

2. Foreword by Cleveland Moffett, The Bulletin Magazine

The Belgian Revolution of 1830 has never been celebrated with the uproarious firework festivities that the national upheavals of the French, Americans, Mexicans or Russians inspire every year. One reason is that the Belgians never had any such colourful characters as Danton, Washington, Zapata or Lenin.

They have their statues of Rogier, Gendebien and Merode, of course, and then there was that riot at the opera house in August – young men stirred by a romantic aria to throw their top hats in the air and cry ‘Liberty!’ – followed by the four days in September of valiant battle and around the Royal Park, all splendid events well worth commemorating. And yet the date chosen as Belgium’s national day is July 21, 1831, when an immigrant German prince agreed to be called Leopold I and to accept the role of the people’s king.

Still, it was a peaceful compromise that ended a year of turmoil. A constitutional monarchy was what the upstart new nation’s powerful neighbours insisted upon. The only holdout, the one fierce opponent of this sensible solution, was journalist Louis de Potter (Bruges, 1786-1859). He, strangely enough, has no public statue or acknowledgement for his merits. Nothing more than a blue plate with his name in a short dusty side street in the pink district of Schaerbeek.



And yet, without Louis de Potter it is hardly likely that there would have been any revolution at all. It was his eloquence, his pamphlets and proclamations, that led the people of Belgium, then under the thumb of William I of the Netherlands, to believe they could rise up against Dutch tyranny and go it alone. It was the “rabble-rouser” who persuaded the majority Catholics and the liberals to join in the ‘union of opposites’, a precarious alliance that lasted just long enough to turn discontent into dissent and finally, independence.

The 1830 revolution was just the right size for the Belgians. It was manageable: not too violent, not too long-drawn-out, not too costly or complicated. For Louis’ rebellious mind, there was just one essential thing wrong with it: the citizens did not vote for a leader, he was parachuted from London!

Louis was not a man to compromise on matters of principle. It was his fierce denunciation of king William and all his works that had led to his imprisonment in 1829 (a great boost to his popularity). Later, when he opposed king Leopold as fiercely as he had William, Louis was banished and lived in exile in Paris. In the end, he fell out with most of his former allies who, much to his disgust, deserted the cause of liberty, equality and democracy.

There are three distinct personalities in Louis de Potter: the young wealthy romantic guitar-strumming, Italy-loving, with his full head of hair; the fierce journalist, pamphleteer, speech-maker, prisoner of conscience, memorialized with a marble bust in the Parliament; the disillusioned philosopher who has lost the cause he passionately believed in, lost the blind devotion of his followers, lost his hair, become a husband, father of four and turned into a history teacher.

He spent most of his tragic-romantic life in Bonn, Bruges, Brussels, Paris, Lille, Rome and Florence, with brilliant friends and trustful disciples, hosting and attending advanced forward thinking events, writing numerous books, playing his guitar and giving generously to artists and poor people.

We have few objective, or non-Belgian, descriptions of Louis de Potter. One of the best is by the British diplomat John Ward, who mentioned him in his memoirs: "I first made Louis de Potter's acquaintance in the prison of the "Small Nuns" at Brussels behind the King's palace, where he was undergoing a sentence of imprisonment for articles in the liberal press organ, "The Courier of The Low Countries", against the Dutch government. He had dark hair and eyes, and rather an Italian style, and his speech was quick and impetuous."

Meeting him again years later, Ward summed him up with a single shrewd observation: "Louis had one of those ardent minds, which, while sincerely seeking truth, constantly push their own convictions to extremities, and are therefore, in political action, usually impracticable by the men of their own party."

To hear Louis tell it, in his two-volumes "Personal Memories", it was not he who failed, but the revolution, recuperated by unelected leaders, stolen to the brave Belgians. In a brief preface, he wrote its bitter obituary: "The Belgian Revolution, conceived in 1828, born in 1830, deceased in 1839, now belongs to history."



3. Profile of Louis de Potter

Louis de Potter (1786-1859), was a European scholar whose family was in England (13th Century), France (14th) and Belgium where, on 15 May 1350 Jacob de Potter married the ancestor of the literature Nobel Prize Maeterlinck.

In 1550 Liévin got his head cut off by the Duke of Alba for writing against religion. In 1580, his nephew, Jan, also complained about the bloody leader and got a statute on the Brussels City Hall. Protestant uncle Abraham escaped to Holland in 1640. Cousin Dominique escaped to France in 1710 as treasurer of the Duke of Orange. Clément sheltered in Germany in 1810 from Napoleon.

As of 1815 onwards, Louis also became a brave "belgian" rebel... He became a revolution leader due to the success of his publications in Bruges, Brussels, Paris, Florence, Rome, The Hague, London... He fought the Dutch King, William of Orange, promoting free democracy and universal voting rights. With his publishers, he obtained unity between liberals and catholics, leading to a new independent nation, with the motto: "Unity makes Strength".

Helped by young revolutionaries, he proclaimed the independence of Belgium out of the Brussels City Hall and inaugurated the first parliamentary assembly. This was after his trial for "press delict", exile and prison. When liberated, he came back from Lille in the carriage of his friend, brewer Rodenbach, acclaimed by 20.000 persons, upon arrival in Brussels.

How did he lose everything along the way? The family estate "Droogenwalle" was bought to Prince de Merode. Louis' family had three castles in Kerchove, Torhout and Loppem. They also had three estates in Bruges (now College of Europe), Brussels (Place of The Martyrs of 1830) and Dixmude. They hosted the visits of personalities like Gezelle (famous Flemish writer), Van Oye ("Sea Poet") or cousin Odevaere (well known Flemish painter).

