

THE PRACTICES OF LANTERN LECTURES, THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'

Cultural policies and changing lanternscapes in German-occupied Antwerp and Brussels during the Great War

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As the days got shorter and colder, the annual lantern season in the year 1913-1914 took off with a new winter program. With the onset of spring, the number of lantern lectures decreased significantly². So, although unusual events were occurring on the world stage, in the summer of 1914 it was as quiet as usual in the theatre halls and societies of Antwerp and Brussels. By the time the new lantern season should have resumed at the beginning of September, however, Brussels had fallen into the hands of German occupiers³. In Antwerp resounded, instead of applause after a successful illustrated lecture, the tremor of bombs from the zeppelins and guns directed at the city⁴. Soon the city was also occupied. The first declaration of media censorship on the written press and lantern lectures followed almost immediately⁵. Well-established lantern practices did not disappear but changed radically under the influence of the German occupation, censorship, cultural policies and the *Flamenpolitik*. The latter aimed at creating internal discord by responding to long-held demands of the Flemish Movement⁶. How German cultural and media policy affected the lantern practices in Antwerp and Brussels and how this led to new opportunities for the Flemish Movement will be at the heart of this article.

I. Introduction

German occupation policy and its consequences on daily life in Belgium have already been described in detail in historiography. Various historical studies have also highlighted diverse aspects of its cultural policies⁷. In this special issue Erik Baeck and Hedwige Baeck-Schilders examine respectively the Royal Flemish Conservatory, the opera, and symphonic music in war-stricken Antwerp. Much attention has also been paid to the use of media. This is no coincidence with scholars such as Joëlle Beurier and Bénédicte Rochet baptizing the Great War as a ‘matrix of modern media’ due to the extensive use of cinema and photography. For the very first time, and despite closed borders and censorship, mass media was widely used for representations of the war in different countries⁸. It has become accepted among historians that the massive popularity of

media was caused by, on the one hand a resurgent nationalism, and on the other hand an insatiable hunger for information and entertainment⁹. All belligerent countries eagerly used various forms of (visual) media for propaganda, fundraising campaigns, and to instigate support from neutral countries, which turned the Great War – more than any war before it – into a ‘war of images’¹⁰.

Belligerent parties in general started to discover the enormous potential of (moving) images¹¹. It is therefore all the more remarkable that First World War Studies and media history in general have paid scant attention to the most prolific visual mass medium of that time: the projection lantern¹². The unfortunate neglect of the older brother of the slide projector is not only due to a focus on photography and cinema but also to the framing of the projection lantern as ‘simply’ a predecessor

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2. GUIDO CONVENTS, *Van kinetoscoop tot café-ciné: de eerste jaren van de film in België 1894-1908*, Leuven, 2000, p. 246.
3. NICOLAS KENNY, *The Feel of the City. Experiences of Urban Transformation*, Toronto, Buffalo and London, 2014, p. 200; LAURENCE VAN YPERSELE, “Max, Adolphe”, in *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, 2014, DOI: 10.15463/ie11418.10055.
4. THOMAS G. MAES, *Antwerpen 1914. Bolwerk van België tijdens de Eerste Wereldoorlog*, Antwerpen, 2013, p. 34.
5. CHARLES HENRY HUBERICH and ALEXANDER NICOL-SPEYER, *Législation Allemande pour le Territoire Belge Occupé (Textes Officiels)*, vol 1, La Haye, 1915, p. 22-24.
6. MAARTEN VAN GINDERACHTER, *The everyday nationalism of workers: a social history of modern Belgium*, Stanford, 2019, p. 166-167.
7. Anneleen Arnout, for example, looked at the Belgian museums in wartime, Herman Stynen at the care of monuments and the landscape. See: ANNELEEN ARNOUT, “Archimedes achterna. De Belgische musea tijdens de Eerste Wereldoorlog”, in *Bijdragen tot de Eigentijdse Geschiedenis*, no. 22, 2010, p. 55-92; HERMAN STYNEN, *De onvoltooid verleden tijd. Een geschiedenis van de monumenten- en landschapszorg in België 1835-1940*, Brussel, 1998, p. 221-247.
8. BÉNÉDICTE ROCHET, “A State Cinematographic Practice in Wartime. The Belgian Army Film Unit 1916-1922”, in *Tijdschrift voor Mediageschiedenis*, no. 1, 2016 (19), p. 23.
9. FRANK HARBERS and THUNNIS VAN OORT, “Bredel en stimulans: de impact van de Eerste Wereldoorlog op film en pers in België en Nederland”, *Tijdschrift voor Mediageschiedenis*, no. 1, 2016 (19), p. 1.
10. ELIANE GUBIN and HENK DE SMAELE, *Vrouwen en mannen ten oorlog, 1914-1918. Gender@war*, Leuven, 2015, p. 37-38; JAMES AULICH, “Graphic Arts and Advertising as War Propaganda”, in *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, 2014, DOI: 10.15463/ie11418.10463; EBERHARD DEMM, “Propaganda at Home and Abroad (Version 1.1)”, in *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, 2017, DOI: 10.15463/ie11418.10910/15461.15461; STEPHEN, BADSEY, “Propaganda: Media in War Politics”, in *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, 2014, DOI: 10.15463/ie11418.10046.
11. LEEN ENGELEN, “Film/Cinema (Belgium)”, in *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, 2014, DOI: 10.15463/ie11418.10320.
12. Invented in the mid-seventeenth century, this projection apparatus was used for projecting enlarged ‘lantern slides’ through a lens onto a screen or wall, by making use of a convex mirror and an objective lens with a light sources between it and hand-painted or drawn, later photographic, glass slides (comparable to a slide projector). On the eve of the First World War, illustrated lectures were a deep-rooted practice in the socio-cultural infrastructure of modernizing cities. For a brief overview of the history of the projection lantern, see: MARGO BUELENS-TERRYIN, IASON JONGEPIER and ILJA VAN DAMME, “Lichtbeelden voor de massa. Toe-eigening en gebruik van de magische lantaarn in Antwerpen en Brussel (c.1860-c.1920)”, in *Stadsgeschiedenis*, no. 2, 2019 (14), p.122-136.

of cinema¹³. In a recent book by Gertjan Willems and Bruno De Wever on media and nation building in Flanders, the projection lantern – although called an “influential medium” – is once again banned to oblivion because of “lack of research”¹⁴. Although a large amount of historical research is rightfully devoted to how harshly censored film consequently influenced film-going in occupied Belgium, it is often overlooked that in the ordinance of 13 October 1914 moving images were mentioned alongside the projection lantern¹⁵.

Long before the war, the projection lantern was eagerly used by various urban actors as a mass communication medium for disseminating information, socio-political propaganda, instruction and education, and entertainment in the form of lantern lectures¹⁶. Mapping out how many lectures took place on a weekly or monthly basis is a herculean task. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this practice increased in popularity and numbers. In this way, illustrated lectures competed with other forms of leisure activities such as theatre and opera. They could take place not only in small association halls, but also in prestigious venues such as the city hall or Antwerp Zoo¹⁷. This medium made it possible to use the spoken word, light, and intonation in combination with the projected images to create “powerful sensory, intimate, and interactive expe-

riences” that evoke a sense of a shared identity¹⁸. The slides served both as illustrations and as evidence of the speaker’s argument, but they could also be framed within an (international) visual education movement, as “visual technologies [were] more ‘vivid,’ ‘vital,’ and capable of leaving ‘impressions’ on young people’s malleable minds than the written or spoken word”¹⁹. For the aforementioned reasons, the projection lantern was actively used by all warring countries.

How German occupation and (cultural) policies in Belgium initiated changes in lantern practices and how media was handled in a broader sense will be the main point of my analysis, which will focus on two strategically important cities in the General Government where a civil occupation regime was installed: Antwerp and Brussels. This article will therefore spotlight the projection lantern in the context of the First World War by using an in-depth analysis of digitized advertisements and reviews in *BelgicaPress* and *Het Archief*, both of which were censored newspapers (with different political and religious ideologies, appendix 1)²⁰. Moreover, regulations dating from the German occupation and archive material of the ADVN (Archive and Documentation Center for National Movements) will be included in the analysis. These sources are looked at from a socio-geographical and historical contextualizing perspective, rather

13. See studies as BÉNÉDICTE ROCHET, “A State Cinematographic...”, p. 23-33; Tamar Cachet, “Motieven om oorlogsdoden te tonen in de pers. De dood fotografisch verbeeld in de geïllustreerde pers tijdens de Eerste Wereldoorlog”; in *Tijdschrift voor Mediageschiedenis*, no. 1, 2016 (19), p. 35-59; GUIDO CONVENTS, “Film en de Duitse inval in België. Of op welke wijze de overheid film als machtsinstrument ontwikkelde” in *Une guerre total? La Belgique dans la Première Guerre Mondiale. Nouvelles tendances de la recherche historique*, 2003, p. 315-328, 315; SABINE LENK, “De Robert Vrielynck collectie. Een ‘imaginair museum rond het bewegend beeld”, in *Tijd-schrift. Heemkundig en lokaal-erfgoedpraktijk in Vlaanderen*, no. 1, 2018 (8), p. 131.

14. GERTJAN WILLEMS and BRUNO DE WEVER, “Inleiding”, in *De verbeelding van de leeuw. Een geschiedenis van media en natievorming in Vlaanderen*, 2020, p. 18.

15. EBERHARD DEMM, “Censorship (Version 2.0)”, in *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, 2017, DOI: 10.15463/ie11418.10725/15462.15460.

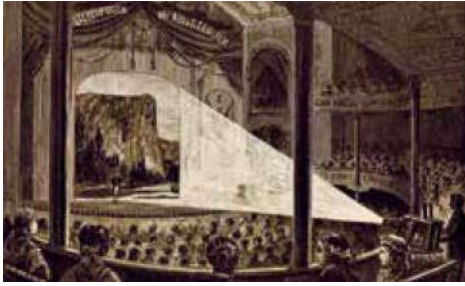
16. ALAIN BOILLAT, « Le spectacle du lanterne magique considéré sous l’angle de la conférence: quelques traces écrites d’une performance orale », in *Performing New Media, 1890-1915*, 2014, p. 227-235; LUDWIG VOGL-BIENEK and RICHARD CRANGLE, *Screen culture and the Social Question 1880-1914*, New Barnet, 2014.

17. MARGO BUELENS-TERRYIN, IASON JONGEPIER and ILJA VAN DAMME, “Lichtbeelden voor de massa...”, p.131, 135.

18. KAREN EIFLER, “Sensation – intimacy – interaction: lantern performances in religious and socio-political education”, in *Early Popular Visual Culture*, no. 1, 2019 (17), p. 47.

19. SABINE LENK and NELLEKE TEUGHELs, “Sprekken met licht. Magisch projectieplaatjes”, *Koorts*, 1, 2020, p. 4.; KATIE DAY GOOD, “Sight-Seeing in School Visual Technology, Virtual Experience, and World Citizenship in American Education, 1900-1903”, *Technology and Culture*, 1, 2019, 99, 105, 109.

20. Both websites bring together digitized historical newspapers. See: <https://www.belgicapress.be/> and <https://hetarchief.be/>.



Lecture with the projection lantern. Source : T.H. McAllister, *Catalogue and price list of stereopticons, dissolving view apparatus, magic lanterns, and artistically-colored photographic views on glass* (New York 1887).

Kring voor volksvoordrachten.
 Voormelde instelling herneemt hare voordrachten van 31 Oktober af aan. Deze worden gegeven in de gemeenteschool der Naamsche straat, alle Zondagen, telkens om 17 uur :
 De volgorde is de hiernavermelde :
 31 Oktober. — *Rondom den « Witten Berg ».*
 7 November. — *De Nieuwe School en de Ouders.*
 14 November. — *Nederland.*
 21 November. — *De Schoonheden der Italiaansche Schilderkunst.*
 28 November. — *De Geschiedenis der Menschelijke Woning.*
 Al deze voordrachten, waarvoor de toegang vrij is, worden opgehelderd door lichtbeelden. ALPHAMI.

Example of announcements of lantern lectures in *Gazet van Brussel*, October 30, 1915. Source : *Gazet van Brussel*, October 30, 1915.

VOORDRACHT van Dr. Aug. Borms over: « Onze Jongens in Krijgsgevangenschap ». — Te 9 1/4 Toren uur vangt de voordracht aan.

Heer Alfred Bogaerts, voorzitter, dankte de aanwezigen voor hunne talrijke opkomst. — Een honderdtal dames en heeren waren aanwezig. — Hij maakte eene korte geschiedenis der medewerking van Dr. Aug. Borms in den huidige Vlaamschen strijd te Lier. Hij besprak in enkele woorden de tegenwerking die de Aktivisten te Lier in de laatste tijden moesten verduren. Alhoewel het den schijn had, zegde spreker, dat we min of meer moedeloos waren, bleven we een krachtige individueele propaganda voeren; overstelpen onze bevolking met Vlaamschgezinde vlugschriften, en 't is dank daaraan dat we met vreugde kunnen vaststellen, dat we er in gelukt zijn bij ons Volk de Vlaamsche fierheid hoog te houden, en dit bewijst ten stelligste uwe talrijke opkomst, om vandaag het weldoende woord te komen hooren van onzen gevierden krijgsgevangenen-vriend Heer Dr. Borms. (Luide toejuichingen bekrachtigden deze woorden.)

Op een gloedvolle, aangename en goeddelijke wijze weerspiegelde heer Dr. Borms de toehoorders het leven onzer jongens in de gevangenkampen zoodanig voor oogen, alsof men wezenlijk er tegenwoordig ware geweest.

Met begeestering getuigde de heer Voordrachthouder van de echte Vlaamsche trouw, waarmede onze Jongens bezielde zijn; die mannen, die eens de Duitse kogels en granaten om hun ooren hoorden fluiten, en hun leven veil hadden voor dat land, wiens regeering hun en ons steeds stiefmoederlijk behandeld heeft. 't Is dan ook niet te verwonderen dat zulke mannen van geen lapmiddelen houden en zich op 't radikaalste standpunt ter oplossing van het Vlaamsche vraagstuk plaatsen. Zij ook zijn thans bereid om den Staat Vlaanderen, hun eenig Vaderland, met hun leven te verdedigen.

Deze woorden werden door het voorlezen van menigen brief uit de kampen gestaafd.

De reeks lichtbeelden wakte de algemeene belangstelling op.

Luide toejuichingen vielen spreker ten deel.

Deze prachtige voordracht sloot met het zingen door de aanwezigen — rechtstaande — van den « Vlaamschen Leeuw ».

Example of a review of a lantern lecture in *Het Vlaamsche Nieuws*, April 22, 1918. Source : *Het Vlaamsche Nieuws*, April 22, 1918.

than prioritizing visual analysis. In what follows, I reflect on the substantive changes that took place in the lanternscape of Antwerp and Brussels as a result of the war situation, German censorship, and cultural policies. More specifically, (II) how the Germans tried to get a grip on the media landscape in an occupied Antwerp and Brussels, with a focus not only on the projection lantern, but also (III) the lantern lectures under German occupation regarding: (a) when and where these lectures could take place, (b) the mobility that was in normal circumstances so characteristic of the projection lantern, and (c) which themes could be addressed by which organizations. Although the so-called 'activists' (Flemish supporters of the German cause) were a small minority in Antwerp and Brussels, especially in the first two years, they also make for an interesting case study. This will be covered in the last part (IV), in which the opportunities the new political situation created for the Flemish movement, and more especially the activists, will be discussed²¹.

II. Getting grip on the media landscape: German policy during the Great War

The German army and newly set-up war administration took immediate action in the early days of occupation by introducing media and entertainment censorship and various regulations and prohibitions. Already on 13 October 1914, the occupation administration declared that "all theatrical

performances, sung or spoken recitations, cinematographic performances, and lantern lectures had to first be submitted to the censor for examination and approval"²². Not only lantern lectures faced intervention by a censor for political reasons for the very first time in Belgian history, but visual media altogether came under German censorship²³. This clearly illustrates how the occupiers strategically used mass media to maintain strict control over the flow of information and images to the population. Moreover, from 1915 onwards, a *Bildungszentrale* (including a special audiovisual service) at Kunstlaan 9 in Brussels was responsible for the distribution of photographs and films in occupied Belgium, as well as for the organization of entertainment evenings with films, concerts, lantern slides, and scientific lectures for Germans and German-friendly Belgians²⁴.

Existing literature often states that activist propaganda "continued to draw heavily on the traditional stock of mid-nineteenth-century *flamingant* themes and techniques. Efforts toward using more modern means of propaganda seem to have remained half-hearted at best"²⁵. Sophie De Schaepdrijver mainly refers here to the lack of a coherent film strategy. Although at the outbreak of the First World War, the lantern was seen as a more established and stable medium, which had already proven its usefulness within the more well-off circles, it is an overly modernist, or even teleological view on media use in the Great War to state that the projection lantern was no longer modern means of propaganda²⁶. Measuring the success of the activ-

21. CHRISTINE VAN EVERBROECK, "Flemish Movement", in *1914 – 1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, 2014, DOI: 10.15463/ie11418.10284.

22. Translated from the Dutch: "theatervertooningen, gezongen of gesproken recitaties, evenals tentoonstellingen van kinematografische of andere lichtbeelden [...] alleenlijk [georganiseerd mogen worden] indien zij te voren door den censor toegelaten zijn." CHARLES HENRY HUBERICH and ALEXANDER NICOL-SPEYER, *Législation Allemande...*, p. 22-24; SOPHIE DE SCHAEPDRIJVER, *Het koninkrijk België tijdens de Eerste Wereldoorlog*, 2013, p. 104.

