

CRITICAL CHRONICLE OF THE
BELGIAN CONTEMPORARY HISTORY

I. GENERAL

The long-expected *Histoire de la Belgique contemporaine 1914-1970* is the work of seven French-speaking Belgian historians and economists : the late J. Bartier (*La vie sociale*), F. Baudhuin (*L'économie*), H. Haag (*La politique intérieure de 1914 à 1926*), J. Willequet (*La politique intérieure de 1926 à 1965*), the departed J.H. Pirenne (*Les relations internationales de 1914 à nos jours*), E. Wanty (*La vie militaire*), J. Stengers (*La Belgique et le Congo*) (1). This volume is intended to supplement the "Histoire de Belgique" by H. Pirenne. The illustration is choice and often new. The notes and the "Orientation bibliographique" vary with the authors as far as length and utility are concerned. Apart from a few chapters the general trend of thought corresponds with the views of H. Pirenne who became rather conservative after World War I. It cannot be said that after reading this large-size volume in grey binding much insight is gained into the social struggle, the Flemish and the community questions (which were not exactly the strong sides of Pirenne either), let alone the royal question or the backgrounds of the "Independence-policy" inaugurated by Leopold III and P.H. Spaak in 1936, the economic collaboration during World War II. In short, it is the official historiography about a period the survivors of which — who are well in their sixties now — cannot be much hurt.

We do not intend to give a survey here of the contents of each part. Chapters like the ones by J. Willequet, by indefatigable F. Baudhuin, by E. Wanty are immediately usable, instructive and in many respects indispensable.

(1) *Histoire de la Belgique Contemporaine, 1940-1970*, Brussels, La Renaissance du Livre, 1975, 444 pp. (*History of Contemporary Belgium, 1940-1970*).

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Really important in the domain of interpretation and — especially with regard to H. Haag — of the method, are the extensive contributions of J. Stengers on the colonial policy and the decolonization (well-informed, lively, an excellent introduction to the problem, and an impressive bibliography) and, in a different way, the one by H. Haag, covering nearly 200 compact columns (the value of a book). The approach — with regard to the analysis of certain tensions (composition and overthrow of the governments) — is largely sociological-politological. The analysis, however, is the one of a sharp-witted and sensitive historian for whom the detail is meaningful only when it contributes to a better understanding of the problems posed.

They are, among other things, the attitude of king Albert I during World War I, the “policy of Loppem” wanted by him, the starting-point of an entirely new development of the roles of government, parliament and parties, the institutionalized integration of the labour-movement into the civil state, the conservative opposition to the widening of the political democracy, which made the parliamentary elections possible on the basis of the universal single suffrage — even before a constitutional review. H. Haag also deals with catholic flamingantism and the rise and fall of the socialist-christian democratic Poulet-Vandervelde government. The theoretical introduction to this contribution, in which the author tries to fit the conflict-zones and the facts into models — which are often graphically represented —, is very much worth reading. Did the contact with the Louvain sociologists studying the political sciences, have an inspiring effect here ? (see *Critical Chronicle*, X, 1979, 4, pp. *8.*10). In his general conclusion the author describes, after his detailed analysis of the conflict-situations, how the compromises were reached after the introduction of the universal single suffrage, and what the limits were that had to be respected. Because the distance is greater, because H. Haag has undertaken many “Vorarbeiten” himself and, moreover, had to elucidate several things with a view to this contribution, the author succeeded in going beyond the stage of mere description. He explains and “conceptualizes”.
(J.C.)

E.H. Kossmann, professor at the University of Groningen, enriched the Dutch and Belgian historiography with a voluminous

work covering the period from 1780 to 1940. It is an efficient, very fluent and brilliant book which was translated into English a few years after its publication : *The Low Countries, 1780-1940*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1978. It is amply provided with notes, which, together with a very welcome critical bibliographical survey, cover 75 small-print pages (1).

This study, which is comparative to a certain extent, has the advantage of being the work of one man. Consequently, the subject-matter is not scattered among several authors, which considerably contributes to the readableness. We do not consider the fact that all aspects are not equally well treated, a serious shortcoming. Indeed, completeness which is incompatible with the temperament of an author more interested in connections than in minor facts, would certainly have proved a disadvantage here. Anyone wanting to know more, can find it elsewhere. He who has ever written a manual, knows how difficult it is to find an equilibrium between knowledge and what the interested reader expects as an overall picture. Consequently, we are not going to apply ourselves to finding regrettable flaws : the author takes more interest in political and socio-cultural aspects than in purely economic and social aspects — which, however, are not neglected.

Neither do we want to look for accents that might have been laid otherwise. This working-method is also necessary and stimulating, and several reviewers have justly applied it.

As contrasted with Haag — mentioned elsewhere — and several other politico-sociologically oriented historians, Kossmann does not try to work with models. Neither does he believe in a comparatism which is kept up too systematically, but yet his comparatism is of a greater reality than is the case in the two G.H.N's.

Dealing consecutively with two more or less related developments in the same chapter gave rise to questions and revealed points of contact and meaningful similarities and differences. With regard to catholic Belgium, the country of the first Industrial Revolution, the author's apprehension is remarkable. The same goes for the linguistic struggle and for the community differences.

After all, this situation is quite different from what happened until the recent past in the Netherlands, a country largely dominated

(1) E.H. KOSSMANN, *De Lage Landen 1780-1940. Anderhalve eeuw Nederland en België*, Amsterdam-Brussels, Elsevier, 1976. (The Low Countries 1780-1940. One Century and a Half in the Netherlands and Belgium).

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by Protestant Holland, not to mention a number of other fundamental structural and mental differences.

It must also be pointed out that foreign policy, among other things, is thoroughly dealt with, especially with regard to the Belgian-Dutch frictions after World War I. Wherever the book is opened, some original idea or an inspired remark is to be found practically everywhere. This is true — one example of many — for the pages devoted to the economic depression of the thirties and the De Man-movement in the Belgian Labour Party, which had several followers in the Netherlands as well.

The fact that this book of over 600 pages lacks a general conclusion, certainly has good reasons. It is necessary to point out that the Great-Dutch movement, which saw better days, is strange to Kossmann. Scepticism and aloofness are too typical of the author's style, yet without causing an effect of aridity.

In short, few authors will ever equal Kossmann in working such a varied subject-matter into so readable a "story".

(J.C.)

II. INVENTORIES OF ARCHIVES

In the domain of the archive-preservation of the political parties a fortunate evolution is taking place. Long before World War II attempts were made at saving all printed and written sources of the political factions. These plans were realized to a very limited extent only or were simply forgotten. A few years ago, however, an almost simultaneous action was started by different organizations to preserve the archives of their own political and ideological tendencies.

Archives of the Socialist Labour Movement

The *Archief en Museum van de Socialistische Arbeidersbeweging* (A.M.S.A.B.) - (Archives and Museum of the Socialist Labour Movement), as far as Ghent is concerned, must be traced back to 1964. A few party-members wanted to save the archives of the party by gathering them in an appropriate depository. The execution was extremely slow, as the initiative was known only in very restricted circles and was based exclusively on voluntary work. As the community-tensions increased also within the Belgian Socialist Party, the need of a master archive-depository for the whole of Flanders was felt more intensely. This growing awareness coincided with a plan that was taking shape at Louvain to set up a catholic Documentation and Research Centre in the framework of the Catholic University (KADOC) (March 1st, 1977).

Two professors who had been at the basis of the initiatives and who assumed the scientific direction — Professor E. Lamberts on the side of the KADOC and Professor H. Balthazar for the A.M.S.A.B. — decided to co-ordinate their efforts to obtain a more substantial support from the authorities (1). Each of the two centres planned to gather the widest possible variety of documentation, which was to comprise :

(1) For the history of both initiatives, see : H. BALTHAZAR, "A.M.S.A.B. Instrument voor de historiografie van de sociale emancipatie in Vlaanderen", *A.M.S.A.B. Tijdingen*, 1982, 1, pp. 5-26 (A.M.S.A.B. An Instrument for the Historiography of the Social Emancipation in Flanders). — E. LAMBERTS, "Het Katholiek Documentatie- en Onderzoekscentrum", *KADOC-Mededeelingen*, 3, 1978. (The Catholic Documentation and Research Centre).

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1. library-material : books, periodicals, brochures, leaflets, pamphlets;
 2. archive-material such as journals, letters, administrative documents;
 3. audio-visual documentation, such as records, sound-tapes, film, photographs, slides, pictures, posters, medals, flags, portraits...
- The two centres wanted to have an information-function both for the public at large and for scientific research.

It cannot be denied that those institutions, thanks to the dynamism of the co-operators, in few years have become important documentation-centres which already succeeded in gathering a tremendous amount of material.

As for A.M.S.A.B., several regional and local sections of the B.W.P. (Belgian Labour Party) - B.S.P. (Belgian Socialist Party) and party-members deposited or donated their archives. (The address : Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat 23, 9000 Ghent).

Working-teams were formed which are now preparing an illustrated repertory of the posters, an inventory of a unique series of films from the post-war period, a repertory of all printed material, a survey of the iconographical material and of the material relicts.

So far these initiatives did not give rise to publications. The evolution of the activities can be followed through the "AMSAB-Tijdingen" (AMSAB-News) (1982, vol. 1 and 2) in which a brief but useful survey can also be found of the most recent archive-acquisitions (a.o. Belgian Transportation Workers' League, Ghent; Les jeunes gardes socialistes; "L. Varlez" archives; "Léon Lesoil" archives, etc.).

Documentation concerning the Catholic Pillar

The *Katholiek Documentatie- en Onderzoekscentrum (KADOC)* - (Catholic Documentation And Research Centre) at Louvain was started in 1977. The address : Mgr. Ladeuzeplein 21, 3000 Louvain. The first printed inventories were published from 1981 on.

With regard to their lay-out we want to point out that a few fortunate solutions were given to the technical problems. Thus the publishers chose a system of loose pages, so that inserting later supplements does not present any problem. They also provided for two series of inventories : series A to describe the archives which are kept at the centre and series B for inventories of archives which have been inventoried by the scientific team of KADOC, but are not

kept there. The contents of the first inventories are not always quite spectacular, but the seriousness and thoroughness with which the task was undertaken, hold out good hopes for the future.

The inventory of the archives of Mr. J. Boon (1898-1960) and Mrs. Maria Boon-Ceulemans (1898-1976) deserves ample attention for a variety of reasons (1). As a young man J. Boon played an active role in the flamingant cultural life of Brussels and he was an activist during World War I.

Later he wrote articles of a predominantly cultural nature in a series of catholic papers. In 1929 he became editor-in-chief of the leading daily "De Standaard" and in 1939 he was appointed director-general of the Flemish programs of the "Belgisch Nationaal Instituut voor Radio-Omroep" (N.I.R.) - Belgian National Broadcasting Institute. After World War II he resumed this function, which he held until his death. His wife, Maria Ceulemans, was very active in the Catholic Girls' Movement at the beginning of the 1920's. Their archives contain a wealth of all kinds of printed sources on a large number of Flemish cultural associations and manifestations. The information on J. Boon's role in broadcasting proves rather disappointing. His wife kept all archives of the catholic Girls' Movement in Brabant from 1917 to 1923 in her possession. (Thorough introduction; mention of audio-visual material and three indices : persons, things, periodicals).

From 1876 on the Antwerp catholics proceeded to the collection of money for the upbuilding of the catholic educational system. The limited archives contain administrative and financial documents on rather a long period, but the emphasis is mainly on the years 1933-1963 (2).

In the framework of the Catholic Workers' League of Louvain a study-circle was set up in 1905 which remained active up to World

(1) W. NAUWELAERTS and A. OSAER, *Inventaris van de papieren van Jan Boon-Maria Ceulemans (1898-1960; 1898-1976)*, Louvain, 1981, 91 pp. (KADOC, Series A, nr. 1). (Inventory of the Papers of Jan Boon-Maria Ceulemans).

(2) W. NAUWELAERTS, *Inventaris van het Archief van de schoolpenning voor Katholiek Vlaamsch Onderwijs te Antwerpen, 2e-12e wijk 1890-1963*, Louvain, 1981, 8 pp. (KADOC, Series A, nr. 2). (Inventory of the Archives of the Schoolfund for Catholic Flemish Education at Antwerp, 2nd-12th police-district, 1890-1963).

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War II. Every year a cycle of lectures was organized for large audiences, dealing with political, social and religious problems. The archive-documents give a detailed survey of lectures, themes and audiences (1).

During and especially after World War I an urge for a greater political and social autonomy towards the catholic party developed among the christian-democratic labourers in Brussels. This resulted in the establishment of the Christian Workers' League, which wanted to be a master-organization of sick-funds, trade-unions, co-operative societies, labourers' leagues and women's leagues (1929). Apart from the journals of a labour-exchange and a co-operative society, hardly any archive-material was preserved on the first decades of that Workers' League. However, the documents on the postwar period which prove available, allow us to draw a clear picture of the secretariat's work on the county-level and of the administrative bodies (2).

As a student of Law L. Delvaux already enjoyed the confidence of the president J. Helleputte to the extent that he was nominated by him as a delegate of the Farmers' League (Boerenbond) to the central administration of the catholic party and was appointed party-secretary. Delvaux held this function until 1936 and thus played an important part in the successive metamorphoses of the catholic party (Catholic League of Belgium; Catholic Union; Block of the Catholics of Belgium). Meanwhile he was also an editor of four agricultural papers and he founded the only agricultural league in Wallonia (Jodoigne, Nivelles) which closely co-operated with the Farmers' League. After the war Delvaux became Minister of Agriculture in the cabinet of A. Van Acker but, owing to a disagreement to the political line of the C.V.P. (Christian Popular Party), he walked out of politics after a short period. He became a justice at the Court of the European Community for Coal and Steel and later

(1) A. OSAER, *Inventaris van het archief van de Kring van Godsdienstleer te Leuven, 1905-1943*, Louvain, 1981, 11 pp. (KADOC, Series A, nr. 3). (Inventory of the Archives of the Circle for Religion-teaching in Louvain, 1905-1943).

(2) P. VANDEBROEK, L. DIERYNCK, A. OSAER, *Inventaris van het archief van het Algemeen Christelijk Werkersverbond van het Arrondissement Brussel, 1919-1975*, Louvain, 1981, 57 pp. (KADOC, Series B, nr. 1). (Inventory of the archives of the General Christian Workers' League in the Brussels District, 1919-1975).

of the European Community. Apart from the private letters of the president, his archives are rather complete with regard to the structure and operation of the central administration of that Catholic Party during the period between the two World Wars.

The exceptional importance of those archives for the political history is obvious. (Thorough introduction; 1 index : persons, places and things) (1).

Hendrik Heyman (1879-1958) played a central part in the Christian democratic circles during the former half of the 19th century. As a confidential agent of Father Rutten in 1912 he was appointed vice-president and later president of the General Christian Trade-Union. From 1921 on he was almost continuously president of the General Christian Workers' League until 1946. As Minister of Industry, Labour and Social Security (1927-1932) he promoted legislation on the social plane. The documents preserved mainly relate to his political career as burgomaster of St. Nicholas, a representative and a minister. (Introduction; 1 index : persons, places, things) (2).

The Royal Museum of the Army

In the previous issue of our "Critical Chronicle" (pp. *97-*100), we called your attention to the Royal Army Museum's happy initiative of giving wider publicity to the institution's collections through the publication of inventories. Amongst the issues so far published — in remarkably quick succession — we will make special mention of those which are of importance for the study of contemporary Belgian history.

The documents "P.E.F. Chazal" do not contain any information on the crucial period when Chazal was Minister of War. They are

(1) E. GERARD and J. VERHOOGEN, *Inventaris van de papieren van Louis Delvaux (1895-1976) met inbegrip van het archief van het Katholiek Verbond van België 1921-1936*, Louvain, 1981, 37 pp. (KADOC, Series B, nr. 2). (Inventory of the papers of Louis Delvaux (1895-1976), including the archives of the Catholic League of Belgium 1921-1936).

(2) L. VINTS, *Inventaris van de papieren van Minister van Staat Hendrik Heyman (1879-1958)*, Louvain, 1981, 56 pp. (KADOC, Series B, nr. 3). (Inventory of the papers of Minister of State Hendrik Heyman).

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mainly of importance for the knowledge of the military history of Belgium, but also for the knowledge of some opinions of the successive kings. Here and there an item is found which points at political interest. (Short introduction; biographical notes on the officers; 1 index : persons, places and things) (1).

The documents "L. Wilmet" contain a very large number of reproductions of archives collected by the author with a view to the preparation of his rather hagiographic articles on the royal family. The documents relate mainly to the period of Philippe, Count of Flanders and brother of King Leopold II and to their children. The information gathered is especially focused on family and personal traits of the princes, but there are also very valuable letters of the most diverse nature on internal and foreign policies (brief introduction; 1 index : persons, things, places) (2).

After the successful February-revolution in 1848, the Belgian committee of the communist federation in Paris conceived the plan to invade Belgium by force and to overthrow the institutions. The Belgian government, informed of this plan, had no difficulty in dispersing the invading little army at Risquons-tout. The archives kept on these events come from the Ministry of War and consequently contain mainly information of a military nature. Yet, there are also numerous interesting data on the originators and the international situation. (Brief introduction; short biographies of the officers; 1 index : persons, names, things) (3).

The documents "Austrian period, 1713-1795" is a very general term to indicate an amalgam containing chiefly personal dossiers of officers who were in the service of the Habsburg emperor (4).

(R.V.E.)

(1) M.A. PARIDAENS, *Inventaire du fonds d'Archives "P.E.F. Chazal"*, Brussels, Musée royal de l'Armée, 1980, 59 pp. (Inventory 4).