Why was he left aside? Louis' Father-in-law was a Magistrate with Flanders' Great Council. His uncle was Head of district of the Austrian Empire. His daughter married general Brialmont, wing officer of King Leopold 1st. His natural son married the daughter of a general on Napoleon III 's staff.

Why was he only a "foreigner"? Due to intensive study of cultures in neighboring countries, he made key-contacts abroad, such as Lafayette, Stendhal, David, Lamennais, Babeuf, Sand in France; Buonarroti, Vieusseux, Arconati, Battistini, Ricci in Italy; Reinhold and Rodenbach in Germany, O'Connell in Ireland, Collins de Ham and Constant de Rebecque in Switzerland...

Except a sculpture in the Senate, how did this historic personality finish in a small apartment in the Needle Street, now a parking lot, behind the Column of Congress? Why was he forgotten by the Belgians, not even honored by a statute? Only a small street in the pink area of Brussels...!

The young European vanguard trained himself as multi-cultural freelance writer when in Bruges, Leibniz, Firenze, Rome and Paris. Even when he got old, the maverick composed a critical auto-portrait, along with a story of the Revolution. He did it with self-derision instead of glorification, more romantic than tragedy, vision rather than regrets, mankind-empathy replacing old-fashion advice.

His philosophic and literary works were marathonic but unexpectedly grew into solid "artefacts", shaping up a Belgian democracy laboratory. Using socio-cultural heritage experiments from Italy and France, he initiated new lifestyle aspirations. Based on this methodic observation of historical difficulties, he proposed a "better life" to our youth, with modern universal (voting) rights to young and old, powerful and poor, women and men.

He was a social "arty" character, using connections and libraries intelligence, which distinguished himself from self-proclaimed superior intellects of that time. He gave bluntly the appealing results discovered in his disturbing social research. Mastering "public petitions" (published complaints gathering over 350.000 signatures), with many publishers, plus interactive published reactions from readers, he influenced established leaders and new political opponents. "Get involved" was the subliminal message to his fellow citizens!

Sincere rationale and genuinely selected words, were used to present his findings, like superior quality intellectual conduct. Innovative publishers polished the products and launched them widely. Louis' masterpieces were widespread "chain-reactions". The characteristic of an "artefact" being that the findings were not naturally present in the initial sampling. But they were amazing enough to publicly entertain many readers of his century, as if they were on theater stage !

Between 1789 and 1848, populations were suffering of economic recession and were witnessing considerable richness in the Courtesans around the Royals... With the new art and the start of the press, revolutions exploded all over Europe.

After the opera "The Dumb Lady of Portici", echoing an Italian revolution, Louis became the voice of the dumb Belgians towards the deaf kings. His friend Buonarroti, small-nephew of Michel-Angelo, helped him support the venue in Brussels of that opera about a beautiful oppressed lady who could not speak but convinced the Belgians, with her great revolt in Naples !

Louis was then recognized as a catalyst of public forces, triggering the revolt in elite circles and in the street. But he failed to keep his young team together. Aged 44, he declared the independence of Belgium while his colleagues were fifteen years younger. On the portrait of the "revolutionary government", the youngest ones were made look older by the artist, to reassure the citizens.

When Louis inaugurated the National Congress, a month later, some older "unelected personalities" recuperated the revolution, and he resigned. He had disagreed with the forced dismissal of his interim team authority, although it had been chosen by the Belgians. The Nations saw the new leaders as a problem...

LeGuillou studied the friendship between Louis and publisher de la Mennais, the man who had created L'Avenir newspaper in Paris. Charlier analyzed the friendship between Louis and colleague journalist Stendhal (Henri Beyle). Like for Robespierre, Beyle's family originates in the same nordic region as Louis).

VanTurenhoudt examined Louis' thought from his youth up to his combat for "universal voting right" (versus "Censitary" based on rank and capital). Louis advocated for press freedom and based his strategy on the promotion of fine arts, as communication tool. The famous artist Jacques-Louis David, long-time friend of Louis, had a spectacular influence on the powerful personalities whom he had portrayed, along his rebellious career, in Paris and Brussels.

Louis, and several of his young colleagues, would have agreed immediately if a Belgian leader had been selected. That is what the citizen also wanted : "a Belgian among the Belgians". No more external powerful nations, ruling over the center of Europe... The small team of seven was put aside because of pressure from London, Paris, Berlin, The Hague and their local lobbyists.

Jottrand, who was a long time friend, confirmed that Louis did not vote against a monarch, but hoped an "aristocratic republic" like the one he had discovered in Tuscany, whereas generous nobles were elected. They were genuinely sponsoring the best artists, craftsmen and meriting small business leaders, without influence from (international) political tycoons.

