

7. Visionnaire ou clairvoyant

La Belgique

Le 26 septembre, dans une longue missive Henri Lambert explique au Colonel House sa conception sur le futur de la Belgique. Elle mérite d'être citée presque in extenso :

...« According to the papers of this evening, Germany offers the restoration of Belgian independence (and consequently the evacuation of France) provided « economic concessions » are made to her. The desired guaranties concern chiefly Antwerp, where Germany has big and natural interests – this port being by nature of things the way out and the outlet of a very important part of Germany. The guarantees may therefore not be illegitimately desired. The method of dealing with this question is not by simply and purely answering that no guaranties of any kind are to be given to Germany. Of course, this answer being stupid has a great chance of being made. But the true, wise attitude would be to say to the Germans: « you ask for economic concessions. Which are yours? » and probably it is such a query that Germany expects, awaits and is ready to answer to.

An other German « condition » of 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 by a not negligible 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 always have refused to take publicly an interest in this question but I have a very definitive opinion on it : if absolute international security were established in Europe under the regime of an economic peace, the administrative separation of the two Belgian elements of population would be an excellent and happy thing for both. Provided of course, the two administratively separated parts were economically federated under a system of absolute free-trade. »...



Cinq ans plus tôt, un autre homme politique belge – Jules Destrée – avec une coïncidence dont l'histoire a le secret, publiait dans la même revue qu'Henri Lambert et dans un article qui jouxtait le sien sa fameuse lettre au roi des Belges prônant le fédéralisme. Jules Destrée qui était de sensibilité socialiste, mais qui avait une certaine sympathie et admiration pour l'attitude idéaliste et courageuse d'Henri Lambert, n'aurait sans doute pas désavoué ces propos. Les deux hommes se connaissaient assurément. Y-a-t-il eu influence des théories de l'un sur l'autre ?