A Tale of Two World Capitals: The Internationalisms of Pieter Eijkman and Paul Otlet

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In the years around 1910, two plans for establishing a World Capital were simultaneously promoted from Belgium and the Netherlands. From the sea resort of Scheveningen, the Dutch physician Pieter Eijkman (1862-1914) and his assistant Paul Horrix campaigned to build such a city on the outskirts of The Hague. Designed by the rising young architect Karel de Bazel, their "Intellectual World Centre", or "Athens of the Future" as the press also called it, was projected around the Peace Palace, the designated home of the Permanent Court of Arbitration. At the Hague Peace Conference of 1899, government representatives had decided to establish such a court, after which the philanthropist Andrew Carnegie had volunteered to provide it with appropriate accommodation. Eijkman now wanted to surround the Peace Palace with a city of hotels, an international congress hall and, especially, academies of science – all grouped around a Monument for International Brotherhood (Fig. 1). Every academy, moreover, possessed a separate research institute with state-of-the-art facilities where "the most eminent scientists of all civilized nations" would come to work for "say, one week a year"[1]. Thus, his World Capital was meant to stimulate world peace and to advance scientific research at the same time.

In the same period, internationalists in Belgium were launching similar initiatives. Brussels was already the seat of more international organizations than any other city in the world, second only to Paris in terms of congresses. In 1907, Paul Otlet (1868-1944), Henri La Fontaine (1854-1943) and Cyrille Van Overbergh (1866-1959) established an "association of associations" to coordinate them all. This *Union of International Associations* (UIA), as it would soon be called, published the periodical *La Vie internationale* and organized an enormous World Congress in 1910 in Brussels, followed by a second such event in 1913 in Ghent and Brussels. Parallel to this, Otlet developed ideas for a Cité Mondiale to accommodate all the international activities that took place in Belgium and beyond. In 1910 he called for such a centre in *Bruxelles Exposition*, a journal about the Universal Exhibition held in Brussels that year. In subsequent years he co-opted the plan for a giant *World Centre of Communication*, designed by Hendrik Christian Andersen

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(1) ANON. [Frans NETSCHER], "Den Haag als wereld-hoofdstad (intellektueel wereld-centrum)", in *De Hollandsche Revue*, 1906, 11, p. 107-110, 108. This and all subsequent translations are ours.

Fig. 1. DE BAZEL, Plan of World Capital situated in The Hague (1905), De Bazel's sketch of the area between the North Sea coast (top) and The Hague (bottom) with the World Capital to the right of point R. The Monument for International Brotherhood is at X, the Peace Palace at A, and the three International Academies are at Z, W, and the point above X mirroring Z. The research institutes were all located in the Worker's Garden City to the right of W. Source: EIJKMAN & HORRIX, *Internationalisme en de Wereld-Hoofdstad*.

Fig. 2. ANDERSEN & HÉBRARD,
A World Centre of Communication
(1913)

and Ernest Hébrard, to be based in Tervuren, a Brussels suburb (Fig. 2)[2]. After the First World War, Otlet campaigned to locate the headquarters of the League of Nations in Brussels, and when Geneva was chosen instead, he switched to a polycentric model, with The Hague as the world's basis for international law, Geneva for politics, and Brussels for scientific, technical and social institutions[3]. In 1928 and 1929, Otlet collaborated with Le Corbusier on a design for a "World Civic Centre" near Geneva and in 1935 with the young Belgian architect Maurice Heymans for a World City situated in Washington, DC[4]. But in between these, he would keep moving the Cité mondiale he envisioned back to Belgium. In 1931 the leading modernist architect Victor Bourgeois made a design for it in Tervuren, and in 1933 Le Corbusier and a series of Belgian architects included a Cité mondiale in their design for the international town planning competition for the left bank of Antwerp.

During the period when Eijkman and Otlet promoted their idea of a World Capital, similar internationalist schemes were launched that varied from artistic, literary, scientist and spiritual to juridical, pacifist and political projects and propositions[5]. One might think, for example, of H.P. Berlage's Pantheon of Humankind (1915) or Frederik van Eeden and J. London's City of Light (1921), both memorials to the First World War and pleas for

(2) Hendrik Christian ANDERSEN & Ernest M. HÉBRARD, *Création d'un Centre mondial de Communication*, Paris, Philippe Renouard, 1913. For a study of the collaboration among Otlet, Andersen and Hébrard, see Françoise LEVIE, *L'homme qui voulait classer le monde: Paul Otlet et le Mundaneum*, Brussels, Impressions nouvelles, 2006; Giuliano GRESLERI & Dario MATTEONI, *La Città Mondiale. Andersen, Hébrard, Otlet, Le Corbusier*, Venice, Marsilio Editori, 1982.

(3) Paul OTLET, "La Société intellectuelle des Nations", in *Scientia*, vol. 25, 1919, p. 81 ; Paul OTLET, "Sur la capitale de la Société des Nations", in *La Revue contemporaine*, vol. 26, 1919, p. 41-52; Paul OTLET, "Une capitale internationale", in *Le Mouvement communal*, vol. 2, 1919, p. 18-21.

(4) On the Geneva design of Le Corbusier, see Paul OTLET & LE CORBUSIER, *Mundaneum*, Bruxelles, Palais Mondial, 1928 (special issue of the periodical *Union des Associations internationales*, n° 128); Paul OTLET, *Cité mondiale. Geneva: World Civic Center*, 1929 (special issue of the periodical *Union des Associations internationales*, nr. 133). On the series of designs for Otlet's Cité Mondiale, see Wouter VAN ACKER, *Pantopia in Utopia. The World City of Paul Otlet*, in Barbara VANDERLINDEN, ed., *Brussels Biennial*, Cologne, Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2008, p. 242-245; Wouter VAN ACKER, *Universalism as Utopia. A Historical Study of the Schemes and Schemas of Paul Otlet (1868-1944)*, Ghent, Ghent University, 2011 (Ph.D. dissertation); Wouter VAN ACKER, "The Crisis of the Modern Cosmopolis: Paul Otlet (1868-1944) and the Utopia of the World Capital City", in Bruno DE MEULDER, Michael RYCKEWAERT & Kelly SHANNON, eds., *International PhD Seminar Urbanism & Urbanization, 5th Proceedings*, Leuven, KU Leuven, Research Unit Urbanism and Architecture (OSA), 2009, p. 161-172; Wouter VAN ACKER, "Architectural Metaphors for the Organization of Knowledge. The Mundaneum Designs of Maurice Heymans", in *Library Trends*, vol. 61, 2012, 2.

(5) Armand MATTELART, *Histoire de l'utopie planétaire*, Paris, La Découverte, 1999 ; Jay WINTER, *Dreams of Peace and Freedom. Utopian Moments in the 20th Century*, New Haven/London, Yale University Press, 2006; Mary G. KEMPERINK & Leonieke VERMEER, eds., *Utopianism and the Sciences, 1880-1930*, Leuven, Peeters, 2010.

worldwide peace[6]; H.G. Wells's scientist proposal for the formation of "a world state of capable rational men" (1902)[7]; Albert-Louis Caillet's occultist initiation of the members of his *Société unitive* into a road towards universal harmony[8]; or the juridical and pacifist vision of a united world conscience of Theodor Ruyssen, president of *La Paix par le Droit*[9].

