2

GARDEN CITIES TO THE WORLD

1913-1920
War damage at the Flemish town of Ypres (photo undated, circa 1919)
CHAPTER 2 GARDEN CITIES TO THE WORLD 1913-1920

2.1 Introduction

On the threshold of World War I British garden city campaigners launched the IFHTP under the name International Garden Cities and Town Planning Association. This naming made the organisation effectively the first international body explicitly dedicated to town planning. Despite this novelty, the early years of the organisation hardly have received due attention. Most literature focuses on the post-war period when the star of the IFHTP really took off. In this chapter I want to analyse the formative years of this international body. Its early history of course is inseparably tied up with the First World War. The central question therefore is how the IFHTP adapted itself to this external factor that had a severe impact on the international exchange of knowledge and experience.

In his monograph of the British Garden Cities and Town Planning Association (GCTPA) Hardy provides a rudimentary outline of its international offspring. This outline does not give a satisfying explanation for the establishment of the international body, nor does it elaborate on organisational changes. Because surviving archival evidence from this period is scarce, I will mainly use reports in periodicals to expand Hardy’s outline, to identify changes and to come up with plausible explanations for these changes. Additionally, I want to analyse the changes of membership and the networks of the members. French historian Saunier has demonstrated the importance of transnational networks for the post-war incarnation of the IFHTP, but thus far nobody has made a serious attempt to map the networks before and during the War. Finally, I want to compare the IFHTP with the transnational civil society at large and the Urban Internationale in particular. Do they have similar patterns or does the IFHTP follow a unique trajectory?

Besides the organisation, membership and networks I also want to analyse the activities of the IFHTP in the period 1913-1920. In his article on the Belgian reconstruction efforts during the War, Belgian architectural historian Uyttenhove treats the main activities of the IFHTP during the War. Because of this focus, he does not give an overview of the activities of the international organisation immediately before the War, nor does he give a follow-up of the activities immediately after the War. Centrally placed in the analysis of the activities is the question whether the central message of the international body changed during these years.

2.2 International garden city propaganda under GCTPA control

Establishment of the IFHTP

On August 22nd 1913 garden city enthusiasts from all over the world convened at the headquarters of the GCTPA in London on the initiative of Ewart Culpin, secretary of the GCTPA, aided by befriended French and German garden city campaigners. The gathering attracted 18 garden city militants, the majority of them of British origin (figure 2.1). Culpin had called for this meeting to discuss “various proposals put forward with the idea of promoting unity of action between workers for the same object in different countries.” This intention suggests a freedom of choice that in fact was not there. The desired outcome of
the meeting, the establishment of a new international garden cities organisation, had been
decided upon before the meeting. In fact, at an Esperanto Congress in Cracow in 1912
Howard, the spiritual father of the garden city movement, had already announced the
establishment of an international garden cities association. The attendants only had to
agree on the scope of the new body and subsequently make arrangements.

The original proposal put forward by Culpin was to start an international association
dedicated to garden cities and town planning. However, this garden city focus was
challenged by representatives that wanted to integrate the propagation of the garden city
idea with “the promotion of social and civic science, covering the whole scope of municipal
organisation and activities and general social and economic problems.” A memorandum on
this alternative scope had been circulated, urging that the wider scope would attract a
broader audience and that it would bring in the “International Civic Association “ [Union
Internationale des Villes] which had been formed at Brussels. Henry Aldridge of the British
National Housing and Town Planning Council (NHTPC) had sent a letter suggesting to dismiss
the wider scope as it was already covered by existing international organisations. In this
context he drew attention to the International Housing Congresses (IHC) which had decided
at its 1913 congress at Scheveningen to establish a housing and town planning committee of
experts from each country. On the other hand, Emile Vinck of the Union Internationale des
Villes (UIV) had sent a letter urging the linking up of his organisation.

In the end, the original proposal was embraced. Alderman Thompson of the NHTPC
dismissed the broader scope as too idealistic. Adolf Otto of the German Garden City
Association did not want to ally himself with housing reformers that advocated the very
opposite of the garden city idea. French architect Augustin Rey of the Musée Social stressed
the educational value of an international garden city association that could teach the
municipalities of Europe to create garden cities for themselves. Ewart Culpin settled the
argument by referring to the need to establish an international garden city association, both to protect existing organisations and to spread their influence.