(2) M.A. PARIDAENS, *Inventaire du fonds d'Archives "Louis Wilmet"*, Brussels, Musée royal de l'Armée, 1980, 49 pp. (Inventory 6).

(3) M.A. PARIDAENS, *Inventaire du fonds d'Archives Risquons-tout, 1848*, Brussels, Musée royal de l'Armée, 1980, 47 pp. (Inventory 10).

(4) R. BOYEN, *Inventaris van het Archiefonds "Oostenrijkse periode, 1713-1795"*, Brussels, Musée royal de l'Armée, 1981, 72 pp. (Inventory of the Archive-documents "Austrian period, 1713-1795").

III. INTERNAL POLITICAL TENSIONS

1. THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY AND THE ENLIGHTENMENT

In the last decade the historians' interest in the study of the eighteenth century has considerably increased. Since 1974 the "Études sur le XVIII^e siècle" (Studies on the Eighteenth Century) (1) have been published at the Université Libre de Bruxelles. On the Dutch-speaking side the "Tijdschrift voor de Studie van de Verlichting" (Review for the Study of the Enlightenment) (2) has been in existence since 1973. Belgian historians also contribute to the Dutch "Documentatieblad Werkgroep Achttiende Eeuw" (Documentation-paper working-team Eighteenth Century) (3) and "Lias" (4). Naturally, articles on this period are also published in other periodicals which are not specifically devoted to the eighteenth century.

In this survey it is not our intention to present the entire production of the recent years : the themes dealt with are too divergent and — although also the starting-date of the transition-period between modern and contemporary times cannot be clearly defined — a number of publications are obviously outside the scope of this "Critical Chronicle". Moreover, this period was already discussed in the preceding issues of this chronicle (5).

(1) *Études sur le XVIII^e siècle*, publiés sous la direction de Roland MORTIER et Hervé HASQUIN, Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, I- , 1974- . Volume IX was published in 1982.

(2) *Tijdschrift voor de Studie van de Verlichting* (Review for the Study of the Enlightenment), Brussels, Free University Brussels, I- , 1973- (Centre for the Study of the Enlightenment). Starting with volume VIII-IX (1980-1981) the title was changed into "Centre for the Study of the Enlightenment and Free Thinking". The editorial staff did not intend to restrict themselves to the 18th-century Enlightenment.

(3) *Documentatieblad Werkgroep Achttiende Eeuw* (Nijmegen), I- , 1968- , (Documentation-paper Working-team Eighteenth Century). From volume XIV, 1982 on, it has been published in Amsterdam.

(4) *Lias, Sources and Documents relating to the early modern history of ideas* (Amsterdam), I- , 1974-

(5) *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Nieuwste Geschiedenis - Revue belge d'Histoire contemporaine* (Belgian Review of Contemporary History), X, 1979, 4, pp.*1- *86; XI, 1980, 4, pp.*87-*178.

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For these reasons we restrict ourselves here to a selection of the most recent studies.

We gathered a few contributions about the impact of the Enlightenment in the Austrian Netherlands at the end of the Ancien Régime.

Over fifteen years ago already J. Craeybeckx stated that the Brabantine Revolution was not merely a conservative matter. It was considered conservative because the Southern Netherlands were thought to have been in a state of complete cultural decline and economic recession in the course of the eighteenth century. On the contrary, Craeybeckx thought, there were distinct signs of a beginning industrialization and also the classical economic sectors were thriving to a certain extent. Thus the conditions were fulfilled also for a cultural development. This new vision had the great advantage that the Southern Netherlands fitted much better into Godechot's general model of the Atlantic revolutions which occurred in several countries between 1770 and 1799. But if some cultural activity did exist in the Austrian Netherlands, there must also have been an interest in and an impact of the new middle-class ideas which caught on in Europe in the latter half of the eighteenth century, and which were called "Enlightenment".

Checking the rightness of this assumption is the starting-point of most studies discussed here.

In a short article (1) Luc Dhondt states that the unfamiliarity with the French language of most inhabitants of the Southern Netherlands did not constitute an obstacle to the spread of the enlightenment. In the period between 1779 and 1787 the "Vlaemsche Indicateur" (Flemish Indicator) indeed saw to the dissemination of these views. By means of the literary, scientific and political topicality this weekly showed its readers the progress of the human mind and the evolution toward a perfect world. The attempts at imitating the "Vlaemschen Indicateur" prove that an accessibility existed to the views presented. The performances of well-known plays, even in the smaller villages, point in the same direction. However, these sources teach us mainly that not only the French example had an inspiring effect in Flanders. On the contrary, it was a typically Flemish "Aufklärung" with a marked Josephist character. Though this article is a concise version of what the author intends to

(1) L. DHONDT, "De l'influence des lumières dans le comté de Flandre à la fin de l'Ancien Régime", *Etudes sur le XVIIIe siècle*, VI, 1979, pp. 167-176. (The Influence of Enlightenment in the Countship of Flanders at the End of the Ancien Régime).

elaborate later, it shows in a convincing way that the spreading-stage of the new ideas was over at the end of the 1780's. The Brabantine Revolution was an example of how they were put into practice.

Like Luc Dhondt, Jan Roegiers strongly insists on the fact that the spread of the Enlightenment in the Southern Netherlands cannot be reduced to a mere evaluation of the extent of the influence the new middle-class French culture had in our country. In the synthesis written by Roegiers in the "Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden" (General History of the Netherlands) on the Enlightenment and especially on the attitude of the Church to it (1), he also points out the existence of a "Catholic Enlightenment". The fact that this renovating trend was not always recognized as such within Roman Catholicism is also to be accounted for by too close an association with the enlightenment of the French philosophers.

For the Southern Netherlands Roegiers cites mainly the names of de Nelis, Wellens, Terswack and Mann. The impact and the writings of these figures prove that the reception of the enlightenment-ideas penetrated also into catholic circles. But there is more: the catholic reform-movement was often able also to contribute in a constructive way to the contemporary enlightenment.

This conclusion by Roegiers — which is important indeed — shows the great evolution which historiography has already undergone. The image of the Southern Netherlands as "Cultural Beotia" (Voltaire) now seems definitely accepted as but a part of the "truth".

The hypothesis that the Austrian Netherlands were at least accessible to the consumption of the Enlightenment-ideas, is confirmed more and more clearly.

In several publications this assumption is the principal question.

Thus De Schampheleire (2) investigates into the circulation of

(1) J. ROEGIERS, "Kerk en Verlichting in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden", *Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, Haarlem, Fibula-Van Dishoeck, IX, 1980, pp. 413-418. (Church and Enlightenment in the Southern Netherlands).

(2) H. DE SCHAMPHELEIRE, "Verlichte lectuur te Antwerpen en Parijs in de 18e eeuw. Een comparatief quantitatief leesonderzoek naar Voltaire, Rousseau en de "Encyclopédie" ", *Etudes sur le XVIIIe siècle*, VI, 1979, pp. 131-166. (Enlightened Reading in Antwerp and Paris. A Comparative Quantitative Investigation into the Reading of Voltaire, Rousseau and the "Encyclopédie").

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prohibited literature in Antwerp and he draws a comparison with the situation in Paris. In order to test the assumption of this "passive enlightened culture-consumption" De Schampheleire analysed a vast series of auction-catalogues from which he selected the twenty best-sold censored works. The prohibited literature was indeed also inserted in the catalogues (if all works were mentioned is a different problem), but provided with an asterisk indicating that they could be purchased only with the explicit episcopal permission. In reality these regulations were not so often taken notice of, and there was also a contradiction between the worldly and ecclesiastical censorship. Consequently, De Schampheleire restricted himself to the works "prohibited" by both institutions. In this list light reading is rather well represented and the enlightenment-literature proves to have been mainly of French origin. By the end of the century the number of "bourgeois" publications increased considerably.

In a second part De Schampheleire compares the propagation of the "Encyclopédie" and the works of Voltaire and Rousseau in Antwerp and Paris. The results of this comparison confirm what was almost predictable : though the propagation of these works was "naturally" smaller in Antwerp than in Paris, they were indeed "relatively" successful there.

The importance of De Schampheleire's article lies not so much in the results. In order to offer really relevant data he should have had — as he says himself — the disposal of comparable material on another large French city. Only then would he have been able to conclude if the political and linguistic borders between France and the Netherlands constituted also a intellectual barrier.

Yet, De Schampheleire's article does deserve our attention because it shows very clearly the possibility of a quantitative investigation on the basis of a large series of auction-catalogues. It is also interesting that he sums up the catalogues analysed in a chronological list with indications of the find-spots.

Still, we should have preferred him to formulate the inevitably limited value of his 'best-seller list' somewhat more explicitly. For indeed, we must keep in mind that these twenty best-selling works (totalling 604 copies) come from a group of 14,000 censored titles. Also in terms of copies this random test remains below 5%. Moreover, also non-censored titles may contain works which displeased one of the censors by their "enlightened" character, but which were left out of consideration here. In our opinion these reflections corroborate the presumption already expressed by De

Schampheleire, that the less-known 'minor' authors were more important for the spread of the enlightenment than the great names.

The same consideration is true of the article by Bruneel on the propagation of French books through the Louvain University bookshop between 1765 and 1777 (1). Per lack of time Bruneel did not dwell on over four hundred titles of which only one or just a few copies were sold in those years. Thus the less-known authors again escape the notice which they probably deserved. This defect might perhaps have been avoided, were it only by a simple enumeration of authors and titles.

From the registers preserved in the General State Archives in Brussels on the daily sales, it appeared moreover that the subjects with the greatest appeal in those Louvain bookshop, were most in demand also in other libraries (Grenoble, Liège, Namur). In spite of the influence of censorship and of the somewhat particular character of this book-trade, works on theology, philosophy and morals were highly quoted, followed by belles-lettres and history. It was characteristic of this book-trade that the fraction of the Louvain reading public supplied with literature there, got acquainted with the enlightenment mainly by means of writings of its opponents.

The analysis of three Liège private libraries and of the Liège municipal library (2) of the latter half of the eighteenth century is remarkable for two reasons. Firstly, because this study presents a picture of the intellectual life in the principality of Liège and of the impact of the enlightenment and the French example there. The conclusion of the authors on this subject is that Liège behaved completely like a French city and was quite comparable to Lyons for example. Secondly, the article is important because it offers a model for the content-study of catalogues.

(1) C. BRUNEEL, "La diffusion du livre français à l'université de Louvain (1765-1777)", *Etudes sur le XVIIIe siècle*, VI, 1979, pp. 117-130. (The Diffusion of the French Book at the University of Louvain).

(2) N. HAESSENNE-PEREMANS and P. DELBOUILLE, "La présence française dans les bibliothèques liégeoises au XVIIIe siècle", *Etudes sur le XVIIIe siècle*, VI, 1979, pp. 177-192. (The French Presence in the Liège Libraries during the XVIIIth Century).

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The works mentioned are divided into categories according to language, theme, level, place of publication and nationality of the author. The relation with the social situation of the owner is striking : the higher his social status, the more foreign and specialized works appear in his library.

J. Smeyers wishes to evaluate the impact of the French literature in the Southern Netherlands. To this end he takes the propagation of Voltaire's works as a case-study (1). He looked for the Dutch translations of the works of the French poet-philosopher, as well as the polemics around them, and the Flemish works in which Voltaire was cited. From this search it appears that Voltaire may be considered a best-seller in the Southern Netherlands as early as 1750. Especially his plays were translated. His other works, exclusively intended for reading public, were indeed also accessible to them in French. Leading publicists were clearly influenced by him and the many attacks on his works indicate a great propagation and a short-coming of censorship in proportion.

In another contribution, of an even more encyclopaedic nature (2), Smeyers mentions the literature in Dutch (prose, poetry, drama) which was published in Brussels in the course of the eighteenth century. From this also it appears that not only tradition was predominant : the enlightened ideas has also pervaded the Dutch-speaking authors. The use of the Dutch language was indeed in danger of being oppressed by them : there was not only the predominant role of French as the civilized language, but also the opportunistic catering to the wishes of bilingual or French-speaking readers.

Consequently, Verlooy's Treatise on the neglect of the Dutch language was not an isolated fact. It fitted perfectly into the desire of the Enlightenment to be linked with the glorious past of our people, but it was also a concrete reaction to the events Verlooy witnessed. So, it is not surprising that Verlooy was not the first and

(1) J. SMEYERS, "Voltaire dans la littérature néerlandaise des Pays-Bas autrichiens", *Etudes sur le XVIIIe siècle*, VI, 1979, pp. 91-102. (Voltaire in the Dutch Literature in the Southern Netherlands).

(2) J. SMEYERS, "La littérature néerlandaise à Bruxelles au cours du XVIIIe siècle", *Etudes sur le XVIIIe siècle*, IV, 1977, pp. 101-116. (The Dutch Literature in Brussels during the Eighteenth Century).

certainly not the only one who advocated the revaluation of the Dutch language. By the nature of this article in which the Dutch-speaking authors are shown with their titles and their interests, J. Smeyers emphasizes this aspect of the impact of the enlightenment.

J. Van den Broeck devoted ample attention to the figure of Verlooy himself (1). For that matter, he was right in doing so, for his work gives an insight into the enormous influence of this Campine lawyer on the politically progressive camp in the eighties and nineties of the eighteenth century. Van den Broeck works very minutely in his exposé. Though he studies Verlooy's life chronologically and consequently deals alternately with events in Verlooy's private life and with reviews of his publications, he never loses sight of the meaningful course of this biography.

This approach offers a very great advantage : we are indeed confronted with the antecedents and the growth of the different parties, fractions and opinions. It teaches us that the positions of 1789 and later did not necessarily have to be opposed diametrically to each other. Democrats, conservatives and royalists had indeed also a number of common claims. The hagiographic historiography which inevitably results from such crisis-periods, however, over-simplified this situation for a long time. Indeed, after 1830 the patriotic side monopolized all events — and consequently also the Brabantine Revolution — which could be interpreted as expressions of national feeling. The progressives of the decade 1789-1799 who were the losers of the Brabantine Revolution, were consequently put in the 'wrong' and were, moreover, associated with all the negative memories of the French domination : conscription, deportation, religious persecution, seizures and forced loans. Van den Broeck's study draws a much more exact and refined picture of the events. Moreover, it leaves room for doubts and hesitations and — next to general factors — also pays attention to personal elements which were decisive in some circumstances. For example, the authoritative

(1) J. VAN DEN BROECK, *J.B.C. Verlooy, vooruitstrevend jurist en politicus uit de 18e eeuw, 1746-1797*, Antwerp-Amsterdam, Standaard Scientific Publishing Company, 1980, 370 pp. (J.B.C. Verlooy, 18th-Century Progressive Lawyer and Politician, 1746-1797).

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and whimsical character of Van der Noot was largely responsible for the failure of a common action by democrats and conservatives against the Austrian authorities. In this connection Van den Broeck's approach to Verlooy's personality is perhaps somewhat one-sided. The epithets used to typify Verlooy are solely of a positive nature : he appears to be a man who did not take life easy, who deserved well of society, who was business-like and realistic, who had a critical nature. This image of Verlooy partly creates the impression of a plea to demonstrate that he did belong to the 'good ones'. This is important as a corrective to the rash, above-mentioned association with the attitude of the progressists. But a greater objectivity towards the figure of Verlooy and towards the image of him in nearly two centuries of historiography teaches us, however, that such a plea for Verlooy was really not necessary. The original, negative typification had indeed no scientific, but a political meaning. In this connection Van den Broeck pays much attention to the question if the collaboration of Verlooy with the French authorities in 1794 was a 'betrayal' of the ideas expressed in his "Verhandeling op d'Onacht der moederlijke Tael in de Nederlanden" (Treatise on the Neglect of the Mother-tongue in the Netherlands) of 1788. He is justified in investigating this question thoroughly, because it belongs to the polemic which has been carried on around the figure of Verlooy for a long time. But should he not have pointed out before that this polemic is a problem which is more important for the history of the historiography of Belgium than for the study of Verlooy's life ? Perhaps the assertion, maybe even the surprise, that Verlooy was a sincere and consistent man after all, underlies the sporadic over-emphasis of the 'good' character of Verlooy. These considerations do not detract from the value of Van den Broeck's work : the thorough knowledge of the archive-material and the wide reading, together with a sensible structure and a fluent style indeed give this work a lasting value.

We wrote before already that several causes promoted an increasing use of French. Next to the radiation of the French culture it was in the Austrian Netherlands mainly the court-life of Charles de Lorraine, the French military presence during the Austrian succession-war, the industrial development of the Southern Netherlands and the situation of Brussels as a stopping-place on the journey to the United Republic or as a hiding-place for French political refugees.

Yet, H. Hasquin, in an article on the use of French in Brussels between 1740 and 1780 (1), points at the remark of Verlooy in 1788, that many people in Brussels try to use French as the vehicle, though for 95% of the inhabitants Flemish is the native language.

Starting from this apparent contradiction Hasquin develops a method through which he tries to count the linguistic usage of the inhabitants of Brussels. To this end he makes representative samples of notary-deeds in Brussels for 1760 and 1780. In those twenty years he ascertains a considerable increase in the use of French. Taking into account an over-representation of procurations in French (since they were meant for foreign countries), Hasquin comes to the conclusion that the frenchification increased by about 5% in those twenty years. Consequently, maximal estimates permit us to fix the French-speaking part of Brussels at 10% in 1760 and at 15% in 1780.