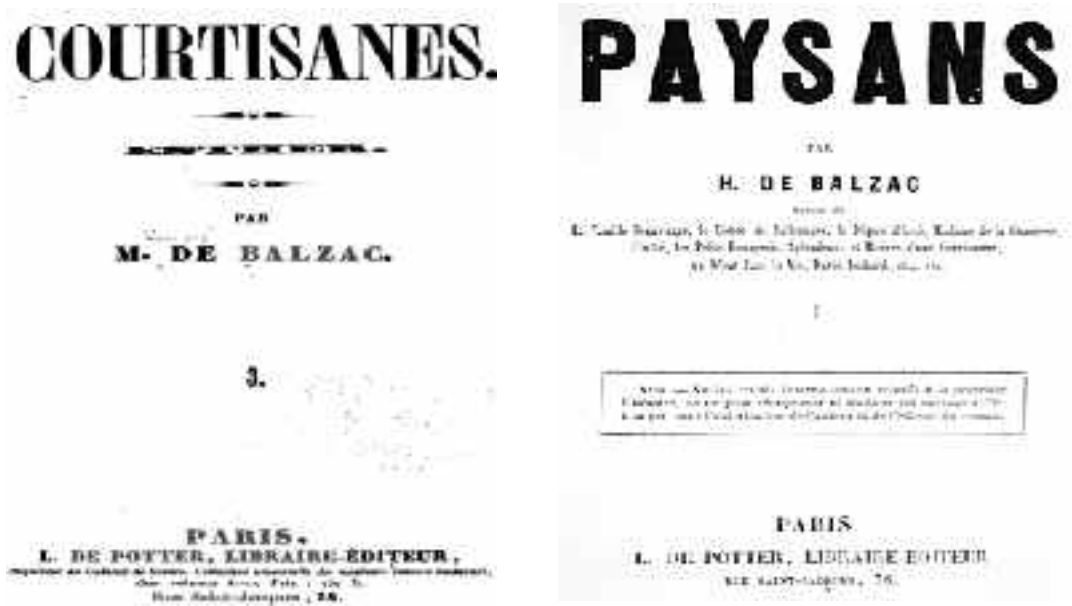
Juste made a study on "The Founders of the Belgian Monarchy", in which he said that Louis "made a step aside" long before he could be too republican. He was a young minded person, bringing about key changes to a population exhausted by invasions. He expressed unconditional support to "a popular leader" selected from within, albeit a king or a president. The "aristocratic republics" he discovered in Italy gave him a strong sense history auto-critic and, at the same time, great respect for artisans driving the (Italian) economy.

A rebel against the formal French-Dutch family Orange-Nassau (from the city of Orange), he sold all real estate he had in order to publish his views widely, criticizing the conduct of another invader. But, towards the end, he expressed regrets for losing the Dutch King who seemed to have improved! What was the secret behind his success? What was the mystery behind his failure?

To replace "his" revolutionary government, several aristocratic families were approached: prince de Merode (today cousin via my aunt Elisabeth de Potter - de Merode), duke of Bourbon (allied today via my uncle François de Pottere - Holstein Duchy of Luxemburg), duke de Lannoy (allied today via my aunt Bernadette) or others like princes Ligne, Croÿ or Arenberg.

Today, outside Denis de Potter in Lille and Yvonne de Potter in New-York, falling under Louis' alleged natural son, Louis has no more direct descendants, only cousins, like Fernand de Potter in Verviers who falls under Louis' uncle.

The last part of his life starts with his exile in France where he will pursue his outspoken responsible journalism, in contact with e.g. Babeuf, Balzac, Hugo, Lafayette, Lamennais, Sand, Stendhal and other personalities in Paris.

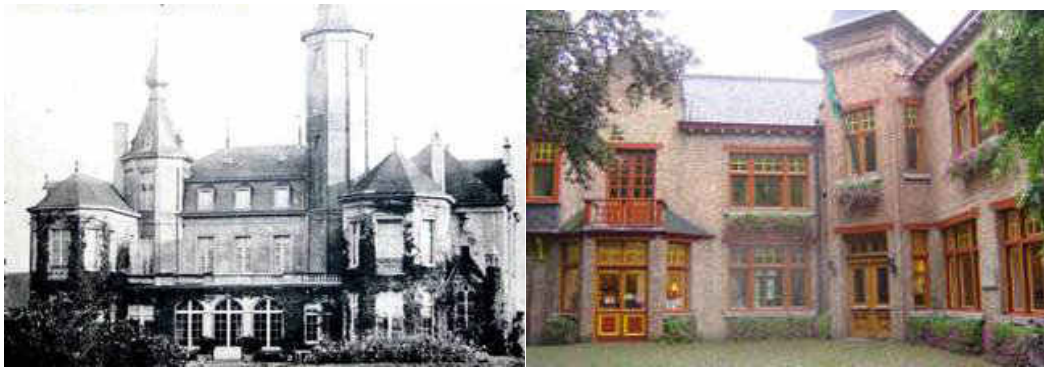


Louis had a busy international life, with his mother in Lille and Brussels, his parents in Aachen and Bruges, his first partner in Florence and Rome, his natural son and many friends in Paris... How did he manage such a wide European career, all on horseback or horse-powered coaches ?



9. Louis' residences

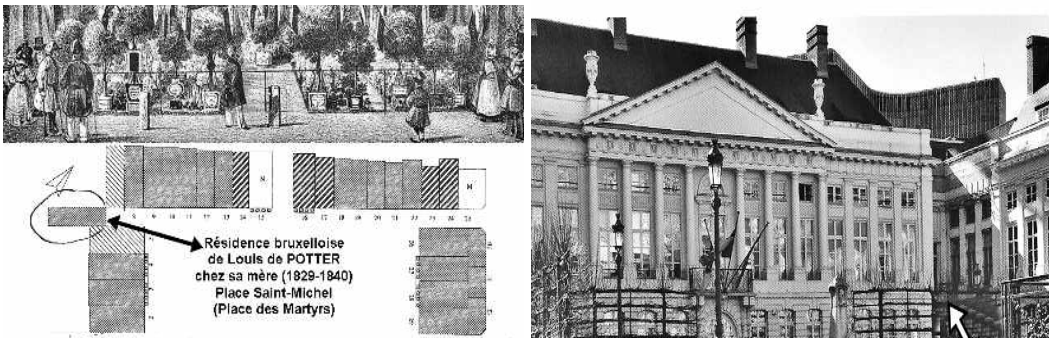
Louis' grand-parents, on one side, lived in the castle of Kerckhove, and, on the other side, in the castle of Torhout where they had a bleaching plant, next to us.