Compared to the scope, organisational issues were settled relatively easy. Ebenezer Howard was unanimously chosen as the first president. In recognition of his work, Culpin was elected secretary. On the motion of Rey and Otto, it was agreed to accommodate the new organisation at GCTPA headquarters in London. Subsequently, a committee, composed of Richard Watrous, Masao Ito, Baron Kurdt von Strantz, Adolf Otto, Ebenezer Howard and Ewart Culpin, was installed to work out a constitution.\(^6\) The work of the Committee was to be conducted from London, and, as most of its members lived in other countries, Culpin effectively had a free hand to model the international organisation to his liking.

Culpin used this \textit{carte blanche} to dress the organisation according to British customs — a strictly hierarchical organisation with power centralized at a bureau of honorary officers — and make the IFHTP an international extension of the GCTPA. Thus the IFHTP became a propagandist body, with membership open to national garden city societies and societies and companies pursuing the proper lay-out of land and cooperative housing.\(^7\) More importantly, the universe of the IFHTP exclusively revolved around the garden city idea. Its interpretation of town planning was a very restricted one. Just like in the town planning campaign of the GCTPA, town planning was used only to refer to a body of hygienic, technical and, in a lesser degree, aesthetic standards, that were thought necessary to create garden cities. Legislation to make these standards compulsory was considered an element of the utmost importance. The British leadership of the IFHTP certainly was not planning to facilitate rivalling town-planning models.

During the first weekend of February 1914, the embryonic IFHTP descended on Paris. The French Garden City Association and the \textit{Musée Social} acted as hosts. On the programme was a series of meetings of the Committee, complemented by general meetings open to all members. At the meetings of the Committee the constitution was finally settled and details for the first congress later that year were agreed upon. The British officers were joined by two new members: Frederick Litchfield of the Co-partnership Tenants Limited became treasurer and George Montagu Harris of the GCTPA took up the position of chairman of the general committee. The general sessions acknowledged the naturalness of British leadership. In an almost ritualistic procession a message from each country was read “bearing testimony to the adaptability of his [Howard] proposals and the reconstruction of society which would result from the systematic application of his ideas.”\(^8\) This unreserved praise underlined that by early 1914 the garden city virus had spread in Europe and that the continental garden city workers were eagerly looking towards Britain to take the lead.

The first international congress of the IFHTP, organised later that year, presented a peak for the fresh organisation. Unsurprisingly, the congress offered homage to the garden city idea. The venue attracted 146 foreign and colonial visitors from 14 different countries (figure 2). Although statistics are not available, it is safe to assume that the British hosts presented the
largest national faction at the congress. The congress also was the scenery to staff the bodies of the IFHTP, created by the constitution as approved in Paris. All British officers were re-elected. Subsequently, the national societies were entitled to name their representatives for the General Committee (council). Finally, the following members of the Executive Committee were chosen: Professor Charles Gide (France); Adolf Otto (Germany); Henry Aldridge, J.H. Greenhalgh, George Montagu Harris, Raymond Unwin, Herbert Warren (England); dr. W.T. Dobrzynski (Poland); Alexander Block (Russia); C. Montoliu (Spain).\(^9\)

Clearly, the larger national factions, the United States excluded, dominated the executive committee. It was decided to hold the next international congress in 1915 at Düsseldorf.\(^10\)

However, World War I thwarted the execution of this decision.

Surveying the pre-war existence of the IFHTP, we cannot but conclude that it was little more than an international extension of the British GCTPA. Although the British garden city workers had the initiative and must have considered themselves the natural leaders of the pack, we cannot accuse them of usurpation of power. The naturalness of British leadership was repeatedly acknowledged by the other national factions.