Yet, we cannot follow the author in the way in which he concludes that it was mainly the leading circles of the upper town that were frenchified. We do not throw doubt upon this conclusion itself : the impressions of contemporaries and the subsequent evolution point in the same direction. But Hasquin makes the socio-professional classification only of the French-speaking clients of the notaries and from this he concludes that about half of them belonged to the privileged groups. But was this the case only on the French-speaking side ? Also the 'breakthrough' of the small middle-class in the French deeds (from 3.6% in 1760 to 12.8% in 1780) would be instructive only when compared to the evolution among the Dutch-speaking people. And what was the influence of the decrease of the group called 'diverses et indéterminées' (from 43.5% in 1760 to 30.1% in 1780) in this process ?

Finally, Hasquin's conclusion that the frenchification of the Flemings in Brussels in 1780 was not irreversible, is undoubtedly correct. But is that ever the case ? Is not a linguistic frontier an ever-evolving phenomenon which can only temporarily be controlled by laws ?
(L.F.)

(1) H. HASQUIN, "Le français à Bruxelles entre 1740 et 1780. Premier essai de quantification", *Études sur le XVIIIe siècle*, VI, 1979, pp. 193-200. (The French at Brussels between 1740 and 1780. First Attempt of Quantification).

2. FLEMISH MOVEMENT

The booklet by M. de Vroede, professor at the Catholic University of Louvain, published by the Cultural Council for Flanders, "Le Mouvement Flamand en Belgique" (1) is meant to give a historical explanation of the Flemish points of view with regard to the state-reform and the problem of Brussels.

Though written for the French-speaking countrymen, it can also prove useful (as an introduction to a complicated problem) for Flemings, a.o. students with a sufficient command of French. Consequently, the intention is "propagandistic", since the booklet not only explains the attitudes and objectives of the Flamings, but *ipso facto* also defends them. However, de Vroede is a historian with too objective a training to do violence to the facts. He never lapses into narrow nationalism and deals especially with the economic, social and psychological backgrounds which he analysed and vulgarized on several previous occasions. He starts with the situation at the end of the 18th century, the period of "Poor Flanders", of the peasant home-workers, the commuters to Wallonia and the scarce industrial centres in the North. Then the "linguistic flamingantism" and the deviations of a number of Flemish-Nationalists are described, but not excused.

The first industrialization-movement before 1914 and the "culture-flamingantism" attended with it, which was a broadening, were the direct forerunners of the "Valorisation en Profondeur"-period which covers the last decades : the favourable influence of the "Golden sixties", along with the economic recession of the old industrial area of Wallonia, the rise of a Flemish-speaking group of entrepreneurs and managers (a new bourgeoisie) and a wider intellectual superstratum wanting to assert their newly acquired power. True, these factors did not call into existence the community-differences and especially the problem of the capital, but they considerably contributed to them.

The results of the Flemish Movement and its meaning for the young generations, also on the plane of cultural development, are well summed up. De Vroede argues that, as a rule, the Flemish

(1) M. DE VROEDE, *Le Mouvement Flamand en Belgique*, Edité par le "Kultuurraad voor Vlaanderen" et l'"Instituut voor Voorlichting", Antwerp, 1975. (The Flemish Movement in Belgium).

Movement aspired after equality and that the struggle for Brussels, which must be an capital acceptable to the North, is in itself not "imperialistic". Neither does flamingantism ever confine the Flemings to a narrow provincialism. Although the argument is fortified with figures, many aspects can, of course, be deepened. De Vroede himself knows that better than anyone else, but the scope and nature of this publication did not permit it. Whether it was successful in convincing many French-speaking Walloons and inhabitants of Brussels is quite a different problem. (J.C.)

3. LABOUR MOVEMENT

Over-all survey

Anyone perusing the flow of publications on the history of the labour-movement in Belgium can clearly recognize a number of tendencies (1).

The socialist movement remains the principal field of interest (with a yearly average of ten titles); the christian labour-movement does not enjoy a comparable historiographical interest although, since the turning-point around 1960, it has obviously been the mainstream in the Belgian and especially in the Flemish labour-movement (in terms of membership and relative power in the social elections). Only recently was some change to be noticed, especially from the side of the Louvain university (for the publication-period between 1976 and 1980, under discussion here, we could find no more than some fifteen titles). On the other hand, this lack of interest in the 'great' christian-democratic movement is largely offset by the historiography which focuses all its attention on 'daensism', that specifically Flemish form of christian-democratic dissidence at the turn of the century (also some fifteen titles).

For that matter, that interest in the 'marginal' groups and tendencies within and outside the social-democratic and reformist mainstream in the leftist labour-movement can also be noticed at the "left side" of the labour-movement.

(1) At least if we rely on the bibliography published in the "Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire - Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Filologie en Geschiedenis".

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With regard to the communist party (some ten articles), we think that this increasing interest is to be attributed to a number of recent political events : around 1976-1977 a short-lived and limited "Euro-communist" electoral rise of the K.P.B. (Communist Party of Belgium) is noticeable, there is the interest in the 'progressive front-formation', and consequently also in the historical reference of the Popular Front period (1936).

On the other hand, since the beginning of the present economic crisis there has been a general historical interest in the socio-political events of the thirties : the hey-day of the communist movement. According to us the influx of students of 'contemporary history' and the parallel rise of radical student-movements are also responsible for the interest in the 'gauchist' phenomenon in our history : also marginal leftist tendencies, such as trotskism for example, enjoy a historical interest.

The statement that the vast majority of the publications are devoted to the socialist movement, must be slightly corrected by pointing out that a great number of these studies are focused on the figure of the vexed politician Hendrik de Man (apart from the publication of de Man's principal works, thirteen articles).

Working-instruments

For years the study of the socialist labour-movement had has an indispensable auxiliary instrument in the current bibliography attended to by Dr. Denise De Weerd. Formerly it was published in yearly supplements in the periodical *Socialistische Standpunten* (Socialist Standpoints).

In 1979 the several contributions were collected in one publication edited by the Emile Vandervelde-Institute in Brussels. Further supplements are published in *Amsab-News*, the periodical of the Archives and Museum of the Socialist Labour-Movement, established in Ghent.

This bibliographical working-instrument is arranged according to themes, with a special attention to the several regions and localities, as well as to the biographical contributions which are published on socialist militants and leaders (1).

(1) D. DE WEERDT, with the co-operation of A. VAN LYSEBETTEN, *Socialisme en socialistische arbeidersbeweging in België. Bibliografie van werken en tijdschriftartikels, verschenen sedert 1944*, Brussels, Emile Vandervelde Institute,

In a contribution devoted to the archive-documents on Belgian trade-unionism, Wouter Steenhaut and Jean Puissant point at the dramatic state of these archives. Yet, they claim, Belgian trade-unionism belongs to the best developed in the world (a union-membership of 67% in 1971). Jean Puissant gives the example of the archives of a regional metal-workers' federation which were recently destroyed. Moreover, where preservation does exist, decentralization is rife. A few national centres are making attempts at altering the situation, such as the Catholic Documentation Centre at Louvain (CADOC), which preserves the archives of the A.C.W. (the master-organisation of the christian labour-movement). The archives of the christian trade-unions, sick-funds and co-operative societies are with the respective organisations. The extensive archives of Cardinal Cardijn (founder of the christian labour youth-movement) were handed over to the State Archives.

On the socialist side, there are the Archives and Museum of the Socialist labour-movement in Ghent (AMSAB), trying to realize a centralization of archives on the Flemish part (yet respecting those organisations which see to their own local preservation). The Emile Vandervelde-Institute in Brussels (socialist) also contains valuable material, but for trade-unionism the archives of the Fondation André Renard (Liège) and the Fonds Defuisseaux (Borinage) are more important, as well as the documents preserved by the regional Miners' Federation of the Borinage.

A lot of work can yet be done through careful exploration. The major aim of the contribution by Wouter Steenhaut and Jean Puissant is to draw attention to the problem (1).

Linda and Robert Flagothier on their part made an extensive inventory of the archive-documents of Isabelle Blum, one of the first female parliamentarians of the Belgian Labour Party, who played an important role in the anti-fascist resistance and who, in the tense post-war period, went over to the Belgian Communist Party (2).

1979, 124 pp. (Documentation note, N/79/6). (Socialism and Socialist Labour-movement in Belgium. Bibliography of Books and Articles, published since 1944).

(1) *Labour and Trade Union Archives — Les archives des syndicats et mouvements ouvriers* : Wouter STEENHAUT & Jean PUISSANT. "Les archives syndicales en Belgique", *Archivum. Revue internationale des Archives*, 1980, XXVII, pp. 25-36. (Syndical Archives in Belgium).

(2) Linda and Robert FLAGOTHIER, *Inventaire d'archives du fonds Isabelle Blum*, Brussels, Louis de Brouckère Foundation, 1980, XII-175 pp. (Inventory of the Archives of the Isabelle Blum Fund).

Biographical study of the socialist labour-movement

The study of the socialist militant is just in its initial stage in Belgium : the necessary auxiliary instruments, biographical repertories and dictionaries are still lacking. A project set up by the French-speaking M.O.C. publishing-company, 'Vie Ouvrière', promises to improve this situation. There is, however, a first start from an unexpected 'military' side : in the Belgian Periodical of Military History Francis Sartorius and Jean-Luc De Paepe published a systematic repertory of the *Belgians* who participated in the Parisian Commune in 1871; this work was based on police-archives of several Belgian municipalities, on archives of the French War Office and on the biographical dictionary of the French labour-movement (1).

As was said in the introduction, much attention is devoted to the figure of *Hendrik de Man*, the 'father of planism' (1885-1953), minister in 1935, chairman of the Belgian Labour Party since 1938 (after the death of 'le patron', Emile Vandervelde), vexed especially on account of his failure in finding a compromise between collaboration and resistance during World War II, which eventually led to his exile in Switzerland. Apparently his failure to 'accommodate' during World War II does not detract from the interest in his person and especially his ideas. The Standaard Scientific Publishing-Company published a reprint of his principal works (in six volumes) in 1974-1976.

In a first volume Mieke Van Haegendoren, who had previously published a biography of Hendrik de Man, compiled the autobiographical notes of de Man, a work preceded by a fascinating introduction by Prof. H. Brugmans.

In the following volumes the principal works are published and commented : 'The Socialist Idea', 'Constructive Socialism', 'The Psychology of Socialism', in which de Man inquires into the deeper psychological motives of the involvement in the socialist movement, and especially the diverse writings on de Man's economic theory, 'Planism', the interest in which is certainly not surprising in the present economic situation. The volume on Planism also contains a contemporary pamphlet by the communist economist Eugene Varga and de Man's response to this polemic criticism.

(1) Francis SARTORIUS & Jean-Luc DE PAEPE, "Belges ralliés à la Commune de Paris", *Revue belge d'Histoire militaire*, XXIII, 1980, pp. 713-742. (Belgians affiliated to the Commune of Paris).

In a volume of stray writings Prof. Balthazar assembled a number of shorter contributions which throw some light on de Man's position during World War I (he became a war-volunteer in August, 1914) and on his relation to Leopold III (whose personal counsellor he was for some time). In a last volume we are given a picture of the solitary doom-thoughts into which de Man had retired after his failure during World War II.

However, the publication "Hendrik de Man, Person and Ideas" covers only a part of the extensive oeuvre of this socialist thinker. In the last volume of the series a bibliography, made by Wouter Steenhaut, was inserted. We wish to pay special attention to this bibliography, because both its form and contents constitute an excellent working-instrument for the study of Demanism, but also for the study of the socialist movement in general, especially viewed in the light of the multiplicity of the tasks undertaken by de Man. The study of the socialist youth-movement, the Federation for Labourers' Education, the planist movement, etc. is impossible without this remarkable working-instrument.

Through a careful investigation of scattered international archives Wouter Steenhaut succeeded in gathering the literary legacy of de Man into a whole again. Not only works published as books, pamphlets or articles have been inserted, but also important notes and internal texts written by de Man, as well as radio-lectures and interviews. A second volume with an extensive list of studies and articles on de Man, contains more than 160 titles, which is a clear indication of the interest in the study of this figure.

It must also be mentioned that Peter Dodge, who published a study on de Man years ago (1966), edited an English compilation of works by de Man (1).

(1) *Hendrik de Man. Persoon en ideeën* (Hendrik de Man. Person and Ideas), Antwerp-Amsterdam. Standaard Scientific Publishing Company, 1974 and following years : I. *Autobiografie* (Autobiography). Presented by Mieke CLAEYS-VAN HAEGENDOREN, 1974, pp. 59-551; II. *Psychologie van het socialisme en opbouwend socialisme* (Psychology of Socialism and Constructive Socialism Presented by L. MAGITS, 1974, 611 pp.; III. *De socialistische idee* (The Socialist Idea). Presented by L. HANCKE, 1975, 447 pp.; IV. *Het planisme* (Planism). Presented by P. FRANTZEN, 1975, 407 pp.; V. *Een halve eeuw doctrine* (Half a Century of Doctrine). Presented by H. BALTHAZAR, 1976, 550 pp.; VI. *Massificatie en cultuurverval* (Massification and Cultural Decline). Presented by W. DEBROCK and *Bibliografie van de werken van Hendrik de Man en van de studies over hem* (Bibliography of the Works by Hendrik de Man and

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Of an entirely different nature is the original text edition of writings and documents by and on *Camille Huysmans* (1871-1968), edited by Dr. Denise De Weerd and Wim Geldolf. Whereas de Man had an extensive theoretical production and only a short-lived and largely unsuccessful political career, the opposite is true in the case of Huysmans : a career of years on the regional, national and international planes, as the secretary of the Second International, a parliamentarian and Speaker of the House, mayor of Antwerp, and minister of education. The interesting correspondence between Huysmans and Lenin was published by Georges Haupt as early as 1963. The volumes already published of the 'writings and documents' cover his activities in The Netherlands during World War I (as the secretary of the disintegrated Second International he tried to save as much as was feasible from the neutral Netherlands, and he also occupied himself with the large Belgian colony of refugees on the spot), and his interventions for the defence of public education.

We wish to draw special attention to the volume 'Camille Huysmans in London' compiled by Herman Balthazar and José Gotovitch. The history of the handful of Belgians who lived in London during World War II and were politically active, is too little known and studied as yet. Still, "seldom did so few people manage so many interests" we could say, paraphrasing Winston Churchill's famous statement on the Battle of England. Indeed, the 'Londoners' were responsible for the Belgian colony of the Congo, and through his connections with the Antwerp circles of diamond-dealers (also emigrated to London) Huysmans played a leading part in these matters.

It is also fascinating how this small migrant colony started the post-war struggle : the conduct of the Londoners already contained issues which come to the fore in Belgian politics after the war, especially with regard to the royal question. Also in the difficulties around the mini Belgian Army, the Piron Brigade, among other things, we see the classical mechanisms of power-policy at work.

of the Studies on him). Presented by W. STEENHAUT, 1976.

Peter DODGE, ed., *A Documentary Study of Hendrik de Man, Socialist Critic of Marxism*, Princeton Univ. Press, 1979, 384 pp. As an introduction to the history of the Belgian Labour Party in the period preceding 'planism' : André PLETINCKX, "Le Parti Ouvrier Belge dans la première phase de la crise économique 1930-1933 (1re partie)", *Revue belge d'Histoire Contemporaine*, VII, 1976, 3-4, pp. 273-327. (The Belgian Labour Party in the First Phase of the Economic Crisis, 1930-1933).

In all these respects this publication has an importance which goes beyond the mere biographical Huysmans-study (1).

Surveys

— General

Under the title "Wat zoudt gij zonder 't werkvolk zijn ?" (2) a survey of the history of the Belgian labour-movement (1830 to 1966) was published in 1977. It is a positive thing that an attempt was made at spotlighting the several branches of the labour-movement in one work, in order to create a popular manual, among other things through ample illustration and publication of several documents and sources. It is also a merit that the whole work is placed against a socio-economic background. However, the work bears the marks of a one-sided ideological view of social history. Characteristic in this connection is the fact that for an outline of the development of Belgian capitalism, only a copy is used of a series of Chilean 'booklets for popular education', which give an elementary and abstract exposition of what capitalism is. In an appendix some figures are added, taken somewhat at random from Belgian

(1) Denise DE WEERDT & Wim GELDOLF, *C. Huysmans in Brussel*, Antwerp-Amsterdam, Standaard Scientific Publishing Company, 1974, XIV-145 pp. (Camille Huysmans, Geschriften en Documenten. I). (C. H. in Brussels) — Denise DE WEERDT & Wim GELDOLF, *Camille Huysmans en België in de Eerste Wereldoorlog*, Antwerp-Amsterdam, Standaard Scientific Publishing Company, 1975, 148 pp. (Camille Huysmans, Geschriften en Documenten. II). (C.H. and Belgium in World War I) — Denise DE WEERDT & Wim GELDOLF, *Camille Huysmans en de Cultuur*, Antwerp-Amsterdam, Standaard Scientific Publishing Company, 1979, 286 pp. (Camille Huysmans, Geschriften en Documenten. VI A). (C.H. and Culture) — Henk VAN DAELE, *Camille Huysmans en het onderwijs*, Antwerp-Amsterdam, Standaard Scientific Publishing Company; Antwerp, Ontwikkeling, 1976, 341 pp. (Camille Huysmans, Geschriften en Documenten. VI B). (C.H. and Education) — Herman BALTHAZAR and José GOTOVITCH, *Camille Huysmans in Londen*, Antwerp-Amsterdam, Standaard Scientific Publishing Company, 1978, XXX-268 pp. (Camille Huysmans, Geschriften en Documenten, VII). (C.H. in London).