Louis' father lived in week-ends in the castle of Loppem, running farms nearby in Dixmude, and in a 96-windows palace in Bruges (now College of Europe).



Louis' mother also lived with him in Lille, and, after 1840, in her house on Place Saint-Michel in Brussels, re-baptized Place Martyrs of the 1830 revolution.



After he returned to Belgium in 1823, because of the illness of his father, he not only corresponded with his Italian friends, he welcomed many Italian emigres to his country. Battistini stated that Louis perfected his Italian, speaking "con la fluidita, l'armonia e purezza Toscana," and writing "con eleganza e facilità."

His most renowned Tuscan radical friend was Filippo Buonarroti (1761-1837), small nephew of the famous Michelangelo. Upon Buonarroti's arrival in Brussels in May 1824, the sixty-three year old Italian was taken under the wing of Belgian Liberals, namely the Anspach brothers, the Doctor Mooremans, the Colignon brothers and of course his "Italian friend" Louis. While he did not share all of Buonarroti's ideas, he admired his intensity and the austere life that he led in order to dedicate his career to his ideals.

There was an ideological distance to this admiration, as Louis was not a radical Babeuvist. Louis' high esteem for Buonarroti was shown in his letter to Niccolini and Vieusseux on June 16, 1827. Some other mysteries persist ... The "false attack" on the library of Italian Libri-Bagnano (with police support? Louis was a friend of police chief Plaisant, even if he was arrested himself) and the introduction of the forbidden opera, the "Dumb of Portici", in Brussels (by these conspirators?) where it caused a start of the Belgian revolution ...!

Louis' genuine action for more democracy for the mid-class, more food for the poor, better education, equitable justice and total press freedom, brought about an "unexpected" Belgian revolution. A translation of the Buonarroti "reformed aristocracy and business" dream into concrete independence and renewal, without the bloody and destructive French approach.

The triumphant arrival of Louis at the Brussels Town Hall in 1830 represented the first time in the history of the nineteenth Century that a noble "Belgian", a journalist linked to revolutionary publishers, spontaneously chosen by the population, found himself parachuted at the head of a Brussels government, emerging from art galleries and farms, free from the Nation States!

Louis, later acclaimed as "Belgian Lafayette", sponsor of most gracious French literature authors, was also an Italian Renaissance man, a "Belgian Buonarroti", refreshing guide for the most gracious arts and crafts across borders.

He was increasingly favor of a Belgian government, voted by all, independent from all foreign rulers. A new deal for a separated Belgium, with its own European history, culture and non censitary nor too aristocratic an election.

As key reporter for the *Courier des Pays-Bas*, *Le Politique*, *L'Avenir* etc., Louis was an influential journalist but completely against all forms of violence. Nevertheless, some fights took place in Brussels, but not much.

A known "Carbonari", the Napolitan General Guglielmo Pepe, involved in the uprising in Naples in 1820 ("Dumb of Portici" opera in Belgium), settled in

12. Role of the journalists in the revolution

The Belgian revolution was triggered by a dozen journalists admiring the friends of Louis de Potter, famous authors or publishers in Paris like Babeuf who had published Robespierre, de Lamennais who was publishing L'Avenir newspaper, Stendhal and many others like Vieusseux in Italy or Roscoe in England.

Other famous editors were part of the movement and sometimes included in the famous "Society of the Twelve". They include Rogier in Liège, brother of the Prime Minister, Ducpétiaux in Liège, Paul Devaux in Bruges, count Vilain XIII in Gent, baron de Bethune in Courtrai and others, plus the numerous publishers of Louis like Tarlier, de Nève or Parmentier and Coché-Mommens.

Jottrand said that when he became a contributor to the *Courrier des Pays-Bas* in April 1826, Louis was well entrenched there. The *Courrier* had around nine hundred subscribers, a significant number of people for that period.

Collègue journalist Edouard Ducpétiaux (1804-1868) and future politician Lucien Jottrand (1803-1877) were young attorneys, considerably younger than Louis. Like all members of the future "provisional government" of Belgium. Louis was attracting bright young minds to the power train. In 1826, Ducpetiaux was twenty-two and Jottrand, twenty-three, Louis was already forty years old. Also ardent liberal, Jottrand was his biographer and his friend.

Jottrand, Ducpétiaux, and Louis were members of a new group, the "Emerging Belgian Free Journalists". Before the rise of strong Belgian papers: Most of the newspapers were managed by Frenchmen, who filled their columns with attacks on the Bourbons and the Jesuits, French epigrams, and Parisian witticism. This fostered the indifference of the people to public questions.

But suddenly some new papers, with Belgian editors, appeared, and proposals were made that disputes about religion should be laid aside in favor of an agitation for Ministerial responsibility, a free press, and other reforms.

This transition did not occur overnight. By 1827 the journalists around Louis had become strong, vocal, and interested, but disputes over religion had still not been erased by common objections to the government. The leading Catholic paper at this time was the *Courrier de la Meuse*, founded at Liège in 1820.



By the end of 1827, however, Louis was sufficiently aware of the currents around him to suspect that he was being used as a tool of King William: “Your Majesty, we ask permission to glorify ourselves in the name of the liberty for all citizens.” This was an alarm signal from the bottom of the prison by a journalist and his publisher to all Belgian authors, journalists and editors.