23. MARTIN LOIPERDINGER, "The Social Impact of Screen Culture 1880-1914", in *Screen Culture and the Social Question 1880-1914*, 2014, p. 14; STEPHEN BOTTOMORE, "The Lantern and Cinematograph for Political Persuasion before WW1: Towards an Introduction and Typology", in *Screen Cultures and the Social Question 1880-1914*, p. 27.

24. GUIDO CONVENTS, "Film en de Duitse inval...", p. 326-327.

25. SOPHIE DE SCHAEPDRIJVER, "Occupation, propaganda and the idea of Belgium", in *European culture in the Great War. The arts, entertainment, and propaganda, 1914-1918*, 1999, p. 267-294, 289.

26. Ongoing research within the B-magic project shows that by the end of the nineteenth century lantern lectures had become a habit in many socio-cultural organisations that often focused on the more well-off citizens in the city. This is supported by the data in my broader database. For more information: MARGO BUELENS-TERRYN, IASON JONGEPIER and ILJA VAN DAMME, "Lichtbeelden voor de massa...", p. 128-132.

ists' propaganda offensive by the visual medium (cinema) that – in retrospect – triumphs over the arsenal of its countless variants, is ignoring the fact that the lantern itself, after all, was still a modern medium. Although its invention can be dated back to the seventeenth-century, the projection lantern in a technological optimised form was only institutionalised within the lecture circuit at the turn of the twentieth-century, in this way modernising the centuries-old culture of public speaking in cities. The rise of cinema did not immediately degrade the projection lantern into an outdated medium of the past. Quite the contrary, although moving images had already taken over the role of greatest entertainer from their still variants before the outbreak of the war, the projection lantern was still a few steps ahead of its newer variant in terms of information dissemination and education²⁷.

First and foremost, slide sets sold on the international market were easily adapted to local contexts by simple interventions such as changing the narrative, reordering the slides, or mixing different slide sets²⁸. Moreover, there was an abundance of photographic slides on the market – both for sale and for rent, which made them easier to obtain than films. There was also the possibility for organizations or speakers “to produce their own slides by hand or with a typewriter, and also to reuse them after cleaning”²⁹. This could drastically reduce costs. In addition, medium length

and short films were still the norm in war-stricken Belgium, while lantern lectures could last up to two hours, taking the time to develop a profound narrative³⁰. Before the revolution in editing and other film techniques in the 1920s, the rhetorical power of a speaker with a lantern was common knowledge among organizers, which was less the case for cinema³¹. The teething troubles of cinema, for example the “flicker” and “shakiness” of moving images, resulted in many organizations preferring the more stable projection lantern³². Moreover, lantern lectures were still considered ‘safer’, as they would contribute to the public discourse on social issues, while film screenings were more likely to be seen as part of the social problem itself – although changes were on their way³³. This article will show that (activist) efforts to appropriate lantern lectures did not stem from an inability to use the relatively new medium of cinema, but instead reflected a conscious choice to exploit a more ideal medium for its purposes.

The projection lantern, as we will see, became a medium deliberately used by the German occupiers within the context of their cultural policies, and later, regarding the *Flamenpolitik*³⁴. The cities of Antwerp and Brussels are interesting cases to study in this respect: Antwerp was seen as an old Catholic stronghold of the past, strongly anchored in local traditions and, more importantly, a growing Flemish sense of identity (often described as

27. MARGO BUELENS-TERRY, IASON JONGEPIER and ILJA VAN DAMME, “Lichtbeelden voor de massa...”, p. 124-128.

28. SARAH DELLMANN, “Getting to Know the Dutch: Magic Lantern Slides as Traces of Intermedial Performance Practices”, in *Performing New Media, 1890-1915*, 2014, p. 236-244; INE VAN DOOREN, “Our Magic Lantern Heritage: Archiving a Past Medium that Nearly Never Was”, in *Screen Culture and the Social Question 1880-1914*, 2014, p. 184.

29. MARINA DAHLQUIST, “Health Entrepreneurs: American Screen Practices in the 1910s”, in *Screen culture and the Social Question 1880-1914*, 2014, p. 138-139.

30. LEEN ENGELN, “Film/Cinema...”, DOI: 10.15463/ie11418.10320. An article of 28 February 1914 in both *Journal De Bruxelles* and *Le Vingtième Siècle*, for example, mentions that the illustrated lecture had a duration of almost two hours.

31. DANIEL BILTEREYST, “Ciné-clubs en het geheugen van de film. Over de eerste Belgische filmclubs en de constructie van filmgeschiedenis”, in *Filmsporen. Opstellen over film, verleden en geheugen*, 2007, p. 41.

32. MARINA DAHLQUIST, “Health Entrepreneurs...”, p. 138.

33. MARTIN LOIPERDINGER, “The Social Impact...”, p. 15.

34. The *Flamenpolitik* was the German ‘divide and rule’ technique aimed at getting a select group of radical Flemish nationalists (‘activists’) on their side by addressing their linguistic and cultural grievances which had appeared on the political stage (long) before the war. SOPHIE DE SCHAEPEDRIJVER, “Belgium”, in *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, 2018, DOI: 10.15463/ie11418.11285; LODE WILS, *Flamenpolitik en aktivisme. Vlaanderen tegenover België in de Eerste Wereldoorlog*, Leuven, 1974, p. 20-22.

“the beating heart of the Flemish Movement”³⁵. Brussels, with its international ties, on the other hand, was the de facto bilingual capital of the country, but ruled by members of a mostly French-speaking nobility, industrial bourgeoisie, and financial circles. In spite of this, Brussels, alongside Antwerp and Ghent, was regarded as one of the three major activist centers at that time³⁶. In terms of population, these were also the three largest cities and the leading cultural and artistic centres in nineteenth-century Belgium³⁷.

In order to understand the changes that took place in the lanternscape of both cities as a result of the German attempts to gain control of the media landscape, an analysis of the newspapers that were permitted by German occupiers is required. After all, these accurately reflect the changes that were taking place in public life since it was a common practice to announce or review lantern lectures in the press. Newspapers offer an interesting viewpoint on the practices of the lantern and how they were presented to their public under changing circumstances. During peacetime, each of these newspapers had their own ‘target group’, based on the ideological and socio-economical fragmentation of Belgian society. Almost all newspapers had a Catholic, liberal, or socialist signa-

ture, and they generally targeted either higher classes, middle classes, or workers’ groups³⁸. A growing group of readers, who became more involved in political life and wanted (and needed) to be better informed (and persuaded), reached out to these cheap mass newspapers which had come into existence during the (second half) of the nineteenth-century³⁹.

To map changes in the lanternscape that were outlined in the censored press, a sample of digitized newspapers of various ideologies published in Antwerp (34) and Brussels (18) was selected for the years 1914-18 (appendix 1)⁴⁰. Utilizing various search terms, advertisements and/or reviews about lantern lectures were selected. In digital searches the error margin of the OCR (Optical Character Recognition) cannot be ignored, but since ‘missed hits’ are random, the result obtained can be considered representative. This resulted in a database of lantern lectures announced and/or reviewed in Antwerp and Brussels newspapers between 1914 and 1918. Both types of articles could differ in form, length, and details, but most announcements briefly mentioned the speaker and location, including the address, date, starting hour, and title of the lecture. Sometimes additional information was given on previous successful lectures by the

35. In our following analysis, I will be mainly focusing on lantern practices taking place in the old city centre of Antwerp. Contrary to Antoon Vrints’ study, the often highly urbanised municipalities that were in the direct vicinity of Antwerp (Merksem, Borgerhout, Deurne, Berchem, Mortsel and Hoboken) are not included in this article. ANTOON VRINTS, *Bezette Stad. Vlaams-nationalistisch collaboratie in Antwerpen tijdens de Eerste Wereldoorlog*, Brussel, 2002, p. 19-23; INGE BERTELS, BERT DE MUNCK, HERMAN VAN GOETHEM e.a., *Antwerpen. Biografie van een stad*, Antwerpen, 2010, p. 34; HENK DE SMAELE, *Rechts Vlaanderen. Religie en stemgedrag in negentiende-eeuws België*, Leuven, 2009, p. 361.5

36. Not only the commune of Brussels itself bore this name, but also the sum of the city centre and the communes around it; it is in this broader sense that Brussels is understood in this article. Though considered in name as a whole, the surrounding communes had authority over their own police forces, town councils and public works. The communes of Brussels are: Anderlecht, Oudergem, Sint-Agatha-Berchem, Brussels, Etterbeek, Evere, Vorst, Ganshoren, Elsene, Jette, Koekelberg, Sint-Jans-Molenbeek, Sint-Gilles, Sint-Joost-ten-Node, Schaarbeek, Ukkel, Watermaal-Bosvoorde, Sint-Lambrechts-Woluwe and Sint-Pieters-Woluwe. NICOLAS KENNY, *The Feel of the City...*, p. 32; CARL STRIKWERDA, *A House Divided. Catholics, Socialists and Nationalists in Nineteenth-Century Belgium*, LANHAM, BOULDER, New York e.a., 1997, p. 36-39, 57; ANTOON VRINTS, *Bezette Stad...*, 19; LODE WILS, *Flamenpolitik en aktivisme...*, p. 86.

37. ULRIKE MÜLLER, “The amateur and the public sphere. Private collectors in Brussels, Antwerp and Ghent through the eyes of European travellers in the long nineteenth century”, *Journal of the History of Collections*, no. 3, 2017 (29), p. 425.

38. HENK DE SMAELE, *Rechts Vlaanderen...*, p. 198; FLORIAN KEISINGER, “Press/Journalism”, in 1914-1918-online. *International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, 2014, DOI: 10.15463/ie11418.10258.

39. ELS DE BENS and KARIN RAEYMAEKERS, *De pers in België. Het verhaal van de Belgische dagbladpers: gisteren, vandaag en morgen*, Leuven, 2010, p. 32-37; AAD VAN MAANEN, “Wij zijn de onzichtbare meesters der samenleving.” De Antwerpse pers in de negentiende eeuw”, in *HistoriANT*, no. 5, 2017, p. 59; FLORIAN KEISINGER, “Press/Journalism”, DOI: 10.15463/ie11418.10258.

40. The different ideologies or categories are: liberal, Catholic, socialist, (censored) war press, cultural, flamingant, professional magazines, (trade) unions & workers’ movements, colonial, financial-economic, unknown.

same speaker and/or organisation, the entrance price, the expected audience, or sneak peaks into the content of the lecture. Reviews typically included these elements as well, with a description of the event that could range from a single sentence about the audience's reactions or turnout to a very extensive discussion of the content, the speakers' performances, images used, and/or audience reactions and numbers. This occasionally included value judgements. No significant differences can be noted between pre-war and wartime announcements or reviews, and no notable variations between different newspapers was observed.

Despite the varying publication dates of the incorporated newspapers of the First World War, the main ideologies for both cities are represented by a sufficient number of newspapers. Therefore, the sample can be considered reflecting important changes in the media landscape and thus the (advertising) practices of the lantern lectures. In order to reconstruct the changes in the lanternscape, and in order to place the Belgian lanternscape in its proper historical context, a comparison will be made not only with the first peaceful months of 1914, but also with a sample period of 1902-1904 from my more extensive database⁴¹.

Figures 1 and 2 reveal a first profound evolution regarding the ideological framing of the press in Antwerp and Brussels, due to the increasing importance of flamingant newspapers during the

war⁴². At first sight, this leads to a biased view of the lantern lectures that threatens to be caught in a hermeneutic circle: since – as we shall see – the Flemish-minded press grew strongly as a result of the policy of the German occupiers, the number of lantern lectures registered in it also grew proportionally. For this article, however, this bias is an advantage. The newspapers admitted by the occupiers give a good reflection of the German cultural policies and how the occupiers concretely intervened in public (entertainment) life. It remains important, however, to be aware of the limitations of this source material: the press covered only a segment of the lantern lecture supply, is subject to the ravages of time (not all newspapers have completely survived) and there is also a certain motivation behind the contemporary digitalization process, which is not transparently reflected on the websites in question. This article therefore does not claim to recreate absolute reality but aims to give an insight into and an indicator of the major patterns and shifts, for which the selected newspaper material is adequate.

The absence of the socialist pillar in Antwerp is mainly due to the available digitized source material (i.e. the lack of digitized Antwerp socialist newspapers)⁴³. Ongoing research at the Centre for Urban History (University of Antwerp) and the B-magic consortium, however, shows that all three traditional pillars of Belgian society made extensive use of the projection lantern. Figure 1 and 2 serve above all as a first illustration of the

41. For the sample period of 1902-1904 the Catholic newspapers *Het Handelsblad* (Antwerp) and *Journal de Bruxelles* (Brussels) and the liberal newspaper *L'Indépendance Belge* (Brussels), all three of them digitized at Belgicapress, were consulted. Three months (February, March and December) of the analogue, liberal newspapers *Le Précurseur* and *Le Nouveau Précurseur* were consulted with the help of Eline Ceulemans and Els Minne. More information about this broader database, see: MARGO BUELENS-TERRYIN, IASON JONGEPIER and LIJA VAN DAMME, "Lichtbeelden voor de massa...", p. 128-132.

42. The colours used in the figures indicate the ideology of the newspaper in which the lectures were announced/reviewed, i.e. with the doubles included. For the classification of the newspapers within the ideological spectrum, the classification applied by *Het Archief* has been used. If a newspaper fell into two categories there, it counts for half in both categories in figure 1 and 2. The rise of lectures announced in the Flemish-oriented press was even more impressive than it seems at first sight: since *Het Vlaamsche Nieuws* (an Antwerp newspaper) was categorised on *Het Archief* as both 'liberal' and 'flamingant', each article in this newspaper counts for half in both categories. However, the liberal part in this figure can be mostly devoted to announcements in *Het Vlaamsche Nieuws*. The same is true for *De Vlaamsche Gazet van Brussel*, published in Brussels until 20 August 1914. *De Vlaamsche Gazet* (van Brussel), <[https://nevb.be/wiki/Vlaamsche_Gazet_\(van_Brussel\)_De](https://nevb.be/wiki/Vlaamsche_Gazet_(van_Brussel)_De)>, consulted on (Nieuwe) Encyclopedie van de Vlaamse Beweging (5 June 2020).

43. The same applies to the different proportions of the traditional pillars in Antwerp and Brussels. Therefore, these data do not provide absolute figures on the importance of a particular pillar in one of the two cities.

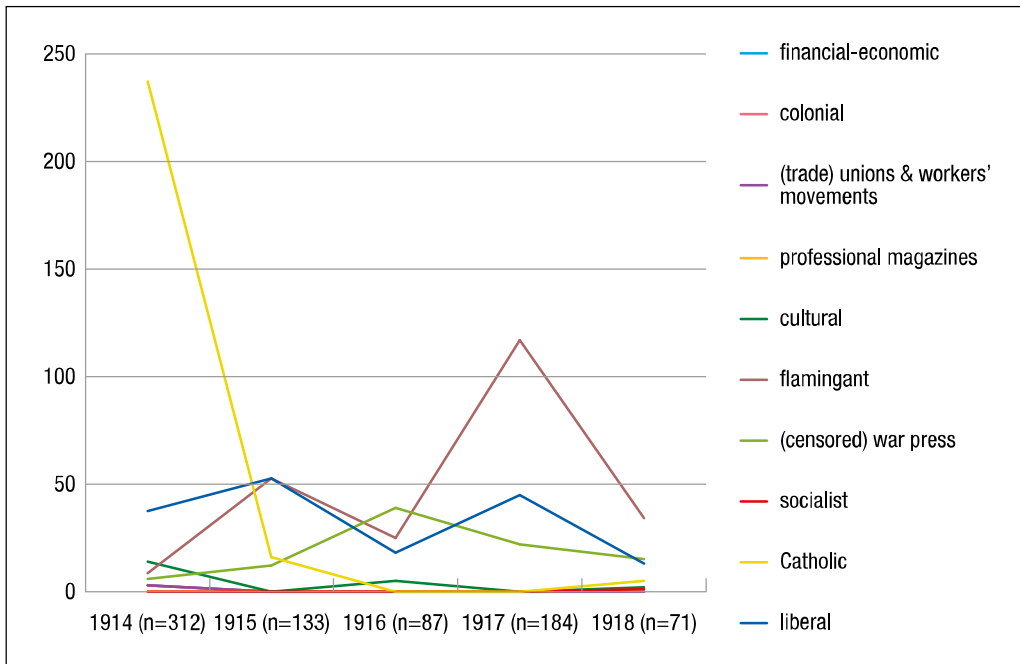


Figure 1. The ideology of the Antwerp newspapers in which lantern lectures (1914-1918) were announced/reviewed (relative values).