(2) *Wat zoudt gij zonder 't werkvolk zijn ? Anderhalve eeuw arbeidersstrijd in België : I : 1830-1966*, Louvain, Kritak, 1977, 288 pp. (Kritak dossier). (What would you do without the Workers ? A Century and a Half of Labourers' Struggle in Belgium : I : 1830-1966).

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industrial and population censuses. An exaggerated criticism of the 'reformist fillet steak socialism in the labour movement' runs through the work like a continuous thread.

For the early labour-movement there is a reprint of Bymholt's old chronicle (1894) describing both the Dutch and the Belgian labour-movements (especially the Flemish, which at that time had many ties with the later anarchist Domela Nieuwenhuis). It does contain some useful information, but through the obsolete chronicle-style it can certainly not be recommended as a 'manual' (1).

— Unionism

More detailed than the first-mentioned work, and focused on trade-unionism is the work by Fernand Lehouck who deals with the development of trade-unionism before 1914 'from apathy to efficiency'. Less based on events than this approach is Jean Neuville's study on the rise of trade-unionism in Belgium, which is but a part of the ambitiously designed "Histoire du mouvement ouvrier en Belgique".

This work illustrates the slow rise of a modern trade-unionism out of the old 'compagnonages' and corporations in the several trade-groups, especially in the capital. They slowly develop into so-called "sociétés de maintien de prix", especially with the more 'aristocratic' trades in typography and metal-working. Much attention is devoted to that specific form of unionism which was popular in the eighties of the previous century, especially with the miners and glass-blowers in the Charleroi-basin. However, the genuine modern trade-unionism is to be situated mainly in the textile-sector, in the Verviers wool-industry and the Ghent cotton-industry, at a time when the spontaneous strike still prevails over genuine, durable trade-union organisation with the numerous miners' group.

Each volume of the serious 'Histoire du mouvement ouvrier' has been elaborated in an excellent way. As compared with 'What would you do without the workers?' the series offers the advantage of providing a 'scientific reference-apparatus' and neither is it marred by an all too ideologically oriented view. The whole does lack a

(1) B. BYMHOLT, *Geschiedenis van de arbeidersbeweging in Nederland en België*, Amsterdam, 1894, 2 volumes - Reprint : Amsterdam, Van Gennep, 1976. (History of the Labour-Movement in the Netherlands and Belgium).

a systematic build-up : sometimes the impression is created that facets are being dealt with without regard to the cohesion (1).

— The Belgian Labour Party 1880-1914

Thus a special volume was edited by Marcel Liebman on the massification-stage of the socialist movement 1880-1914. In fact we are confronted here with a French counterpart of the work by André Mommen, 'De Belgische Werkliedenpartij : ontstaan en ontwikkeling van het reformistische socialisme (1880-1914)' (The Belgian Labour Party : rise and development of reformist socialism), (Ghent, Frans Masereel fund, 1980, 260 pp.). On this theme Mommen, in 1976, took his degree of doctor of Political Sciences, under the direction of Prof. Liebman.

The two works take a critical stand with regard to reformism, a criticism which runs parallel with the classical leftist views of the social-democratic movement. Qua methodology mainly a history of ideas is presented : the political debates in the press and at the party-congresses constitute the major part of the works, whereas the pragmatic practice of co-operative societies, trade-unions and sick-funds are but sparingly discussed. Yet the presence of a reformist doctrine and ideology is precisely to be found in the existence of those successful forms of 'self-help' of the labourers, rather than in the presence of 'bourgeois' ideologies in the labour-movement. The great mass joins the Belgian Labour Party only when the party in its practice gives proof of offering some alternative for the social abuses. And even when, in the thirties, these institutions are hard hit in a time of crisis (think of the adventures of the Labour Bank), the

(1) Fernand LEHOUCK, *Van apathie tot strijdbaarheid : schets van een geschiedenis van de Belgische vakbeweging 1830-1914*, Bruges, Orion, Nijmegen, B. Gottmer, 529 pp. (Orion's Scientific Library) (From Apathy to Efficiency : Outline of a History of the Belgian Trade-Unionism, 1830-1914).

Jean NEUVILLE, *Naissance et croissance du syndicalisme, I*, Brussels, Vie ouvrière, 1979, 391 pp. (*Histoire du mouvement ouvrier en Belgique*, 8) (Birth and Growth of Syndicalism). For the study of the socialist miners, who were predominant in the social struggle before World War I, we refer to Joël MICHEL, "Un maillon plus faible du syndicalisme minier : la Fédération nationale des mineurs belges avant 1914", *Revue belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, LV, 1977, 2, pp. 425-473. (A Weaker Link of Miner Syndicalism : the National Federation of Belgian Miners before 1914).

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majority of the followers — through a defensive reflex — stand by their 'reformist leaders', even though this policy cannot produce results in difficult economic circumstances.

So the hypercritical viewpoint of the leftist opponents of reformism induces them to overlook the international and national contexts of the rise of the movement. The works under discussion here create the impression that, around 1900, the Belgian socialist movement was considered 'backward' in the Second International ('backward' because it didn't produce any theorists).

However, this is not true at all : the Belgian electoral success in 1894 and 1895, the fact that a political reform had been brought about through actions outside parliament and the flourishing practice of the co-operative societies made it a hub of the international movement, which appears, among other things, from the positions held by figures such as Huysmans, Vandervelde and even Anseele. And also the marxist critic, young Hendrik de Man, owed the affection with which he was welcomed in Germany, for example, the Mecca of marxism, only to his affiliation to that hyper-reformist movement. Finally, the national context : the unique aspect in the history of the Belgian labour-movement is the rise of a christian labour-movement, connected with the leading political party, which will eventually acquire preponderance in the labour-movement. How an even more reformist movement took that position, is hardly mentioned in these works.

The leftist historiography of Belgian reformism often creates the impression that the classical schemes are just taken for granted and merely filled with Belgian 'facts' : whereas in the above-mentioned works those facts are the results of source-investigation, in a working-paper by Pascal Delfosse on this subject source-investigation proves not even necessary, as it is based solely on older works (Bertrand...). An attempt at abandoning, also on the leftist side, the classical patterns on reformism is made by the Brussels professor Leo Michielsen (1).

(1) Marcel LIEBMAN, *Les socialistes belges : 1885-1914 : la révolte et l'organisation*, Brussels, Vie ouvrière, 1979, 300 pp. (Histoire du mouvement ouvrier en Belgique, 3) (Belgian Socialists : 1885-1914 : Revolt and Organisation). - André MOMMEN, *De Belgische Werkliedenpartij : ontstaan en ontwikkeling van het reformistisch socialisme (1880-1914)*, Ghent, F. Masereel Fund, 1980, 260 pp. (The Belgian Labour Party : Rise and Development of Reformist Socialism). - P. DELFOSSE, *Le réformisme en Belgique (1880-1914), fondements sociologiques, doctrine économique et manifestations idéologiques*, Louvain, U.C.L.,

The above-mentioned vision becomes most untenable when it claims to have found a sociological foundation for the existence of reformism in the labour-movement, and starts from a kind of 'class-contrast' between 'labour-aristocracy' and the mass of unskilled workers. Though in some cases actual evidence can be found that the labour-aristocracy may be the bearer of the reformist idea, this varies widely from one region to another (also among the various Belgian regions).

The foreign debate held on this topic, especially in England, certainly does not lead to the unanimous and one-sided conclusion propagated in Belgium mainly by Mommen and Delfosse.

Regional and thematic approach

In the above-mentioned works the Belgian labour-movement is viewed too much as a monolith and the regional differences are hardly considered. With regard to regional studies we may have reached a turning-point which could prove helpful for the reform-study. On the history of the socialist movement in the Charleroi region a somewhat chronicle-like work was published by Francis Poty, which, in our opinion, deals too much with the general history of the Belgian labour-movement and supplies too little information on the local movement. Yet, the Carolingian labour-movement is an interesting case : not only because it is based on a varied industrial structure (mining and metal-industry, as well as the glass-sector), but also because it has kept aloof from the Belgian Labour Party for a long time, with a specific organisation-type of its own : the Chevalerie du Travail. Only around 1904 did a special Carolingian federation of the Belgian Labour Party come about. This labour-movement, inspired on the American Knights of Labor which took over a lot from the masonic organisation-forms, is the subject of the excellent study by Joël Michel, who investigates both the strong and the weak sides of this movement.

The two regional studies permit a strong relativation of the picture drawn by Mommen of one revolutionary Walloon miners' group : a clear distinction must be made between the mining-basins of Liège,

Institut Sciences économiques, 250 pp. (Working Paper). (Reformism in Belgium (1880-1914), Sociological Foundations, Economic Doctrine and Ideological Manifestations). - L. MICHELSSEN, "Omtrent het reformisme" VI, *Marxist Review*, IX, 1975, 3, pp. 71-77. (On Reformism).

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Charleroi and the Borinage. For the history of the labour-movement in Huy and especially Liège, the first start was made (1).

Also for Flanders the regional study is starting. The reprint of Albert van Laar's older work on the origins of the Antwerp socialist movement to only slightly industrialized and even mainly rural in 1926, is naturally still influenced by the chronicle-style and coloured elements of 'older' historiography. In the period considered the Antwerp socialist movement was not yet the dominating power which it was later to be in Flanders : the dockers are still in search of a trade-union structure, the diamond-workers were involved in a year-long conflict with the Antwerp Belgian Labour Party and only on the eve of World War I did the first socialist daily — Volksgazet (Popular Paper) — appear (2).

Quite different is Willy Massin's work on the first difficult breakthrough of the socialist movement in Limburg. Here the emphasis is shifted from the predominant industrial centres in the labour-movement to only slightly industrialized and even mainly rural surroundings. Before World War I the Limburg socialist movement was to obtain a firm footing only in Tongres, which was influenced by Liège, and in the south of the province. Incidentally it must be noted that a recent political event (the breakthrough of the Socialist Party in Limburg) apparently stimulates historiography.

For Flanders, finally, there is a short study by Prof. H. Balthazar on the relations between socialists in Flanders and Northern France which, especially in Sout-West-Flanders, the region of Menin

(1) Francis POTY, *Histoire de la démocratie et du mouvement ouvrier au Pays de Charleroi, I*, Brussels, Culture et civilisation, 1975, 256 pp. (History of Democracy and Labour Movement in the Region of Charleroi, I). - Francis POTY, *Histoire de la démocratie et du mouvement ouvrier au Pays de Charleroi, II*, Charleroi, Présence et action culturelles, 1979, 239 pp. (History of Democracy and Labour Movement in the Region of Charleroi, II). - Joël MICHEL, "La Chevalerie du Travail. Force ou faiblesse du mouvement ouvrier belge ?", *Revue belge d'Histoire contemporaine*, IX, 1978, 1-2, pp. 117-164. (The Chevalerie du Travail. Strength and Weakness of Belgian Labour Movement). - Serge BEELEN, "Contribution à l'histoire de la Fédération liégeoise du P.O.B. - 1893-1914", *Féd. (...) d'H. et d'Archéol. de B., XLIVe Congrès*, Huy, 1976, pp. 303-304 (Contribution to the History of the Liège Federation of Belgian Labour Party, 1893-1914). - Michette SATINET-DEMET, "Naissance et développement du mouvement socialiste dans la région hutoise", *Féd. (...) d'H. et d'Archéol. de B., XLIVe Congrès*, Huy, 1976, pp. 274-279. (Birth and Growth of Socialist Movement in the Region of Huy).

(2) A. VAN LAAR, *De geschiedenis der arbeidersbeweging van Antwerpen en omliggende*, Antwerp, Ontwikkeling, 1974, 582 pp. (History of the Labour-Movement of Antwerp and Surroundings).

and Courtrai, had their importance (1).

Also inspired by recent political events is the interest in the historiography on the 'love-hatred' relation between the socialist and Flemish movements (2).

It should be noted that the interest enjoyed abroad by several expressions of labour-culture, is also spreading in our country (a.o. labour-songs, architecture of people's homes) (3).

The communist movement

We already mentioned the interest taken in the communist movement. The published accounts of a study-day devoted to the history of the Belgian Communist Party, may serve as a good introduction to this historiography (4). Also the biographical study on the historical communist party leaders, Joseph Jacquemotte (1883-1936) and the murdered Julien Lahaut (1884-1950) was taken up by French-speaking historian Maxime Steinberg (5).

(1) W. MASSIN, "De opkomst van het socialisme in Limburg, 1890-1914", *De Tijdspiegel*, XXXIII, 1978, 2, pp. 3-30. (The Rise of Socialism in Limburg, 1890-1914). - Herman BALTHAZAR, "Betrekkingen tussen het socialisme in Vlaanderen en Noord-Frankrijk (1870-1914)", *De Franse Nederlanden*, Jaarboek 1979, pp. 11-29, (ill. and French Summary). (Relations between Socialism in Flanders and Northern France).

(2) Here we restrict ourselves to mentioning the names of Prof. J. Craeybeckx, D. Devreese, M. Oukhow and especially Dr. H. Van Velthoven who, in 1980, was promoted to Doctor of History on this theme. Especially interesting is the study of this relation at a time of tension. See for example: Mieke SERTYN, "Het socialistisch aktivisme tijdens de Eerste Wereldoorlog", *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Nieuwste Geschiedenis*, VII, 1976, 1-2, pp. 169-196. (Socialist Activism during World War I).

(3) Hendrik VANDECAVEYE, "Het proletariërslied: een sociaal-kulturele verschijningsvorm van de socialistische arbeidersbeweging", *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Nieuwste Geschiedenis*, XI, 1980, 1-2, pp. 171-204. (The Proletarians' Song: A Socio-Cultural Phenomenon of the Socialist Labour-Movement). - I. LEWILLON, *Boussu-Bois 1900-1980. Histoire et présence d'une maison du peuple*, Boussu, 1980, 119 pp. (Boussu-Bois 1900-1980. History and Presence of a People's House).

(4) *Le parti communiste belge: 1921-1944: actes de la journée d'étude de Bruxelles: 28 avril 1979*, Brussels, Joseph Jacquemotte Foundation, 1980, 152 pp. (Cahiers marxistes, 1980, numéro spécial). Dutch translation: *Een geschiedenis van het Belgisch kommunisme 1921-1945*, Ghent, 1980, Masereel Fund, 153 pp. (VMT. cahier, nr. 2). (A History of Belgian Communism, 1921-1945).

(5) M. STEINBERG, "Un certain combat: Joseph Jacquemotte (1883-1936)",

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Some works devoted to the history of the Belgian Communist Party, still have a heroizing and hagiographic streak. For example, the study on the Belgian Spain-volunteers by Ward Adriaens : some 1300 Belgians (of whom many, but not all, were communists), after Franco's rebellion in 1936, went to Spain to defend the republic. Adriaens narrates their adventures by means of numberless oral testimonies.

We prefer the stricter and more sober sociographic approach by Rudi Van Doorslaer who, by means of written sources (police-files and files of the Public Assistance), draws a profile of the Ghent volunteers in the International Brigade. In doing so it is not only his intention to re-introduce the 'heroes' of the anti-fascist struggle, but especially to penetrate into the social milieu in which the Popular Front-Communist Party could exert its influence. From this it appears clearly how little the Flemish Communist Party could go beyond a marginal social milieu, and how little it could reach an industrial town such as Ghent (1).

Van Doorslaer also studied one of the vexed periods in the history of the Belgian Communist Party. When in 1939 Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union concluded the so-called 'steel treaty' this had naturally consequences for the anti-fascist Communist Party, also in a small country like Belgium. Yet, the loyalty to the Comintern and its original neutrality-policy was not to prevent the Belgian communists from committing acts of resistance soon after the beginning of the German occupation. In his study Van Doorslaer breaks with the myth that the Communist resistance started only after the German attack on Russia in June, 1941. In spite of the German-Russian non-aggression pact the anti-fascist resistance of the Communist Party continued, even though the massive armed

Cahiers Marxistes, V, 1974. (A Certain Struggle : Joseph Jacquemotte, 1883-1936). - M. STEINBERG, "Julien Lahaut", *ibid.*, VI, 1975, 17 (36), pp. 1-12. For above-mentioned Isabelle Blum, see *Isabelle Blum. Entretiens recueillis et présentés par José GOTOVITCH*, Brussels, Joseph Jacquemotte Foundation, 1976, 249 pp. (Isabelle Blum. Talks gathered and presented by J.G.).

(1) Ward ADRIAENS, *Vrijwilligers voor de vrijheid : Belgische anti-fascisten in de Spaanse Burgeroorlog*, Louvain, Kritak, 1978, 142 pp. (Kritak dossier). (Volunteers for Freedom : Belgian anti-fascists in the Spanish Civil War). - R. VAN DOORSLAER, *Gentenaars in de internationale brigaden. Motivaties voor het vrijwilligerschap in een politiek militair konflikt*, Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis van de tweede wereldoorlog, 1980, pp. 149-196. (Ghent Men in the International Brigades. Motivations for Volunteering in a Politico-Military Conflict).

communist resistance did not start before June, 1941. Yet, the Belgian communists were obliged to express this policy in a Comintern jargon. Consequently, next to the fact that the myth is refuted, the importance of this study lies in the image which is drawn of the relations between a national and the international communist movement, the difficult path the communists tried to find toward their 'own' realization of the ideal (1).

Without any of the exaltation which is often characteristic of the partisan history of the trotskist movement, Nadia De Beule described the adventures of this group of marginal communists in the period between World Wars I and II. True, the emphasis is on the twenties : the history of the very much localized Parti Socialiste Révolutionnaire (in 1936, around Walter Dauge in the Borinage).