---

**Figure 2.2 Hierarchy of foreign participation at the 1914 IFHTP congress, expressed in the number of attending delegates (GC&TP, 1914, 178)**

**Raison d’être**

Why did the GCTPA feel a desire to establish a new international organisation? In his *The Garden City Movement Up-to-date* (1913) Culpin presented the IFHTP as the natural next stage in the evolution of the (international network of the British) garden city movement.\(^11\)

At the founding meeting he referred to a growing volume of foreign correspondence, seeking advice and reporting on garden city activity abroad, and concluded that a new international body was required to unite and strengthen the national garden city societies. Dennis Hardy, the monographer of the GCTPA, follows Culpin’s rhetoric as he labels the
CHAPTER 2 GARDEN CITIES TO THE WORLD 1913-1920

IFHTP “a logical sequel to this expanding network.” But is the motivation presented by Culpin really that convincing?

The IFHTP did not fill an international vacuum. Since 1904 the GC(TP)A had been organising annual International Garden City Congresses that served as an international rallying point for garden city militants. Additionally, these militants could and did find a platform at existing international societies, exhibitions, competitions, study tours etc. The IFHTP did not represent a significant increase of scale or professionalization compared to the old International Garden City Congresses of the GCTPA. Effectively it was only a formalisation of the existing framework of the GCTPA for internationalisation. Why did the GCTPA pursue this formalisation?

In his article on the Belgian reconstruction, Belgian architectural historian Pieter Uyttenhove gives an additional consideration for the establishment of the IFHTP: to protect faithful adoptions and adaptations of the garden city idea across the world against counterfeits. This motive of control offers an interesting lead. Culpin’s 1913 book was more than just an outright boast of the remarkable advance of the garden city movement; it also voiced a serious concern about the suburban sprawl that had ‘promiscuously’ appropriated the garden city label. Even within the (international) garden city movement interpretations of the garden city creed differed fundamentally. The GCTPA lacked the required (international) stature to act as international agent. The old international garden city congresses were inadequate as a foundation for international policing; they reeked too much of British paternalism. So the GCTPA formalised its international network of befriended garden city enthusiasts. On paper it became an international society, but in reality the GCTPA had its international police station.

Intertwined with the motive of control was the motive of rivalry. The IFHTP joined an expanding international sphere for the discussion of urban affairs, the so-called Urban Internationale. For years the entities that inhabited this international plane had been invading the working sphere of the international garden city congresses, but by 1913 these congresses were directly under threat by the newly established UIV and the new town planning committee of the IHC. Probably the establishment of the IFHTP was (partly) an attempt of the British garden city workers to counter the growing competition from the Urban Internationale. But why did the British garden city workers start a new international organisation instead of pursuing their goals through existing bodies? Leading British town planning pioneers like Patrick Abercrombie and Stanley Adshead of the Department of Civic Design at Liverpool University were already raising objections to the growing number of international town planning venues and called for condensation, not further expansion. The answer can once more be found in a hunger for control. In the existing bodies, the British garden city workers were but one faction that had to compete with foreign garden city prophets that preached deluded versions of the garden city faith and, much worse, rivalling town planning concepts that at times propagated the very opposite.
Wintering the War

Only days after the arrangements for the second international congress at Düsseldorf had been taken at hand, the outbreak of World War I turned the world of the IFHTP upside down. The thought of an armed conflict between the leading nations in the field of town planning was found almost unbearable. In its First Annual Report (1915) the IFHTP was eager to stress how much the town planning community had to thank the German nation for, despite the realities of war. But the old order had already changed, and the War posed new circumstances. The hostilities and distrust threatened to undermine the spirit of transnational cooperation. The War inevitably divided the membership. The German and Austrian aggressors were excluded and some of the allied members, foremost the French, were very conspicuous of the neutrals. On a more practical level, it was no longer feasible to organise international congresses. Some European members exclusively focused on the War and its consequences. They considered international exchange relatively a trivial issue. Other European members were unable to cross the frontlines and make their way to London. Most members on other continents avoided war-torn Europe and awaited better times to resume their transnational project. This new situation of course had dire consequences for the IFHTP. The stream of (foreign) membership contributions and congress registration fees rapidly dried up. Coupled with the currency controls, this had devastating effects on the funds of the IFHTP. In fact, it could not have survived on its own. It greatly benefitted from the fact that it was run by the British officers at GCTPA headquarters.