Van Maanen did not change his position because the Belgian journalists demanded another penal code. Instead he unleashed the police on his critics. Both Catholics and Liberals were prosecuted. Louis' friend Ducpétiaux, of the “News of the Low Countries”, was the first one arrested, for writing a pamphlet criticizing the penal code. His wife will later help design the Belgian flag sewed by Mrs Abt (illustrations).

Arrested with him in February 1828, were his printer and his publisher; considered as his partners in crime. This governmental harassment of the press lasted up until the revolution. Freedom of speech also became precarious and Catholic priests were prosecuted for remarks made in their sermons.

Both parties grew indignant about the oppressive atmosphere the government was creating. Until the administration clamped down on the freedom of the press, a large part of the prosperous liberally inclined bourgeoisie approved its anticlerical measures, but its restriction of freedom of speech now angered them and made them more sympathetic to their Catholic brothers.



Illustration Louis (glasses): **Potter Press People Perceive Pressure...!**



King Louis on the throne (with hanging cord) and poor Nassau in prison...

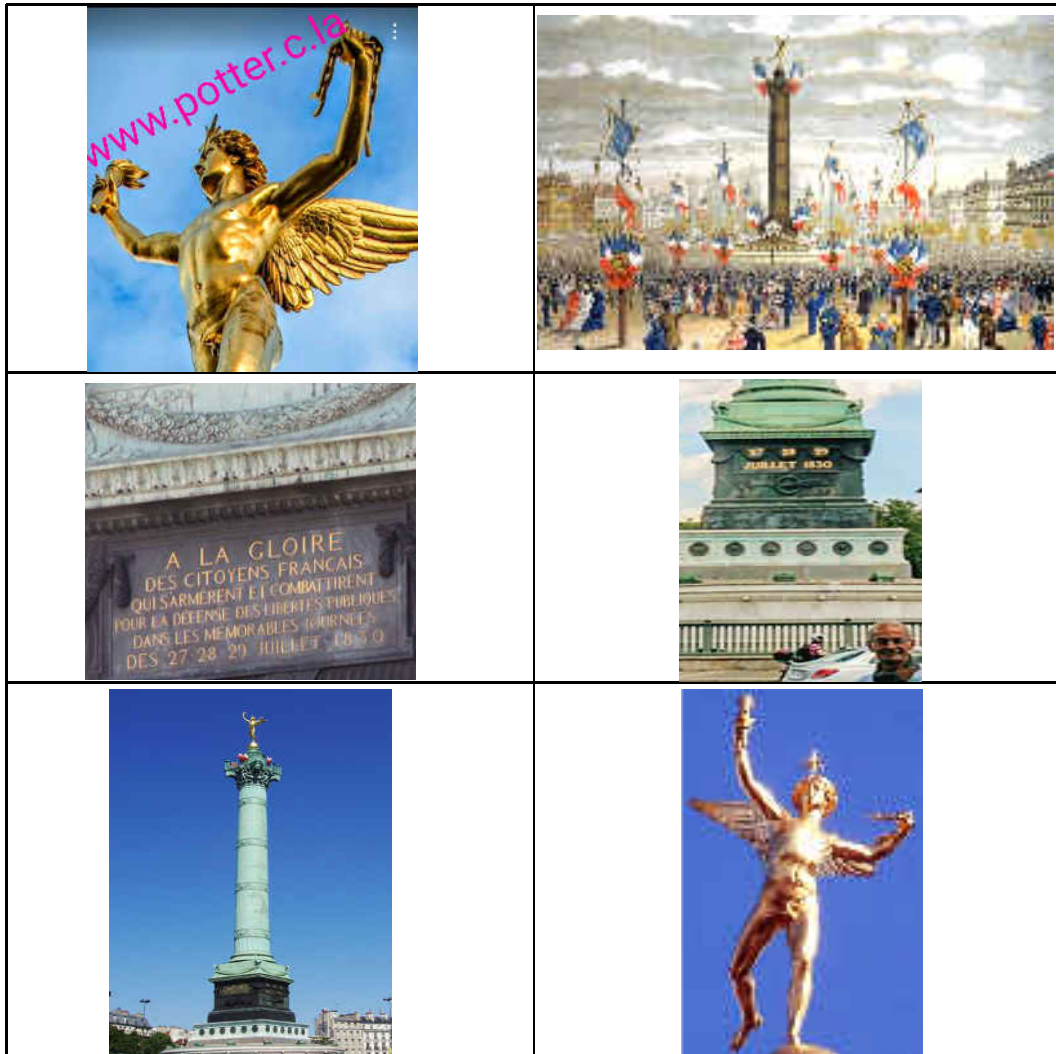
Soldier de Potter...

Belgian Freedom with Louis the Potter!



London conference on the creation of Belgium. Palmerston will sign with The Nations. Mr. Louis de Potter (with a pot on his head!) via his lawyer Sylvain Van de Weyer dispatched by the 1st government of Belgium





In a letter to Gendebien on September 9, he continued to stress that separation, at least administrative and parliamentary, "is not a law project. It is a step that your revolution has set forward and that you have in hand or not". Louis did not stop there however; he wanted the Belgians to stand firm : "You will impose to your future leader a preliminary condition to his reign. It will be yours to provide a Belgian constitution which you will request the king to swear and respect. If he wants to be King of the Belgians, and does not approve firmly and frankly your complete independance, then erect a federative republic."

Gendebien had cautioned Louis about returning from Paris and Lille too soon. Louis assured him that, "Expelled from Belgium by the Dutch, I should be recalled by the Belgians themselves." Louis then wrote an indignant letter to Van De Weyer reproaching him for a short and somewhat offhand reply that Louis should remain tranquil, when Louis had kindly offered him the aid of the "eight thousand Belgians in Paris" who wanted to march on the country and liberate it.