Here also a sociographic milieu-picture prevails : from this it appears, among other things, that the people inspired by Trotskism, came from the labourers' milieu, in spite of the official Communist Party vision which insists that it was only intellectual wiseacres, 'petty bourgeois' (2).

In our view this sociographic approach, which here is still applied mainly to a marginal labour-movement, provides a promising method for the study of the 'larger' labour-movement in which the merely ideographical approach is still often predominant. (G.V.S.)

(1) Rudi VAN DOORSLAER, *De kommunistische partij van België en het Sovjet-Duits niet-aanvalspakt, tussen augustus 1939 en juli 1941*, Ghent, Frans Masereel Fund, 1975, 272 pp. (The Communist Party of Belgium and the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact, between August, 1939 and July, 1941). - Nadya DE BEULE, *Het Belgisch Trotskisme : de geschiedenis van een groep oppositionele kommunisten*, Ghent, Jan Dhondt Foundation - F. Masereel Fund, 1980, 276 pp. (Belgian Trotskism : the History of a Group of Oppositional Communists).

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In a voluminous *Working Paper* in the series *Economie et Société*, published by the Institut des sciences économiques of the Université Catholique de Louvain, Pascale Delfosse attempted a politico-sociological approach to reformis-revisionism, starting from the debate between Bernstein and Luxemburg (1).

For the author it is nothing but a first step in that direction. The problem is interesting, but perhaps slightly disappointing to anyone who has come to understand that, from the start, reformism was "innate" in artisans (first) and wage-earners who are keen on petty-bourgeois respectability, and not at all in a small intellectual and powerless minority. This becomes clear after an ever-increasing amount of detailed research into the labour movement on the level of the daily struggle and not on the plane of ideologists and of the leaders acting in a more or less reformist way. In her reflections and analyses the author makes little use of new material, which was caused by the design of the work itself. That does not remove the fact that the analysis-models are founded on a narrow basis.

The importance attached to the co-operative societies (the sources for which were V. Serwy, Vandervelde and Destrée, who viewed the Belgian Labour Party as a federation of economic institutions grouped around consumers' co-operative societies and sick-funds, in which the political associations were merely additions, p. 39) and the great efforts of the Belgian Labour Party in the struggle for universal suffrage, were repeatedly emphasized before. The second part of the investigation is devoted to a content-analysis of the party-newspaper *Le Peuple*. Also the linguistic usage is investigated in order to reveal the concrete manifestations of reformism and thus to come to the construction of abstract-conceptualizing models, inspired by formal logic and structural semantics. The experiment does not present much more than a confirmation of things that were already known. In themselves the linguistic usage and contents of the editorials of a party-newspaper certainly deserve a thorough investigation (this restriction, however, should have been indicated in the title of the *Working Paper*), but this method still remains an incomplete approach to the essence of reformism. As was said before, it is high time to investigate — if

(1) P. DELFOSSE, *Le réformisme en Belgique (1880-1914) : fondements sociologiques, doctrine socio-économique et manifestations idéologiques*, Louvain, Institut des Sciences Economiques de l'Université Catholique de Louvain, s.d. (Reformism in Belgium (1880-1914), Sociological Foundations, Economic Doctrine and Ideological Manifestations).

possible also through politico-sociological models — how much reformism, which was certainly taken up and strengthened by the party-leadership speaking through *Le Peuple*, was rooted in an overall economic and social context. P. Delfosse's study certainly invites this kind of work. (J.C.)

4. WORLD WAR I

It is Luc Schepens' great merit that he made an objective study of the exceptionally troubled circumstances during World War I in which the Flemish Movement was considerably accelerated. In doing so he spotlighted the personalities and the roles of the politicians concerned, especially of King Albert and Charles de Broqueville (1).

During World War I the Belgian "internal" policy was extremely difficult. The greater part of the territory was occupied by the Germans, but the government, military headquarters and other important services resided mostly in the small unoccupied area behind the Yser. Moreover, numerous Belgians lived in the diaspora : the Netherlands, France, England and the camps in Germany. Through their own press and the local press the Belgians at home and abroad influenced not only the military policy, but also the social and cultural views of the government and the sovereign. Considerable pressure was also exerted on them by the military and political leaders of the guarantors, France and England.

Apart from the military problems the Belgian policy was mainly governed by social questions and the Flemish-Walloon contrast. In the last analysis they were thoroughly interwoven, as L. Schepens rightly points out. For the former questions the beginning of a solution was soon found through the assurance of the universal personal suffrage at the age of 21. For the latter problem only vague promises were made, so that the spark remained near the tinder and — for lack of a daring political solution — endangered the Belgian military efforts in the first place and the survival of Belgium in the

(1) Luc SCHEPENS, *Koning Albert, Charles de Broqueville en de Vlaamse Beweging tijdens Wereldoorlog I*, Lannoo, Tielt, 1982, 1 volume in -80, 235 pp. (King Albert, Charles de Broqueville and the Flemish Movement during World War I).

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future. How could things develop in such a sense ?

As early as 1913 an act was passed which was to alter the linguistic situations in the judicature, administration, education and army in favour of the Flemings.

The high-ranking officers were almost exclusively French-speaking in spite of the real efforts of clear-sighted officials to induce the officers to bilingualism. Moreover, the non-commissioned officers who were hurriedly promoted officers in 1914, were again mainly French-speaking, so that a disproportion was created between the large percentage of Flemish-speaking soliders who did not understand French, and the French-speaking officers and non-commissioned officers.

L. Schepens also points out that the newly-promoted junior officers often left much to be desired in the field of education and intelligence (not so with regard to patriotism and bravery). This was the cause of all kinds of abuse of power and misunderstanding. The grievances of the Flemish soldiers were heard and denounced by chaplains and other Flemish intellectuals. How they gave rise to the Front-movement in the army is explained in detail by the author, as well as the Flamenpolitik of the Germans, Activism in the occupied area and the diaspora. (About this, see also the remarkable book by Lode Wils, *Flamenpolitik en aktivisme*, Davidsfonds, Louvain).

L. Schepens is justified in blaming the difficulties in the army partly on war-fatigue, defeatism and a revolutionary spirit which influenced the Belgian soldier as much as the French, German and Russian soldiers.

The fact that the government and king Albert were well aware of the military and social climate in the army and in the occupied area, and aimed at an improvement, is proved by the meetings of the cabinet-council devoted to the Flemish Issue. In his address to the cabinet-council on February 1, 1918 Albert declared that it was necessary to recognize the existence of a Flemish Movement and to make concessions to the Flemish people "which they (the government) consider reasonable". He considered it reasonable that those concessions should not affect the authority of the army, should remain within the national framework and should not be directed against the French language and culture in Flanders. The draft made by secretary Ingenbleek, went much further and mentioned a Flemish university, the broadest administrative autonomy possible, full bilingualism of the army after the return to

Belgium. The author rightly imputes to the sovereign such intentions as : opening the safety-valves in time to avoid greater concessions, maintaining the equilibrium among all tendencies within the unitary state (here the Flamingant-Wallingant contrast), safeguarding the efficiency of the army, consequently no reorganization in Flemish and Walloon regiments, and no linguistic measures which would displease the predominantly French-speaking corps of officers and non-commissioned officers; avoiding to displease the French-speaking and bilingual Flemish upper middle-class and keeping up the image of the Belgian unity abroad. But is it not the Sovereign's task to protect the state, if necessary against the will of the citizens ?

Meanwhile, it appears from his secretary's draft that he was already thinking much further ahead. We may indeed assume that the secretary was informed of the royal views and made his draft in that sense !

The plea made by de Broqueville in the afternoon-session of the same cabinet-council also bears witness to daring and discernment. In order to bar the German influence in Flanders and to combat both Frontism and Activism he proposed five measures : abolition of the present bilingualism, review of the linguistic usage in the judicature, entirely Flemish education from top to bottom, try out small Flemish and Walloon units in the army, Flemish and Walloon autonomy in all branches of the administration. This proposal went much further than even the pro-Flemish ministers. True, his attitude was inspired by the fear that, at the peace-conference which again seemed imminent, the Belgian government would be confronted with the Flemish government — patronized by the Germans — in consequence of Wilson's declarations on the right of self-determination of the small peoples. His ultimate goal was to save Belgium. But... the cabinet-council decided only to make a draft of a policy-declaration. Also de Broqueville's proposal to establish schools for Flemish officers and non-commissioned officers was indeed agreed upon by all ministers, but the executive order was never drawn up.

With Luc Schepens we may regret that the entire war-government headed by the king did not get to grips with the Flemish Issue in the sense wanted by de Broqueville and, to a certain extent, also by the king.

This would certainly have considerably strengthened the Belgian consciousness within the Flemish Movement. But was this truly

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feasible in the light of the opposition which was to be expected from the officers' corps, the strong resistance of leading political and ecclesiastical authorities (Cardinal Mercier) and the reluctance of the allied military and political leaders ? (L.D.V.)

Henri Bernard was for many years a professor of history and historical criticism at the Belgian military academy (KMS-ERM) in Brussels. This new book, together with his other works, is the result of a lifetime of critical reflexions about warfare (1). The heart of the book is the diary or "Carnets" of his father, colonel, later general Arsène Bernard.

From Arsène Bernard's "Carnets" we learn the crude reality of war with its rare successes and many adversities, its casualties, its rain and mud, its rats, its bronchitis and rheumatism, its endless marches, its orders and counter-orders. Colonel A. Bernard sleeps on straw like his men and demands for them a humane treatment from his officers. He avoids those under his command being sacrificed "unnecessarily" and all losses of officers and privates affect him deeply. By his superiors he is dreaded for his freedom of speech. So he reports that the officers of the general headquarters after 50 days of war did not once visit his frontsector.

Professor Bernard, the author, on the contrary points out that many officers did indeed visit the frontline regularly, and that, after the French and German examples, from 1917 on, Belgian general headquarter-officers alternately had to perform terms of at the front. Professor Bernard also relativizes other judgements of his father's and places them in the general context of the allied strategy. He also evaluates and motivates the Belgian defence of Liege, the sallies of the Belgian army from the Antwerp stronghold and the defence of the Yser-river. Here he emphasizes the support the British fleet operating off the Belgian coast, gave to the Belgian army by shelling the Germans threatening Belgian front. As well as his father he admires the calm and composure of the British soldiers. But he is critical about the conception of the "offensive à outrance", the ruthless offensive of the French generals Foch and Joffre, resulting in the wholesale slaughters of Artois and the Somme. Like his father he fully agrees with king Albert of Belgium who would take only

(1) Henri BERNARD, *L'an 14 et la campagne des illusions*, Brussels, La renaissance du livre, 229 pp. (1914 and the Campaign of Illusions).

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calculated risks and succeeded in keeping the command over his own army. He blames the Germans for having forgotten the lessons taught by their own great military philosopher, Clausewitz... Professor Bernard is convinced that his critical attitude about Belgian, allied and enemy performances is the right one in order to avoid similar mistakes in the future. He stresses that both French and German military historians took the same views in the nineteen-twenties.

Although a scientific book and rather anti-hero, it does not lack humour and poetry, for instance where professor Bernard describes the 1914 Brussels when the people were less interested in the historically charged assassination at Serajewo but rather in the victory of Philip Theys, the Belgian who won the first stage in the "Tour de France" and covered the 388 km in 13 h., 18 m. and 28 sec... (L.D.V.)

Carlo Bronne, "homme de lettres", was a magistrate. After the liberation he presided over a Court Martial in 1944. This accounts for the fact that these new Memoirs contain a few data about summary executions (relatively not to be compared with the frequency in France) immediately after the liberation, the disarmament of the Resistance (1). For the historian the harvest is rather poor. The author is much more interested in the Academy, literature and mundane events. In a later stage the latter may prove useful for the mentality-history of a certain élite, although only few things worth mentioning are told about literary men and other prominent people with whom the author was in touch as a university graduate. (J.C.)

(1) C. BRONNE, *Le temps des vendanges. Mémoires*, Brussels, L. Musin, 1976 ("Le temps des vendanges". Memories).

IV. THE INSTITUTIONS

THE ARMY

Mr Balace (1) describes the uniforms of army's Children School. To some extent he also deals with the general history of the school.

In the young Belgian State of 1838 a Royal Decree established a military body of 600 children aged 8 to 18. The children had to be legitimate sons or orphans of soldiers or canteenwomen. At 14 they were sent to the battalions where they served as drummers, buglers or trumpeters till they were 18. The same system was in use in most European and in the U.S. armies.

Until the age of enlistment in the battalions of the different arms, the army's children attended the regimental school and wore the uniform of their service, in most cases cut out of a worn-out adult's uniform. No wonder an eye-witness of that time found the children of the army "badly clothed, dirty and sometimes disgusting". A Royal Decree, issued by Leopold I in 1847 gathered all children in one company and installed them in the Lier Sion barracks. That school was transferred to Aalst in 1859 and reorganized. The school was managed by a superior officer.

Since 1847 the army's children wore a proper uniform. As the manager of the school grew concerned about the poor physical condition of his pupils and thought the tight uniforms were the cause, he designed a new coat, more ample, practical and economical, in 1868. Eventually the name of Army's Children School was changed into Army's Pupils School in 1883. (L.D.V.)

In 1831 Dr. J.D. Larrey inspected the barracks and hospitals of the Belgian army. He made an account of his observations. This report, with a rather extensive biographical note, was published by R. Boijen (2). This article is very interesting for the few historians studying ancient healing art. The French will be specially interested

(1) F. BALACE, "Enfants de troupe, pupilles et cadets", *Militaria Belgica*, I, 1978, 6 and 7, pp. 179-185 and 209-212. (Children of the Armee).

(2) R. BOLJEN, "De geneeskundige inspectietocht in België van Dr. J.D. Larrey (1831)", *Belgisch tijdschrift voor militaire geschiedenis*, XXI, 1976, 5, pp. 421-436. (Medical Inspections in Belgium of J.D.L.).

because Larrey is one of the most famous military surgeons. Nowadays the military hospital of Versailles is named after him.

In Belgium he introduced the flying ambulance and demonstrated his own techniques of surgery as explained in his books to the Belgian medical staff. After visiting a Brussels military hospital which he estimated one of the best in Europe, he travelled to Antwerp and there he found conditions absolutely impossible : overcrowded rooms without proper ventilation, stinking toilets in the corners, thirty blind soldiers in a total of 50 ophthalmic patients.

In Larrey's opinion ophthalmia was the result of insalubrious living conditions aggravated by wrong treatment : leeches on the temples and a plaster of sublimate and bella-donna-extract. This liquid lessened the eye's nervical sensitivity and rendered the eye's cornea thicker and opaque. Apart from poor housing and faulty treatment Larrey viewed the bad food with salt meat and fish, lots of potatoes and beer, and the smoking-habits as well as the climate's humidity, to the causes of ophthalmia. He rejected infection as a cause... He therefore advised the authorities the removal of the ophthalmic patients to healthier quarters in the rear, and a change in nourishment and treatment. For the Diest barracks, Larrey proposed the same improvements but, moreover he replaced the ~~straw~~-heap upon which the soldier slept, much as a calf or a pig, and that was always wet since the straw absorbed the rainwater — by a bed with cheap straw-mattresses not reaching the floor. As the toilet-pits remained uncovered and the infected emanations presented great danger of contamination everywhere, he ordered to cover each use of the toilet with sand. The same measures were taken in Louvain. As for the Namur barracks Larrey found them cleaner, better aired and less crowded.

In his final report to King Leopold of Belgium, Larrey proposed not merely the above mentioned changes but also the nomination of a surgeon-major in every army-corps and the establishment of a Special School for Military Medecine and Surgery.

F. T'Sas (1) received a technical education. He had already made a study of the Napoleonic artillery. Now he explains how the "lange

(1) F. T'SAS, "Du passage de l'artillerie lourde allemande de la première guerre mondiale à celle de la seconde", *Revue belge d'Histoire militaire*, XXI, 1975, 3, pp. 213-241. (Heavy Artillery in Germany from World War I till World War II).

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Max", who shelled Paris in 1918 from a 120 Km distance disappeared. After World War I military engineers and technicians worked on artillery projects in Sweden, Holland and the Soviet-Union. During World War II most of the new big guns were used to shell South-England. But they all exploded after a while. The author gives details of the K12, "Gustav Kanone", "Hochdruck Pumpe" (V3)...

For an unknown reason the author also deals with the 88 mm gun. That was certainly the most famous gun, but it was not a heavy gun.

It is an article for a few specialists and devotees. (L.D.V.)

Major, at present Lieutenant-colonel, R. Schalbroeck (1) gives an account of the difficulties encountered in appointing Belgian military attachés (MA). It is a very good article in periodicals that seldom deal with historical subjects.

As in France and Germany in 1860, the Belgian Ministry of War had to reckon with the opposition of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who opposed the entry of officers into the foreign embassy. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the first place thought the diplomatic function inconsistent with the military. Nevertheless some Ambassadors insisted on the appointment of M.A. to our diplomatic missions.

Moreover, the Minister of War, general Pontus, already in 1888 emphasized the need for Belgium to have Military Attachés with our Embassies. He saw the M.A. as a gifted and able officer watching progress realized in the military field and communicating his observations to his Ambassador or Minister for the benefit of our own national army. The Belgian officers sent every year to follow the military manoeuvres abroad, also stressed the need to have M.A. with the Big Powers. His main concern was to know the German and French war-preparations, while general Brialmont went and saw M.A. in connection with intelligence service in order to get the same information. He accused the government of not being able to give

(1) R. SCHALBROECK, "Het ontstaan van de militaire attaché in België", *Contact*, XXXII, 1972, pp. 1-31 (The Origin of Military Attachés in Belgium) and *Ministerie van buitenlandse zaken, buitenlandse handel en ontwikkelingssamenwerking, Directie generaal, Informatiebrief*, s.l., 1973, 34, pp. 2-31.

him exact information about foreign high explosive shells so that he declined every responsibility for his fortifications.