Considered within this wide range of internationalist schemes, Eijkman and Otlet's World Capitals were very similar. First of all, both were not merely ideological but also were linked to concrete practices in the growing field of internationalism. Both rode the tide of increasing internationalist enthusiasm over the rapidly growing number of international conferences and associations that were believed to advance international understanding and world peace. They themselves were the fruits of these developments, as Eijkman was a close witness to the 1899 Peace Conference and Otlet was co-organizing his own congresses. Eijkman also tried to guarantee the success of a second Peace Conference, again in The Hague, in 1907, by opening a club for delegates and journalists and allowing the pacifist William Stead to publish a conference journal from there. Otlet was even more deeply involved in trying to facilitate international exchanges and coordinating their traffic. Hence the World Capitals were offshoots of these activities as well as instruments to further advance them. Both Otlet and Eijkman had concluded that to stimulate transnational traffic even more, it would have to pass through one particular physical place. Their cities were to be transnational hubs for global interdependencies. In this, they marked a radical change in the geography of international endeavour from a distribution or circulation of centres (e.g., in travelling conferences) to a concentration in one place. In Eijkman and Otlet's plans, the entire world came together in a single, permanent location.

Another shared feature was that neither Eijkman's nor Otlet's project was the work of one man. Almost by definition, each of them needed the support and cooperation of collaborators from different countries, and both of them were most active in trying to establish such networks. Eijkman and Horrix toured around Europe, collecting signatures from prominent intellectuals. They gave lectures, were interviewed for newspapers, published brochures, contacted politicians, sailed to meet Carnegie and organized picnics on the prospected premises of their World capital city. At the same time, Otlet solicited for and obtained subsidies from the Interparliamentary Union and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. He published brochures, bulletins and a journal, opened a museum, participated in universal exhibitions by organizing exhibitions and congresses, set up summer schools

(6) Frederik VAN EEDEN & Jaap LONDON, *Het godshuis in de lichtstad*, Amsterdam, Versluys, 1921; Hendrik Petrus BERLAGE & Henriette Roland HOLST-VAN DER SCHALK, *Afbeeldingen van de ontwerpen voor het Pantheon der Menschheid*, Rotterdam, W.L. & J. Brusse, 1915.

(7) Herbert George WELLS, *Anticipations of the Reaction of Mechanical and Scientific Progress Upon Human Life and Thought*, London, Chapman & Hall, 1902.

(8) Albert L. CAILLET, *Traitement mental et culture spirituelle: la santé et l'harmonie dans la vie humaine*, Paris, Vigot, 1912.

(9) Théodore RUYSSEN, *La Philosophie de la Paix*, Paris, V. Giard & E. Brière, 1904.

and co-founded several international organizations which were networking devices in themselves, such as the International Institute of Bibliography, the International Congress of Administrative Sciences and the International Union of Local Authorities.

And yet, despite these transnational networks, the World Capitals can be seen as distinctly national undertakings. As Madeleine Herren has shown, nation-states "of the second order", like Belgium or the Netherlands, often seized emerging forms of international cooperation as "backdoors to power", thus seeking to extend their own influence beyond their national weight[10]. The fact that Eijkman and Otlet each launched their own campaigns and found themselves competing with each other, discrediting each other's aspirations and those of rival small nations (as we shall see below), strongly underscores this dimension. That is not to say that there was nothing transnational about their endeavours. But it seems that they somehow combined an inclusive internationalism with an exclusive nationalism.

In the following we will explore the combination of these two dimensions by examining Eijkman and Otlet's World Capital plans. We will try to balance the internationalist idealism, clearly expressed in both, with the national opportunism that also gave rise to each – discussing both the ideas behind their conceptions and the practice of the campaigns. We will start with the highest universalism to which both plans aspired: the universalism of science with which both Eijkman and Otlet tried to associate their cities. We then move on to the more mundane politics and the potential tensions between nationalism and internationalism in their plans and in their mutual competition.

The progress of science and the intellectual union of the world

Both Otlet and Eijkman held a strong belief in science as the engine of social progress and internationalization. They both developed this belief during their professional careers – as a physician in the case of Eijkman and as a bibliographer and documentalist in the case of Otlet. Eijkman considered it his social task to apply scientific insights to the welfare of society – a typical hygienist point of view, which he had held from the beginning of his career. For him, hygiene was not a branch of medicine but, conversely, embraced regular medicine in its much larger social task. Otlet's commitment to bibliography and documentation also had a fundamental social underpinning. The ultimate goal of the organization and transmission of knowledge was, according to Otlet, not just the progress of science but

(10) Madeleine HERREN, *Hintertüren zur Macht. Internationalismus und modernisierungsorientierte Außenpolitik in Belgien, der Schweiz und den USA 1865-1914*, Munich, Oldenbourg, 2000 (Studien zur internationalen Geschichte 9). See also Michel DUMOULIN, ed., *Présences belges dans le monde à l'aube du XXᵉ siècle*, Brussels, Univers Cité, 1989; Michel DUMOULIN, "Vingt ans d'historiographie des relations internationales de la Belgique (1964-1984)", in *Relations internationales*, vol. 42, 1985, p. 176, and Anne RASMUSSEN, *L'Internationale scientifique 1890-1914*, Paris, Department of History, École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences sociales de Paris, 1995 (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation).
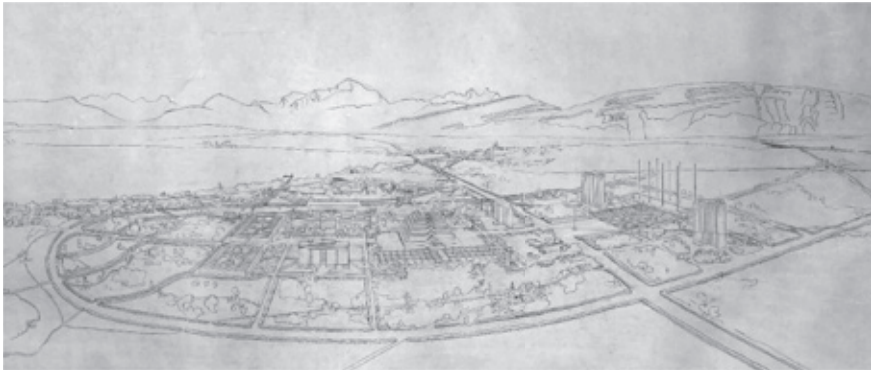
Fig. 3. Le CORBUSIER, *La Cité mondiale* (1929). Fondation Le Corbusier

the betterment of society. He stated that: "Science having the Cosmos itself as object and being the fruit of the combined effort of men of all times and all places, is the most firm basis of internationalism"[11].

Otlet and Eijkman especially emphasized the peace-promoting character of science, which they regarded as the most universal of human endeavours. This is why their World Capital plans were modelled on its practices and organizational forms. Most of Eijkman's city consisted of buildings for international scientific organizations, halls for scientific conferences, and facilities for scientific experimentation. Similarly, Otlet's Cité mondiale, in the version of Le Corbusier (1929), was completely built around a pyramidal edifice that was to hold and make available all scientific knowledge of the world, the so-called Mundaneum. In all of Otlet's schemes, this Mundaneum played a central organising role (Fig. 3).