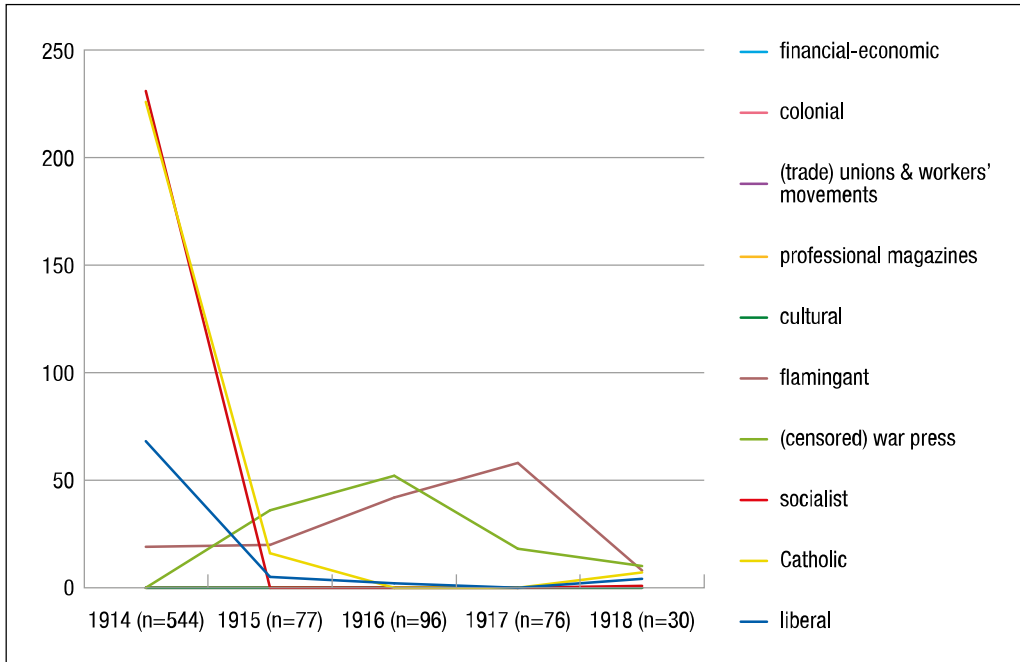


Figure 2. The ideology of the Brussels newspapers in which lantern lectures (1914-1918) were announced/reviewed (relative values).

pillarized press landscape in both 1902-1904 and the first months of 1914. This finding confirms the existing historiography. In addition to the rise of mass politics, scholarship generally agrees that socio-cultural life was highly influenced by the phenomenon of pillarization⁴⁴. Nevertheless, certain forms of entertainment, such as café visits, and as far as I can establish for now, also public lantern lectures, sometimes slipped through the net. Although leisure activities could be open to everyone and – as far as we know – lantern lectures were not censored in peacetime, pillars could put limits to their followers' freedom⁴⁵. Ongoing research shows that illustrated lectures were not only organized exclusively within one pillar, but also that others took place in 'non-pillarized' urban spaces such as theatres and museums⁴⁶. The pillarization is therefore an important phenomenon to consider when analysing the announcements and reviews of lantern lectures in the press, since pre-war newspapers were most often linked to one of the three traditional pillars.

My analysis of the ideological framing of newspapers in which lantern lectures were advertised, shows that the pillarized newspapers lost their strong influence on the Flemish-minded ones during German occupation. This shift is due to several factors. Firstly, in Brussels no major daily newspaper continued its publication due to difficulties with censorship. In Antwerp, however,

numerous newspapers remained active during the first months of the war. By applying a 'presence policy' they tried to remain as active as possible within the guidelines of German censorship. However, after a conflict with the German occupier, three important Antwerp newspapers from different pillars with origins (long) before the Great War, namely *Gazet Van Antwerpen* (Catholic), *Het Handelsblad* (Catholic) and *De Nieuwe Gazet* (liberal), stopped their publication in April-June 1915⁴⁷. These initiated constraints curtailed the common practice of announcing lantern lectures in the (pillarized) press, which limited the ability of the inhabitants to be informed about these lectures. Rather than questioning the representativeness of the corpus of sources, this demonstrates the limitations and difficulties that the German occupation and its cultural policies subjected to the lantern landscape.

In addition, the traditional Antwerp and Brussels parties had proclaimed 'God's peace', meaning that political battles were to be postponed until the German enemy had been defeated, and that, for the time being, cooperation was considered more important. A striking example of this is the observation that all new newspapers produced in Brussels under German censorship – and which opted for the 'presence policy' – refrained from any ideological affiliation whatsoever ('(censored) war press' in the figures)⁴⁸.

44. The pillarization gained a foothold in Belgium in the shadow of the so-called 'School War' (1878-1884). This was the first major outburst of the Catholic-anticlerical conflict within Belgium. In the fight against the liberal Education Act of 1879 (aimed at centralizing and declericalizing the Belgian school system) the Catholics mobilized massively and successfully. Consequently, urban life in Belgium was no longer exclusively characterised by socio-economic fault lines between rich and poor, but became increasingly fragmented by religious and ideological lines. On the eve of the First World War, three traditional ideological pillars were in place: the Catholic, the liberal and the socialist. As a rule, club life and public amusements also became segmented along pillarized fault lines. MAARTEN VAN GINDERACHTER, *The everyday nationalism...*, p. 16-17; STAF HELLEMANS, *Strijd om de moderniteit: sociale bewegingen en verzuiling in Europa sinds 1800*, Leuven, 1990, p. 26-27; CARL STRIKWERDA, *A House Divided...*, p. 12, 71-73.

45. STAF HELLEMANS, *Strijd om de moderniteit...*, p. 4, 35, 125; MARTIN LOIPERDINGER, "The Social Impact...", p. 14; STEPHEN BOTTOMORE, "The Lantern and Cinematograph...", p. 26-27; KAREL DIBBETS, "Het taboe van de Nederlandse filmcultuur: neutraal in een verzuild land", in *Tijdschrift voor Mediageschiedenis*, no. 2, 2006 (9), p. 48.

46. This is based on my broader database of 1902-1904. MARGO BUELENS-TERRYIN, IASON JONGEPIER and ILJA VAN DAMME, "Lichtbeelden voor de massa...", p. 122-136.

47. LODE WILS, *Flamenpolitiek en aktivisme...*, p. 89, 93-94; ELS DE BENS and KARIN RAEYMAEKERS, *De Pers in België...*, p. 37-38; ANTOON VRIJNTS, *Bezette Stad...*, p. 68.

48. Newspapers that were published during the years of war but were not affiliated, according *Het Archief*, with one of the three traditional pillars or with the flamingant ideology are considered 'war press'. Since most of these (as far as we know) appeared under censorship and not clandestinely, they are included together under the category '(censored) war press'.

The sources central to my study, as shown in figures 1 and 2, also confirm research by Luc Vandeweyer. He demonstrated that adherents of the Flemish movement (called 'flamingants'), in contrast to the 'God's peace', started working on a kind of 'linguistic' pillar formation during the years of war. Before the Great War, the ideological and socio-economic opposition in the Belgian society had taken precedence over the language struggle between the Flemish and French-speaking communities in Belgium. This led to the fact that flamingants, pursuing Flemish language rights as well as the cultural autonomy and emancipation of Flanders, were mainly to be found in extensions, or 'sub-pillars', within the three traditional pillars. This was less prominent in the liberal and socialist pillar than in the Catholic one. Among a younger generation of Flemish intellectuals, this started to change in the last decades before the Great War, resulting in a couple of Flemish-oriented organizations that managed to transcend the traditional pillars, such as the *Groeningewacht* and the *Algemeen Nederlandsch Verbond*⁴⁹. Because the membership number of activist organizations grew only slowly during the war, they started to allow flamingant organizations to take on an ideological color⁵⁰.

Secondly, in addition to censorship, the cultural policies, and more precisely the *Flamenpolitik*, was systematically developed, leaving traces in the press and in the lanternscape of Antwerp and Brussels. This was not the intention from the beginning. After all, the *Flamenpolitik* was originally aimed at influencing the neutral Netherlands, as this country was economically more important for

Germany. Only when it became clear that the war would last longer was this practice also applied to occupied Belgium itself⁵¹. It would, however, take a long time before the German *Flamenpolitik* began to achieve some success in Belgium. Until the summer of 1915, German interference in the ambition of Flemish activists had ranged from very limited to non-existent. The ratio between the effort and money invested and the Flemish-oriented sympathy was particularly distorted, both in quality and quantity⁵². Still, my analysis shows that the share of Flemish-oriented press (thus also the lantern lectures announced in it) increased in the context of a growing flamingantism and, from 1916 onwards, a more strongly developed *Flamenpolitik* (figure 1 and 2)⁵³.

The activist influence gradually gained strength after the former *Vlaamsche Gazet – Het Laatste Nieuws* (a flamingant, but neutral oriented newspaper) was named *Het Vlaamsche Nieuws* in January 1915. From that moment onwards, this newspaper profiled itself as 'progressive Flemish-oriented and liberal' and unilaterally turned its back on the notion of 'God's peace'. From the beginning *Het Vlaamsche Nieuws* received a monthly subsidy from the German government. This allowed the Germans to control the newspaper and made it an essential instrument of their *Flamenpolitik*. It also ensured the continuation of the publication, even when all the other Antwerp newspapers came into conflict with the German occupying forces and stopped publication. Nevertheless, the circulation of the openly collaborating *Het Vlaamsche Nieuws* was, however, presumably low, with about 8,700 copies. After all,

49. LUC VANDEWEYER, "Zuilvorming tijdens de Eerste Wereldoorlog", in *Une guerre total? La Belgique dans la Première Guerre Mondiale. Nouvelles tendances de la recherche historique*, 2003, p. 97-98; THEO D'HAEN, "Capitalising (on) World Literature: Brussels as Shadow Capital of Modernity/Modernism" in *Other Capitals of the Nineteenth Century. An Alternative Mapping of Literary and Cultural Space*, 2017, p. 111-127, 121-126; ANTOON VRINTS, "Activisme", in *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, 2016, DOI: 10.15463/ie11418.10999; CHRISTINE VAN EVERBROECK, "Flemish Movement", DOI: 10.15463/ie11418.10284; SOPHIE DE SCHAEPEDRIJVER, "Belgium", DOI: 10.15463/ie11418.11285; Id., "Occupation, propaganda, ...", p. 281; ULRICH TIEDAU, "De Duitse cultuurpolitiek in België tijdens de Eerste Wereldoorlog", in *Bijdragen tot de Eigentijdse Geschiedenis*, p. 21-45, 22; H. J. ELIAS, *Vijfentwintig jaar Vlaamsche Beweging*, vol. 1, Antwerpen, 1969, p. 58-65.

50. LUC VANDEWEYER, "Zuilvorming...", p. 101-107.

51. ULRICH TIEDAU, "De Duitse cultuurpolitiek...", p. 22, 44; H. J. ELIAS, *Vijfentwintig jaar...*, p. 18; ANTOON VRINTS, *Bezette Stad...*, p. 16.

52. SOPHIE DE SCHAEPEDRIJVER, *De Grote Oorlog...*, p. 158-168; H. J. ELIAS, *Vijfentwintig jaar...*, p. 30.

53. Again, *Het Vlaamsche Nieuws* and *De Vlaamsche Gazet van Brussel* count as a half in both the category 'flamingant' as 'liberal' (see above). ANTOON VRINTS, *Bezette Stad...*, p. 175.

literature stated that the majority of Antwerp's flamingants opted for a Flemish-oriented attitude loyal to Belgium ('passivists'), which limited the extensiveness of the activist grassroots support base in Antwerp⁵⁴. In Brussels, a similar trend can be observed for the activist newspaper *Gazet van Brussel – Nieuwsblad voor het Vlaamsche Volk*. Although it claimed to have a moderate political point of view when it first appeared ("We want to be and remain Flemish Belgians"), this Flemish-minded newspaper was also financially supported by the German occupying forces and became an important tool of the *Flamenpolitik*. A (ideological) radicalization occurred in (the second half of) 1917, which is clearly reflected in figure 2⁵⁵.

The changing colours of the press landscape, due to the combination of censorship, the cultural policies and the *Flamenpolitik*, therefore inevitably had an influence on the advertised lantern lectures that were now increasingly mentioned in the growing flamingant press. How, then, did this affect the number of illustrated lectures organized in and outside Antwerp and Brussels, the organizing associations and the themes addressed?

III. The lantern landscape and the German occupation: changing conditions, changing practices

Although often forgotten by historians, public lecture halls were an important part of entertainment life in Belgian cities. It is mainly in these urban spaces that the projection lantern was deeply

entrenched at the outbreak of the war. Many analyses in existing research on cinemas and theatres can also be applied to a large extent to these public lecture halls, which were equally affected by the regulations of the occupier. Historical literature states that both the intellectual and artistic life came to an abrupt stop with the start of the occupation. Still, growing awareness of the importance of propaganda and image-building motivated the German occupiers to allow (and encourage) the reopening of, inter alia, public venues and film theatres. Municipal or urban authorities usually had to give permission for the re-openings of cinemas, which not all local authorities were willing to do, because this kind of entertainment was not considered very patriotic and would mainly benefit the German occupier financially⁵⁶.

Occupation, censorship, and a changing press landscape caused the deep-rooted, urban practice of illustrated lectures announcement in the press to profoundly change. An example of this can be found in something as seemingly innocent as a starting time. On 8 November 1914 the occupying forces set the clock forward by one hour, to 'normal Central European time'. In advertisements, and external communications in general, this 'German time' was often used. However, it was not popular, and many kept to the Belgian time, often as a statement "to express non-acceptance of German rule"⁵⁷. In the announcements of lantern lectures, it was usually mentioned whether the starting hour was expressed in 'torenuur' (short: T.U., 'clock-tower time' or 'German time') or Belgian time. In 1916 the introduction of daylight-saving time

54. In order to avoid a monopoly of *Het Vlaamsche Nieuws* on the Antwerp press, the city council tried to boycott this newspaper. To prevent this, August Borms and Raf Verhulst joined the editorial board in June 1915. H. J. ELIAS, *Vijfentwintig jaar...*, p. 29, 87-88, 162; ANTOON VRINTS, *Bezette Stad...*, p. 66-72, 85, 209; LODE WILS, *Flamenpolitik en aktivisme...*, p. 88-92; ELS DE BENS en KARIN RAEYMAEKERS, *De Pers in België...*, p. 38; *Het Vlaamsche Nieuws*, <<https://nieuwsvandegrooteoorlog.hetarchief.be/nl/media/het-vlaamsche-nieuws/agXiVcxGVGoQRA7MIXjGHwf?search=Vlaamsche+Nieuws>>, consulted on Het Archief (5 June 2020).

55. *Gazet van Brussel*, <https://nevb.be/wiki/Gazet_van_Brussel>, consulted on (Nieuwe) Encyclopedie van de Vlaamse Beweging (5 June 2020); LODE WILS, *Flamenpolitik en aktivisme...*, p. 75. Translated from the Dutch: "Vlaamsche Belgen willen wij zijn en blijven".

56. LEEN ENGELEN, "België verdeeld. Filmdistributie in bezet België (1914-1918)", in *Tijdschrift voor Mediageschiedenis*, no. 1, 2016 (19), p. 5-7; SOPHIE DE SCHAEPDRIJVER, "Occupation, propaganda...", p. 275-277; GUIDO CONVENTS, "Film en de Duitse inval...", p. 325; ANNELEEN ARNOUT, "Archimedes achterna...", p. 58-59.

57. LEEN ENGELEN and ROEL VANDE WINKEL, "A Captivated Audience. Cinema-going at the zoological garden in occupied Antwerp, 1915-1918", *First World War Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/19475020.2017.1315315.

was added to this, which was not warmly welcomed either by the Belgian population⁵⁸.

This starting time is also a good indicator of the existence of a curfew at any given time. Contrary to the sample period of 1902-1904, where lectures almost never started before 8 P.M., the first illustrated lectures under German occupation – as far as indicated in the press – took place almost exclusively during the day. In the first months of 1915 this shifted in Antwerp towards 6 P.M. (whether or not expressed in German time), meaning that these lectures were always over by the time they normally started in peacetime. It was not until 1917 that most lectures took place again later in the evening (around 8 P.M.). Brussels shows a similar pattern, although more lectures continued to take place in the (late) afternoon in 1917 (compared to Antwerp). This is probably due to the ‘children’s hours’ organized by the activist organization *Volksopbeuring*.