As the international tension grew in 1886-88 and King Leopold II insisted on reorganizing the army and introducing general conscription, the Ministry of War as well as the General Headquarters stressed the need for genuine information about the military preparations of the big neighbours. Still Foreign Affairs rejected any proposal for appointing M.A. or installing an Intelligence Service.

As international tension grew again in 1911, with rumours about German and French mobilizations, the question of appointing M.A. was raised again by the Minister of War Hellebaut. All these struggles did not escape the attention of the British Military Attaché to Brussels. Talks between the British M.A. in Brussels and the Belgian General Headquarters had been going on for some time between 1906 and 1912, about landing possibilities of a British expeditionary force in case of emergency, transport of the units, requisitions, etc..., while the British were interested in the defence-capacities of the Belgian Forces. Thus the benefit of M.A. for both sides was revealed.

The decision to appoint M.A. to the foreign Embassies in particular, and the army's reorganisation as a whole, made under the pressure of a threatening international situation, as was usual in military matters in Belgium, came too late to have any influence on the course of events in 1914.

Mr. F.E. Stevens (1) describes the files about fortifications (1815-1914) of the Army-museum in a well-written article. He shows the riches but also the many gaps. Files contain historical facts, descriptions of the sites, maintenance and new buildings, memoirs of attack and defence, maps, groundplans. It also gives information about armament, instruction of the garrison and life in general in the fortified places. Moreover it contains an amount of socio-economic information interesting for the region's social history.

(1) F.E. STEVENS, "Het fonds "Versterkingen" in het Archiefdepot van het Legermuseum", *Belgisch tijdschrift voor militaire geschiedenis*, XX, 1974, 5, pp. 395-410. (The Fund "Fortifications" in the Archives of War Museum).

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One-third of the book (1) is devoted to the history of the Belgian Air Force from 1910 till ca. 1975. Only a few historians are studying our Air Force, so we discover a lot of facts with pleasure, mostly in chronological order. We indirectly learn interesting matters, such as the fact that the 10th of May 1940 only a few modern aeroplanes, Hurricane's, were destroyed on the ground, most of the planes were destroyed on the ground the days after. The authors did not forget the balloons, the air-ships, the light aviation of the ground forces and the units defending the aerodromes.

Another third of the book is handling about badges, heraldic... The last third is a survey in alphabetical order of all the aeroplanes used in the Belgian Air Force, but also in the young Congolese Air Force and even the planes of the Katangese secession. But only a few sentences are devoted to each plane. Some pages are even treating the Belgian aircraft factories.

It is certainly an interesting work, but historians will have a lot of objections, for example many Christian names or even the first initials of them are not mentioned, there are few notes and we do not know where some information was found...

Among the authors who wrote about the beginning of Belgian Military Aviation H. Gérard (2) is an exception in giving sources.

As in the first years of the 20th century the importance of the airplane for military purposes became obvious to officers and politicians, Minister Hellebaut decided to create a Belgian Military Aviation in 1910. A school for Military Aviation was opened in the middle of the Antwerp fortifications at Brasschaat in 1911. The purpose was double : to form the necessary staff to man the military airplanes and to study the possibilities of the new weapon in the State's defence.

The Airforce would be entrusted with a triple role : observation, exploration and liaison between General Headquarters and the fortresses. The planes would be constructed at the Antwerp Bollekens works.

(1) J. MANGIN, J. CHAMPAGNE and M. VAN DEN RUL, *Sous nos ailes. L'Aviation militaire belge. Son histoire, ses avions, ses insignes*, Aarlen, G. Everling, 1977, 304 pp. (The Belgian Military Aviation).

(2) H. GERARD, "L'Aviation militaire belge (1910-août 1914)", *Militaria Belgica*, I, 1977, 4, pp. 109-116. (The Belgian Military Aviation).

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In 1910 the young Belgian Military Aviation possessed 2 Farman planes, in 1911-12 the Aviation School's students constructed two other planes of the same type and in 1912 another 4 planes were constructed by the Antwerp Jero firm. The Farman plane was both simple and strong and could be dismantled easily. It turned easily and almost on the spot. In the fortified places Liège and Namur spare parts for one squadron were stored. (L.D.V.)

V. THE ECONOMY

The Dutch historian P.M.M. Klep co-operated with Prof. H. Van der Wee in Louvain for several years in the "Workshop on Quantitative Economic History". He wrote a.o. a work on the dynamics of growth and the economic stagnation in an agrarian borderland which stretches from the Breda area to the North-Antwerp Campine. His study, covering the period between 1750 and 1850, during which an industrial revolution occurred in England and in the South of Belgium, is also important from a methodological point of view and will be discussed in detail in a following *Critical Chronicle* (1). Here we can already mention a more elaborate and revised version of a similar study, which was first published as a "Workshop discussion paper", entitled "New estimates of the agricultural labour force in Belgium". The Dutch article deals with the provinces of Antwerp and Brabant between 1846 and 1910 (2). The main stress is put on an investigation into the value of the available quantitative historical material, mainly composed of official agricultural and occupational censuses which show many gaps and, moreover, are often not very reliable. These censuses can sometimes be tested through a comparison with the original census-forms — preserved by chance — on one or more villages. Then it appears that the percentage of agrarian undertakings over 4 hectares, was small. Sometimes the woman was noted as "active" and then again she was not. Children under 14 were seldom considered active on the farm. The criteria used also differed considerably when the "main occupation" of the person enumerated had to be stated, and who was actually "of no occupation"?

(1) P.M.M. KLEP, "Groeidynamiek en stagnatie in een agrarisch grensgebied. De economische ontwikkeling in de Noord-Antwerpse Kempen en de baronie van Breda, 1750-1850", *Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis van het Zuiden van Nederland*, Tilburg, Stichting Zuidelijk Hist. Contact, XXVI, 1973, XL-212 pp. (Dynamics of Growth and Stagnation in an Agrarian Borderland. The Economic Development in the North-Antwerp Campine and the Barony of Breda, 1750-1850).

(2) P.M.M. KLEP, "De agrarische beroepsbevolking van de provincies Antwerpen en Brabant en van het Koninkrijk België, 1846-1910. Nieuwe evaluaties van kwantitatief historisch materiaal", *Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis*, LIX, 1976, pp. 25-69. (The Agrarian Professional Population of the Provinces of Antwerp and Brabant and of the Kingdom of Belgium, 1846-1910. New Evaluations of Quantitative Historical Material).

Consequently, nearly all authors who used the official figures, made serious mistakes. Only after making the necessary corrections is it possible to determine approximately what the agrarian professional population meant quantitatively, what the agrarian participation of women was, etc. Yet, the Belgian statistics prove to have been drawn up relatively better than those of most other countries. (J.C.)

In view of the scarcity of long-term macro-economic data, the same author attempted to give an insight into the transition from an agrarian to an industrial society in Brabant from the end of the Middle-Ages to 1930, by means of the available figures (consequently, also dating from the pre-statistical period) (1). In doing so he used as the criterion the "urbanization ratios", calculated by him, a town being an agglomeration of at least 5,000 inhabitants. In the 16th century the degree of urbanization was already remarkably high (41% of the population). Surprisingly enough, the 17th and 18th centuries, which preceded the industrial revolution, witnessed a decline of the ratio. Especially Antwerp and Brussels, with a slow population-growth, depressed the overall development. A second period of quick urbanization is situated between 1845 and 1890, but there were considerable differences among the districts. Such shifts, spread over centuries, when ascertained, must, of course, also be explained by means of an overall research into the socio-economic growth-dynamics. (J.C.)

Equally critical is the Brussels professor and specialist of quantitative social history, J. Hannes, with regard to the official and other occupational, industrial, agricultural censuses that have been preserved. On the other hand, choosing criteria in dividing the population into occupational categories presents many difficulties to the research-workers.

In the present stage of research attention must be focused in the first place on the critical investigation of the quantitative sources, before applying more or less refined sociological and economic

(1) P.M.M. KLEP, "Urbanisation in a pre-industrial economy. The Case of Brabant, 1374-1930", *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Nieuwste Geschiedenis - Revue belge d'Histoire contemporaine*, VII, 1976, 1-2, pp. 153-168.

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analysis-models. It is, indeed, better to have no "results" than wrong results. Even very general development-lines, based on uncorrected material — but correction is not always possible — may be misleading. At first sight the criticism of sources is thankless and time-consuming trifling work. But J. Hannes has never shrunk from it. Through specific data he has repeatedly reached "reliable" partial ascertainments — although even in those cases he mostly does not guarantee absolute certainty — which often throw more light on the backgrounds. J. Hannes does not shy away from conclusions or from a synthesis, but he never omits pointing at the margin of doubt that still exists.

His procedure and method are again illustrated in the two following publications. The first is a book on the economic activity in Brussels in 1846-1847, with many compiled and revised statistics in the Appendices (1). The subtitle indicates that the study is mainly a check on and a completion of the industrial census of October 15, 1846.

The check on the first general census of the population, agriculture and industry — for Brussels the enumeration-activities and their deficiencies could be elucidated with some archive-documents — was done by means of the registers of patent-taxes. It appears that the differences are considerable and the author tries to explain them, taking a.o. the "combination of occupations" into account. He does formulate a few results, In 1846 there were more than 3.000 undertakings in Brussels which, after all corrections, proved to employ no more than an average of 4.2 workers. Large concerns were rare and the artisan-sector predominated. Neither was export flourishing. With regard to the number, there was a preponderance of the "service"-sectors (described in detail) and especially of the group of transportation and commerce. All this is carefully explained. (J.C.)

(1) J. HANNES, *De economische bedrijvigheid te Brussel, 1846-1847. Controle en aanvulling van de nijverheidstelling van 15.10.1846.*, Louvain-Paris, Nauwelaerts, 1975 (Centre Interuniversitaire d'Histoire contemporaine - Interuniversitair Centrum voor Hedendaagse Geschiedenis, Cahiers-Bijdragen 81). (The Economic Activity in Brussels, 1846-1847. Check on and Completion of the Industrial Census of 15.10.1846).

In another article, devoted to the small producer and the retail-dealer in the 19th century, J. Hannes in 1971 pleaded for an investigation of the economic and social middle-groups who had been little studied. Indeed, they constitute a heterogeneous group between the middle classes and the proletarians with very great mutual status-differences. They were also characterized by a great social mobility which resulted from a strong conjuncture-dependence. Not until the end of the 19th century was the lower middle class — a vague concept — recognized as a social category. Once again the author must pay attention to the available sources and their degree of reliability. As an example of a critical investigation of problems which must be taken into account, he deals a.o. with the number of patent-tax payers at Antwerp in 1827 and the number of undertakings per occupation-group (1). (J.C.)

AGRARIAN AND RURAL HISTORY (2)

Though Mrs. Van Molle's contribution deviated from the traditional way of presentation we considered it sufficiently valuable to pass over that objection.

It is obvious that in Belgium a lively interest is taken in the recent rural past. Monumental and material evidence of the past rural life is appreciated by a large public.

Other, less commercial or sentimental dimensions of the modern agrarian and rural history enjoy considerably less interest, also in non-scientific circles. This may seem surprising to anyone making the comparison with the neighbouring countries. In the Netherlands and Great Britain, but especially in France and Germany large-scale

(1) J. HANNES, "De kleine producent en de kleinhandelaar in de 19de eeuw", *Histoire économique de la Belgique- Economische Geschiedenis van België, Actes du Colloque de Bruxelles - Handelingen van het Colloquium te Brussel 1971*, Brussels, 1973, pp. 55-65. (Archives et Bibliothèques de Belgique, no. spécial 10) (The Small Producer and the Retail-Dealer in the 19th century).

(2) Lecture hold on the international congress : "Trasformazioni delle società rurali nei paesi dell'Europa occidentale e mediterranea (sec. XIX-XX). Bilancio degli studi e prospettive di ricerca" at Naples-Sorrento, 25-28 October, 1982.

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research into the 19th and 20th century agrarian history has been undertaken for decades. In the latter three countries the numerous special studies were worked into detailed and thorough historical syntheses (1), which, as yet, has not been done for Belgium.

So far the Belgian historiography apparently had a special evolution which corresponded to our own research-possibilities and needs. From this starting-point four questions are posed in this article : what factors had a negative impact on the development of research into the modern Belgian agrarian past, what factors promoted this research, what is the present state of scholarship and what are its perspectives.

Inhibiting factors

Before the 1970s the interest of the Belgian historians in the modern agrarian sector was limited. Those who drew up the status quaestionis of the agrarian-historical research at that time, did not even notice that the study of the 19th and 20th centuries had been neglected (see selective bibliography below, nrs. 4 to 6). A. Verhulst e.g., called only the former half of the 19th century "une période complètement négligée dans nos recherches d'histoire rurale" (nr. 7).

After Verhulst's survey of 1968 no other status quaestionis of the research was published. But a glance at the current bibliographies shows that the interest in modern agrarian history has definitely increased in the last few years. But the Belgian historiography has not yet made up the arrears as compared with the situation abroad.

Why these permanent arrears ? Three elements may account for the situation. Firstly, the typical course of the Belgian agrarian history : the early industrialization combined with a rapid population-increase and an extremely high population-density led here — sooner than in the rest of the European continent — to the

(1) J. THIRSK ed., *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, Cambridge, 1967- , 8 volumes planned. - G. DUBY and A. WALLON eds., *Histoire de la France rurale*, Paris, 1975-76, 4 volumes. - G. FRANZ ed., *Deutsche Agrargeschichte*, Stuttgart, 1962-69, 5 volumes.

steadily declining share in employment of the active agrarian population. The fact that Belgium was never willing to adopt a policy of strong agricultural protection during the agrarian crises of 1880-95 and 1929-34 has increased these arrears even more. In 1978 only 3.0% of the Belgian active population was still employed in agriculture as against 5.6% in the Netherlands, 6.3% in Germany, 8.6% in France and 14.4% in Italy.

It is perhaps hardly surprising that an economic sector which has been steadily on the decline since the middle of the 19th century and which at first sight seems reduced to practically nothing, is not very attractive for historical research. But does the one-sided study of the industrialization and of the labour-movement, two topics in the present-day social-economic historiography, not lead to a lopsided representation of the recent past ? After all, about 1900 over one quarter of the Belgian population was still active in agriculture and nearly half the population lived in small rural communities of under 5,000 inhabitants. In that respect more research into agriculture and rural questions appears necessary in order to restore the insight into the modern period to its right dimensions.

A second explanation of the limited interest in contemporary agrarian history is of an entirely different nature. In Belgium, as contrasted with several other European countries, "agrarian history" is not a subject in the curriculum of agricultural engineers and students of history. Therefore any work done is the result of personal initiative. This accounts for the fact that the study of mediaeval agriculture is rather well developed, thanks to the efforts of the professors A. Verhulst and L. Génicot. In this respect the Netherlands are ahead of Belgium : the Agricultural College of Wageningen has comprised a full-fledged *Department of Agrarian History* since 1952, which has doubtlessly stimulated agrarian-historical research.

Thirdly, and this is related to the preceding, the study of the recent agrarian past is rendered difficult through lack of familiarity with the subject. The vast majority of students of history originally do not have any ties with farming and they shrink from the technical nature of the subject-matter. Land economists, as well as sociologists and economists in general prefer the study of topical matters to history and, moreover, they have not got the necessary historical-critical training to find their way in the mass of available sources.

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Stimulating factors

The fact that the interest in contemporary agrarian and rural history has nevertheless increased systematically since the 1970s also calls for an explanation. There are at least three underlying reasons and as many immediate causes for this phenomenon.

Firstly, the tendency to pay more attention to recent agrarian and rural history clearly runs parallel with the general tendency in historiography to give preference to contemporary subjects. Evidence of this is the publication since 1969 of the *Belgian Review of Contemporary History* which in 1973 devoted an entire volume to agriculture, and the establishment in 1974 of the *Belgian Association of Contemporary History*.

Secondly, the accelerated diminution of agriculture in employment and in the use of the soil seems to have stimulated research in the last decade... out of a feeling of nostalgia for the quiet rural life, at a time when Belgium more and more begins to resemble one vast industrialized conurbation. Anyhow, the "green-fashion" of the last few years did no harm to the historiography on agriculture and rural matters.

Finally, it is not unlikely that this form of historiography was stimulated in an indirect way by the development of cognate historical disciplines : demographic history, the study of migration-movements, the socio-economical stratification-research of regions, cities and rural municipalities, and special political studies (see a few important examples sub nrs. 51 to 63). Such studies, which do not deal with the agrarian sector in a direct way, demonstrate that it is impossible to understand the complexity of the present so-called 'industrial society' without taking the rural element into account. In that sense these studies have certainly contributed to a better insight into one of the fundamental dualisms in present-day Belgium : dualism between city and countryside, between labourers and farmers, between the interests of industry and those of agriculture.

Next to these underlying reasons for the increasing research into the recent agrarian history, three immediate causes must be mentioned. First among them is Belgium's participation in the European Economic Community. Thanks to the E.E.C. the agricultural problems are very much in the air again and the huge problems of the European Agricultural Commission have certainly stimulated research. Shortly after the signing of the Treaty of Rome,

namely in June 1960, the Belgian Ministry of Agriculture set up an *Agricultural Economic Institute* (Landbouweconomisch Instituut, L.E.I.) with the purpose of investigating the future of the national agriculture, among other things in the perspective of the common market. Several economic and sociological studies which were published in the series of *L.E.I.-documents*, are valuable contributions to a general history of Belgian agriculture, yet to be written.