Eijkman explicitly argued that the internationality and pacifying character of his World Capital derived from the universality of science. The mistake political pacifists made, he stated, was that they were too sentimental – that they based their ideals of universal brotherhood simply on the hope that people would begin to change their behaviours and start to do good. International cooperation in science, however, followed not an ideal but a necessity. Because of the universal character of their method and knowledge, scientists simply needed to cooperate across borders – research just could not do without it. This built-in necessity was the driving force behind the ever-increasing international organization of science (what Eijkman called "*l'internationalisme*"), an unstoppable process, advancing with the certainty of natural law. Just as there was no point in denying the rotation of the earth, there was no way of stopping the internationalization of science – Eijkman actually compared the two by turning Galileo's legendary statement "and yet, it moves" into "and yet, it organizes itself"[12]. Because of this inevitability,

    (11) Paul OTLET, "La loi d'ampliation et l'internationalisme", in *Le Mouvement sociologique international*, vol. 8, 1907, 4, p. 133-174, 159.
    (12) P.H. EIJKMAN, *Over Internationalisme*, Den Haag, Voorbereidend Bureau der Stichting voor Internationalisme, 1908, p. 4 and 12.

science was a much more solid promoter of world peace than any pacifist ideology could ever hope to be.

The exception was the pacifist pursuit of arbitration, which Eijkman regarded not as a sentimental endeavour but as a pragmatic and rational development, on a par with international cooperation in science[13]. Reason had made its way into international relations, and the rational alternative to war was arbitration. Conflicts were no longer to be decided by violence and mistrust but would be handled by legal experts at an international court. These experts represented precisely the sort of scientific attitude that Eijkman saw advancing in all fields and disciplines, and this is why the Peace Palace was a natural neighbour of scientific academies in the World Capital. In their pragmatic ways and in their peaceful effects, science and arbitration were almost identical, in Eijkman's view.

The similarity was extended in Eijkman's provision of his international scientific organizations with political power. Just as the International Court of Arbitration did not merely study the law but also issued verdicts on particular conflicts, the scientific academies in the World Capital were to decree policy measures that would be officially implemented. Eijkman's idea was that they would devise scientific solutions to social problems such as disease, poverty and the organization of labour and that for executing these, they "should be granted particular rights and powers, by which they could have an official role in international government"[14]. Hence the World Capital, as a collection of Academies in all sorts of fields, was meant to be a true capital in the sense of the seat of an administration. It would not merely organize science but would truly govern the world. The legitimacy of its global rule was grounded in the rationality and the internationality of science.

The only place where regular forms of politics did seem to be present in Eijkman's World Capital was in the projected International Congress, which consisted of an "International Senate" and an "International Parliament" as "two Chambers of World Government"[15]. However, what Eijkman probably had in mind was something like the Interparliamentary Union (IPU), which he hoped (and at one point claimed) would be established in The Hague[16]. It is true that the IPU was a gathering of ordinarily elected parliamentarians, but it was also closely associated with the cause of arbitration. Moreover, the very meaning of the word "congress" for a parliamentary assembly was at that time (and certainly in Eijkman's parlance) closely associated with its use in science. In the usual scientific phraseology, the word "congress" meant the community of representatives of a particular field, who would from time to time assemble in a meeting[17]. Hence a scientific congress was, in effect,

(13) *Ibid.*, p. 102-103.

(14) P.H. EIJKMAN, "Reorganisatie der Internationale Congressen", in *Vragen van den Dag*, vol. 20, 1905, p. 866-871, 868.

(15) Quoted in A.W. REININK, *K.P.C. De Bazel-Architect*, Rotterdam, Uitgeverij 010, 1993, p. 114.

(16) P.H. EIJKMAN, *Over Internationalisme, op. cit.*, p. 40.

(17) Anne RASMUSSEN, "Jalons pour une histoire des congrès internationaux au XIXᵉ siècle: régulation scientifique et propagande intellectuelle", in *Relations internationales*, vol. 62, 1990, p. 115-130.

a parliament of experts. And so the political "Congress Halls" in Eijkman's World Capital were similarly conceived as the Academy buildings, which housed the "congresses" of particular disciplines.

Like Eijkman, Otlet thought that the "intellectual union of the world is an accomplished fact" and that this was "the direct result of the progress of science". After all, science, being "pure reason", worked "incessantly for the unification of the human spirit and brought different nations together"[18]. Although in general terms Otlet shared Eijkman's premises concerning scientific rationality and universality, they were built into Otlet's utopia in different ways. In contrast to Eijkman's reliance on scientific congresses, Otlet relied on non-governmental organizations of an "intellectual order" as the building blocks for his utopia[19]. The Mundaneum would be a "district for organizations, congresses and free international movements and a scientific, documentary and educational centre". It would combine in one entity the five traditional institutions of intellectual work: the library, the museum, the scientific association, the university and the research institute. It would offer to private organizations a permanent seat, and in that manner it would affirm the "necessary difference between that what must stay official and that what must stay of a private order". The Mundaneum would be a free and autonomous institution, organized outside of politics and governed by the great intellectual organizations themselves. It would complement the political, administrative and social organizations by an institution of an intellectual and moral order. Around the Mundaneum, Otlet conceived the Cité mondiale as a centre that would institutionalize international life in general. "International Life", according to Otlet, was "not only the group of relations between governments" but also, in a "larger and more lively" sense, "the group of ideas, activities, and human interests" that are traditionally called by the collective notion "Humanity"[20].

Otlet outlined the structure of the Cité mondiale as the junction of two axes: that of national and of international forces (Fig. 4). Similar to the "Avenue des Nations" which characterized the universal exhibitions of its time, Otlet grouped along the vertical axis of his schema the "pavilions of the nations" and the "halls of continents". The horizontal axis assembled the headquarters of intellectual, economic, social, medical, and recreational international organizations. On the crossing of the national and international axes, he positioned the world organizations concerning health, economy, social and intellectual affairs. The disposition of two axes illustrates that Otlet did not replace or set aside the national forces of internationalism by supranational forces. On the contrary, according to Otlet, the essential task of the present times was "the combination of nationalism and internationalism to create a universal life more human, more just and more pacifist"[21]. In his vision,

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(18) Paul OTLET, *Les problèmes internationaux et la guerre. Tableau des conditions et solutions nouvelles de l'économie, du droit et de la politique*, Geneva/Paris, Librairie Kundig/Rousseau & Cie, 1916 (Publications de l'Union des Associations internationales), p. 277.

(19) P. OTLET, *Cité mondiale. Geneva: World Civic Center*, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

(20) *Ibid.*, p. 25.