Moreover, in the first weeks of the war, the actions of both warring parties had made the organization of lantern lectures almost impossible, with Brussels being one of the first (and longest) to feel the consequences (figure 3). In Antwerp, however, the lantern season did start, although extremely slowly

compared to the pre-war period, with four lantern lectures in September 1914, two in October and one in December⁵⁹. Only one newspaper article dared to express anti-German sentiments. Reference was made to a previous lecture in which the speaker discussed the neutrality imposed on Belgium at the time of its creation and “made it clear how Germany was violating this rule in the war it waged against Belgium, even though it signed the various stipulations of this law with the other countries”⁶⁰. Four of these seven lectures were organized by *Verbonden der Christene Vakvereniging van het arrondissement Antwerpen* (VCV) in the Nationalestraat 119, who reflected in an article in March 1915 on these difficult first months after the outbreak of the Great War⁶¹. Besides providing material aid from August 1914 onwards, they had also arranged lantern lectures to boost the morale of their members. However, the dramatic attack on the city had put an end to this practice. As stated in *Gazet van Antwerpen*, even when a large part of the fugitive population had returned to Antwerp, circumstances did not allow the restart of these lectures of the *Verbonden*. First, “numerous members were called to military service, and since the young elements were largely the most productive propagandists and collaborators, numerous services were disrupted”⁶². Secondly, “soon the order was carried

58. Ibidem; SOPHIE DE SCHAEFDRIJVER, *De Grote Oorlog...*, p. 128; Id., “Occupation, propaganda...”, p. 281.

59. Three of ones giving in September were organized by *Verbonden der Christene Vakvereniging van het arrondissement Antwerpen* in the Nationalestraat 119. Although this religious colouring may also be due to the number of digitized newspapers from 1914 in which a large part was Catholic, historiography also notes a revival of religiosity in September 1914. A fourth illustrated lecture (about Venice) was given at the Seemansheim nursing home in the Brouwersvliet, where another lecture was given on 1 October. This time the theme was ‘a journey through Belgium, France, England and Russia’. Just before the fall of Antwerp, on 6 October, the doors of the Nationalestraat 119 were opened again for an illustrated lecture, which treated the theme ‘Germany’ and was specifically aimed at the numerous unemployed inhabitants of the city (the newspaper article did not elaborate further on the exact content). After a quiet November, December saw the organisation of festivities dedicated to St. Nicholas in the Stuivenberg hospital, which received great praise and ensured that ‘all sick children’ had ‘a most pleasant day’. *Gazet Van Antwerpen*, 5 September 1914, p. 3; *Gazet Van Antwerpen*, 16 September 1914, p. 3; *Gazet Van Antwerpen*, 21 September 1914, p. 2; *Gazet Van Antwerpen*, 23 September 1914, p. 4; *Het morgenblad: volksdagblad*, 17 September 1914, p. 3; *Gazet Van Antwerpen*, 30 September 1914, p. 3; *Gazet van Antwerpen*, 3 October 1914, p. 3; *Het Vlaamsche Nieuws*, 7 December 1914, p. 1. THOMAS G. MAES, *Antwerpen 1914...*, p. 62.

60. *Gazet Van Antwerpen*, 5 September 1914, p. 3. Translated from the Dutch: “*liet uitschijnen hoe Duitschland in den oorlog die het België aandoet, dit recht met de voeten trapt, al hoewel het de verschillige bepalingen van dit recht met de andere mogelijkheden onderteekend heeft.*”

61. *Gazet Van Antwerpen*, 5 September 1914, p. 3; *Gazet Van Antwerpen*, 16 September 1914, p. 3; *Gazet Van Antwerpen*, 21 September 1914, p. 2; *Gazet Van Antwerpen*, 23 September 1914, p. 4; *Het morgenblad: volksdagblad*, 17 September 1914, p. 3; *Gazet van Antwerpen*, 3 October 1914, p. 3.

62. Translated from the Dutch: “*talrijk waren de leden die tot den legerdienst geroepen warden, en, aangezien de jonge elementen grootendeels de leverigste propagandanisten en medewerkers waren, werd menige dienst ontredderd.*” *Gazet Van Antwerpen*, 3 March 1915, p. 1.

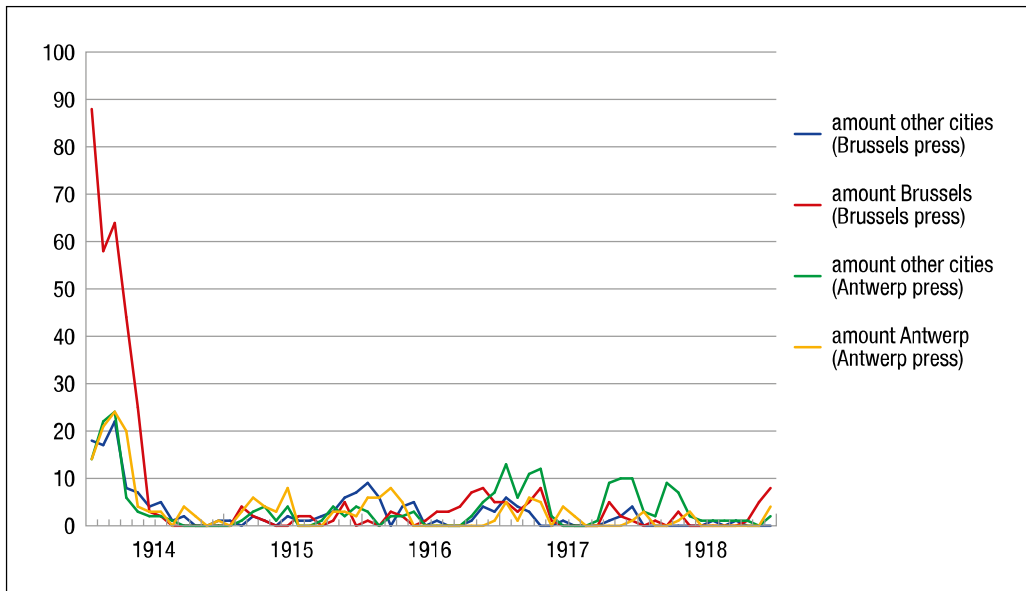


Figure 3. The number of monthly lectures (1914-1918) announced in Antwerp and Brussels newspapers.

out by the army to turn out the lights in the evening, which made it impossible to organize evening meetings⁶³. Finally, "it was no longer possible to speak of regular employment in the union; as a result of the closure of many factories due to the restrictions on shipping, due to various circumstances, thousands of workers were made redundant, and were thus unable to contribute their fees to the union, but since there were still workers at work, the burden of the workers was maintained"⁶⁴. Other organizations encountered the same or similar obstacles in the (resumption) of their activities and consequently saw their membership numbers fall as well⁶⁵.

The projection lantern as a medium, however, had always been extremely good at incorporating,

amalgamating, and adapting to new situations, contexts, and other media⁶⁶. My research shows that this was also the case during the First World War. Although in January 1915 the same silence still resounded in both cities' lanternscape, lantern lectures started to appear on a more regular basis in the Antwerp and Brussels' press from February 1915 onwards. The numbers achieved before the war were, however, by no means matched. Compared to the first half of 1914, the numbers were at least halved, as illustrated by figure 3. After the first turbulent months of the war, in which the international image of the Germans had suffered a severe dent due to the destruction of Louvain and, more generally, of Belgian cultural heritage, the German occupying forces wanted to establish themselves

63. Translated from the Dutch: "weldra werd door de krijgslegerheid het bevel uitgevoerd de lichten des avonds uit te dooven, hetgeen het inrichten van avondvergaderingen onmogelijk maakte." *Gazet Van Antwerpen*, 3 March 1915, p. 1.

64. Translated from the Dutch: "Van regelmatige werkzaamheid in de beroepsvereniging kon verder geen spraak meer zijn; door het sluiten van menigvuldige fabrieken door de belemmering der scheepvaart, door enige andere omstandigheden, vielen duizenden arbeiders zonder werk, en waren dus in de onmogelijkheid de bijdrage hunner vakvereniging aan te halen, doch gezien er nog arbeiders aan het werk bleven, werd de bodenlast behouden." *Gazet Van Antwerpen*, 3 March 1915, p.1.

65. Even the Royal Zoological Society of Antwerp, a bourgeois society with members from the city's social elites, saw their membership numbers drop drastically during the war due to financial constraints of the members. See: LEEN ENGELEN and ROEL VANDE WINKEL, "A captivated Audience...", DOI: 10.1080/19475020.2017.1315315.

66. IÑE VAN DOOREN, "Our Magic Lantern Heritage...", p. 184; CHARLES MUSSEY, *Politicking and Emergent Media. US Presidential Elections of the 1890s*, Oakland, 2016, p. 142.

once again as a *Kulturnation* or ‘guardians of culture’ through their cultural policies. From this point of view, normal (cultural) life in occupied Belgium had to be restored as soon as possible, regardless of possible pressure from the cultural policies of the occupier⁶⁷. Although at the beginning of the war patriotism was still an important motivation for many city dwellers not to participate in the cultural life under occupation, the war fatigue in the last years of the war led to a decline in passive resistance and a return to all sorts of ‘distractions’⁶⁸. The increase in the number of lantern lectures can therefore also be seen from this angle.

These lantern lectures could take different forms and could be used for different purposes, sometimes mentioned in the announcement of the lecture: charity, popular education (*volksontwikkeling*), lecture and art evenings, higher and professional education, or what the newspapers described as ‘lectures for the people’. The same types of lectures were common before the war. In an article in *Gazet van Antwerpen* of 15 February 1915, the motivation for the organization of a series of lectures was further explained: “From here and there K.V.H.V. [Catholic Flemish University Extension] was asked if no lectures could be given this Winter. In order to remain in fellowship with the faithful audience, in order to give many others the opportunity – now that similar meetings are scarce – to still enjoy some spiritual entertainment; these were the reasons given⁶⁹.” Proportionally speaking, it was more often considered necessary to give a reason or motivation for the

lantern lecture in the wartime newspaper article itself, compared to pre-war years. This was more strongly the case in Brussels than in Antwerp. However, it can be expected that the real goal of these lectures was not always mentioned in the censored press due to the censorship restrictions.

Whatever the reasons given for restarting the lantern lectures, from 1915 onwards the urban public life, and thus the seasonal waves of the lantern season, recovered to a ‘new normal’. Lantern lectures from 1902-1904 show that the lantern season more or less coincided with that of the theatre, thus beginning around September/October and ending around March/April (i.e. the autumn and winter months)⁷⁰. Sometimes, however, they were a few weeks or months behind on schedule, when measures prevented the arrangement of illustrated lectures and consequently slowed them down. In Brussels, for example, the organization of *Volksontwikkeling* complained in its general rapport of 1916-1917 about the delay in their lantern season:

Our working was severely hindered by several circumstances, despite our strong will. In the beginning, the permissions to have the accommodation were not granted in time for us to get off the ground by the end of October. Shortly afterwards, in mid-November, Great-Brussels was punished with an early closure and a ban on taking to the streets, causing another month's delay. The great cold and associated coal shortage were also already causing trouble: our section “Evening classes” therefore

67. ANNELEEN ARNOUT, “Archimedes achterna...”, p. 61-64, 70.; WINFRIED DOLDERER, “Een beleid uit één stuk? Continuïteit en discontinuïteit in de Duitse Flamenpolitiek”, *Wetenschappelijke Tijdingen*, no. 4, 2014, LXXIII, p. 289-317, 300.;

MARNIX BEYEN, “Art and Architectural History as Substitutes for Preservation. German Heritage Policy in Belgium during and after the First World War” in *Living with History, 1914-1964. Rebuilding Europe after the First and Second World Wars and the Role of Heritage Preservation*, 2011, p. 33-43, 34; WOLFGANG CORTJAENS, “The German way of Making Better Cities! German Reconstruction Plans for Belgium during the First World War” in *Living with History, 1914-1964. Rebuilding Europe after the First and Second World Wars and the Role of Heritage Preservation*, 2011, p. 45-59.

68. ANNELEEN ARNOUT, “Archimedes achterna...”, p.79.

69. *Gazet Van Antwerpen*, 15 February 1915, p. 2. Translated from the Dutch: “Van hier en ginder werd het Bestuur der K.V.H.V. gevraagd of er dezen Winter geene enkele voordrachten konden gehouden worden. Om in gemeenschap te blijven met de getrouwe toehoorders, om vele anderen in de gelegenheid te stellen-nu soortgelijke vergaderingen zoo schaarsch zijn-toch eenige geestelijke ontspanning te genieten, waren de opgegeven redens.”

70. GUIDO CONVENTS, *Van kinetoscoop tot café-ciné...*, p. 246.

decided to continue working for a few more months of spring⁷¹.

This quote suggests that even activist organizations such as *Volksontwikkeling*, a subsection of the activist and German-supported *Volksofbeelding* (established in 1915), had to surf on the waves of the (more restrictive) regulations of the German occupying forces and that they too had to bear the restrictions⁷². Sometimes lectures even had to take place without slides, as reported in a review of a lecture on Belgian prisoners of war by the well-known central figure of Antwerp activism, August Borms, in the Catholic Cercle of Wetteren: “Due to certain circumstance, the interesting lecture could not be accompanied by lantern slides⁷³.” This also demonstrates how familiar and well established the medium of the projection lantern was in public lectures at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Just like lantern activities in Antwerp and Brussels, the lectures announced and/or reviewed for other cities (or even countries) suffered from the war situation. The decades before 1914 were characterized by a high individual mobility of both lecturers and urban audiences. The extent to which the lectures held in other cities were actually visited by Antwerp and Brussels residents is difficult to say with certainty, but it has been demonstrated that from the nineteenth century onwards the (entertainment) life of Belgian citizens was no longer limited to their place of residence. Thanks to a well-devel-

oped railway network, (distant) journeys were no longer restricted to the higher classes of society, but also became part of the possibilities of the middle classes⁷⁴. Moreover, theatre operators arranged for their plays to end on time so that the public could catch the last trains⁷⁵. The same was the case for lantern lectures.

Individual mobility within occupied Belgium, however, was limited: travelling was difficult, time consuming and expensive. During the first months of the war, as a consequence, the world of most Belgians shrunk back to their own municipality⁷⁶. The lack of mobility was reflected in the announcements of lantern lectures given outside Antwerp and Brussels (figure 3): unlike in the first half of 1914, in the autumn of the same year there were hardly any in the censored press⁷⁷. In the course of the war, the number of lectures in other cities increased systematically, sailing along on the new waves of the lantern season. This could have provided a sense of mobility that was not always physically possible for all individuals.

Besides the number of organized lectures and changing individual mobility, there were other indicators that revealed that times were changing. Scholarship generally agrees upon the idea that the wartime censor focused specifically on political matters, i.e. withheld or at least toned down and justified “everything which might criticize the government, distress and trouble the population,

71. Translated from the Dutch: “Onze werking werd zeer belemmerd door verscheidene omstandigheden, die onzen wil te sterk waren. In den aanvang kwamen de toelatingen om over lokalen te beschikken niet tijdig in orde zoodat het wel eind October is geworden alvorens we konden van wal steken. Kort daarop, half November, werd Groot-Brussel met een vroege sluiting en een verbod om op straat te komen bestraft, zoodat we daardoor weer één maand vertraging ondergingen. De groote koude en daarmee gepaard gaande kolennoed waren ook al roet in ons eten: onze afdeling “Avondlessen” heeft dientengevolge het besluit genomen nog een paar maanden van de lente door te werken.” ADVN, VB 5240.

72. For more information, see the contribution of Evelien Jonckheere elsewhere in this issue.

73. *Het Vlaamsche Nieuws*, 8 July 1918, p. 2. Translated from the Dutch: “Uit oorzaak van zekere omstandigheden kon de belangwekkende voordracht niet met lichtbeelden gepaard gaan.”

74. JEFFREY TYSENS, WILLEM DE DOBBELEER and VEERLE VANDEPUTTE, *Deftig vermaak, ijdel vertier. Stedelijkheid en burgerlijke ontspanning in het 19e-eeuwse Gent: een eerste verkenning*, Gent, 2009, p. 8, 46.

75. SOFIE ONGHENA, “Spektakelstukken. De mise-en-scène van de wetenschap in de Belgische stad, 1860-1914”, in *Tussen beleving en verbeelding. De stad in de negentiende-eeuwse literatuur*, 2013, p. 43-69, 58.

76. SOPHIE DE SCHAEPDRIJVER, *De Grootte Oorlog...*, p. 105, 125; Id., “Occupation, propaganda...”, p. 272; GISELLE NATH, *Brood willen we hebben! Honger, sociale politiek en protest tijdens de Eerste Wereldoorlog in België*, Antwerpen, 2013, 11; MAARTEN VAN GINDERACHTER, *The everyday nationalism...*, p. 164.

77. SOPHIE DE SCHAEPDRIJVER, *De Grootte Oorlog...*, p. 168, 285.

or weaken its morale"⁷⁸. An ordinance in the middle of January 1915, prohibiting open-air meetings and public meetings discussing political matters in "closed places", thus didn't come out of the blue. Moreover, all clubs and associations with political aims were dissolved. The same ordinance also determined that all other "public and special meetings" had to apply for admission at least five days in advance to the *Ortskommandant* and, in his absence, to the *Kreitschef*. Moreover, in case of violation, not only the organizers, but also the participants would be held responsible. Public assemblies "to purely ecclesiastical, convivial, scientific, professional, and artistic purposes", however, were exempted from this rule⁷⁹. Violation of this regulation was punishable by imprisonment of one year or by a fine of up to five thousand francs⁸⁰.

My analysis of advertisements and reviews of lantern lectures in the censored press clearly shows the consequences of this ordinance on the topics discussed during the war (figure 4 and 5)⁸¹. The first peaceful months of 1914 in Antwerp and Brussels reveal a similar profile with the sample period of 1902-1904, with only minor proportional differences between the three main categories: 'travel', 'science' and 'colonization & politics'. Speakers in peacetime had the practice of picking up on current events in science and society, such as the Transvaal war, the African sleeping sickness, and child rearing. While this clearly conveyed values and norms to the audience, it is notable that the major points of discussion that dominated

contemporary politics did not seem to reappear explicitly in the lecture circuit.

German occupation brought changes in the lantern landscape and the discussed themes, and most drastically in Antwerp: scientific subjects grew strongly in number. Religion was a subject remarkably missing in both cities, which could possibly be explained by the overweight of flamboyant organizations aimed at transcending the traditional pillars⁸². It is also clear that during the war political themes almost completely disappeared from the Antwerp lanternscape.