In 1969 an international congress was held at Naples on the theme of "Les mouvements paysans dans le monde contemporain". The Belgian contribution was provided by J. CRAEYBECKX (nr. 38), who thus opened a new field of research both for himself and for others after him.

The latest stimulus for renovating research came from the Belgian Farmers' League, the leading Belgian professional organization for farmers, which in 1990 will have been in existence for precisely 100 years. In order to be able to celebrate that centenary with the necessary lustre, the League applied to the Department of History at the Catholic University of Leuven to write its history. This initiative was widened into a broad research-project into the history of agriculture and rural matters in Flanders from 1880 to 1980. Such widening proved necessary to evaluate the history of the Farmers' League against the background of the entire agrarian and rural history, a background which had been insufficiently investigated — as will appear below.

Status quaestionis

a) Research centres and agrarian museums

The contributions to the contemporary agrarian and rural history of Belgium cannot be attributed to one or a few research centres. The contributions originated in several universities and also in different scholarly disciplines : not only history, but also agricultural sciences, sociology, geography, economics, architecture and folklore.

This multiplicity of disciplines and institutions involved, in evidence of the growing and broad scientific interest, but it sometimes hampers the systematic and surveyable research-approach. True, a *Belgian Centre of Rural History* (nrs 1 to 3) has been in

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existence since 1963, but as the originators and administrators of that inter-university centre apply themselves mainly to the study of the Ancien Régime, the contemporary period has little been dealt with as yet.

The disadvantages of a deficient co-ordination appear most clearly in the domain of the agrarian museums. At this moment Belgium has as many as 19 agrarian museums in the real sense of the word and an indefinite number of folklore-museums, one or more sections of which evoke agriculture and rural life. Only three of them are really important : the *Open-Air Museum of Bokrijk*, the *National Flax Museum* at Courtrai and the *Museum of the Walloon Life* at Liège. Next to those there are at least four museums collecting discarded farm machinery, three museums which are entirely devoted to apiculture, one devoted to hop-cultivation, one devoted to tobacco, etc. All of them 'collect' and 'preserve', mostly without mutual arrangements, all kinds of objects related to agriculture and rural life, unfortunately all too often without subjecting them to scientific research.

b) Tools

Apart from a few retrospective bibliographies which have meanwhile become obsolete and are, moreover, incomplete (nrs 4 to 7), there is no bibliographical survey of the Belgian agrarian history. An unexpectedly rich, but little known source for agrarian history is the geographic bibliography (nr. 8). Next to that there are a few retrospective bibliographies on certain themes, such as hop-cultivation, re-allotment, etc. (nrs 9 to 13). But all in all heuristic research remains difficult for lack of a thorough bibliography.

Other tools are even scarcer. True, there are two agrarian encyclopaedias, a Belgian one and a Belgian-Dutch one, which are sometimes useful in historical research (nrs 17 and 18). For Flanders a great dialectological dictionary was started, the first published volume of which is devoted to agrarian vocabulary (nr. 19). A good repertory of the very rich periodical agrarian press is not available (nr. 14) and published archive-inventories relating to the agricultural sector are rare. Most agricultural establishments have indeed the unfortunate habit of destroying their out-dated documentation.

Geographers have recently drawn the attention to the importance

of the cadastral archives for the study of the old agrarian structures (nrs. 15 and 16). The publication of A. ZOETE gives a detailed and handy survey of the several cadastral sources from 1835 on.

c) Manuals and syntheses

The fact that few good tools are available has not, however, hampered the progress of research. Gradually, agrarian and rural history is dealt with more often, even in historical syntheses. During the last decade three such syntheses were published (nrs. 20 to 22) : one on Wallonia, a second on Flanders and a third on the Low Countries (i.e. Belgium and the Netherlands). In each of these publications much attention is paid to the contemporary agrarian and rural world, at any rate more than in older manuals.

The history of the Belgian agriculture itself was worked into a concise, copiously illustrated synthesis under the direction of the historian A. VERHULST and the rural economist G. BUBLOT (nr. 27) in 1980, on the occasion of Belgium's 150th anniversary.

All these syntheses sum up the state of research at the end of the 1970s. In that sense they are a welcome basis for anyone starting research now. At the same time they may have an inspiring effect, for more than one aspect of the agricultural problem is insufficiently dealt with in them for lack of preliminary studies : such as, for example, the agricultural policy, the rise and evolution of the farmers' associations, the attitude of the farmers towards technological innovations, the laborious alterations to the leasing-legislation, the year-long controversies about re-allotment, etc.

d) Monographs

Consequently, there is a need of monographs on special aspects of agrarian history in order to come to far-reaching and well-balanced syntheses in the future. A few themes were thoroughly investigated, but for others research is still in the initial stage.

The theme which is most elaborated, is undoubtedly agricultural economics. Since the beginning of the 19th century the authorities have had censuses taken at regular intervals. Tens of books and hundreds of articles outline the situation of Belgian agriculture at

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different moments of history. Medium-term and long-term analyses are indeed scarcer. In 1957 G. BUBLLOT published a monumental work on the Belgian agricultural production from 1846 to 1955 (nr. 28). He investigated the production-function from all possible points of view : the size of the agrarian professional population, agrarian capital, mechanization, soil-productivity, farmers' income etc. A quarter of a century after its publication this book still remains, generally speaking, the outstanding fundamental work. But, like any study based on censuses and statistics the accuracy of which is contestable, the one by Bublot is also susceptible to criticism. J. GADISSEUR recently did part of the work over again. His valuation of the Belgian agricultural production between 1846 and 1913 differs considerably from Bublot's (nr. 29). And who is to say for sure that Gadisseur will have the final word in this debate ?

A second and even more animated debate is held about the question as to how large the active agrarian population actually was in the course of the 19th century (nrs 31 to 34). The starting-point here is the fact that the figures of the agricultural censuses of the time do not correspond with those of the population-censuses. Therefore, several re-interpretations were made of the statistical material, but these contradict each other. The latest re-interpretation by G. DE BRABANDER is still up to date.

With regard to the evolution of agricultural economics after 1945 the series of *L.E.I.-documents* provides ample information. There is, however, one drawback : these documents were compiled by order of the Ministry of Agriculture, which implies not that the approach should be insufficiently scientific and objective, but that the choice of the topics dealt with, is made in function of a political question. Consequently, themes which are considered to be politically less interesting, may escape the notice of the L.E.I.

The same remark is true of sociological research (nr. 36). The only Belgian sociologist who has applied himself to rural sociology for some time, H. EVERAET, works with the L.E.I. In his work too the purely scientific argumentation and the need to answer political questions are sometimes mixed. Therefore some of his studies, such as "What farmers are modern ?" prove somewhat too normative. But in general his work amply deserves our attention, especially because Everaet tries to answer all by himself a series of questions on which a whole team of sociologists could work.

The scientific study of contemporary Belgian agricultural policy

was started in 1973, fifteen years after the publication of the *Ideengeschichte der Agrarwirtschaft und Agrarpolitik im deutschen Sprachgebiet* by H. HAUSHOFER, five years after *Les agrariens français de Méline à Pisani* by P. BARRAL and also five years after the *Agrarische Interessenpolitik und Preussischer Konservatismus im Wilhelminischen Reich* by H.J. PUHLE. The first Belgian contribution comprised two remarkable articles by J. CRAEYBECKX on the political struggle for the farmers at the end of the 19th century when the Right of Plural Voting was introduced (nr. 37). Craeybeckx emphasized the political doctrine and the actions of the Belgian Labour Party.

Our study of the Belgian agricultural policy from 1884 to 1914 is both a counterpart and an extension of the work of Craeybeckx (nrs. 39 and 40). The emphasis is on the Catholic Party, since it is mainly that party which, ever since the beginning of the 19th century, has been the safeguard of the agrarian interests. The study deals with national policy (initiatives of Ministers and parliamentarians), Catholic private initiative (the rise and realizations of the independent farmers' associations) and the interactions of both.

Next to the three principal themes discussed above — agricultural economics, rural sociology and agricultural policy — there are a number of other, mostly less comprehensive themes, that still require much research. Agricultural credit, for example, was the subject of a doctoral dissertation published in 1949, which in many respects, however, must be extended and deepened (nr. 41). The leasing-system has not been studied since 1913, although the leasing-legislation has been radically altered since (nr. 42). The evolution of the farmers' insurance-system was never investigated scientifically. A short time ago the history of agricultural education was taken up — through students' dissertations — by the Department of Historical Pedagogics at the Catholic University of Louvain.

Rural architecture has enjoyed much interest for some time. In 1926 M.A. LEFEVRE published a study on the different types of Belgian rural dwellings (nr. 43). In 1950 this was followed by the fundamental work by Cl. TREFOIS on the development of farm-building (nr. 44). The establishment of the Open-Air Museum of Bokrijk in 1953 stimulated the study of rural architecture once more. The first director of Bokrijk, J. WEYNS, studies the popular chattels in Flanders from the Middle-Ages to World War I (nr. 50).

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The study of contemporary agrarian implements and of mechanization is in its initial stage. The publications of J. DAVID are handy tools to start an index-study of farming-implements (nrs. 46 and 47). In 1981 the Belgian Centre of Rural History started a project for making an inventory of discarded farm-machinery, photographing it and, if possible, filming its use.

The interest of geographers in the evolution of the rural landscape is marked : on the one hand agrarian geography applies itself to the landscape-history from the Roman times till the end of the 18th century and on the other hand it studies the present-day landscape. As yet the abrupt changes which the landscape underwent in the 19th century and in the former half of the 20th century, are little dealt with (nrs. 48 and 49).

e) Perspectives : presentation of a research-project

As mentioned above, a research-project was started at the Catholic University of Leuven in preparation for the centenary of the Belgian Farmers' League in 1990. It is entitled : "Structural changes of agriculture and countryside in Flanders, 1880-1980". The limitation in space — Flanders instead of the whole of Belgium — is justified by the typical nature of the Flemish agriculture which is much more intensive than the Walloon agriculture, and also more directed at specialization and more and more evolving towards production-forms which are not bound to the soil, such as stable-cattle breeding and hydrocultures. The fact that the 'Belgian' Farmers' League, throughout its history, has been mainly a 'Flemish' matter, has strengthened the option even more to focus the research on Flanders. The limitation in time (1880-1980) is based on the fact that agriculture and rural life in Flanders did not start modernizing quickly until the end of the 19th century.

The project was started in the spring of 1982 and is expected to last four years. It is carried out by an inter-disciplinary team under the direction of Prof. Dr. L. WILS (History Department) with the co-operation of Louvain historians, sociologists, economists and agricultural specialists of the Belgian Farmers' League. An inter-discipline approach offers many possibilities for nuanced interpretations of the structure-changes of agriculture and rural matters. Thus it is possible to avoid overemphasizing one explanation-factor

(for example the economic conjuncture, the political decision-making, the farmers' mentality etc.).

The objective of the project is twofold : firstly, to prepare the necessary instrument so as to facilitate future research. Its main aim is the publication of a critical bibliography of the Belgian agrarian history, for example modelled after the one made by M.-L. MARDUEL and M. ROBERT for France (1), and of a repertory of the Belgian periodical agricultural press.

The second objective is the factual study of one century of structural transformations of agrarian and rural life in Flanders. A well-defined working-hypothesis is used : viz., that the changes undergone by the agrarian sector since the end of the 19th century, are mainly changes in function. Agriculture and rural life seem to have lost a considerable part of their traditional functions. The management of the farm has become more and more dependent on external factors, both at the level of the purchase of raw materials and financing, and at the level of the production and transformation of the finished article. The individual farmer has become dependent on suppliers of seeds, fertilizers and farm machinery, on banks and insurance-companies, on dairies and preserve-factories, etc. In short, the system of rather autonomous agricultural exploitations has gradually been replaced by a system of intersectorial bonds and of horizontal and vertical concentrations.

A similar trend of thought can be applied to the most important changes in the political, union and social structures. Indeed, the isolation and the independence of the small Flemish village-communities were broken in the previous century through their integration into larger institutions of a regional, provincial, national and even — since the existence of the E.E.C. — of a supernational nature.

And how did the farmers' mentality evolve during these alteration-processes ? Did the farmers adapt their pattern of values and standards, for example their attitude toward faith, money, family-life, vocational education ? Was there a change in their relations among themselves and with the non-farmers around them ? How do they evaluate the evolution which agriculture underwent and what are their prospects ?

(1) M.-L. MARDUEL and M. ROBERT, *Les sociétés rurales françaises. Eléments de bibliographie*, Paris, 1979. (French Rural Societies. Bibliography).

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The elaboration of this interpretation-model requires in the first place an accurate analysis of the evolution of agricultural economics, not only in the strict sense, but also in a broader sense by considering the increasing impact of the ancillary industries and especially of the food-industry.

Secondly, a detailed analysis of the history of politics and the union will be necessary. How did the farmers' organization evolve? What mechanisms of representation and decision-making were applied? What functions did the farmers' association assume in the course of time? And so on.

Thirdly, the economic and political-institutional analyses, which mainly focusses on the national and regional Flemish events, must be checked on the local plane. To what extent did the economic conjuncture, the decision-making in politics and in the trade-unions have an impact on the individual farmer? In other words, how did the farmer experience the structural changes in the agrarian and rural milieu, and to what extent did he slow down or stimulate them?

In order to be able to answer these last questions sociologists will conduct inquiries in some fifteen rural communities which are representative of the different farming-types in Flanders.

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* * *

The balance of the research into the Belgian agrarian and rural history is certainly not to be called negative. There is a growing interest in this theme and on a number of aspects fundamental contributions have already been made, though there remain many gaps. The status quaestionis indicates how fragmentary the knowledge of the rural milieu of 1830 till 1982 still is. There is plenty of room for special studies, long-term analyses and finally for new syntheses. The closer the subject is to topics of the day, the greater the offer of preliminary studies becomes, on the understanding that they have been made by officials and politicians in the light of specific policy-problems. However, the increasing attention paid to the rural past by the public at large and by researchers, justifies the hope that the Belgian historiography will soon catch up in this respect with the neighbouring-countries.

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Belgian Centre of Rural History

Address : Place Blaise Pascal, 1 - 1348 Louvain-la-Neuve

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Open-Air Museum Bokrijk (established in 1953)

Address : Provinciedomein Bokrijk - 3600 Genk

On 90 of the 550 hectares of the open-air museum rural life from 1500 to 1920 is reconstructed. The visitor is shown a little village from the Campine and one from Hesbaye, and hamlets from East and West Flanders, from Brabant and from the Meuse Valley.

National Flax Museum at Courtrai (open since April 1982)

Address : Etienne Sabbelaan, 4 - 8500 Courtrai

The museum gives a well-ordered picture of the flax cultivation and working from the Middle-Ages up to the recent mechanization.

Musée de la vie wallonne à Liège (founded in 1930; opening of the present rooms, devoted to agriculture, in 1972)

Address : Cour des Frères Mineurs - 4000 Liège

This museum offers an attractive illustration of the professional life and popular amusement of Wallonia in olden times : the field and forestry work, dairying, milling-business, apiculture, etc.

II. Tools

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(L.V.M.)

VI. THE ARTS

FLEMISH LITERATURE — HISTORY AND CRITICISM

In a preceding catching up survey of critical works on Flemish literature (1789-1980) it was already pointed out that the person and the works of Guido Gezelle have met with an intense critical response of late. Indeed, a hundred and fifty years after his birth (on May 1st, 1830) Guido Gezelle's renown proved to be unfading as ever and did not need to be supported by voluntary (and artificial) memorial activities. The critical tributes accumulating during the last twenty years did reach a peak in the Gezelle-year 1980, but they were the result of a permanent and natural recognition of the author's merits : in Gezelle Flemish literary historians and critics honour the greatest of 19th-century poets.

So, Gezelle scholars may rejoice, and in many respects. Though biography is still an unpopular genre with Dutch literary historians — fortunately things seem to be changing right now — much research was done on Gezelle's life, his whereabouts and pastoral activities. For the moment the results of these minor preparative studies remain scattered in specialized periodicals and the biography is still lacking. But we do have such detailed publications as R. Lagrain's study on the poet's mother and J. Persyn's monograph on Juliaan Claerhout (1), an archeologist and philologist who highly contributed to spread the poet's fame far and wide and particularly in the periodical *Het Belfort*.

Apart from the continuously increasing stream of factual information on the author's literary and publishing activities, the Gezelle study has quite decisively been marked by the impact of new methodological developments in the study of literature. The explosion of structuralism, calling for an intrinsic study of the literary work (the work being an autonomous unity) provoked many

(1) R. LAGRAIN, *De moeder van Guido Gezelle*, Tielt-Amsterdam, Lannoo, 1975 (The Mother of Guido Gezelle); J. PERSYN, *Juliaan Claerhout, gemiste kans of menselijk tekort ?*, Antwerp-Amsterdam, De Nederlandsche Boekhandel, 1975. (J.C., Feature or Human Imperfection ?).

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a minute, meticulous and shrewd analysis of (the structure of) particular poems. The late B.F. van Vlierden's elaborate essay on the structure of the famous poem *Dien avond en die rooze* ("That evening and that rose") is but one successful specimen of the genre (1). On the other hand the success of thematical criticism ("critique thématique" is an important development of French new criticism or "nouvelle critique") is clearly illustrated by the much appreciated critical trilogy of Albert Westerlinck : *De innerlijke wereld van Guido Gezelle* ("The inner world of G.G.", 1977), *Taal-kunst van Guido Gezelle* ("Verbal skill of G.G."; 1980) and, recently, *De oude taaltovenaar Guido Gezelle* ("The old language magician G.G."; 1981) (2). Westerlinck, who is known to be a brilliant supporter of the psychological approach, focuses on the inner (i.e. psychological) world of the poet, but in the latter studies he also deals with stylistic-historical aspects of Gezelle's poetry.