(21) P. OTLET, *Les problèmes internationaux et la guerre*, *op. cit.*, p. 155.
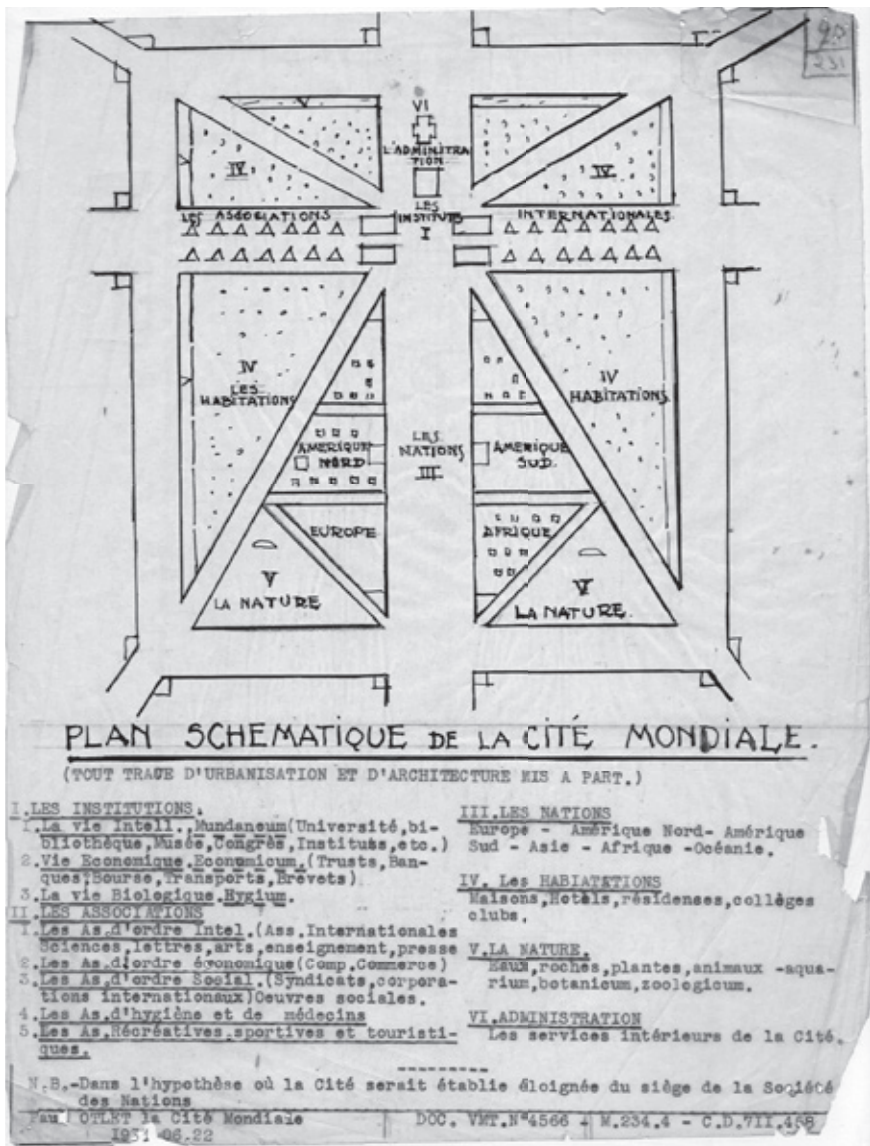
Fig. 4. Paul OTLET, *Plan schématique de la Cité mondiale* (1931). MDN, funds Cité mondiale, note n° 456.

nationalism was a social system that was based on the control of territories, while internationalism was a social organism that was structured on the basis of social functions (such as hygienic, economic, social, political, intellectual and religious functions) that pervaded the world society at large – he considered both as complementary. Nevertheless, Otlet's utopian constitution unmistakably strengthened transnational actors and reduced (national and

international) politics to rationalized administration. His utopia articulated that non-governmental organizations should have at least the same amount of power and responsibility over international relations as governmental actors.

Secular Vaticans

Both Eijkman and Otlet claimed that their utopias were apolitical since they were built on science and reason. Traditional political party divisions were transcended in favour of a rational administration, just as national differences were overcome by the universality of science. However, like any claim to apoliticalness, their assertion should be read as a political statement in its own right, and it should still be asked what politics Eijkman's and Otlet's projects actually did embody. What kind of utopia were the World Capital and the Cité mondiale politically? And where did Eijkman and Otlet position themselves in the spectrum of international politics?

Eijkman and Otlet both gave some indication of their political viewpoint when they expressed why they rejected different forms of internationalism. Eijkman did so inadvertently when he reported how his pleas were received by audiences in Germany. There, he said, internationalism tended to have a negative ring because it was associated with movements that were generally considered undesirable – at least in the circles in which Eijkman spoke. The first of these movements was "red internationalism", the socialist belief in and pursuit of a classless society and supranational state. The second was what they called "black internationalism", which was basically the Roman Catholic Church. And the final movement was the so-called "gold internationalism" – the multinational trade relations of mainly Jewish capitalists. Eijkman used to answer these audiences that his own pursuits had nothing to do with any of these movements and that what he promoted was a "colourless internationalism"[22]. However, since he defined this colourlessness in contradistinction to these other political movements, Eijkman actually did reveal something of his own position.

What this shows first was that Eijkman's internationalism was indeed in no way a socialist ideology. The changes he envisioned were supposed to take place within the existing order, and he never spoke of revolution as leading to the desired goals. Nor did he focus on an exploited proletariat. His attention was much more fixed on the educated upper class, the "aristocracy of the mind", who advanced society along the road of reason and internationalization[23]. As far as class structure was concerned then, Eijkman did not plan any change. There is no sign that Eijkman distanced himself from the components of "gold internationalism" either, in the sense that his writings reveal no anti-Semitism (or at least not more than that implied by the term itself) and no critique of world-wide capitalism whatsoever. On the contrary, in Eijkman's plans the existing forms of trade and commerce would only be better organized, not controlled or abolished. Still, he was

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(22) P.H. EIJKMAN, *Over Internationalisme*, *op. cit.*, p. 1-2 (original emphasis).
(23) P.H. EIJKMAN, "Reorganisatie", *op. cit.*, p. 871.

not a conservative in the sense of confessional politics either. He did not adhere to any organized religion, and in his plans for future pedagogy, he proposed keeping religion out of education. Stead's characterization of the World Capital as a "Vatican laïque" was on the whole quite accurate. It is true that Eijkman did want to include the study of religion in his Academies, which could have been a reflection of the theosophical belief in the value and unity of all religions, also shared by his architect De Bazel[24]. However, Eijkman said very little about this and about religious matters of any kind and was much more outspoken on his faith in science. On the whole then, the World Capital appears to be an elitist liberal dream. The three coloured internationalisms which the German audiences identified were precisely the three so-called *Reichsfeinde* of the Wilhelminian Empire, and an aversion to them was typical for the Second Reich's establishment. Eijkman shared this aversion, but he also abhorred the conservatism and militarism of German elites. In fact, he was much closer to the progressivist American upper class that relied more on scientific progress and often supported international arbitration; driving forces behind the Peace Palace such as A.D. White, Richard Bartholdt and Andrew Carnegie belonged to this group. Just like them, Eijkman believed in a future that would turn away from military dominance and organized religion but that, at the same time, did not entail a revolution, overturning the existing power structures and social hierarchies. Eijkman's utopia was to be gradually achieved.