Not to mention German Prussians, British, Polish and Spaniards in France who wanted to help too. The revolutionary spirit of Paris had made Louis even more ebullient than usual. September 12, he wrote again, this time a joint letter to both Van De Weyer and Gendebien. He again offered to lead a citizen army to

Fighting in Brussels began on September 23, 1830 when Frederick attacked the city. Men, women, and children of Brussels erected barricades and fought fiercely. Aided by the men from Liege and Louvain and by Van Halen, they expelled, by the 27th, the Dutch from the city.

This historic street fight of a population, which had been triggered by young journalists, avid of freedom, and conducted by improvised combats-leaders, such as the chief of Bourgeois Guards, commander d'Hooghvorst, was the turning-point in the revolution, started at the doors of the opera "Portici".

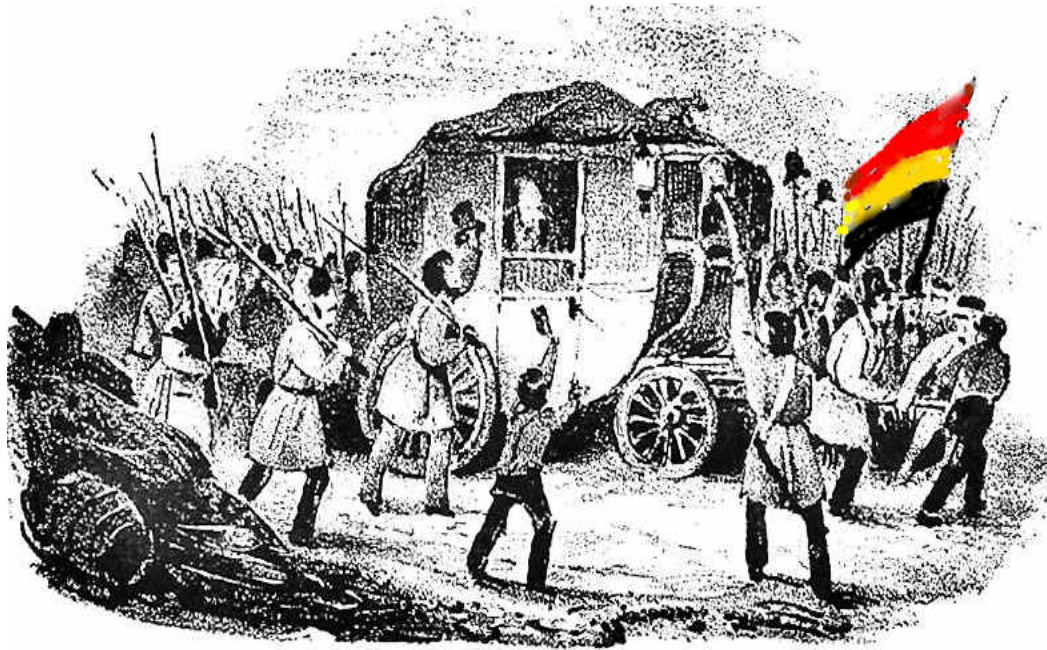
It is illustrated by the huge painting "The Belgian revolution of 1830" made by baron Gustave Wappers (1803-1874), a friend of Louis. It hangs in the Royal museum and shows Louis embracing the Belgian flag, while Louis had criticized all forms of violence, being against those fights.



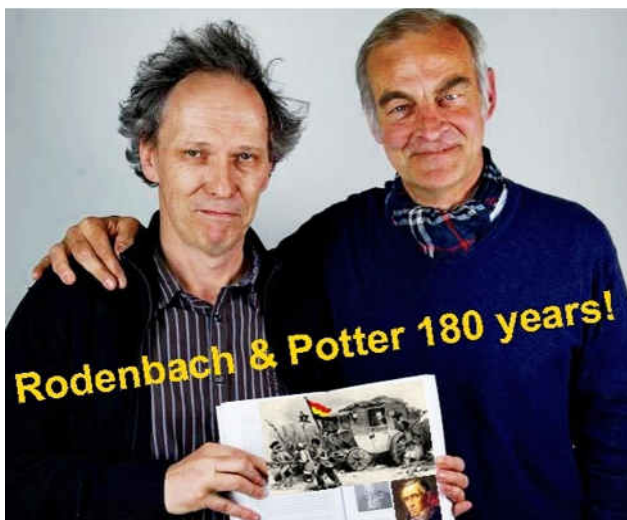
The records of barricade fighting in the European capitals during the nineteenth century show no other instance in which the success of the citizen volunteers over regular troops was so marked, or entailed such important results. The Dutch, though no doubt badly led, were veteran soldiers. The Belgians lost some 600 killed (some 400 were buried in the Place des Martyrs). With this price they were free. Their capital was never attacked by the Dutch again.

Elated by their countrymen's victory, Louis and Rodenbach left Lille on September 26, travelling to Brussels in Rodenbach's brewery carriage. The next morning the revolution leaders team sent word to Louis who was in Enghien, twenty miles southwest of Brussels, that he was formally invited to return to the capital as a dean and constituting member of the Provisional Government.

Louis' trip across his homeland was a heroic procession. Approaching Brussels, it was a triumphal march. Inside Brussels it was an enthusiasm which was almost a delirium! The streets, windows, and roofs of the houses offered thousands of spectators, all of whom were animated by the same patriotic sentiment, and uttered only one cry: "Long live Louis de Potter, leader of Belgium's freedom! Long live the Belgian Lafayette! Hurray for the great citizen, defender of Belgian liberty!" Fighters of the four days, and even the wounded, carried the cabriolet in which he was, and that no horse could have dragged across such a crowd of more than 20.000 people! Women were presenting him flowers and requesting the honor of kissing the nation's heroic liberator.