Although some contacts were blocked by the War, other ties were maintained and some even strengthened. Garden Cities and Town Planning, the periodical of the GCTPA regularly carried foreign reports to demonstrate the garden city flame was at least still flickering in Europe. However, the most optimistic reports came from regions far removed from the front lines. The traffic of ideas and persons across the Atlantic actually increased and by 1917 the IFHTP could report that the American Government was considering the garden city principles for its wartime housing schemes for munitions workers. The steadiest flow of reports arrived from Australasia where Charles Reade was touring to promote the garden city idea. Reade decided to remain in South Australia to advise on town planning and the IFHTP took some credit, not simply for the provided intermediary, but also for the town planning associations and local civic groups that sprang up after the lectures. But Reade was not the only British garden city missionary abroad. In 1914 Thomas Adams, Culpin’s predecessor as secretary of the GCTPA, left for Canada to spread the gospel. Barry Parker, co-designer of Britain’s first garden city, travelled abroad to assist the creation of garden suburbs in Porto, Portugal (1917) and Sao Paulo, Brazil (1917-1919). J.H. Greenhalgh and P.W. Wilson toured the United States with sets of lantern slides to preach the garden city faith.

The IFHTP was not satisfied with handling correspondence and reporting on activities abroad. It actually took up a new campaign dedicated to the reconstruction of Belgium that distinctly departed from the internal focus of the earliest meetings. This campaign was a collaboration with the Town Planning Institute (TPI) and the Royal Institute of British
Architects (RIBA). The initiative very much was a British tête-à-tête. To avoid accusations of overt British paternalism, the IFHTP, was explicitly put forward as the main initiator.  

To many the ravaged country of Belgium symbolized the necessity of international collaboration. The German invasion had not only resulted in countless civilian casualties and refugees, but had also destroyed substantial parts of the country’s fabric. A genuine desire to help the unfortunate Belgians was but one motivation for launching a reconstruction campaign. There were other, less noble, considerations as well. The garden city movement had never gotten sound footing in Belgium, so the reconstruction campaign could be used to raise interest in this country.  

Additionally, the tabula rasa in the ravished country must have had a tremendous appeal on the British town planners and housing reformers. The ruined towns and fields of Flanders offered an ideal laboratory for experimentation to define the application of the garden city idea on an unprecedented scale. A new Belgium, designed as an ideal garden city country, would be a powerful example to be followed at home and abroad. It would also be a formidable propagandist tool to raise the international standing of the IFHTP. On a more general level, the efforts for Belgium were exactly the kind of quest needed to lead the IFHTP through the darkest days of the war. It kept members actively involved and made it clear to the outside world that the IFHTP was not a dormant body, but the undisputed international champion of the garden city and town planning movement.

The War posed radical changes for the IFHTP. These changes were not to be found in the organizational structure. For the time being the original framework was left in peace and the annual re-election of the British officers was little more than a formality. However, the IFHTP in wartime was not a mere continuation of the pre-war situation, albeit on a humbler scale. The temporary cancellation of the international congresses proved to be a major setback. In the absence of this major activity, the IFHTP had to conceive new activities to acknowledge and justify its continued existence, which it eventually did by increasing its foreign correspondence and launching the Belgium reconstruction campaign. More important, it became very hard to give substance to (foreign) active membership. The absence of international congresses, travel restrictions and the exclusion of the aggressors, made it undesirable, unnecessary or even outright impossible for many foreign members to actively participate in the activities of the IFHTP, which were confined to the British isle.

As a consequence, the power balance between the active national factions was completely turned upside down. The British members remained the largest faction. Of the six largest pre-war foreign representations (figure 2.2) only France and the Netherlands participated during the War. The Germans and Austrians were barred, the Russians were unable to attend and totally lost touch after the October Revolution and the Americans avoided
[ii] Lenin addresses the troops, May 5, 1920 with Trotsky in foreground (photo taken by G.P. Goldstein on Sverdlov Square in Moscow on May 5, 1920)
belligerent Europe. In all, less than 10% of the nations represented at the 1914 congress of the IFHTP directly participated during the War. The French benefitted from this redistribution of power and influence, besides the Belgians whose participation was propelled from marginality into the centre of attention because of the reconstruction campaign. The redistribution of power did not work to the advantage of the British leaders. They had lost some of their most faithful foreign supporters (especially Germany and Russia) and the new influential national factions were not planning to follow the British lead indiscriminately. For the first time a dissonance was to be heard. The Belgians and French questioned the naturalness of British leadership and the universal application of the garden city idea that came with it; they demanded attention for their own ideas and solutions and particularities of their countries (see paragraph 1.6).