Like Eijkman, Otlet was not at a loss to categorize the different forms of internationalism. In an article of 1907, he reviewed the different groups of internationalists who had attended the second Hague Peace Conference[25]. Otlet had watched the conference from the sidelines and had observed that five different voices spoke through the delegates or in the press. First were the Pacifists or those who "declare war to war" and desire disarmament and perpetual peace. Otlet called them "sentimentalists"; people like Baroness Von Suttner who aimed to end the "horrors of the war" in a spirit of "fraternity, religiosity and femininity." Second were the Interparliamentarians, or those who demand an international Parliament and obligatory arbitration. He referred to the Interparliamentary conferences organized by the Interparliamentary Union, which allowed internationalist ideas to penetrate into the national parliaments. Third, Jurists were represented by associations such as the International Law Association and the Institut de Droit international. This group asked for the regulation of relations between nations through law. Fourth came the Socialists, consisting of groups of followers of Jaurès, Bebel and Vandervelde. Following Marx and Lassalle, they thought that war would end through popular insurrection and the fall of capitalist regimes. Finally, Otlet mentioned the increasing number of International Associations through which transnational relations beyond the national borders are multiplied and through which men of different nations cooperate in common functions. It was this last movement to which Otlet adhered.

(24) F. NETSCHER, "Eijkman", *op. cit.*, p. 185.
(25) P. OTLET, "La loi d'ampliation et l'internationalisme", *op. cit.*

This overview of the different internationalist movements shows, first of all, that although Otlet's viewpoint regarding national politics was closest to socialism, his perspective on international politics was not. As he wrote in his autobiographical notes, if he would have entered national politics he would only have wanted "to collaborate with an advanced programme, a socialist programme but without the dogmatism and narrowness of many socialists"[26]. Without such an orientation, it would have been difficult to have a lifelong collaboration with La Fontaine, who was, after all, a socialist senator, and even more difficult to assist the socialist Émile Vinck in founding the Union internationale des Villes (UIV) in 1913. The UIV was an international organization that formalized and facilitated transnational inter-municipal circulation of information, procedures, personal experiences, principles and ideas relating to municipal administration[27]. The UIV was strongly linked with the socialist network, and Otlet welcomed the secretariat of the UIV in the offices of the UIA[28]. He also presented the project of the Cité mondiale at the first congress of the UIV as the ultimate goal at which municipal internationalism should aim, and he regularly published on the Cité mondiale in the journal of the UIV[29]. Nevertheless, the Cité mondiale cannot be described as a radical socialist project. Otlet was not involved in the socialist International and abhorred revolutionary tendencies.

Like Eijkman's World Capital, Otlet's Cité mondiale made visible the idea to gather humanity by means of international associations around one central institution, and can therefore also be described as a "Vatican laïque". In fact, Otlet himself often referred to the Vatican as one of his models[30]. After World War I, Otlet and La Fontaine proposed to found an "Intellectual League of Nations" that would complement the League of Nations and the International Labour Office and that would gather all intellectual workers in one social network, similar to the setup of the UIA. The Swiss historian and writer Gonzague de Reynold (1880-1970) – who dreamt of a reconciliation of the Catholic social teaching and a nationalist corporatist political framework – described these endeavours as a form of humanitarian syncretism:

(26) Paul OTLET, *Notes autobiographiques*. Cahier bleu manuscrit n°539. Mundaneum (MDN), Personal Papers Paul Otlet.

(27) Pierre-Yves SAUNIER, "La toile municipale aux XIXe et XXe siècles: un panorama transnational vu d'Europe", in *Urban History Review/Revue d'Histoire urbaine*, vol. 34, 2006, 2, p. 163-176.

(28) Patrizia DOGLIANI, "European Municipalism in the First Half of the Twentieth Century: The Socialist Network", in *Contemporary European History*, vol. 2, 2002, 4, p. 573-596.

(29) Paul OTLET, "Un projet grandiose de Cité internationale", in UNION INTERNATIONALE DES VILLES, ed., *Premier congrès international et exposition comparée des villes*, Brussels, Union internationale des villes, 1913 ; Paul OTLET, "Une capitale internationale", in *Le Mouvement communal*, 1919, 2, p. 18-21 ; Paul OTLET, "Genève. Cité internationale", in *Le Mouvement communal*, 1928, 92, p. 359-364 ; Paul OTLET, "Bruxelles, vraie Capitale", in *Le Mouvement communal*, 1930, 116, p. 378-379 ; "La Cité mondiale et l'Exposition de 1935. Un stand de propagande et de documentation à l'exposition internationale du bâtiment", in *Le Mouvement communal*, 1932, 133, p. 226 ; Paul OTLET, "Anvers qui va grandir", in *Le Mouvement communal*, 1933, 150, p. 245-248.

(30) P. OTLET, *Cité mondiale. Geneva: World Civic Center*, *op cit.*, p. 23-24.

"We are, indeed, [...] in the presence of a humanitarian syncretism tending to laicise the Christian idea, to make the League of Nations into a Church against the Church. This Church has its mysticism which is of a pantheist origin, a metaphysics borrowed from rationalism; it has its pseudo-scientific methods, its pedagogy is extracted from Rousseau and all rubbed in with psychoanalysis; it has its universal language, its Latin: Esperanto"[31].

De Reynold's comparison of Otlet and La Fontaine's initiative to a "Church of Humanity" found some fertile ground here, despite his obviously more Catholic point of view. Even the sociologist and town planner Patrick Geddes, a good friend of Otlet, told him that "all you will do is to create a revolt against the new Vatican. You will say that it isn't your intention to pontificate at all. I know it – but unfortunately this is the impression you continue to give"[32].

Otlet was no Catholic, but what kind of religion did his Cité mondiale embody? Otlet was not a Freemason like La Fontaine either, nor did he seem to adhere officially to any other particular religion. However, he did sympathize with definite theosophist, spiritist and other occult movements. His painter friend Jean Delville invited him to speak on the spiritual aspect of the Cité mondiale for the *Société théosophique* of Brussels in 1923[33]. Three years later, Otlet gave another lecture about the Cité mondiale for a splinter group of the Theosophical Society, the "Order of the Star in the East", founded by Annie Besant (1847-1933) in India and temporarily disbanded to the unlikely town of Ommen, the Netherlands, under the guru Krishnamurti (1895-1986)[34]. But the religious tenor of Otlet's utopia seems to be closest to the intellectual tone of Auguste Comte (1798-1857) and his religion of humanity[35]. Religion mattered for Otlet as a "consciousness for humanity, the transformation of the world by the triumph of the spirit [...] which is linked to world peace"[36]. Similar to Comte, Otlet stated that, in the end, science is for the scientist what religion is for the believer, because "science is also the motive of human solidarity, that what pushes us toward altruism, that what drives us with the least waist of time and effort toward the

(31) Gonzague DE REYNOLD, "La Reconstruction intellectuelle, les Catholiques et la S.d.N", in *La Revue Générale*, juin-juillet 1922, p. 617-633, 627.

(32) W. Boyd RAYWARD, *The Universe of Information. The Work of Paul Otlet for Documentation and International Organisation*, Moscow, VINITI, 1975, p. 264-266.

(33) Paul OTLET, "L'aspect spirituel de la Cité Internationale", in *Ordre de l'Étoile d'Orient. Bulletin*, 1924, janvier.

(34) Paul OTLET, "La Cité Mondiale", in *The Herald of the Star*, vol. 15, 1926, 10, p. 435-442.