In 1916 and 1917, Brussels seemed to maintain continuity with the pre-war period. But within these thematic categories, many topics could logically be linked to some aspect of the war – although these links were almost never explicitly expressed in the Antwerp and Brussels censored press. Medical subjects, for example, about venereal diseases or diseases transmitted by flies were often addressed. All belligerent countries started to worry about venereal diseases, with so many young men without their wives at the front and as many women without their men at home⁸³. In Antwerp, a course of six lessons was spent on this 'venereal danger' in June 1917⁸⁴. It is, however, difficult to link slides (sets) in the archives to specific lectures. Illustration 6 and 7 are part of a set of glass slides, some of which were devoted to "the dangers of syphilis, its mode of transmission, its prevention, treatment, and consequences both to the individual and to

78. EBERHARD DEMM, "Censorship (Version 2.0)", DOI: 10.15463/ie11418.10725/15462.15460.

79. CHARLES HENRY HUBERICH and ALEXANDER NICOL-SPEYER, *Législation Allemande pour le Territoire Belge Occupé (Textes Officiels)*, vol 2, La Haye, 1915, p. 45-46. Translated from the Dutch: "tot zuiver kerkelijke, gezellige, wetenschappelijke, beroeps- en kunstdoeleinden".

80. CHARLES HENRY HUBERICH and ALEXANDER NICOL-SPEYER, *Législation Allemande...*, p. 45-46.

81. 'Science' brings together everything about astronomy, biology, technology and medicine. When, based on the title of the lecture, it appears that the subject falls under two of these categories (e.g. 'Christian art'), it is included in graphs under both categories as half a point each time. Because of this, the choice was made to display the graphs in relative values instead of absolute values. Under 'travel' is considered any subject that deals with foreign countries, but does not specify what exactly (e.g. a lecture entitled 'Peru'). 'Culture' includes everything from (urban) landscapes, literature and sports. Topics that respond to current events (and are referred to as such in newspaper articles) are included under 'colonisation & politics' (e.g. the consequences of an earthquake in Japan a few months earlier therefore count for half under 'colonisation & politics' and for the other half under 'science' (geography)).

82. LUC VANDEWEYER, "Zuilvervorming...", p. 101-107.

83. JOURNEY STEWARD and NANCY M. WINGFIELD, "Venereal Diseases"; in *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, 2016, DOI: 10.15463/ie11418.10968.

84. *Syndikaal mededeelingsblad: van de Algemeene Federatie der Vakbonden van Antwerpen*, 9 June 1917, p. 2.

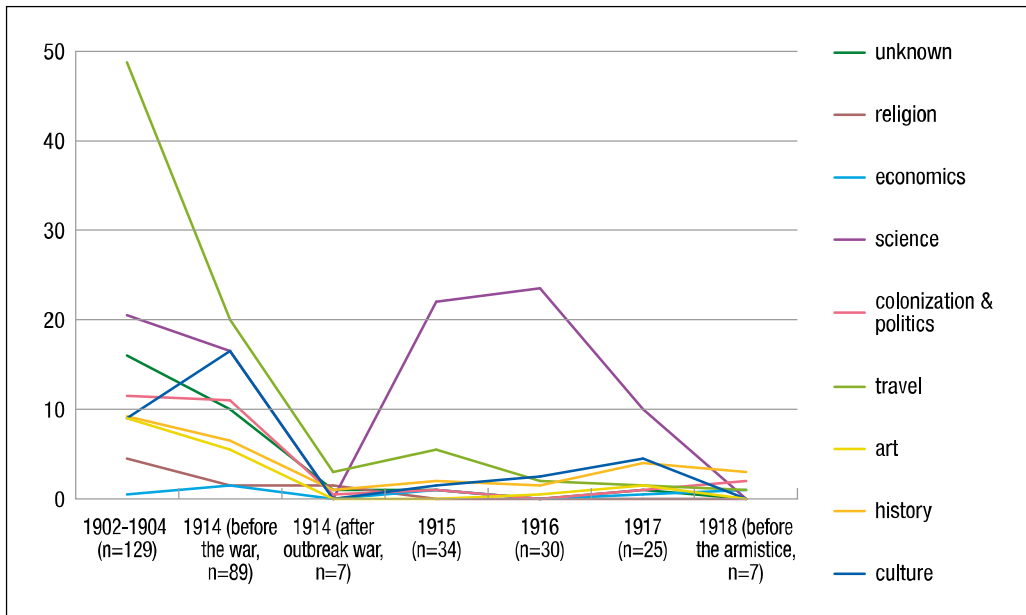


Figure 4. Themes of the lantern lectures (1914-1918) in Antwerp in comparison with lantern lectures of 1902-1904. This figure shows, in contrast to figure 1, the number of 'unique lantern lectures'. This means that all double announcements are filtered, so that each lecture – even if it was announced several times in the same or different newspaper(s) – counts as one. As a result, the n-value is lower than in figure 1.

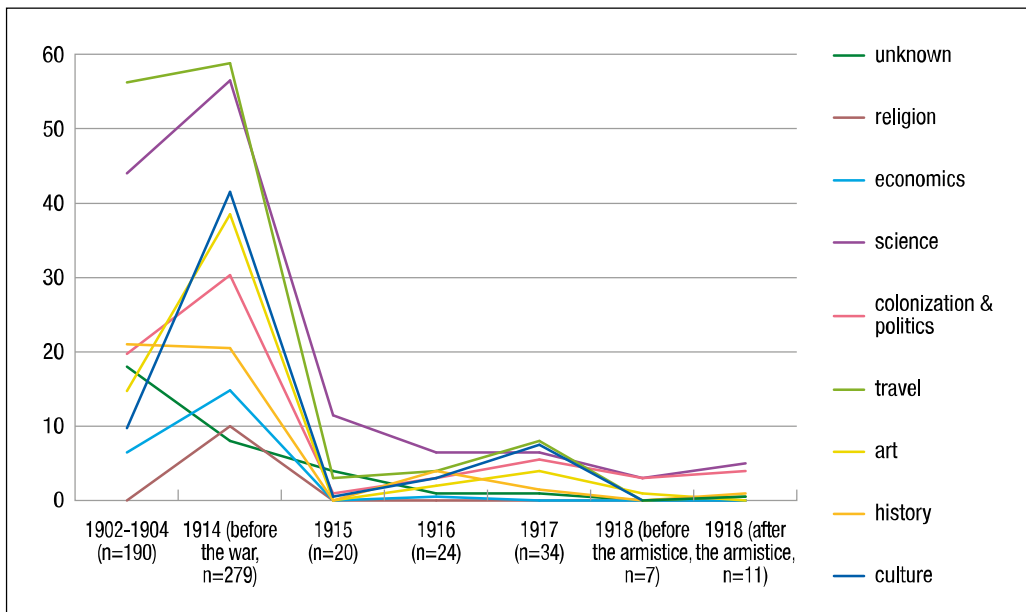


Figure 5. Themes of the lantern lectures (1914-1918) in Brussels in comparison with lantern lectures of 1902-1904. This figure shows, in contrast to figure 2, the number of 'unique lantern lectures'. This means that all double announcements are filtered, so that each lecture – even if it was announced several times in the same or different newspaper(s) – counts as one. As a result, the n-value is lower than in figure 2.

society”⁸⁵. It is presumed that these slides served for a lantern lecture during, or just after, the First World War by or on behalf of the Medical Officer of Health for Cardiganshire⁸⁶. It is highly likely that similar slides on this subject were also shown in Belgium. In April 1917 and March 1918, the film ‘Fiat flux’ was shown several times in Cine Zoologie (Antwerp), which also focused on the venereal problem, since “a public danger has to be fought in public, and the more accessible the place is, the more solid the impact will be”⁸⁷.

The concerns about the transmissions of diseases by flies were also well-founded: in the Middle East there had been an epidemic outbreak of dysentery in May 1915 due to contaminated water and food supplies, caused by flies transmitting microbes and bacteria. The western front did not escape these dangers either, and in a Belgium hit by famine, the fear of contaminated food was real⁸⁸. It remains, however, an educated guess how many speakers explicitly made this connection in their lectures. The same applies to the level at which the flamboyant, and especially the activist, message-colored lectures on, for example, art, travel topics, and history such as ‘Antwerp from 1515 to 1565’ and ‘Plantin and his time’⁸⁹. After all, lectures did not have to be about politics *stricto sensu* to be Flemish-oriented – cultural or scientific themes, for example, lent themselves also perfectly to this purpose. The section under which the lecture was published in the newspaper can offer a hint (e.g.

‘Flemish lectures’), but it unfortunately is very hard to reconstruct what was exactly said and shown.

Although the titles of the lectures hardly hinted at explicitly activist messages, the German occupying forces had other ways for favouring the Dutch language, namely through ordinances. These German regulations caused a remarkable shift in the organizing institutions, as is clearly shown by my analysis of the announcements and reviews of lantern lectures in occupied Antwerp and Brussels. Maps 1 to 4 illustrate the strong shift in the venues in which these lantern lectures were organized⁹⁰. Although an in-depth spatial analysis can offer interesting perspectives on this shift in venues, there is no room within the scope of this article to elaborate this sufficiently. More important in the context of this article is the difference between Brussels, where there is a greater concentration of lectures in the Pentagon, and Antwerp, where lectures were organized further from the (old) city centre. Whether this is due to the socio-economic profile of the neighbourhoods concerned remains to be seen. The regulations of the German occupiers explain in the meantime to some extent why certain societies closed their doors, while others (for the first time) opened their venues to lantern lectures.

Lantern lectures usually took place in buildings that were also used for other purposes, such as theatres, government buildings (City Halls), school or university buildings, and rooms of cultural and scien-

85. Archifdy Ceredigion Archives, ADX/1262 : Glass slides on the subject of Syphilis., http://www.archifdy-ceredigion.org.uk/sched/adx.1262.html&open_str=m70,c143, consulted on 8 September 2020.

86. Ceredigion Archives, “‘Venereal Diseases Cause More Casualties than War’: A Grim Magic Lantern Show”, <https://archifdyceredigionarchives.wordpress.com/2017/05/31/venereal-diseases-cause-more-casualties-than-war-a-grim-magic-lantern-show/>, consulted on 8 September 2020.

87. Translated from the Dutch: “een openbaar gevaar in het openbaar dient bevochten te worden, en hoe meer de plaats toegankelijk is, hoe deugdelijker de uitwerking zal zijn.” Brochure ‘Dierentuin Cinema Jardin Zoologique’ of 1-2 April 1917 (SA Antwerpen, nr. 1968#51); Programma’s: cinema tijdens de Grote Oorlog (1917), <http://www.expocinezooologie.be/nl/full_text/0051_01-04-17_02-04-17.html>, consulted on Cine ZOOlogie (14 July 2020).

88. LEO VAN BERGEN, “Medicine and Medical Service”, in *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, 2014, DOI: 10.15463/ie11418.10221; GISELLE NATH, *Brood willen we...*; MELANIE SCHULZE-TANIELIAN, “Disease and Public Health (Ottoman Empire/Middle East)”, in *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, 2014, DOI: 10.15463/ie11418.10466.

89. *Ons Land*, 10 March 1917, p. 4; *Ons land*, 15 December 1917, p. 2.

90. These are the types of organizations that organized lantern lectures at certain venues. The Royal Athenaeum, for example, is an educational institution, but different types of organizations gave lectures here, which is why it is subdivided under ‘unknown’. When all the different types of organizations that organized lantern lectures at one venue fell under one type, the venue got the colour of that type of organization.

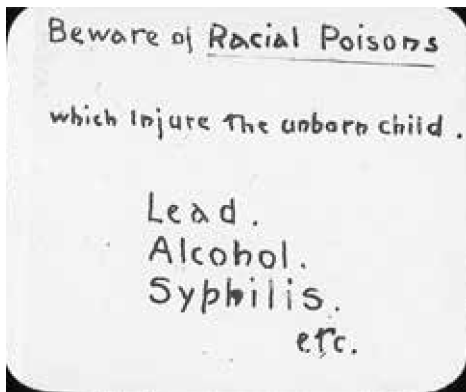


Figure 6: Lantern slide ADX1262/13 – Racial Poisons.
Source: Archifdy Ceredigion Archives, ADX/1262:
Glass slides on the subject of Syphilis.



Figure 7: Lantern slide ADX1262/224 – Illustration of child
with syphilitic sores. Source: Archifdy Ceredigion Archives,
ADX/1262: Glass slides on the subject of Syphilis.

tific organizations where other activities were also organized. An important requirement for lantern projections was that the room could be darkened⁹¹. In Antwerp, only six (21,43% of the wartime venues) of the 33 places where illustrated lectures were organized in the first half of 1914 reopened their doors under German occupation and censorship⁹². Three locations had, not coincidentally, (strong) links with the Flemish movement and/or activism⁹³. A similar tendency took place in Brussels, where only nine (36% of the wartime places) of the 62 pre-war venues reopened during the war⁹⁴. However, it should be kept in mind that this shift (only) concerns lectures announced in the censored press. The disappearance of certain organizers from the lanternscape mentioned in newspapers may also be due to an increase of more clandestine activities, as well as to the use of other (less expensive) advertising means such as posters. After all, advertising in public was more difficult compared to the pre-war period, as an article in *Syndikaal mededeelingsblad* indicated: “The subjects and the names of the lecturers amply replace the propaganda which is difficult to make public⁹⁵.”

These changes in venues could be attributed to important evolutions on the part of the organizers. First, an interesting shift appears in the lectures organized by educational institutions but with a remarkable difference between Antwerp

and Brussels. Before the outbreak of the war, more than half of the lantern lectures in the capital (54,55 %) were organized by higher education or student unions of (former) students⁹⁶. This dropped drastically to 19,47% in favour of the Flemish-nationalist-oriented initiatives of *Volksopbeuring* during the war. In Antwerp the reverse evolution took place: most war-time lectures (30,10%) were organized by educational institutions, compared to 13,21 % in the first half of 1914. This is not accidental in the context of the Great War. When the activism and the *Flamenpolitik* gained momentum after 1916, education became one of the focal points of Antwerp’s activists. After all, Antoon Vrints has demonstrated that activism in this city had already found considerable support in the educational sphere⁹⁷. For example, *De Bond der gediplomeerde Oud-Leerlingen van de Nijverheidsschool van Antwerpen* organized as many as fifteen lantern lectures at the conference hall of *Nijverheidsschool van Antwerpen* (NS, Paardenmarkt 94). Likewise, the Royal Athenaeum (RA) reopened during the German occupation for classes on technical innovations, historical themes, and scientific topics such as electricity, mainly organized by *Algemeen Nederlandsch Verbond-Afdeeling Hooger Onderwijs voor het Volk*.

This increased ‘competition’ on the market of lantern lectures possibly explains that cultural

91. ELLERY E. FOUTCH, “Moving Pictures: Magic Lanterns, Portable Projection, and Urban Advertising in the Nineteenth Century”, *Modernism/modernity*, 4, 2016, p. 733-769, 740, 747.

92. These venues were: the *Koninklijk Kunstverbond* (Arenbergstraat 28), *café Suisse* (Groenplaats 2), *Volksuniversiteit* (Statieplein 19), the Royal Athenaeum (Victoriaplaats), *El Bardo* (Sint-Jacobsmarkt) and *Vlaamsche Leeuw* (Turnhoutschebaan 283). The first three had a clear predominance of pre-war lectures, while the last three were clearly flourishing during the years of war.

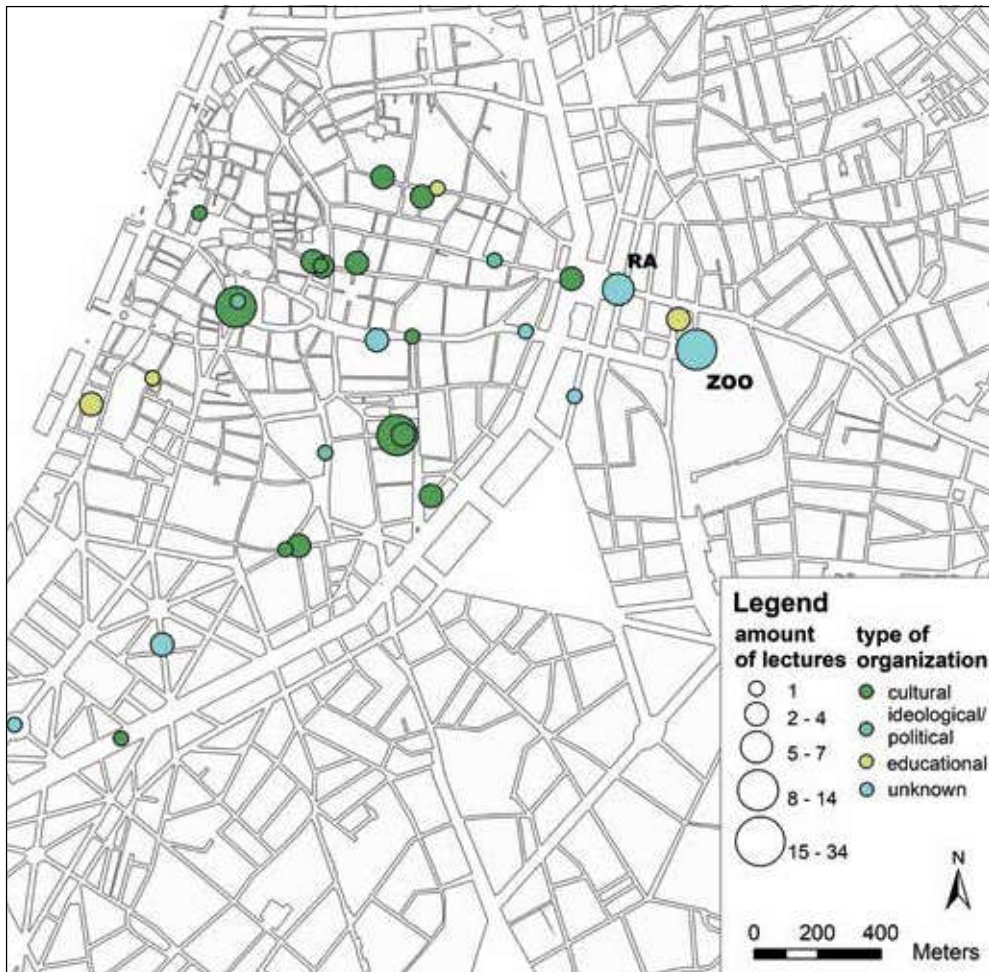
93. Antwerpen-stad, <<https://nevb.be/wiki/Antwerpen-stad>>, consulted on de (Nieuwe) Encyclopedie van de Vlaamse Beweging (5 June 2020). Vrijzinnigheid, <<https://nevb.be/wiki/Vrijzinnigheid>>, consulted on de (Nieuwe) Encyclopedie van de Vlaamse Beweging (5 June 2020); ANTOON VRINTS, *Bezette Stad...*, p. 84, 291, 351.