A new dawn
After four dark years the battlefields were abandoned and the focus turned to the tasks at hand. The building production, for years simmering under a wartime economy, had to be rekindled and even intensified to meet the demand for a sufficient housing stock. The race for adequate, affordable housing (in French habitation à bon marché, in German Minimumexistenzwohnungen) was on. This race very much was an international affair. Housing reformers and planners from the various European countries followed each other’s achievements closely. Reports on foreign experiences and publications in national periodicals, foreign periodicals and publications, study trips abroad and correspondence were regular dishes on many a planner’s menu. International exhibitions and congresses spiced up this international diet. Such international events provided a focal point on an international level where the latest achievements of the national housing and planning practices were presented in a condensed fashion. Moreover, international congresses offered an extra dimension to the transnational trade of ideas and experiences by facilitating face-to-face dialogue. Corridor chats and acquaintances were as valuable as the official agenda. However, these international venues were about more than just an international dialogue on technical issues. They represented a renewed pacifist dream of a world where nations collaborated and communicated, instead of taking up arms. The League of Nations embodied this longing for a brave new world.

The IFHTP flourished under the post-war resurgence of internationalism. Although far from inactive during the War, only after the open hostilities had ceased it could fully resume its activities. Severed contacts were restored and it could take up its intended expansion again. British garden city purist C.B. Purdom was appointed as second secretary to raise the capacity and decisiveness of the international organization. Obviously, the British leadership meant serious business. Moreover, the international stage was cleared again and the IFHTP could resume its international congresses. Already in 1919 it offered a modest international gathering on the occasion of the reconstruction exhibition held by the Union des Villes et des Communes Belges (UVCB) in Brussels. A year later it organized its first fully dressed post-war international congress in London.
Although old formulae were dug out to dress the post-war IFHTP, its British leadership could not simply turn back the clock and continue its pre-war operation. The context had changed too much. The British favored an early return of the German garden city workers, but this was fiercely opposed by the Belgian and French members. The GCTPA restored its contacts with Germany, but re-admittance of the Germans in the IFHTP was postponed. The Russians also did not return after the War. Perhaps their absence partly originated in restrictions posed by the new Bolshevist regime, but very likely Western European obstruction – the western countries feared a spread of the communist revolution – played a role as well. Other foreign supporters of the GCTPA, for example the Spanish and Polish garden city movements, did not immediately flock to the IFHTP after the War. This meant that the British leaders had to defend the natural hegemony of British leadership and the garden city idea against continental skepticism.

More important, the pressing task to increase the housing stock overruled the application of sound town planning principles. Most countries were not willing to waste energy in anything as fanciful as the colonization of the countryside through (true) garden cities. They wholeheartedly chose for the immediate relief in or near existing city centers. Sure enough, the garden city idiom was intensively copied throughout Europe after the War, but its adaptations mainly were garden villages, garden suburbs and city extensions on garden city lines. Densities soon rose and apartment blocks entered the picture. Even in Britain, home of the garden city, it was the suburb that was canonized in the first post-war housing and town planning legislation.

In the quest for cheap worker’s houses continental Europe soon outshone British garden city experience. The odds were increasingly against the British garden city workers finding a willing ear for their garden city dream. They seriously were in need of an update of the garden city to provide it with a new meaning.

How did the IFHTP adapt to this new international setting? The first post-war set of rules (1919) largely fell back to the pre-war framework and did not really attempt to come to terms with the new context for internationalism. They maintained the hierarchical structure of Annual Meeting, General Committee (in the early 1920s re-baptized as Council), Executive Committee and General Secretary was maintained and expanded with a growing stock of symbolic vice-presidents (figure 2.3). As of old, all offices were firmly in British hands. These British officers were all affiliated to the GCTPA. Combined with the fact that the IFHTP was still accommodated at the offices of the GCTPA in London, it is safe to conclude that the parent was still in firm control of its international offspring. The secretaries Culpin and Purdom ran the IFHTP almost single-handedly.
2.3 The international network of the GCTPA formalized

The analysis of the organization and changing internal power balances is instrumental to get an understanding of how the early IFHTP operated. However, we have to be aware that the international organization was not a mere formal body. It was an international rallying point where garden city, town planning and housing reform campaigners met, exchanged ideas and discussed (possible) steps of action. It was a community of organizations and individuals united in membership of the IFHTP. Who were these members, what were their social networks and what was the position of the IFHTP in these networks?