(35) Auguste COMTE, *System of Positive Polity: or, Treatise on Sociology, Instituting the Religion of Humanity*, London, Longmans, 1875; Auguste COMTE & H. Gordon JONES, *Religion of Humanity. The Positivist Calendar of Auguste Comte and Other Tables*, London, London Positivist Society, 1929; Andrew WERNICK, *Auguste Comte and the Religion of Humanity. The Post-Theistic Program of French Social Theory*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001.

(36) Paul OTLET, *Monde: essai d'universalisme. Connaissance du monde, sentiment du monde, action organisée et plan du monde*, Brussels, Mundaneum, 1935, p. 302.

City of Justice"[37]. On the whole, then, it seems Otlet supported a humanist internationalism. Despite the religious overtones, this was not a religious humanism, but a humanism that aimed at structuring world society in a functionalist manner through international organization.

City, country or universe?

The term "utopia", as intended by Thomas More, has the ambiguous meaning of "a place which does not exist" (*ou-topos*) and "a place to be desired" (*eu-topia*). The projects of Eijkman and Otlet are utopias in the sense that they imagine a coordinating centre of internationalism. However, their utopias are not situated in an untraceable island, as More's was. Eijkman located his World Capital on the outskirts of The Hague, while Otlet situated his Cité mondiale near Brussels. Neither World Capital project simply promoted an idealist associational programme of internationalism; both also served as a billboard in support of a national campaign which advertised, respectively, Brussels and The Hague as transnational centres in an era of global interdependence.

The tensions between these two aims came out when the British pacifist William Stead discussed the respective merits of the two locations. During the Second Peace Conference in 1907, he affirmed that, although Brussels was a sturdy rival candidate, The Hague was the present "Capital of the United States of the World"[38]. The choice "to fix the centre of the World State" there was, he argued, accepted by the other nations as a "natural consequence"[39]. The Hague had already been called "Capital of the World" during the first Peace Conference in 1899, when it was decided that it would become the seat of the Permanent Court of Arbitration[40]. Until then, it had hardly had such aspirations, and it had come as a surprise that the (equally surprising) organizer of the Peace Conference, the Russian tsar Nicolas II, had picked the city as his preferred site[41]. Looking for a "neutral" and impartial location, preferably a capital of a small country, to bring the great powers around one table, Brussels had seemed to be the primary candidate, since it already hosted so many international meetings and organizations. King Leopold II had even supported efforts to bring the conference to Brussels and had offered the monumental Palace of Justice as the venue. But the Russian tsar finally decided in favour of The Hague – the city associated with the pioneer of international law, Hugo Grotius (1583-1645). Stead concluded that if "King Léopold had responded with more cordiality to the overture of the Russian government in 1898", the delegates would probably

(37) *Ibid.*, p. 291.

(38) William T. STEAD, "La Haye. La Capitale des États-Unis du Monde", in *Courrier de la Conférence de la Paix*, 11 August 1907, p. 50.

(39) *Ibid.*

(40) Arthur EYFFINGER, *The Peace Palace: Residence for Justice, Domicile of Learning*, The Hague, Carnegie Foundation, 1988.

(41) Arthur EYFFINGER, *The 1899 Hague Peace Conference: "The Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World"*, in The Hague/London, Kluwer Law International, 1999.

have gathered in the *Palais de Justice* instead of the Dutch royal residence, *House in the Woods*. However, now that The Hague was consolidating its role as organizer of a series of Peace Conferences (a third one was planned for 1915) and, possibly, capital of the world, it was necessary, Stead argued, to exercise caution as to the role of the Dutch state, and Queen Wilhelmina, as hosts. Was it not preferable, he asked, to adopt an alternative arrangement, suggested by peace advocate Hayne Davis, to create an international "District of Columbia" – in analogy with the one in Washington in the USA – where the Conference would not be subordinate to the Dutch but would be its own master:

> "[Even l]eaving aside for a moment the idea of a donation of a national territory under control by the International Conference, an agreement must at least be signed, or a positive Convention, which assures that the Third Conference will be hosted in The Hague in a proper manner"[42].

Two months after Stead's article appeared, Paul Otlet reacted in the *Courrier de la Conférence de la Paix* against the designation of The Hague as World Capital[43]. The article, entitled "Brussels the Capital of the World," listed the most important assets of Brussels and thereby aimed to counter Stead's earlier elaborate account of all the advantages of The Hague. In 1910, Otlet countered Stead's preference again, listing the same arguments. Brussels was, according to Otlet, "one of the most active centres of international life" – indeed the UIA had revealed that "of the 109 permanent international institutions that exist today in the world, 17 do not have a fixed seat, 42 are domiciled in Belgium, 15 in Switzerland and only 2 in Holland"[44]. Moreover, Belgium was uniquely situated between the great cities of Western Europe, which made it a "roundabout of the three great countries with a different civilization, Germany, Britain and France". Its population "constitutes an amalgam of Germanic and Latin races", having a spirit of the "most 'mondial' kind that exists". And finally, its "history as the battlefield of nations", its neutrality, its political "freedom to organize reunions and associations", its "freedom of speech and press", its character as an economic free trade zone, and of course Otlet's own "great work of Universal Documentation" – all these marked the "international superiority" of Belgium. If a referendum would be held, Otlet believed that Brussels would be designated naturally as "the capital of the United States of the World".

When Eijkman began to promote his own World Capital plan, he similarly had to promote The Hague as well as cast doubt on the reputation of alternative candidates. It was easy to discredit the capital cities of great powers since they would never be fully acceptable to other states. But other small European countries were more difficult to deal with. Switzerland, Eijkman argued, was too unstable, as it was a republic, and as such subject to frequent regime change. Moreover, it had recently become a haven for

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(42) W.T. STEAD, "La Haye. La Capitale des États-Unis du Monde", *op. cit.*

(43) Paul OTLET, "Bruxelles la capitale du monde", in *Courrier de la Conférence de la Paix*, 13 October 1907, p. 3-4.

(44) *Ibid.*, p. 12.

terrorists, such as the Italian anarchist who had murdered the Austrian empress Elisabeth in Geneva in 1898[45]. Belgium was even a harder nut to crack. It had a strong tradition of hosting international events and organizations, fully backed, also financially, by Leopold II and private benefactors such as Ernest Solvay. But, Eijkman argued, the country's eagerness and pride as a world centre were precisely what could put off other nations. The Belgians' insistence on speaking a world language, for example, did not always serve them well outside the francophone sphere. The fact that the Dutch did not expect anybody to speak their barely known language actually enhanced their accessibility, for "[the] Germans, English and Americans feel much more at home in the polyglot Netherlands than in Belgium, which for them speaks a foreign language"[46].

Reacting against Eijkman, Otlet claimed that The Hague was only suited as a quiet milieu for long juridical debates far removed from the great centres. Social, scientific and economic institutions, by contrast, would need an active milieu like that of Brussels. Furthermore, The Hague had no university, no important scientific societies and no international express lines. Ironically, Otlet even critiqued the ambition of Eijkman to speak of a "capital":

> "What is certainly needed are active centres of internationalism, in direct connection with each other and cooperating accurately. The idea of a 'Capital' evokes the association with a hegemony and is intolerable. The world cannot want another sort of imperialism that is added to all the others which have had their time. Even a superficial examination of the facts permits to observe that there exist today several very active centres of internationalism"[47].