L'honneur de le recevoir et de l'accueillir; à Tournai, Leuze, Ath, Enghien, Hal et enfin à Bruxelles, on détela sa voiture (1), des hommes la traînèrent, malgré toutes ses instances. On criait partout: Vive la liberté! Vive de Potter! Vive le La Fayette belge: Vive notre défenseur! Des dames, des demoiselles briguaient l'honneur de l'embrasser, en lui présentant des fleurs, des lauriers. Il pleurait de joie et d'attendrissement.

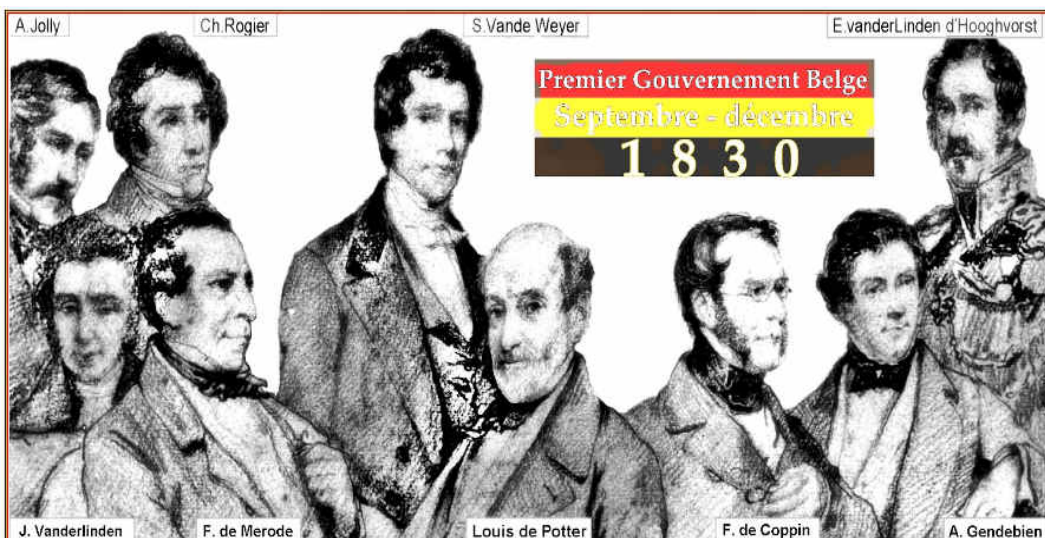


The success in Brussels was not long in spreading across the country. September 26 Bruges fell to the Belgians, and September 28 two thousand men from the garnison at Ostend went over to the side of the new Belgian government, and these were typical surrenders in most new Belgian cities.



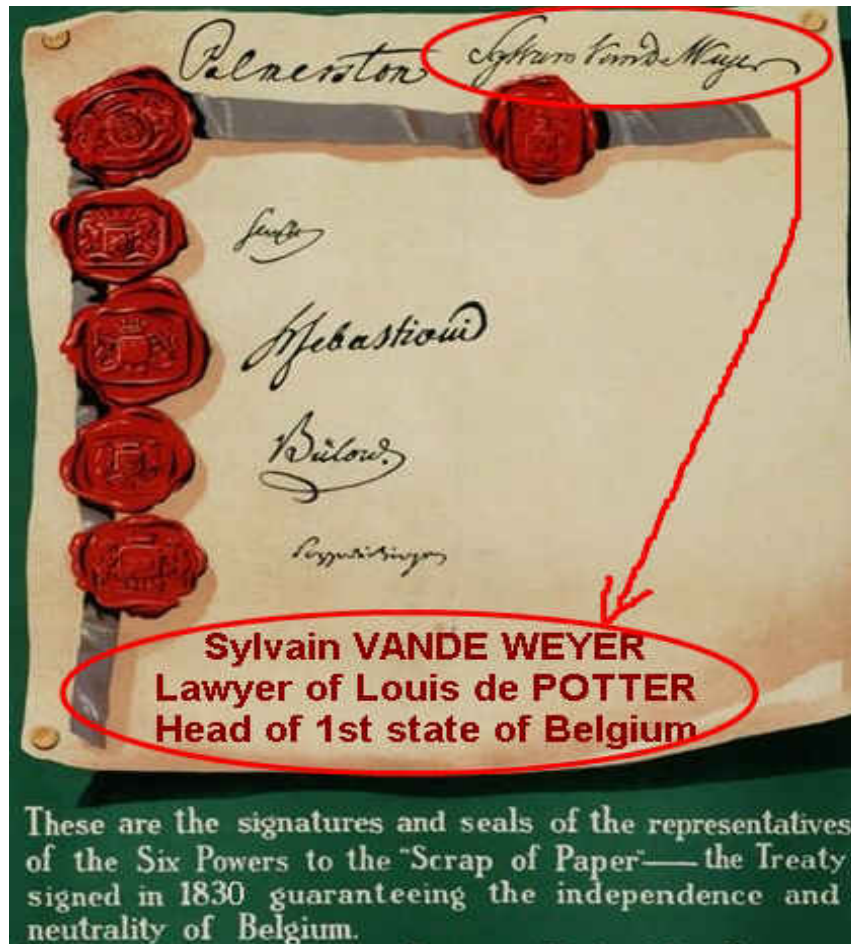
Louis finally reached the city hall that evening of the 28th at 18:30, followed by an immense crowd screaming his name as liberator of the country. After embracing the victorious leaders of the city on the balcony of the City Hall, Louis de Potter, was introduced to the crowd outside by Gendebien where he declared the independence of the country from the Dutch domination.