Yet another methodological approach proved to be particularly appropriate to raise new points in Gezelle scholarship. Sociology of literature, taking into account the huge bulk of popular or trivial literature, noticed the importance of the many many occasional poems Gezelle wrote and of his widely read popular prose (tales, texts for almanacs and popular periodicals). The "social dimensions" of these publications, neglected so far, have now been studied thoroughly by J.P. Couttenier in an unpublished 1976 dissertation and in many subsequent articles (3). Moreover, it proved quite rele-

(1) B.F. VAN VLIERDEN, *De structuur van Guido Gezelles Dien avond en die rooze*, Ghent, Koninklijke Academie voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde, 1972; for examples see in particular the specialized Gezelle-periodicals (they are two !): *Gezelliana* and *Gezellekroniek*. The latter periodical, edited by the "Guido-Gezellegenootschap" (G.-G.-Society) relates on a G. symposium (1974), devoted entirely to the very same poem.

(2) All of them Beveren, Orion - Nijmegen, B. Gottmer, in the series "Orions Literair Atelier". In addition to these should be read the articles on Gezelle by the same author, J.J. Aerts (pseud. Alb. Westerlinck), *Verwondering en reken-schap, Opstellen over Nederlandse letterkunde*, Louvain, Universitaire Pers Leuven, 1978.

(3) See e.g. J.P. COUTTENIER, "Literatuursociologische benadering van een Gezellegedicht" and IDEM, "Maatschappelijke basis van Gezelles poëtische vernieuwing omstreeks 1877", in *Gezellekroniek*, X (1976) and XI (1977); see also J. BOETS, "Poëtische en sociale dimensies van een gelegenheidsgedicht", in *Gezelliana*, III (1972) and IDEM, with L. DANHIEUX, "Gezelschapspoëzie", *ibid.*, IX (1978).

vant to insist on the fact that Gezelle, poet and priest, used his extremely rich verbal and technical skill in "popular" journalism and in the electoral campaigns of his time (1).

An excellent survey of these new findings is given by K. de Busschere, in his short "meeting with" Guido Gezelle (2). It is a particular merit of this well-informed short study that it is written in an attractive, direct and familiar way and that it summarizes (in the footnotes) the most outstanding results of recent Gezelle research. Particularly relevant seems the author's warning that the judgment on Gezelle is very inadequate if based on the reading of his poetry alone. Gezelle's personality was many sided determined by his attachment to the past and by his conservative and regressive idealism. He fought the ideas of liberalism and Enlightenment militantly, satirically, often with humour. Knowing the man and his works means to placing the whole of his works and opinions into the social and political context in which they functioned.

An early attempt at situating Gezelle's works in the background of European culture was made by J.J.M. Westenbroek, in his edition of *Gedichten, Gezangen en Gebeden* (1862-1879-1893) ("Poems, Hymns and Prayers") (3). This volume, Gezelle's third one, following *Kerkhofblommen* ("Cemetery Flowers") and *Dichtoefeningen* ("Exercises in Poetry") of 1859, is approached from a sociological

(1) Journalistic prose had been edited by J. BOETS, *Cortracena* (1972) and *Gezelles leermaren* (1975), publications of the "Centrum voor de Gezellestudie bij de UFSIA" (Centre for G. study at the University Faculties of St. Ignatius, Antwerp). In the same series Boets published the complete bibliography of Gezelle's separate works: *Gezelles zelfstandige publikaties* (1979), an indispensable tool in G. study.

(2) K. DE BUSSCHERE, *Guido Gezelle*, Bruges, Orion - Nijmegen, B. Gottmer, 1980 (Grote Ontmoetingen, Literaire monografieën); vierde verbeterde en bijgewerkte druk (1959/1).

(3) Guido GEZELLE, *Gedichten, Gezangen en Gebeden eerste druk van 1862*, bezorgd door dr. J.J.M. Westenbroek, Antwerp-Amsterdam, De Nederlandsche Boekhandel, 1976. The printing-history and the nature of this volume were the subject of Westenbroek's dissertation (1967), of which he summarizes the results in the introductory chapters of the present edition.

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point of view, considering the reception of the work in the 19th century. Traditionally literary history held that Gezelle, owing to his tendency to celebrate the Flemish-Christian past and as a result of the misunderstanding of his originality as a poet, was isolated in his own time. Westenbroek, however, indicated *romantic* elements in Gezelle's poetry and pointed out that it is equally linked with European *biedermeier*, a concept that was herewith introduced and further accepted in Gezelle scholarship.

The last but not the least of events to be mentioned in the study of Gezelle is the publication of his *Verzameld dichtwerk* ("Collected Poetry"), started in 1980 (1). This edition will not only contain the collections that were published by the poet himself but also all other poems and fragments that could be found up to now, which was, quite understandably, preceded by an almost gigantic philological investigation of archivalia. In spite of all this, the new edition will not replace the previous *Jubileumuitgave* ("Jubilee-edition") of 1930, the ample philological, historical and critical annotations of which have not been made superfluous.

Though a philologist and folklorist, the activities of J. Goossenaerts (1882-1963) will deserve the particular interest of historians. Goossenaerts was the unobtrusive but well known promotor of many Flemish-nationalist initiatives. The important part he played in modern history of the Flemish movement is widely commented upon in a richly illustrated album, *Dr. Jozef Goossenaerts 1882-1963*, published in 1982 by the "Stichting (Foundation) dr. J. Goossenaerts" on the occasion of his centennial. In the album the many aspects of Goossenaerts' life and works are dealt with by different contributors.

(1) Published by J. BOETS, with the collaboration of K. de Busschere, P. Coutenier, Chr. d'Haen, J. de Muelenaere, Antwerp-Amsterdam, De Nederlandsche Boekhandel. Up to now (1982) four volumes have been published; another four are ahead. The separate volumes have introductions by such eminent scholars as: J. Aerts, J. Boets, E. Janssen, A. Keersmaekers, J. Persyn, G. Stuijveling, B.F. van Vlierden, A. van Wilderode (= C. Coupé), J.J.M. Westenbroek. The whole is supervised by R.F. Lissens.

Equally occasional is the album *Cyriel Buysse 1859-1932*, published in 1982 by the "Herdenkingscomité (Memorial committee) Cyriel Buysse" to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Buysse's death. This commemoration coincided with the publication of the seventh (and last) volume of Buysse's complete works (1), revealing our famous novelist and dramatist as an entertaining journalist and critic. To be noticed by historians is Buysse's sharp analysis of the respective chances of christian-democrats and socialists, competing at the end of the 19th century to improve the social status of the Flemish peasants (in *Het socialisme en de Vlaamse landlieden*, 1895; "Socialism and Flemish country people"). Buysse, who is known to have given a compassionate portrayal of rural proletarians in his works, then sympathized with the christian-democratic party of A. Daens, as can also be inferred from his novel *'n Leeuw van Vlaanderen* ("A Lion of Flanders", 1900), in which he also evokes the personality of the socialist leader Edw. Anseele. A few years later, in 1904, he was to comment on the electoral victory of the liberal party, of which his brother was to be a representative.

The generation of "Van Nu en Straks" ("Now and Later"), including Cyriel Buysse, realized a radical renewal of literature and arts in a wide European context. The correspondence of its protagonists, the edition of which is being prepared in the Antwerp "Archief en Museum voor het Vlaamse Cultuurleven" (Archives and Museum for Flemish Cultural Life) has now been enlarged with the republication of the letters from 1892 (2). The large anthology published by Anne Marie Musschoot (3) gives a reprint of the most

(1) Cyriel BUYSSSE, *Verzameld Werk*, samengesteld en ingeleid door Prof. dr. A. Van Elslander en dr. A.M. Musschoot, Brussels, Manteau, dl. 7, 1982.

(2) *De wereld van Van Nu en Straks. Briefwisseling 1890-1901. Brieven uit 1892*, 8 dln., Antwerp, 1980-1981, 8 dln. (bewerkt door R. Rennenberg, e.a.).

(3) *Van Nu en Straks 1893-1901*. Een vrij voorhoede-orgaan gewijd aan de kunst van Nu, nieuwsgierig naar de kunst-nog-in-wording - die van Straks. Bloemlezing ingeleid en toegelicht door Anne Marie Musschoot met een woord vooraf door Prof. dr. A. van Elslander, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1982.

A lecture by A. van Elslander on *August Vermeylen en het tijdschrift "Van Nu en Straks"* was published separately as "Mededelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, afd. "Letterkunde", Nieuwe Reeks, dl. 44, no. 2, Amsterdam, 1981.

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important texts of the periodical. The historian will find here the rash but penetrating political essays of August Vermeylen (1872-1945), who formulated the task of the Flemish Movement in a European perspective. The reader of the anthology will further be made aware of the fact that the "Van Nu en Straks" generation took a decisive step in preparing the cultural integration of the Northern and Southern Netherlands, and that anarchism was a widely spread ideology with young intellectuals and creative artists of the time (*Van Nu en Straks* published texts by J. Mesnil and by F. Domela Nieuwenhuis). The latter phenomenon has been discussed at some length by Lieske Tibbe in *Art nouveau en socialisme* (1) ("Art nouveau and socialism"), a study investigating the shifts in the relations between the labour movement and the artists, fighting bourgeois mentality in a capitalist society. The years considered are 1894-1904 and the opinions of Henry van de Velde (the art nouveau designer of *Van Nu en Straks*) serve as a "demonstration case".

Until recently criticism on drama and theatrical life in Flanders was in real bad shape. In the last few years, however, things seem to be changing on different levels. A diachronical survey of theatre in our provinces has been provided by Alfons van Impe, *Over toneel* ("On Theatre") (2), a book written without scholarly pretensions and thus showing some shortcomings from a methodological point of view. The survey as such is very helpful though, if one allows for the fact that history of theatre is being reduced here to the history of dramatic texts. For the study of medieval stage in our countries in particular Van Impe's approach proves to be lacking any solid basis; the reader is referred by the author himself to specialized works on the matter and even to encyclopaedias (!). Of particular interest to the historian will be the chapter on "Het Vlaamsch Volkstoneel" (Flemish Popular Theatre). This theatrical company, a phenomenon of exceptional merits in our country, was directed from 1920 onwards by J.O. de Gruyter (1885-1929), actor and stage-

(1) Lieske TIBBE, *Art nouveau en socialisme. Henry van de Velde en de Parti Ouvrier Belge*, Amsterdam, 1981 (Kunsthistorische Schriften 5).

(2) Alfons VAN IMPE, *Over toneel. Vlaamse kroniek van het komediantendom*, Tiel-Amsterdam, Lannoo, 1978 (Literatuur in zicht 3).

director. De Gruyter considered theatre fundamentally as a literary medium, put at the service of Flemish popular culture. When De Gruyter left two years later, the troupe was directed by W. Moens (1898-1982), who "reformed" it into a Catholic Flemish Popular Theatre, divulging catholic militant opinions. In 1924, it was again reformed by the introduction of J. de Meester jr., a stage director who promoted a revolutionary expressionist theatre, characterized by a critical approach of reality. The troupe as such, was split in 1930, but its hectic experimentations had a lasting impact on Flemish theatrical life, on which Van Impe expatiates duely and authoritatively.

Somehow different from Van Impe's survey and partially supplementary to it is J. van Schoor's study on *De Vlaamse dramaturgie sinds 1945* ("Flemish Dramaturgy from 1945 onwards") (1). The survey of Flemish drama is here updated but the book is actually intended to be a description of contemporary Flemish dramatic texts and theatrical genres. Van Schoor's main interest focusses on the period 1968-1979, considered to be the starting point of "new" theatre, beginning with the publication and performances of Hugo Claus' *Vrijdag* ("Friday"). The preceding decennia are covered by some more or less exhaustive essays or surveys on which the author could rely, including the "History" written by Van Impe. Though Van Schoor himself did not intend to give a complete survey, his book provides a fairly representative and complete picture of the most remarkable events in Flemish theatrical productions. The point he raises in the very first place, however, is that an autochthonous tradition of playwriting is a necessary condition for the development of a vital theatrical life; and such play-writing would (pre)suppose 1. a closer contact of the playwright and the producers of the plays and 2. a closer linking up of the playwright with the popular tradition. But for a few exceptions none of these conditions has been fulfilled. Apart from that it is also quite remarkable that the survey of Flemish dramatical works proves to be (quantitatively) very rich, taking into account that Van Schoor says to have proceeded by strictly qualitative standards.

(1) Jaak VAN SCHOOR, *De Vlaamse dramaturgie sinds 1945*, Brussels, Stichting Theater en Cultuur, 1979.

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Less comforting is the study by Daan Bauwens, *Kan iemand ons vermaken ?* ("Can somebody entertain us ?") (1), a "documentary survey of theatre and society in Flanders". This book is neither a historical survey nor an official report on Flemish theatre. The author himself intended his work to be a sociological study on Flemish theatrical life, rightly considering that theatre is in the first place a sociological phenomenon; but the study he presents here is a clearly biased analysis of the "official" organisation of theatre in the Dutch speaking part of Belgium. It really is an interesting work, with plenty of information (also inside information) that was never released before. By its very bias, however, promoting the point of view of the Cultural Front (a left wing organisation in cultural life), the wealth of information presented hides a mine of controversy.

Since 1975 theatrical life in Flanders is organized by an encompassing decree, grouping performing troupes into four categories : A. official or repertory companies ("repertoiregezelschappen"); B. travelling companies ("spreidingsgezelschappen"); C. chamber companies ("kamergezelschappen") and D. experimental and educational theatre. The (re)organisation was regulated by fixed norms of governmental subvention. The results over four years of enforcement of this far-reaching decree is examined very critically by Bauwens : the picture he draws up is not a very nice one and he passes his judgements very provocatively, without shunning personal attacks and even gossip. The point is clear : the current organisation of theatrical life is financially detrimental to small companies and to experiments. The *critical* reader will find this book very informative.

In spite of Bauwens' severe criticism of government policy, more in particular with regard to the support of experimental and educational theatre, there is the remarkable fact that this very "discriminated" fourth category has been flourishing continually in recent years. Educational theatre ("vormingstheater"), sometimes identified with political theatre, resulting from the "cultural" revolution of 1968-1969 in Western Europe (and beyond), has been quite successful in the Flemish provinces, as in Holland, in the

(1) Daan BAUWENS, *Kan iemand ons vermaken ? Dokumentaire over teater en samenleving in Vlaanderen*, Ghent, Frans Masereel Fund, 1980.

nineteen seventies. In our provinces, moreover, it was supported theoretically by an academic team in Brussels Free University, in which context Dina van Berlaer-Hellemans and Marianne van Kerkhoven had a leading role.

The results of their research on the aims and characteristics of educational theatre were first laid down in *Blijf niet gelaten op de wonderen wachten* ("Don't sit and wait in resignation for wonders to happen") (1). In this first phase an attempt was made to give a survey of *all* critical and/or didactic dramatic works performed (edited or not). These works were analysed, commented upon (with exemplary abstracts) and classified. In a second phase the scope of the research was shifted to its international context. The Brussels team organized a meeting on "Educational Theatre : between art and theory of education" (Brussels, October 1979), the papers and discussion-abstracts of which were published in a second volume : *Tot lering en Vermaak : 9 manieren van 10 jaar vormingstheater* ("To the instruction and amusement : 9 ways for 10 years of educational theatre") (2). The texts of this new volume have been written by theoreticians but also by people practising in political theatre. Their common concern is to work with a kind of drama that is defined as : "drama of which it is the makers' aim to (help to) change social relations". The dramatic form as such bears relevance to social and political history *and* immediate reality. Its definition and evolution is further worked out in a third volume, published by the same group of the Brussels Centre for the Study of Language and Literature. In *Het politieke theater heeft je hard nodig* ("The political theater needs your heart") (3), with a pun on "hart" (heart) and "hard" (needs you "badly"), the question raised during the 1979

(1) Dyane ABS, Willy DE GREEF, Gunther SERGOORIS, Carlos TINDEMANS, Dina VAN BERLAER-HELLEMANS, Marianne VAN KERKHOVEN, *Blijf niet gelaten op de wonderen wachten. Benaderingen van het vormingstheater in Vlaanderen van 1968 tot nu*, Antwerp, Soethoudt, 1979.

(2) *Tot lering en vermaak : 9 manieren voor 10 jaar vormingstheater*. Acta van het colloquium "Vormingstheater : tussen kunst en pedagogiek" (...), red. Dina van Berlaer-Hellemans, Marianne van Kerkhoven, Antwerp, Soethoudt, 1980.

(3) *Het politieke theater heeft je hart nodig. Het theater tussen emotionele werking en politieke werkelijkheid*, red. Dina van Berlaer-Hellemans, Marianne van Kerkhoven, Luk van den Dries, Antwerp, Soethoudt, 1982.

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meeting, whether the use of emotional effects in educational/political theatre is significant and effective was but a starting point. There are new texts of wider interest, tracing the links of modern educational theatre with the tradition of critical theatre (Brecht) and with contemporary examples abroad. Its conclusion that political theatre is fading away (as its encompassing critical outlook on society has been replaced by partial and inner problems) is not considered as a negative one : the fragmentation of theatrical experiments makes room for new possibilities. (A.M.M.)

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