The irony of this statement lies in the fact that Otlet's preferred site for his Cité mondiale was Tervuren, the centre of Belgium's colonial imperialism. The colonial institutions in Tervuren dated from 1897, when a Universal Exhibition was held in Brussels with a colonial section in Tervuren. After the Universal Exhibition, the colonial section was transformed into a permanent Congo museum (1906-1910), designed by Charles Girault, which would be the first part of a much larger district of colonial institutions[48]. In addition to the Congo Museum, there would be the École mondiale, a postgraduate elite school for colonial officers, complemented with a centre for research, laboratories, a library, residences for professors and sport facilities, a congress palace, an agricultural school and a documentation centre at the heart of the

(45) P.H. EIJKMAN, *Over Internationalisme*, *op. cit.*, p. 27-28.

(46) *Ibid.*, p. 31-32.

(47) P. OTLET, *Note sur le projet "La Haye Capitale du Monde"*, *op. cit.* Archives of the Mundaneum (Mons), funds Cité mondiale, box 5, farde Notes numerotées 1907-1931, Note 1927.01.11.

(48) Lieven DE CAUTER, Lode DE CLERCQ & Bruno DE MEULDER, "Van 'Exposition coloniale' naar 'Cité mondiale'. Tervuren als koloniale site", in Herman ASSELBERGHS & Dieter LESAGE, eds., *Het museum van de natie: van kolonialisme tot globalisering*, Brussels, Gevaert, 1999, p. 45-71.

ensemble. The school would raise enlightened forces in the home country and then send them off to civilize Congo and other colonies[49].

While Tervuren was increasingly criticized as the symbol for the brutality of Léopold II's activities in Congo – especially after his death in 1909 – Otlet kept situating his Cité mondiale in Tervuren[50]. In 1913 he proposed the plans of Andersen and Hébrard to be executed in there, in 1919 he again situated the Cité mondiale designed by Louis Van der Swaelmen in Tervuren, and in 1931 he did the same with the Cité design of Victor Bourgeois. The link between the Cité mondiale and the "Cité coloniale" seemed, in Otlet's eyes, only to confirm the international role that Belgium would continue to play in the future. In *Léopold II et nos villes* (1927), Otlet tried to counter the negative perception of the king. Opening the article like a fairy tale, "Once there was a king. It was a great king", Otlet hoped that the public appraisal of Léopold's life would turn gradually into that of a positive legend. After recounting the impressive number of construction sites completed or started by order of the king, Otlet acknowledged that there was also a darker side to Léopold II's enrichment and embellishment of the Nation. However, Otlet asked his reader, "Should he have respected the obsolete social systems [in Congo] or should he have resolutely tried out the creation of new systems?"[51] Otlet answered his rhetorical question, stating that Léopold II was "a great innovator of social institutions", "a renewing sociologist".

Otlet resisted imperialism, but his internationalism did not have its roots in a reaction against imperialism, nor did he renounce the national sphere of royal and governmental power. The relation between the Belgian state and the institutions founded by Otlet (the IIB and UIA) was in the end mutually supportive[52]. His reliance on national forces in his internationalist endeavours was an evident act of patriotic nationalism. As Otlet remarked, nationalism moves between patriotism and chauvinism, or between the love of the native country and the hate of foreign countries[53]. While the latter is opposed to internationalism, the former is receptive to it and may even become a constructive force that helps building international agreements.

The Netherlands had its own colonial empire, with the Dutch East Indies as the most valuable possession. But precisely because of its value and its vulnerability, in case of international conflict (the Dutch navy would be no match for potential British interventions), the official foreign policy was to lay low in international affairs. For this reason, the Dutch government was initially not at all pleased when the Russian tsar had proposed The Hague as the place for Peace Conferences. When Carnegie had offered to build the Peace Palace, foreign affairs minister Melvil had first turned the offer

(49) Bruno DE MEULDER, *Reformisme, thuis en overzee. Geschiedenis van de Belgische planning in een kolonie (1880-1960)*, Leuven, KU Leuven, 1994 (Ph.D. dissertation).

(50) Lukas CATHERINE, *Léopold II: la folie des grandeurs*, Brussels, Luc Pire, 2004 ; Michel DUMOULIN, *Léopold II: un roi génocidaire?*, Brussels, Académie royale de Belgique, Classe des Lettres, 2005 ; Adam HOCHSCHILD, *King Leopold's Ghost. A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa*, London, Pan, 2006.

(51) Paul OTLET, *Léopold II et nos villes*, Brussels, 1927 (Tiré-à-part du *Mouvement communal. Organe de l'Union des Villes et Communes belges*), p. 12.

(52) Cf. M. HERREN, *Hintertüren zur Macht*, *op. cit.*

(53) P. OTLET, *Les problèmes internationaux et la guerre*, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

down[54]. For Eijkman, however, this cautious attitude reflected a lack of ambition, and it was this narrow-mindedness that he was fighting against. In most of his writings he contrasted the dominant small-mindedness ("*die peuterigheid*!") with his own grand ideas. In this, he represented a general shift among Dutch cultural elites toward greater ambitions and international orientation.

This international orientation was at the same time a national programme. Part of what moved Eijkman and Horrix was to make their country (re-)gain its stature in the world. The same argument was made by Cornelis van Vollenhoven, a young law professor, who called upon his fellow countrymen to similarly support the new role of "The Hague" in 1910[55]. According to Van Vollenhoven, there was no way in which the Netherlands could recapture the world dominance it had enjoyed in the seventeenth century. But it could significantly increase its role by becoming the centre of international mediation and arbitration. It could only credibly claim this role, however, if it commanded respect among other nations by displaying a high level of civilization. And hence, the aim of making The Hague a world centre needed every Dutchman's efforts to excel in whatever they were doing (be it art, business or science). Internationalism was a programme for national renewal.

In the end, Van Vollenhoven and Eijkman had some limited success. One of the few politicians who sympathized with the latter's plans was Prime Minister Abraham Kuyper. Just before he resigned (still in 1905), he founded a "Nederlandsch Comité voor Internationalisme" [Dutch Committee of Internationalism] to advance Dutch ambitions[56]. As result of its work, Kuyper's successor Heemskerk passed a bill on 24 November 1909, stating that the Dutch government protected learned societies and aimed to bring international bureaus to The Hague. As a result, the "Bureau de la Commission permanente des Congrès internationaux de Médecine", the "Bureau permanent de la Fédération internationale de Pharmacie" and the "International Institute of Statistics" all settled in The Hague[57].

While Eijkman and Horrix managed to gather support from many international organizations, they found themselves excluded when they knocked on the doors of the internationalist scene in Brussels[58]. La Fontaine reported to Otlet in October 1907 that "Eijkman and Horrix have spent several days here trying to harvest signatures. They have visited the seat of Solvay which

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(54) P. BROOSHOOFT, "Schevingen wereld-centrum?", in *De beweging*, 1906, 2, p. 172-194, 173.

(55) C. VAN VOLLENHOVEN, "Roeping van Holland", in *De Gids*, vol. 74, 1910, 4, p. 185-204. This article was followed by several similar rallying cries, collected in the bestseller: *De Eendracht van het Land*, Den Haag, Martinus Nijhoff, 1913.

(56) A.W. REININK, *K.P.C. De Bazel – Architect, op. cit.*, p. 118.