94. Of these, there were four outspoken educational institutions: L’Ecole industrielle au Palais di Midi (boulevard du Hainaut), Université populaire de Koekelberg (place Simonis 22), L’Ecole communale de Sint-Jans-Molenbeek (rue de Ribaucourt 21) and Université libre (rue des Sols 34). The other five were Palais du Bourse (place de Bourse), Musée du Livre (rue de la Madeleine 45), Maison du Peuple (rue Joseph Stevens 13), L’Union Coloniale (rue de Stassart 34) and l’hotel Ravenstein (rue Ravenstein 3). In the latter two different (cross-pillar) organisations met on a regular basis. None of them really flourished compared to the pre-war situation.

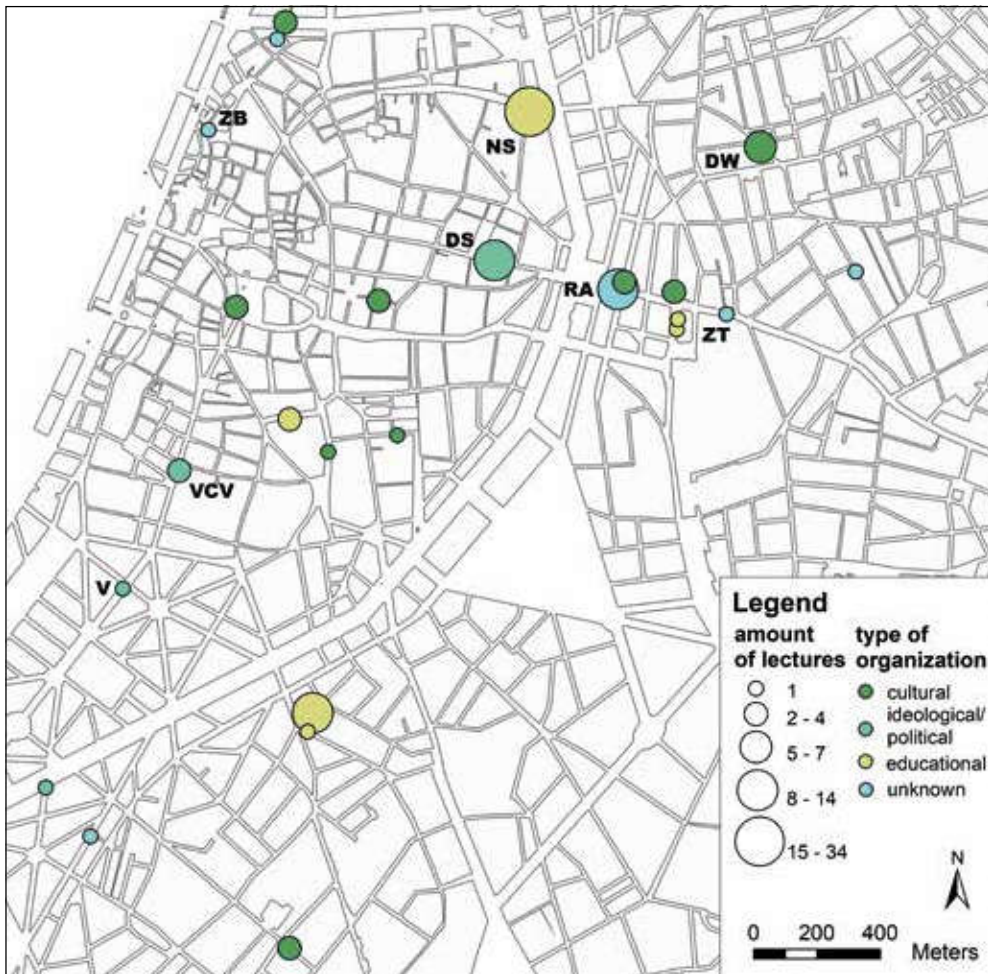
95. *Syndikaal mededeelingsblad: van de Algemeene Federatie der Vakbonden van Antwerpen*, 25 March 1916, p. 3. Translated from the Dutch: “De onderwerpen en de namen der voordrachtgevers vervangen ruimschoots de propaganda welke moeilijk in ’t openbaar te maken is.”

96. For example: the *Université Nouvelle*, the *Université populaire* or the *Extension universitaire flamande catholique de Belgique* of the various communes.

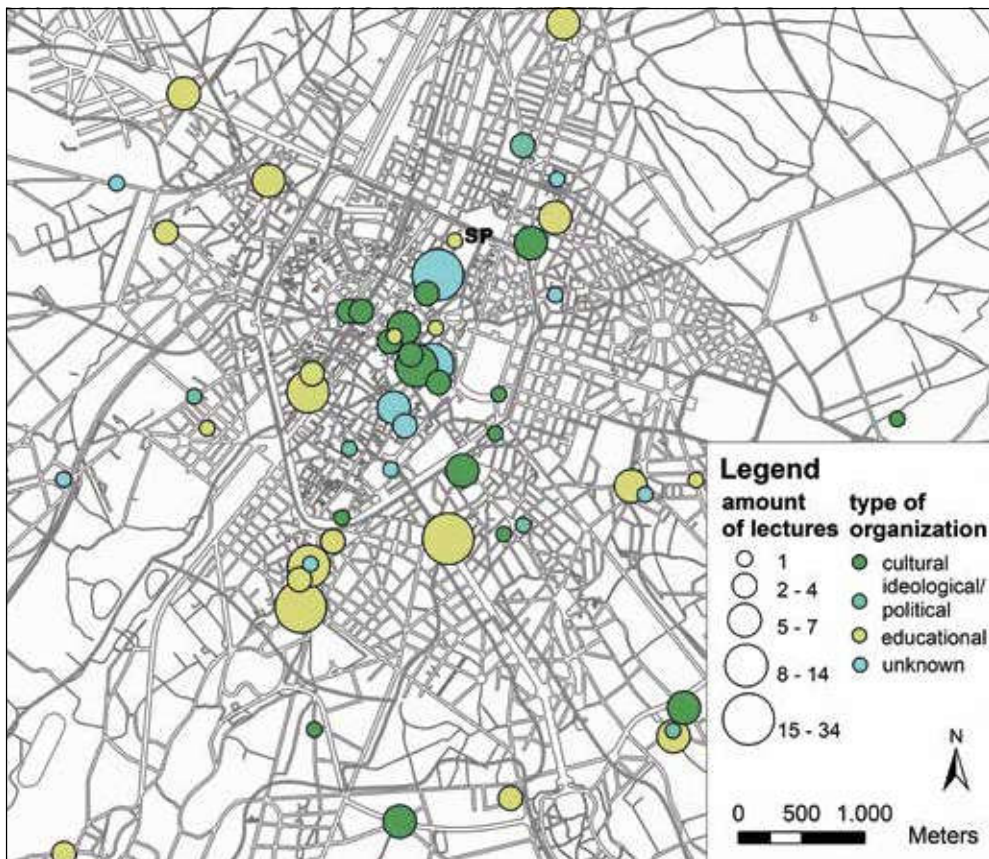
97. ANTOON VRINTS, *Bezette Stad...*, p.157.



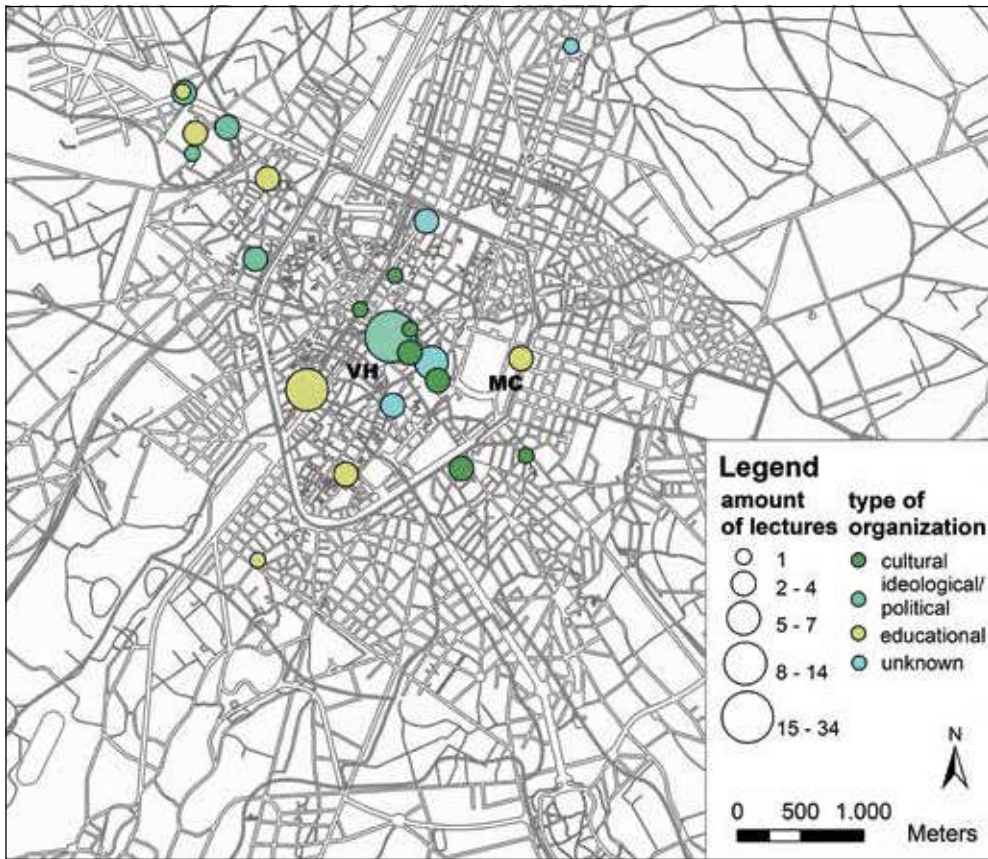
Map 1 : Lantern lectures in Antwerp before the war (first half of 1914).



Map 2 : Lantern lectures in Antwerp during the war (1914-1918).



Map 3: Lantern lectures in Brussels before the war (first half of 1914).



Map 4 : Lantern lectures in Brussels during the war (1914-1918).

and scientific organizations or clubs in Antwerp, often with paid membership, apparently found it less interesting to spend their (strongly reduced) budget on such activities (32,04% compared to 51,89% before the war). For instance, the press announcements suggest that the Zoo (ZOO) of Antwerp lost importance – this may be due to the increasing focus on cinema performances in order to survive these hard times⁹⁸. These cultural and scientific organizations also lost influence in Brussels during the years of war, although to a lesser extent: from 28,67% before to 20,35% during the war. Another hypothesis is that these cultural and scientific organizations and clubs were more focused on the higher, French-speaking classes of society. These groups in society were often among the first to flee across the border during the German invasion⁹⁹. The mandatory use of the Dutch (or German) language due to a new ordinance in May 1915 may also have been a barrier for most of these more elitist, French-speaking organizations (see IV). In addition, especially the bourgeoisie in Antwerp was not very receptive to activism¹⁰⁰. It seems plausible that it was mainly these (French-speaking) higher class associations which suffered from the war situation.

(Explicitly) political or ideological organizations in both cities started to use lantern lectures more intensively to reach their (future) followers. Brussels underwent the strongest evolution in this respect: from a meagre 12,94% of illustrated lectures organized by political or ideological associations in the first half of 1914 to 32,74% under occupation. The ‘new’ wartime venues (map 4) in Brussels are almost entirely used for/

by the various works of local branches of *Volk-sopbeuring* and especially the (Flemish) lectures given within the subsection *Volksontwikkeling*¹⁰¹. *Volksontwikkeling* was founded in ‘t *Vlaamsch Huis* (VH, Grote Markt, 16) in September 1916 with the aim of building a real “people’s university” and “to revive the Flemish part of the population in the Brussels area by all means of service spiritually, morally, and materially”¹⁰². This was not an organization with an outspoken political character (they claimed to be working “outside all political party spirit”), but it was still committed to obtaining a broader basis for the activism¹⁰³. Departments were set up in various communes of Brussels¹⁰⁴. These lantern lectures were (highly) visible in the Antwerp and Brussels press, where various newspapers regularly reported on the (lantern) activities of *Volksontwikkeling*¹⁰⁵.

In Antwerp, as opposed to Brussels, the growing politically inspired part of the lanternscape (25,24% compared to the pre-war 16,04%) was more scattered. Since Antwerp is understood here as the then not yet merged city of Antwerp, without the often highly urbanized municipalities that were in the direct vicinity of Antwerp (Merksem, Borgerhout, Deurne, Berchem, Mortsels, and Hoboken), flamingant (often activist) activity in Antwerp may seem more limited – compared to Brussel – than it felt for contemporaries, who also often came across announcements in the Antwerp press for lectures organized by (flamingant) organizations of neighboring municipalities, especially the *Vlaamse Kring* in Mortsels (tables 1 and 2)¹⁰⁶. The Antwerp scene itself, by contrast, was largely dominated by the Antwerp section of *Volk-sopbeuring*

98. LEEN ENGELEN and ROEL VANDE WINKEL, *Cine Zoologie. Hoe film de Antwerpse dierentuin heeft gered*, Borgerhout, 2018.

99. THOMAS G. MAES, *Antwerpen 1914...*, 66.

100. ANTOON VRINTS, *Bezette Stad...*, p. 258.

101. For more information, see the contribution of Evelien Jonckheere elsewhere in this issue.

102. ADVN VB.5240. Translated from the Dutch: “het Vlaamsche volksbestanddeel in de Brusselsche omgeving door alle dienstbare middelen geestelijk, zedelijk en stoflijk op te beuren”.

103. H. J. ELIAS, *Vijftiëntig jaar...*, p. 89-90; ADVN VB.5240. Translated from the Dutch: “buiten allen politieke partijgeest om”. *Gazet van Brussel*, 11 November 1916, p. 2.

104. These departments were: *In ‘t Vlaamsch Huis* (Brussels), *Au Progrès* (Oudergem), *In het Prinsenhof* (Koekelberg), *In den Ouden Sint-Job* (Ukkel), *A la Ruche* (Koekelberg) and *In den Welkom* (Ganshoren). ADVN VB.5240.

105. ADVN VB.5240. These newspapers are: *Het Vlaamsche Nieuws*, *Ons Land* and *De Eendracht* (in Antwerp) and *Gazet van Brussel*, *Vlaamsch Leven*, *La Belgique*, *Le Bruxellois*, *L’Echo de la Presse*, *L’Information* and *De Zondagsklok* (in Brussels).

106. In this article a conscious choice was made to perceive both Antwerp and Brussels as contemporaries did: Brussels with its communities as a city with one name and Antwerp without its neighbouring municipalities. Evelien Jonckheere elaborates on the *Vlaamsche Kring* in her contribution. ANTOON VRINTS, *Bezette Stad...*, p. 19.

City/municipality	Amount of war-time lectures
Antwerp	112
Merksem	3
Borgerhout	8
Deurne	0
Berchem	3
Mortsel	26
Hoboken	0

Table 1: Amount of war-time lectures in Antwerp and its neighboring municipalities (1914-1918).

City/commune	Amount of war-time lectures
Brussels	71
Anderlecht	0
Oudergem	9
Sint-Agatha-Berchem	0
Etterbeek	0
Evere	0
Vorst	0
Ganshoren	1
Elsene	1
Jette	0
Koekelberg	12
Sint-Jans-Molenbeek	8
Sint-Gilles	1
Sint-Joost-ten-Node	0
Schaarbeek	1
Ukkel	1
Watermaal-Bosvoorde	0
Sint-Lambrechts-Woluwe	0
Sint-Pieters-Woluwe	0

Table 2: Amount of war-time lectures in Brussels and its municipalities (1914-1918).