The Provisional Government now consisted of Charles Rogier, Sylvain Van De Weyer, count Félix de Merode, viscount Andre Jolly, baron F. de Coppin, Joseph vander Linden, J. Nicolai, baron Emmanuel van der Linden D'Hoogvorst, and Alexandre Gendebien, and their dean by age, the honorable Louis de Potter. Rodenbach was approached but declined until elections.



to punish Orangists who had started various incidents around the nation, but de Merode realized his mistake when Louis was firmly against reprisals, such as breaking Dutch dikes, after the bombardment of Antwerp. Louis was a peaceful democratic person, fighting "privileges", not a violent individual neglecting workers.

Although Louis was involved with many of the legislative acts of the Provisional Government, he did not sign Protocol One of the London Conference, by which Belgium agreed to let the five great powers, England, France, Austria, Prussia and Russia, mediate the difficulties between Belgium and Holland.



Protocol One was later much criticized by the Belgians, who claimed that the Provisional Government had in fact signed away its right to self-determination by allowing the great powers to arbitrate the terms which Belgium and Holland ultimately had to accept.

Louis argued that the Provisional Government intended no submission, that it believed it was only agreeing to a suspension of war so that terms might be discussed, that it was only a declaration of armistice.

While Louis' was addressing the members of the National Congress on the occasion of its opening , on November 10, the protocol was signed. During his leading speech, Louis had signified his hopes for a peaceful settlement.

Louis was not just a well-known journalist, retired from the government, and opposed to the search for the new Belgian king outside of Belgium; he was a popular hero, still much beloved by the mid and lower classes, in other words, dangerous for the Nations and their wealthy representatives in Brussels.

All of a sudden, the streetwise hero was watched carefully by the police (his friend Inspector Plaisant could not protect him anymore), and suspected of plotting with his friends at the Caf  la Bergere, he took his family to Paris in late February 1831, and did not return for any length of time until 1838.

His voluntary exile prevented Louis from experiencing first hand the new government of Leopold I, who was formally made King of Belgium on July 21, 1831. Prince Leopold of Saxe Coburg-Gotha was not the Belgians' first choice, as loudly requested by the population, but apparently was fine because the Dutch king, so much opposed by Louis (with nothing more than petitions paid by coins and a prison bed), was gone.

Louis' lawyer and old-time friend, Belgian delegate in London, Van de Weyer, had proposed Leopold's name in November 1830. But it was Lord Palmerston who influenced the decision. Leopold was English by culture and sympathy; any children of his future marriage would, as native-born Belgians, be of the Catholic faith. On 4 June the Congress selected him by 152 votes out of 195.

Many of Louis' ideas were adopted by the infant nation Belgium. While all religions received support from the state, which must have annoyed Louis, there was no established national church. The new King Leopold had been sworn in on the steps of a church and not crowned inside of it. Both the Catholics and Liberals gained much freedom from interference with a new constitution which resolved many old abuses; and the first cabinet of the Kingdom of Belgium.

From 1838 to 1846, minister de Muelenaere (a neighbor of Louis in Dixmude) formed government which was a Unionist one, containing both Catholics and Liberals. The London Conference, meeting on and off until 1839 when the final treaties were signed with Holland, was itself a progressive example of settlement by negotiation. Europe was born... The war-weary great powers, seeking to make the "Concert of Europe" a continuing reality, actually sat down at the conference table, instead of settling the Belgian issue with a war.

Furthermore, unlike most peace conferences, it neither followed a major war, nor did its conclusion benefit one particular nation. However many Belgians disliked being a pawn of the great powers, the conference substituted talks for bloodshed.

Louis also wrote an excellent appraisal of the relationship between the church and state. His Union book contained an interesting philosophy which is still relevant today. It might be interesting to compare Louis' statement to the way other nineteenth century philosophers related the religious to the secular society.

F - Interesting links

1. Family pages: <http://www.potter.c.la>
2. Google Books Library of Nicolas de Potter:
<https://books.google.be/books?uid=112688654645187946494>
3. Facebook page Louis: <https://www.facebook.com/louis.depotter.5>
4. Facebook page Louis ' authors: <https://www.facebook.com/dePotterLouis>
5. Facebook page Louis ' family: <https://www.facebook.com/dePotterSfamily>
6. Facebook page Louis ' adventures:
7. Facebook page Louis ' history: <https://www.facebook.com/dePotter1830Louis>
8. Facebook page Louis ' French book:
<https://www.facebook.com/LouisdePotterRevolutionnaireBelgeEn1830>
9. Facebook page Louis ' Dutch book:
<https://www.facebook.com/Louis.de.Potter.de.Drooghenwalle>
10. Facebook page Nicolas: <https://www.facebook.com/Nicolas.de.Potter.d.Indoye>
11. Facebook page Louis ' concept : <https://www.facebook.com/LouisDePotter1830>
12. Facebook page Jan: <https://www.facebook.com/nic.potterde>
13. Facebook page Jean: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100010479641576>
14. Facebook page 200 years of Belgium: <https://www.facebook.com/1830BE2030>
15. Facebook page National Congress:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/169904876499556>
16. Facebook page Louis ' cemetary grave:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/louisdepotter1830>
17. Facebook page Belgian Patriots 2030:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/PatriotesBelges1830BelgischePatriotten>
18. Facebook page Potter 's family:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/538286432882807>
19. Facebook page fans Prof Balace: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/38711574002>
20. Facebook page 1830 cartoon:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1671395589793595>