(57) Pieter Hendrik EIJKMAN, *L'Internationalisme scientifique (Sciences pures et Lettres)*, La Haye, Bureau préliminaire de la Fondation pour l'Internationalisme, 1911, p. 11.

(58) Henri LA FONTAINE, Letter to Paul Otlet (17 October 1907). Archives of the Mundaneum (Mons), funds Henri La Fontaine, box HLF 067, Correspondance La Fontaine/Otlet.

has sent them back to Van O[verbergh] and to the two of us. Horrix has tried to meet me, but without success"[59].

Like Eijkman, Van Vollenhoven and Heemskerk in the Netherlands, Otlet, La Fontaine and Van Overbergh played a foundational role in attracting international organizations and making the protection of learned societies a part of the national policy. In fact, the bill of the Dutch Minister Heemskerk was proposed in analogy with and in reaction to the move of the Belgians[60]. With La Fontaine, Otlet and Van Overbergh as the main actors behind the UIA, a bill was proposed in 1907 by Émile Tibbaut to the Belgian Chamber of Representatives to grant a civil personification to scientific international associations which had their permanent headquarters in Belgium and which had a Belgian representative in their board[61]. Such a legal existence would enable them to keep a treasury, make contracts and receive gifts. But above all it would protect Brussels as the privileged centre of internationalism. The bill was finally passed in 1919 when Léon Delacroix presented the law to be of assistance to Otlet and his project of "A World Centre at the Service of the League of Nations"[62]. The UIA was the first to take advantage of the law's protection.

Conclusion

To what extent did Otlet's project go beyond Belgium and Eijkman's transcend the Netherlands? In our comparative analysis, the answer to this question diverges depending on the categories that frame the characterization of their internationalist endeavours. First, in their universalist aspirations, the World Capital and the Cité Mondiale both aimed to somehow bring the world together in supranational institutions – often related to the supposed universality of science and knowledge. In their utopian constitution, the nation-state was not neglected but replaced by rationalized administrations or parliaments of experts, complemented by international organizations and international scientific congresses. Second, Otlet and Eijkman's utopias positioned themselves politically primarily within the spectrum of international politics and only secondarily within the frame of national politics. Eijkman adhered to an elitist form of liberalism, which was closest to American movements, while the political tenor of Otlet's utopia was humanist functionalist with socialist reformist sympathies. Third, however, the propaganda which Eijkman and Otlet made for their utopias expressed itself as national campaigns for national promotion. Internationalism for Eijkman was a programme for national renewal, while nationalism for Otlet was a constructive force of internationalism. For Eijkman the most suitable location for his centre of internationalism was The Hague; for Otlet it was primarily Tervuren near Brussels. Their attitude in these idealist campaigns was opportunist at the

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(59) *Ibid.*

(60) The former two in 1909 and 1910. See A.W. REININK, *K.P.C. De Bazel – Architect*, *op. cit.*, p. 118 ; A. RASMUSSEN, *L'Internationale scientifique 1890-1914*, *op. cit.*, p. 359-360.

(61) W.B. RAYWARD, *The Universe of Information*, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

(62) *Ibid.*, p. 214.

same time. Both Eijkman and Otlet paid visits to the politicians of their government, made an appeal to philanthropists such as Andrew Carnegie and tried to gain as much support as possible from international organizations. The way in which Eijkman and Otlet translated their internationalist ideals into concretely structured spaces at the precisely stipulated locations revealed how much they perceived the transnational geography of internationalism to be inescapably connected to a national control of territories.

ABSTRACT

Wouter VAN ACKER & Geert SOMSEN, *A Tale of Two World Capitals: the Internationalisms of Pieter Eijkman and Paul Otlet*

The years before the First World War saw several proposals to establish a "World Capital" in one of Europe's smaller nations. Such proposals were transnational in at least three senses. They aimed to bring all international organizations and movements together; they hinged on international support; and they planned to concentrate all transnational traffic in one centre. At the same time, these grand projects often had nationalist intentions too, trying to advance their home country into a stronger international position. In this article we analyse the relationship between transnational and national dimensions by looking at two elaborate plans: the "World Capital", proposed by the Dutch physician Pieter Eijkman (1862-1914) to be built near The Hague; and the "Cité mondiale" which the Belgian bibliographer and internationalist Paul Otlet (1868-1944) wanted to establish near Brussels. By comparing both projects and their mutual competition, we probe the combination of transnational and national ideology and opportunism.

Utopia – internationalism – Paul Otlet – Pieter Eijkman – world capital

RÉSUMÉ

Wouter VAN ACKER & Geert SOMSEN, *Le Conte de deux cités mondiales: les internationalismes de Pieter Eijkman et de Paul Otlet*

À la veille de la Première Guerre mondiale, des propositions pour la construction d'une « Ville mondiale » ont été lancées dans plusieurs petits pays européens. Ces propositions peuvent être considérées comme transnationales pour trois raisons. Premièrement, elles voulaient réunir toutes les organisations et courants internationaux; deuxièmement, elles entendaient obtenir un large soutien international ; troisièmement, elles prévoyaient de rassembler tout le trafic international dans un centre unique. Ces projets imposants avaient également des intentions nationalistes car ils visaient à renforcer la position de la patrie sur le plan international. Dans cet article, nous analysons la relation entre les aspects nationaux et internationaux dans deux plans détaillés : la « Capitale mondiale » que voulait construire le médecin hollandais Pieter Eijkman (1862-1914) aux alentours de La Haye ; et la « Cité mondiale » que voulait réaliser à Bruxelles le bibliographe et internationaliste belge Paul Otlet (1868-1944). En comparant les deux projets concurrents, nous étudions l'interpénétration des idéologies et des intérêts, tant transnationaux que nationaux.

Utopie – internationalisme – Paul Otlet – Pieter Eijkman – capitale du monde

SAMENVATTING

Wouter Van Acker & Geert Somsen, *De geschiedenis van twee wereldsteden: de internationalismen van Pieter Eijkman en Paul Otlet*

In de periode voor de Eerste Wereldoorlog werden in verschillende kleinere Europese landen voorstellen gelanceerd voor de bouw van een "Wereldstad". Deze voorstellen kunnen op minstens drie niveaus als transnationaal beschouwd worden. Ze wilden alle internationale organisaties en stromingen samenbrengen; ze waren aangewezen op het vergaren van internationale steun; en ze voorzagen om al het internationale verkeer te concentreren in één centrum. Tegelijkertijd hadden deze grootse projecten ook nationalistische intenties in de manier waarop ze probeerden het thuisland sterker te positioneren op internationaal niveau. In dit artikel analyseren we de relatie tussen de transnationale en nationale aspecten in twee sterk uitgewerkte plannen: de "Wereldhoofdstad" die de Nederlandse geneesheer Pieter Eijkman (1862-1914) wou bouwen vlakbij Den Haag; en de "Cité Mondiale" die de Belgische bibliograaf en internationalist Paul Otlet (1868-1944) wou realiseren bij Brussel. Door beide, rivaliserende projecten te vergelijken onderzoeken we de combinatie van transnationale en nationale ideologie en opportunisme.

Utopia – internationalisme – Paul Otlet – Pieter Eijkman – wereldhoofdstad