(founded on 4 May 1916) in *De Vlaamsche Leeuw* (Turnhoutschebaan 283), the liberal *Volkshuis* (V, Volksstraat), the Socialist *De Werker* (DW, Diepestraat), and the Socialist *De Solidaire* (DS)¹⁰⁷. The latter had their meeting place in the popular and centrally located *El Bardo* complex (Sint-Jacobsmarkt). Even before the war, various political parties had organized meetings in *El Bardo*¹⁰⁸. It appears thus that the Antwerp's political parties and organizations also found ways to bypass the

mentioned ordinance of January 1915. Although *De Solidaire* were a socialist freethinkers' union, their lantern lectures dealt exclusively with scientific and medical subjects (such as venereal diseases), astronomy, or technology¹⁰⁹. By doing so, they might have been able to avoid compulsory permission or to get this approval sooner. In addition, as a socialist freethinkers' union – and the most important one in Antwerp – the working language was Dutch. This was in their favor, given

107. ANTOON Vrints, *Bezette Stad...*, p. 351.

108. ANNE HIMPE, *De Beweging in Huis. Vlaamse huizen tijdens het interbellum*, Gent, 1992, p. 47.

109. *De Solidaire* were founded in 1880 by the same group of socialists (ex-militants of the first international and a few young people) who had founded the *Antwerpse Volksvrijdenkersbond* in the 1870s. Vrijzinnigheid, website consulted on de (Nieuwe) Encyclopedie van de Vlaamse Beweging (5 June 2020).

the regulations of May 1915¹¹⁰. Although the use of the Dutch language was considered normal in Flemish-oriented, socialist freethinking circles, they remained vague in strictly political terms (i.e. cosmopolitan rather than nationalistic)¹¹¹.

IV. New cultural policies, new opportunities for the Flemish Movement?

Although the German occupiers' cultural policies stimulated the entire culture life in occupied Belgium and the measures imposed sometimes also affected Flemish-oriented and activist organizations, flamingants were at the same time regularly favoured, both directly and indirectly. This gave the Flemish Movement and its supporters, especially the activists, new opportunities for development within the outlines of the existing policies. It was thus not surprisingly mainly Flemish-nationalistic, or more broadly, Flemish political-oriented lectures (although certainly not always advertised as such) which were given permission to continue and therefore increased in number.

In spite of the limited mobility for civilians and therefore also the speakers of lantern lectures, for example, Borms still managed to address several cities in (mainly the last two) years of war: Antwerp, Berchem, Boom, Brussels, Charlerloi, Ghent, Lier, Merksem, Mortsels, and Wetteren¹¹². In times of a strengthened *Flamenpolitik*, activist speakers saw thus the possibility to travel

around occupied Belgium to give lantern lectures, although in a more restricted way than before the war. This can be seen as a form of propaganda and means of communicating the 'success' of the Flemish Movement. After all, most of their non-activist colleagues never got this travel freedom in war-stricken Flanders.

Already before the war, Borms had been visiting (small) Flemish villages to advocate the creation of a Flemish university in Ghent¹¹³. Moreover, Marcel Provençe had touring through Belgium with a Flemish-oriented lecture in French in March 1914, called '*Les Provençaux et la Renaissance Provençale*' in French or '*de Provençalers en de Provençaalsche herwording*' in Dutch¹¹⁴. On 23 March Provençe gave this lecture at the Royal Athenaeum (RA) of Antwerp at the former Victoriaplaats (now Franklin Rooseveltplein). The next day he spoke in Brussels in *Salle Patria* (SP, rue du Marais 23), on 27 and 28 March he visited Bruges and Merksem. In the same month Hasselt, Ghent, Courtrai, Ypres, Dunkirk, Mons, and Hazebroek were also visited¹¹⁵. The lecture was organized by *Cercle Pro Westlandia*, whose main goal was the revival of Flemish language and Flemish art in French Flanders and the adjoining West-Flemish region, and with the support of local organizations of the cities involved. Provençe himself was "chief editor of the '*Revue de Félibrie: Lou Quatro Doufin*' by Aix in Provence, one of the most authoritative militants (next to the chief and equal giant, Frederik Mistral), for the Provençal language and Provençal morals, customs and traditions"¹¹⁶.

110. CHARLES HENRY HUBERICH and ALEXANDER NICOL-SPEYER, *Législation Allemande...*, p. 45-46; Vrijzinnigheid, website consulted on de (Nieuwe) Encyclopedie van de Vlaamse Beweging (5 June 2020).

111. Idem.

112. Source: database author.

113. ERNEST CLAES, *Voordrachtgevers zijn avonturiers*, Antwerpen and Amsterdam, 1962, p. 43-63; CHRISTINE VAN EVERBROECK, "Borms, August", in *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, 2014, DOI: 10.15463/ie11418.10061.

114. Source: database author.

115. All lectures were announced (several times) by various Antwerp and Brussels newspapers of different ideologies. These newspapers are: *Het Nieuws van den Dag* (Catholic), *Le Peuple* (socialist), *Vlaamsche Gazet van Brussel* (liberal-flamingant), *Het Handelsblad* (Catholic), *Ons volk ontwaakt* (Catholic-flamingant), *Carolus: het weekblad van de Vlamingen* (flamingant), *De Nieuwe Gazet* (liberal) and *Gazet Van Antwerpen* (Catholic).

116. *Het Handelsblad*, 11 March 1914, p. 1. Translated from the Dutch: "*hoofdopsteller der 'Revue de Félibrie: Lou Quatro Doufin' van Aix in Provence, een der meest gezaghebbende strijders (naast den hoofdman en gelijken reus, Frederik Mistral), voor de Provençaalsche taal en Provençaalsche zeden, gebruiken en overlevering*".

Although it was emphasized in an article in *Ons volk ontwaakt*, dating from 14 March, that the Provençal and Flemish language struggles were determined by local circumstances, this lecture did make the comparison between the two:

The Provençal people, like us Flemings, are fighting for the preservation and revival of their language, for their morals, customs, and traditions, for their own civilization and for their independence. And that FLEMISH-MINDED, French recitation will, for its part, show the Flemish people that they are not alone in the world to fight for the oppressed mother language and the well-understood tribal interests, and their courage in the heart speaks to perseverance in their endeavours; and, on the other hand, to the people, who until now have stood outside our struggle, but RIGHTLY want to serve the truth and justice, they will, we hope, open their eyes and show them what we Flemish people here and the Provençal people in Provence are pursuing, is NOT a struggle against the French, but a much needed, and therefore most legitimate, fight AGAINST FRENCHIFICATION, our BOTH enemy, a glorious work of love for one's own mother language, for one's own people, and one's own life¹¹⁷!

Newspaper articles urged readers to attend these lectures: "And, wherever they can, we encourage

our friends to lure with them to this lecture those who are indifferent to our language struggles until now, or even hostile to them, by ignorance or prejudice. It is possible that their eyes will open there¹¹⁸." In Antwerp, an "attentive audience" was recorded, which filled the entire spacious hall of the Royal Athenaeum (RA). Much to the delight of an editor of *Het Handelsblad*, in addition to a large number of Flemish-minded people, French-speaking and-oriented spectators were also spotted at the lecture in Bruges, who "might have thought it was an ordinary French lecture in 'Parisian style'"¹¹⁹. That was only a good thing, the article concluded, "because they have heard something there that would otherwise remain out of their reach¹²⁰." The German cultural policies, and especially the *Flamenpolitik*, would appeal exactly to these regionalists' stirring.

This ambition for the cultural emancipation of Flanders was part of the regionalist revival in Europe described by Eric Storm for the period from 1890 to 1939, in which regionalism is used as a neutral term to describe a movement which promotes the study, construction and reinforcement of a regional identity¹²¹. 'Flemish-regionalism', as did Flemish cultural flamingantism, preceded Flemish-nationalism: already in the nineteenth century, Belgium was seen as a Francophone country with a 'Flemish soul', which set it apart from the Dutch-speaking Netherlands and French-speaking France as

117. *Ons volk ontwaakt*, 14 March 1914, p. 8. Translated from the Dutch: "De Provençalers strijden, even als wij, Vlamingen, voor het behoud en het herleven hunner taal, voor hunne zeden, gebruiken en volksoverleveringen, voor hunne eigen beschaving en voor hunne zelfstandigheid. En die VLAAMSCHGEZINDE, Fransche voordracht zal, eenerzijds, den Vlamingen toonen dat zij niet alleen in de wereld staan om te strijden voor de verdrukte moedertaal en de welbegrepen stambelangen, en hun moed in het hart spreken tot volharding in hun streven; en, anderzijds aan den menschen, die tot nu buiten onzen strijd stonden, doch, RECHTZINNIG de waarheid en rechtvaardigheid willen dienen, zal zij, hopen wij, de oogen openen en hun toonen dat wij Vlamingen hier en de Provençalers in Provence betrachten, GEEN strijd is tegen het Fransch, doch een hoogstnoodige, dus hoogst gewettigde kamp TEGEN DE VERFRANSCHING, ons BEIDER vijand, een heerlijk werk van liefde voor eigen moedertaal, voor eigen volk en eigen leven!"

118. *Ons volk ontwaakt*, 14 March 1914, p. 8; *Het Handelsblad*, 11 March 1914, p. 1. Translated from the Dutch: "En, waar ze ook kunnen, zetten wij onze vrienden aan, die menschen die, onverschillig tot nu niets voelden voor onzen taalstrijd, of er zelf vijandig aan waren, door onwetendheid of vooroordeel naar die voordracht mee te lokken. Mogelijk gaan daar hunne oogen open."

119. *Het Handelsblad*, 31 March 1914, p. 2. Translated from the Dutch: "wellicht gedacht hadde dat het hier een gewone Fransche voordracht 'op zijn Parijsch' gold".

120. *Het Handelsblad*, 31 March 1914, p. 2. Translated from the Dutch: "want daar hebben zij toch iets vernomen dat anders meestal buiten hun bereik blijft."

121. ERIC STORM, *The Culture of Regionalism: Art, Architecture and International Exhibitions in France, Germany and Spain, 1890-1939*, Manchester and New York, 2010.

neighbouring countries. This so-called Flemish soul went back to the Medieval and Renaissance past where Flanders was defined by its arts and architecture, “which by definition were divorced from any specific language”¹²². As Theo D’haen stated: “Then-contemporary (that is to say, nineteenth-century) speakers of ‘Flemish’, in this view at least, had lost all meaningful links to their past and it was the French-speaking intellectuals of Belgium that were the true carriers of any memory of Flanders’s glorious past¹²³.” The appeal of *Pro Westlandia* to the restoration of language and (cultural) customs therefore fits within the pre-war Flemish Movement, which was about more than just a linguistic struggle. The Flemish intellectuals and artists who took part in this movement often had to use French to communicate their ideas, as was the case in Provinces Flemish-minded lecture given in French¹²⁴. The First World War, with the *Flamenpolitik* and the Front Movement, was an important catalyst in the emergence of Flemish-nationalism/separatism¹²⁵. “With its *Flamenpolitik*,” Maarten Van Ginderachter stated, “the German occupying regime reshaped the social-political context in which the language issue was rooting¹²⁶.”

The German cultural policies, after all, had the objective of withdrawing Belgian (and Flemish) cultural life from French domination and bringing it into the German sphere of influence¹²⁷. An updated ordinance in May 1915 on lantern lectures makes

this very clear: “In cinematographic and lantern screenings, the explanations of the works may be in German or Flemish or in both languages at the same time. The French language may only be used together with the German or Flemish language, but not alone¹²⁸.” According to Guido Convents a simple grammatical mistake in the Flemish titles and subtitles of movies “would be considered an act of resistance and could lead to the removal of the film”¹²⁹. This contrasted strongly with the pre-war habits, where cinema-going had largely been a French-language pastime¹³⁰. It is likely that the same applies to lantern lectures, which was probably a predominantly French-speaking activity in the pre-war period. Since newspapers often gave the title of the lecture in their own language, it is difficult to say with certainty how many lectures were given in which language. In 1902-1904, however, it was explicitly mentioned for five lectures (three of which came from a Dutch-language newspaper) that the lantern lecture was given in French, compared to one explicitly mentioned Dutch-language lecture in a French-language newspaper¹³¹. In the first peaceful months of 1914, eleven announcements stated that the spoken language would be French (six of which came from a Dutch-speaking newspaper)¹³². Moreover, the associations organizing these lectures often give an indication of which language was used; many (cultural or scientific) associations in Antwerp and Brussels were French-speaking.

122. THEO D’HAEN, “Capitalising (ong) World Literature...”, p. 119-120.

123. Idem, p. 120.

124. Idem, p. 120-123.

125. Maarten Van Ginderachter summarizes this Front Movement well: “This Front Movement had been founded in the trenches of the Belgian army in response to the acute linguistic tensions between Flemish-speaking soldiers and French-speaking officers.” MAARTEN VAN GINDERACHTER, *The every nationalism...*, p. 166-169.

126. Ibidem; SOPHIE DE SCHAEPDRIJVER, “Belgium”, DOI: 10.15463/ie11418.11285; ULRICH TIEDAU, “De Duitse cultuurpolitiek...”, p. 21-22; CHRISTINE VAN EVERBROECK, “Flemish Movement”, DOI: 10.15463/ie11418.10284; CARL STRIKWERDA, *A House Divided...*, p. 36-38; THEO D’HAEN, “Capitalising (on) World Literature...”, p. 118-121.

127. ANNELEEN ARNOUT, “Archimedes achterna...”, p.62-63. WINFRIED DOLDERER, “Een beleid uit één stuk...” p. 316.

128. *Het Volk*, 29 May 1915, p. 1; *Vooruit*, 29 May 1915, p. 1. Translated from the Dutch: “In cinematografische en lichtbeeldenvertooningen mag de uitleg der stukken in Duitse of Vlaamsche taal of in deze twee talen tegelijkertijd opgesteld zijn. De Fransche taal mag maar ten zamen met de Duitse of de Vlaamsche taal gebruikt worden, maar niet alleen.”

129. GUIDO CONVENTS, “Cinema and German Politics in Occupied Belgium”, in *Film and The First World War*, Amsterdam, 1995, p. 171, 174; ROGER SMITHER, “Film/Cinema”, 1914-1918-online. *International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, DOI: 10.15463/ie11418.10705; GERTJAN WILLEMS, DANIEL BILTEREYST and ROEL VANDE WINKEL, “Film en natievorming in Vlaanderen”, in *De verbeelding van de leeuw. Een geschiedenis van media en natievorming in Vlaanderen*, 2020, p. 226-227.

130. LEEN ENGELEN, “Film/Cinema...”, DOI: 10.15463/ie11418.10320.

131. Source: database author.

132. Source: database author.

Echoes of the *Flamenpolitik* are also found in two unmistakably politically oriented lectures about the prisoners of war in Germany, organized in Antwerp in May 1918. The organizing circles were not mentioned, but the venues in which the lectures took place were *zaal Brabo* (ZB, Veemarkt 6) and *zaal Thalia* (ZT, Carnotstraat 28)¹³³. In both cases these were the only two announced lectures in the censored press that took place there. Both lectures were, once again, linked to August Borms, who had visited the prison camp of Göttingen¹³⁴. One of the lectures was given by a returning prisoner of war, Ivo Van Daele, the other by Borms himself. According to the review of Borms' lecture, which was called "a triumph day for Activism in Antwerp", thousands of enthusiastic followers showed up at the event, demonstrating their appreciation with a "crackling salvo of cheers". Van Daele was also present, together with two other returning prisoners of war, who were loudly applauded¹³⁵.

Likewise, two lantern lectures took place in Brussels in the Music Conservatory (MC, Regentstraat 30) on 11 and 13 April 1918¹³⁶. They were described as "Flemish art evenings from the Göttingen camp". These lectures were a 'spin-off' of the Flemish art evenings that had also been given in the Göttingen camp, which was considered a 'model camp'. Here, the *Flamenpolitik* came to its full force and an activist Flemish culture and life was pursued¹³⁷. The success of these evenings in the Göttingen camp was even used to encourage attending similar lectures in Belgian cities. The newspaper article stated:

"May the same attentive and passionate crowd, who filled the cinema of the camp in Göttingen to the last seat and stand, testify in Brussels by no less numerous turnouts of love for the country and its people, for its past, present, and future"¹³⁸. A clear link between the Flemish evenings in Göttingen and Brussels was also embodied by the men's choir of the Göttingen camp performing at these events in the Belgian capital.

In the face of this enthusiasm for the activist cause and its results, voices could be heard in the newspapers only a few weeks later, sounding quite a bit less optimistic. In a reader's letter, titled '*Lichtbeelden a.tu.b.*' ('Lantern slides, please'), which was published in *De Eendracht* of 1 June 1918, a certain Frank expressed his frustrations about the fact that not enough propaganda was carried out in an efficient way; besides meetings, lectures had to be held. However, apparently there was a regretful lack of slides on Flemish-oriented subjects:

A lecture on the history of the Flemish Movement, interpreted in this way, would arouse deeper popular interest than a simple spoken lecture. Hear! These lantern slides do not exist, neither do lantern slides to illustrate a lecture about the domestic work in Flanders, the fishing industry, the port of Antwerp, the black Kempen, etc. Nowadays people complain too much about the fact that the people don't know our Flemish history, don't know and appreciate the Flemish country enough¹³⁹.

133. *Het Vlaamsche Nieuws*, 3 May 1918, p. 2; *Het Vlaamsche Nieuws*, 12 May 1918, p. 1.

134. CHRISTINE VAN EVERBROECK, *August Borms. Zijn leven, zijn oorlogen, zijn dood. De biografie*, Amsterdam and Antwerpen, 2005, p. 90-93.

135. *Het Vlaamsche Nieuws*, 3 May 1918, p. 2; *Het Vlaamsche Nieuws*, 12 May 1918, p. 1. Translated from the Dutch: "een triomf-dag voor het Aktivisme te Antwerpen".

