UNCG OpenLibrary	 falsepeace.pdf
Le Nouveau Contrat Social ou L'Organisation de la Démocratie Individualiste	UNCG UNCG	 nouveaucontratsocial.pdf
Pax Economica	Google UNCG UNCG UNCG	 paxeconomica.pdf
The ethics of international trade (1915)	UNCG	 ethicsinternationaltrade.pdf
Un autre aspect de la question européenne et une solution (1915)	UNCG	 autreaspectquestioneuropeenne.pdf
The economic solution of the European crisis (1916)	UNCG	 autreaspectquestioneuropeenne.pdf

Other sites

Titles	Sources
The International Morality of Exchange	The School of Cooperative Individualism
How to "Reconstruct" the World	The School of Cooperative Individualism
Henri Lambert, cofondateur de la Ligue internationale du Libre-Echange (1918) ou de l'utilité de l'Europe unie (Autre lien)  irice-lci-004-0019.pdf	IRICE (CNRS) CAIRN.INFO
Henri Lambert, Un grand penseur toujours d'actualité, 1862-1934, Maître de verrerie, économiste, sociologue, grand réformateur, philosophe, visionnaire.  HL_VerreEtHistoire	Association Verre et Histoire

Publications of Henri Lambert

1893

H.L., Révision constitutionnelle. Représentation des intérêts, Tamines, s.d. [1893] brochure, 15 p. (copie d'une lettre adressée à L'Indépendance belge du 27.12.1892).

H.L., « La représentation des intérêts », in Gazette de Charleroi, 27 janvier 1893, p. 1-2.

1894

H.L., Note complémentaire à la brochure traitant de l'organisation du suffrage général par la représentation des intérêts, Tamines, 15 p., s.d [1894].

1895

H.L. et BAUDOUX (É.), Les syndicats professionnels et l'évolution corporative, Bruxelles, 1895, 74 p.

H.L., « Situation de l'industrie du verre à vitre en Belgique », in Revue industrielle de Charleroi, 3 février 1895, p. 2.

H.L., « Deux hérésies économiques », in Gazette de Charleroi, 7 février 1895, p. 1.

H.L., « Situation de l'industrie du verre à vitre en Belgique », in Revue industrielle de Charleroi, 10 février 1895, p. 2.

H.L., « Situation de l'industrie du verre à vitres en Belgique » in Moniteur industriel de Charleroi et de la province, 10 février 1895, p. 42-43.

H.L., « Deux hérésies économiques », in Gazette de Charleroi, 14 février 1895, p. 1.

H.L., « Situation de l'industrie du verre à vitre en Belgique », in Revue industrielle de Charleroi, 17 février 1895, p. 2.

H.L., « Situation de l'industrie du verre à vitre en Belgique », in Revue industrielle de Charleroi, 17 février 1895, p. 51-52.

H.L., « Situation de l'industrie du verre à vitre en Belgique », in Revue industrielle de Charleroi, 24 février 1895, p. 2.x.,

[H.L.?] « La crise verrière. Situation de l'industrie du verre à vitre en Belgique », in Gazette de Charleroi, 1 mars 1895, p. 1.

H.L., « Controverse économique », in Gazette de Charleroi, 2 mars 1895, p. 1.

H.L., « Controverse économique », in Gazette de Charleroi, 3 mars 1895, p. 1.- 375

H.L., « La production en verrerie. Un remède empirique », in Gazette de Charleroi, 21 mars 1895, p. 1.

H.L., « La production en verrerie. Un remède empirique (suite) », in Gazette de Charleroi, 22 mars 1895, p. 1.

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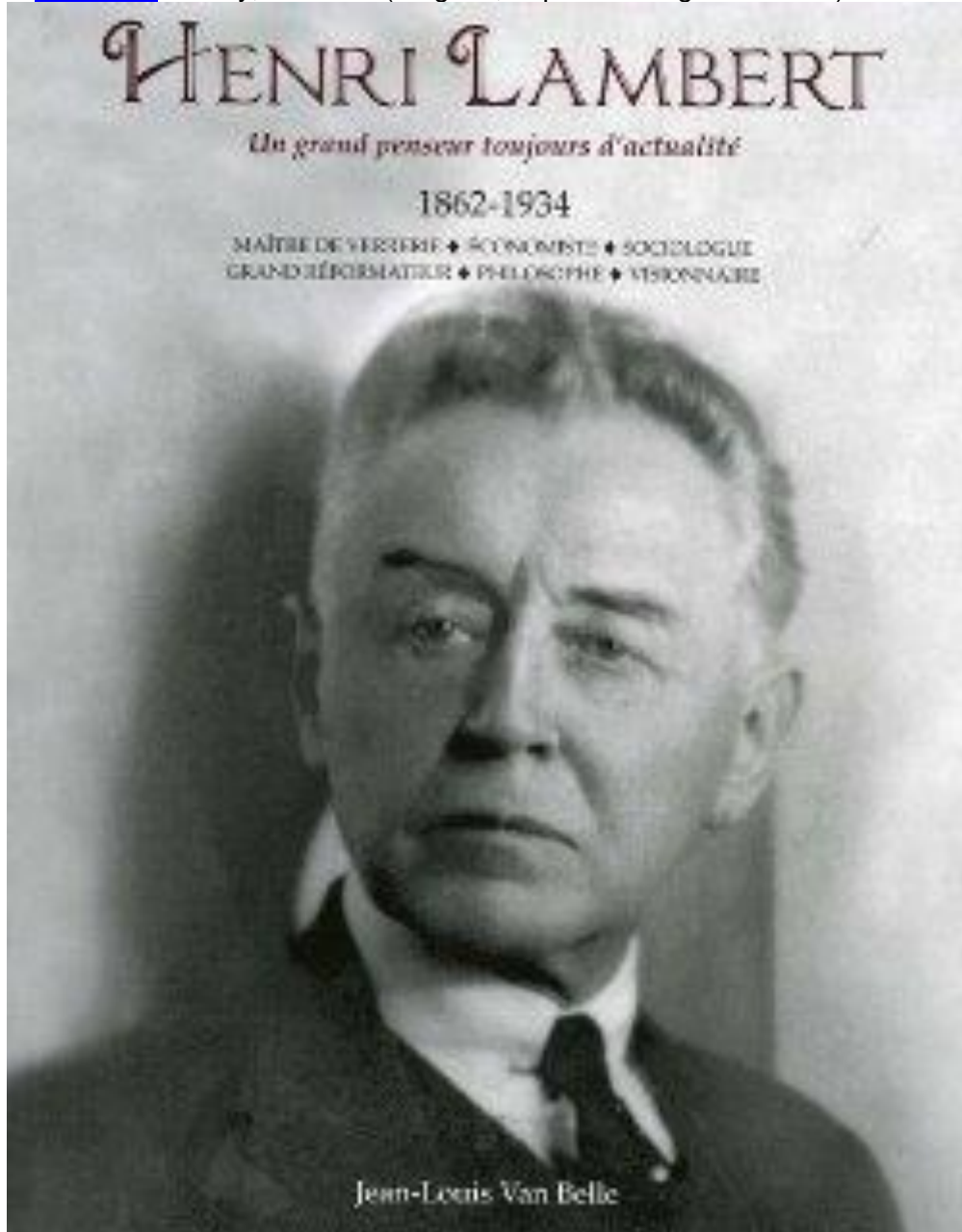
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