136. *Gazet van Brussel*, 8 April 1918, p. 4; *Het Vlaamsche Nieuws*, 7 April 1918, p. 2.

137. H. J. ELIAS, *Vijfentwintig jaar...*, p. 91; ANTOON VRINTS, *Bezette Stad...*, p. 338; HERMAN BALTHAZAR and NICO VAN CAMPENHOUT, *Twee jonge Vlamingen in den Grooten Oorlog*, Tiel, 2014, p. 59-62; SOPHIE DE SCHAEFDRIJVER, *De Grootte Oorlog...*, p. 286.

138. *Het Vlaamsche Nieuws*, 7 April 1918, p. 2. Translated from the Dutch: "Moge dezelfde aandachtige en geestdriftige schare, welke te Göttingen de cinemaloofs van het kamp tot op de laatste zit- en staanplaats vulde, in Brussel door eene niet minder talrijke opkomst getuigenis afleggen van liefde voor land en volk, voor zijn verleden, heden en toekomst."

139. *De Eendracht: weekblad voor het Vlaamsche Volk*, 1 June 1918, p. 2. Translated from the Dutch: "Een aldus opgevatte voordracht over de geschiedenis der Vlaamsche Beweging zou diepere belangstelling opwekken bij het volk dan een enkel gesproken voordracht. Hoor! die lichtbeelden bestaan niet, evenmin als de lichtbeelden om een voordracht te veraanschouwelijken over den huisarbeid in Vlaanderen, de visscherij, de Antwerpsche haven, de zwarte Kempen, enz. Men klaagt thans ten overvloede erover dat het volk onze Vlaamsche geschiedenis niet kent, het Vlaamsche land niet genoeg kent en waardeert."

This kind of activist disappointment often resounded in (the) Antwerp and Brussels (censored press) and can be framed within a general tendency of disillusionment within activist circles at that time¹⁴⁰. After all, activists themselves were not always completely satisfied with the results. *Het Vlaamsche Nieuws* of 17 February 1917 published a reader's letter, which was filled with disappointment about the poor attendance at a lecture on *Volksonwikkeling*: on a total of 200 members, only thirteen showed up at a lecture on Social Legislation by lawyer De Smedt at the Athenaeum in Brussels. He expressed his disappointment vividly:

In my imagination, I saw a *franskiljon* entering a spacious room, counting those present at a glance and bursting out with an exuberant laugh. He choked it out: 'They demand a university! And they don't go to a people's university in their own language.
'They demand, they wish so fervently educational evenings for the people in their own language. And now they're not going.
'They ask for all kinds of things, and when it comes, they don't use it.
'*Allons donc! C'est pas sérieux!*
'And to top it all, they demand a Flemish government for Great-Brussels.
'*C'est idiot!*

And laugh, he did!
Was I *franskiljon*, I laughed with him.
But now I sat there listening sadly. Yeah, it's stupid, it's idiotic¹⁴¹.

"That's not being active", he concluded, "I call that being **compromised-passive**, because you are standing with crossed arms to watch how the **true active people** build up the Flemish hearth¹⁴²." This kind of disillusionment, however, is not so prominently featured in the Brussels press itself, but here too they could not ignore the low attendance, which the press ascribed to the bad weather or the theme of the lecture, which clearly did not appeal to the Flemish people: "I believe the Flemish people still have a sacred fear of the word 'science'. When one announces a lecture as scientific, one should almost have the feeling of a theatre manager, who puts an art exhibition on the poster, thinking with fear of his purse. On Sunday there were far more people at Dr. Minnaert's lecture than there were at Dr. E. Peeters' about Arsenik, but there were still many empty chairs, while there were too few on the previous Sunday¹⁴³." It was Borms who gave an illustrated lecture a week earlier about 'Peru', where he had been teaching in his earlier years. Later, in 1909, he started at the Royal Athenaeum (RA) in Antwerp, known for its radical Flemish sympathies and activities¹⁴⁴.

140. ANTOON VRINTS, *Bezette Stad...*, p. 193.

141. *Het Vlaamsche Nieuws*, 17 February 1917, p. 1. Translated from the Dutch:

"In mijn verbeelding zag ik een *franskiljon* die ruime zaal binnenkomen, in één oogopslag de aanwezigen tellen en in een uitbundige schaterlach uitbarsten.

Hij hikte het uit: "Zij eischen een Hoogeschool! En naar een volkshoogeschool in eigen taal gaan ze niet.

"Zij eischen, zij wenschen zoo vurig ontwikkelingsavonden in eigen taal. En nu gaan ze er niet heen.

"Zij vragen van alles, en wanneer 't er komt, maken ze er geen gebruik van.

"*Allons donc! C'est pas sérieux!*

"En om de kroon op het werk te zetten eischen ze nog een Vlaamsch bestuur voor Groot-Brussel

"*C'est idiot!*

En lachen, dat deed hij!

Ware ik franskiljon, ik lachte met hem mee.

Maar nu zat ik daar droevig te luisteren. Ja, 't is dom, 't is idioot."

142. Ibidem. Translated from the Dutch: "Dat is niet actief zijn. Ik noem dat **gecompromitteerd-passief** zijn, want ge staat met gekruiste armen toe te zien hoe de **ware bedrijvigen** den Vlaamschen eigen heerd opbouwen."

143. *Gazet van Brussel*, 28 March 1917, p. 3. Translated from the Dutch: "Ik geloof dat de Vlamingen nog altijd een heilige vrees koesteren voor het woord wetenschap. Wanneer men een voordracht aankondigt als wetenschappelijk, moet men bijna een gevoel hebben als van een tooneelleider, die kunstvertooning op het affiche plaatst, en daarbij met angst aan zijn kas denkt. Er was Zondag op de voordracht van Dr. Minnaert nu wel heel wat meer volk dan op die van Dr. E. Peeters over Arsenik, maar er waren toch veel leege stoelen, terwijl er s Zondags tevoren, te weinig stoelen waren."

144. ERNEST CLAES, *Voordrachtgevers...*, p. 43-63; CHRISTINE VAN EVERBROECK, "Borms, August", DOI: 10.15463/ie11418.10061; H. J. ELIAS, *Vijfentwintig jaar...*, p. 58-65; *Gazet van Brussel*, 18 March 1917, p. 3.

By contrast, the children's hours set up by *Volksonwikkeling* in some of the communes of Brussels were always described as very popular: "Already one hour in advance the youth had taken post at the door of the hall and when the doors opened some 300 girls and boys (some of them, to our great pleasure, accompanied by their parents) stormed into the halls. Benches and chairs were soon occupied and in Ganshoren, the crowd was so big that there were even children on the floor¹⁴⁵!" This may indicate that most people were repelled by implicit or explicit (activist) propaganda messages in lantern lectures and that children's hours, which often contained illustrated fairy tales, were perceived as less 'threatening'. It may at least imply that they did not (only) associate themselves with *Volksofbeelding* for the intrinsic message, but first and foremost for the benefits that came with it. In general, however, reviews mainly mentioned how large and enthusiastic audiences had been. According to Karen Eifler, such reviews primarily confirm that organizations themselves (rather or at least more than their intended audiences) highly valued the organization of lantern lectures: "Whether or not lantern performances were actually experienced by audiences as described, the reported effects lend support to the assumption that social organizations wanted to build and intensify feelings of shared identity¹⁴⁶."

Whenever a negative reaction to a Flemish lecture was already mentioned in the censored press, it was always in contrast to the great enthusiasm of the rest of the audience. For example, a lantern lecture on 'Our Prisoners of War' in Duffel was arranged on May 26, 1918. Afterwards, *Het Vlaamsche Nieuws* described how the 400 to 500-strong audience were entirely on board with the message about "the life and the Flemish endeavours of our

boys in Germany": "The loud cheers of those present proved how much they agreed with the words of the spirited speaker. One shouted... but ask the people of Duffel what **they**'re worth¹⁴⁷." However, by this point, the war was already nearing its end, and as indicated, doubt had already struck the activists. The situation described in the newspaper article is thus more the organization's (ideal) view on the incident, rather than a reliable witness to the 'real' state of affairs.

V. Conclusion

In 1914, illustrated lectures already were deeply rooted in the urban fabric of Antwerp and Brussels. Educational institutions, as well as political or ideological associations and cultural and scientific institutions (often linked to one of the three traditional pillars) regularly organised lantern lectures during the autumn and winter months. The lantern season came to a standstill during the second half of 1914, due to the outbreak of the war, the invasion, and the subsequent installation of an occupation regime with measures such as censorship, blackout rules, and the prohibition of (public) gatherings. In the second year of the war the lantern season gradually started again, regardless of possible pressure from the cultural policies of German occupying forces. This was aimed at repairing the damage to their reputation which had been caused by the destruction of Belgian cultural heritage in the first months of the war. Getting cultural life back on track in occupied Belgium was an important priority.

In addition, cultural policies were designed to break the French dominance over the cultural life in (occupied) Belgium, with an intent to bring this culture into the German sphere of influence.

145. *Gazet van Brussel*, 18 April 1917, p. 3. Translated from the Dutch: "Reeds één uur bij voorbaat had de jeugd post gevat aan de deur der zaal en toen deze geopend werd, stormen telkens een 300-tal meisjes en knapen (sommige tot ons groot genoegen door hunne ouders vergezeld) de zalen binnen. Banken en stoelen werden gauw bezet en in Ganshoren was de toeloop zoo groot dat er zelfs kinderen op den grond zaten!"

146. KAREN EIFLER, "Sensation – intimacy – interaction...", p. 54.

147. *Het Vlaamsche Nieuws*, 3 June 1918, p. 2. Translated from the Dutch: "het leven en het Vlaamsch streven onzer jongens in Duitschland", "De luide toejuichingen der aanwezigen bewezen hoe zij instemden met de woorden van den krachten spreker. Eén heeft geroepen... maar vraag aan de Duffelaars wat **die** waard is!"

These policies culminated in the *Flamenpolitik* and the related focus on Flemish-oriented and -spoken lectures. The activists themselves, favoured by the German media management, were not always satisfied with the results. Although reviews mainly emphasized the enthusiastic reactions of the numerous audiences, reviews were also written by disappointed flamingants, who found the attendance at these lectures rather poor. In any case, the reactions of the public described in newspaper articles should mainly be read as the expected rather than the actual reality. However, the fact that adherents of the Flemish movement largely ignored cinema does not necessarily show an inability to appropriate this medium, but rather a conscious and deliberate choice for the already well-established, stable, and reliable modern technology of the lantern projection.

A content analysis has demonstrated aspects of both continuity and discontinuity characterizing the 'new normal'. The press was being remodelled according to Flemish-oriented accents, thus losing most of its pillarized profile from before the war. German regulations restricted the mobility of speakers and urban audiences, although flamingants in particular still had the opportunity to travel around with their lantern lectures. Nevertheless, travel and scientific topics remained popular, while (non-flamingant) political themes lost their influence due to German regulations. At the same time, the number of organizations that we today consider to be 'politically oriented' actually increased during the war, mainly to disadvantage of the cultural and scientific associations. As a result, only a limited number of pre-war venues reopened their doors during the German occupation, while others, on the other hand, did so for the first time.

An important nuance is that the findings in this article are based on announcements and reviews of lantern lectures in the censored press, which give a biased picture. At the same time, it is pre-

cisely for this reason that these sources are a good indicator of changes in the lantern landscape. Moreover, what was exactly said and shown in these lectures is always difficult to reconstruct. Illustrated lectures could apparently address anything but the war, while the speaker could just as well have been propagating for one of the warring parties, as well as for the resistance. For instance, activist organizations could adopt a more moderate stance in the press (e.g. *Volksopebeuring*), in order to attract more of their compatriots to their lectures, who were often resistant to the collaborating forces and the anti-Belgian point of view of activism.

Further research into lantern lectures, announced in the clandestine press, could provide a useful 'sequel' and an interesting comparative perspective. Likewise, a further deepening of the Antwerp and Brussels lanternscape outlined above could offer interesting insights into the networks of persons and slides (collections), the practical elaboration of these lectures as well as the audience that attended them and what kind of influence these lectures had on the views of the spectators on the Flemish Question. In addition, an international comparison with former Russian-Poland can provide interesting perspectives on the use of a mass medium in similar situations. After all, the German authorities were pursuing a policy aimed at bringing both Flanders and Russian-Poland under permanent German influence by, among other things, cultural policies (i.e. organizing higher education in the vernacular and establishing an independent Flanders/Poland). The *Polenpolitik* was aimed at protecting Poland from Russian influence, with the German policy mainly responding to a deep-rooted Polish nationalism¹⁴⁸. In this way, the internationally oriented medium of the projection lantern can be repositioned within a broader transnational perspective and give us more insight in the use of mass media in similar situations in different (occupied) countries.

148. KRISTOF LOOCKX, "Een nieuwe kijk op de Vlaamse Hogeschool. De Duitse bezettingspolitiek en de universiteiten van Gent en Warschau tijdens de Eerste Wereldoorlog in een transnationaal perspectief, *Wetenschappelijke Tijdingen*, LXXIV, 2015, p. 143-144, 164.

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Appendices

	Antwerp newspapers	Brussels newspapers
Liberal	Het Vlaamsche Nieuws (277)	Vlaamsche Gazet van Brussel (43)
	De Nieuwe Gazet (36)	Het Laatste Nieuws (2)
		Le Progrès libéral (31)
		L'Indépendance Belge (58)
Catholic	De kronijk van kunst en letteren, tooneel en sport, finacie en algemeene belangen (2)	Het katholieke volk (7)
	Gazet van Antwerpen (111)	Het Nieuws van den Dag (13)
	Het Handelsblad (124)	Journal de Bruxelles (108)
	Het morgenblad: volksdagblad (11)	La Libre Belgique (5)
	La Métropole (1)	Le Patriote (24)
	Nieuwe Vlaamsche Illustraties (1)	Le Vingtième Siècle (88)
	Omhoog! (1)	
	De werking van de katholieke vlaamsche arrondissementsbonden der provincie Antwerpen (11)	
	Ons volk ontwaakt (10)	
	Ons volk (1)	
Socialist (censored) war press	De Volksgazet (1)	Le Peuple (244)
	Antwerpen vooruit (3)	Het Rood Kruis (17)
	Geïllustreerde zondagsgazet (15)	La Belgique (2)
	Antwerpen boven (1)	La Dernière Heure (3)
	De Legerbode (29)	Le Bruxellois (57)
	Diesterweg's hulpkas voor behoeftige schoolkinderen (1)	Le Quotidien (76)
	La Semaine (2)	L'Echo de la Presse (37)
	Syndikaal mededeelingsblad (46)	
Flamingant	De Vlaamsche Wachter (1)	Gazet van Brussel (142)
	Het Vlaamsche Nieuws (277)	Vlaamsche Gazet van Brussel (43)
	Ons volk ontwaakt (10)	
	De eendracht (46)	
	Ons Land (56)	
	Carolus (2)	
Cultural	De kleine gazet: geïllustreerd blad (1)	
	Het toneel (7)	
	Journal d'Anvers: hebdomadiare de la via anversoise (8)	
	Le Courrier d'Anvers (1)	
	L'officiel artistique et théâtral (2)	
	Méphisto: organe périodique du Théâtre royal d'Anvers (2)	

	Antwerp newspapers	Brussels newspapers
professional magazines (trade) unions & workers' movements	La comédie (2)	
	Omhoog! (1)	
	Unitas (3)	
	Ons volk (1)	
colonial	La tribune congolaise et La gazette west-africaine (3)	
financial-economic	Lloyd anversois: journal maritime emamant des courtiers de navires (5)	

Vlaamsche Gazet van Brussel is defined as 'liberal-flamingant' and is counted for half in both categories. Omhoog! is defined as 'catholic and press of the christian labor movement' and is counted for half in both categories.

Ons volk is defined as 'catholic and press of the christian labor movement' and is counted for half in both categories.

Appendix Table 1: Overview of censored Antwerp and Brussels newspapers, sorted by their ideology, where references to the projection lantern were found (the total number of mentions for each newspaper). Newspapers listed in two categories are counted for half in both categories.

		Antwerp newspapers	Brussels newspapers
1	Total mentions of the projection lantern ((2)+(3))	828	957
2	Total of (1) referring to lantern lecture	791	845
3	Total of (1) referring to the technology of/discussions on the medium	37	112
4	Total number of 'unique lectures' (without doubles)	497	595
5	Total of (4) which took place in the city	211	418
6	Total of (5) which could be exactly located in the city ((7)+(8)+(9))	193	389
7	Total of (6) before the war (from the beginning of 1914 until 28 July 1914)	88	279
8	Total of (6) during the war (from 28 July 1914 until 11 November 1918)	102	99
9	Total of (6) after the war (the remaining of 1918)	3	11

Appendix Table 2: overview of the number of references to the projection lantern found in the Antwerp and Brussels press by focusing on the search terms 'lichtbeelden', 'projections' and 'lumineuses'¹⁴⁹. Some lectures were announced and/or reviewed several times, whether or not in different newspapers. The number of 'uniques lectures' is the number of lectures without those doubles.

¹⁴⁹. These are the three search terms that in my ongoing B-magic research always generate the most hits and can therefore be assumed to give a good representation. See: MARGO BUELENS-TERRYIN, IASON JONGEPIER and IJJA VAN DAMME, "Lichtbeelden voor de massa...", p. 122-136. For the newspapers on *Belgicapress*, the variants were also used as search terms, namely 'lichtbeeld', 'projection' and 'lumineuse'.