Middleclass reformers and professionals
Who were the members in the period 1913-1920? This seems a rather simple question, but there are no straightforward answers. The historical membership administration is lost. Nor do we have attendance lists of the meetings and the congresses at our disposal. This does not mean we do not have sources at all. Culpin gives a brief outline of the international network of correspondents of the GCTPA in *The Garden City Movement up-to-date* (1913). It is likely that this network was the basis of the IFHTP. Additionally, we have ‘official reports’
of the main activities of the IFHTP in the GCPA’s organ *Garden Cities and Town Planning* that also acted as organ of the IFHTP. These reports do not hand conclusive attendance lists, but they do identify those active members – officers, speakers, main participants of the discussions and prominent attendants – that in the eyes of the British leadership defined the activities. I do assume that these sources enable us to identify the majority of the relatively small population of active members that worked out the agenda of the IFHTP.

First I shall identify the active members that are mentioned in the reports on the activities of the IFHTP in *Garden Cities & Town Planning*. Subsequently I shall analyze active membership. What was the (professional) background of these active members and what organizations did they represent? Is active membership (mainly) composed of GCTPA members and their foreign correspondents, or are we dealing with entirely different individuals and organizations? I will limit the identification and analysis of active membership to the largest national factions at the 1914 congress of the IFHTP: Britain, Germany, Russia, France, the United States and the Netherlands (see figure 2.2). As my selected source does not give particulars about participation from Austria, I will not discuss active membership from this country. To complement the picture, I will also discuss Belgian active membership, because the importance of Belgian membership increased dramatically during the reconstruction campaign.

![Diagram of British active membership](image)

Figure 2.4 Continuity of British active membership, measured in years. An active member has to be mentioned in a report on an activity of the IFHTP in *Garden Cities and Town Planning* at least in two annual volumes. The year 1918 is left out of consideration due to the absence of reports (*GC&TP* 1913-1920).

**British active membership**

Britain by far presented the largest national faction. All the executive positions were held by
British members. If we behold the active British members (figure 2.4), the British officers (Howard, Culpin, Montagu Harris and Litchfield) and British keynote speakers at the congresses (Unwin, Aldridge) clearly dominated active British membership. Not all of these dominant active members wielded the same power. Evidently, Culpin was the central figure. He collected influential positions in the IFHTP (secretary, local organizer, member of committees) and frequently presented himself as important lecturer at the international events of the IFHTP. On the other hand, Howard held very little real power. He lacked the keenness of his colleagues and acted as a mere symbolic father of the movement, suitable only for cordial words and grand dreams. Strictly speaking, Thomas Adams, former secretary of the GCTPA, was not a representative of the GCTPA, but of Canada – he had relocated to Canada in 1914 – but the GCTPA considered Adams as one of its important missionaries abroad.

In terms of professional backgrounds, the British active members were a motley crew. Some were professionally trained architects (for example Unwin and Lanchester); others had a background in governance (for example Montagu Harris and Thompson) or were just laymen with an interest in social reform, housing and/or town planning (for example Howard, who was a professional shorthand-writer and part-time social reformer and town planning pioneer). It would be wrong to dismiss these laymen as ignorant amateurs. Some of them grew into professionals as they acquired an understanding of town planning that could easily rival with trained architects. For example, actor and playwright C.B Purdom started as a clerk at the GCTPA, but grew to become one of the most prolific town planning authors of the British garden city movement.

All active British members had direct ties with the GCTPA. Most of them were member of the GCTPA and had acquired membership of the international offspring through the British parent. Some active members are explicitly referred to as representatives of other British organisations. Aldridge and Thompson were representatives of the NHTPC and Litchfield and Vivian were representatives for the Co-partnership Tenants Ltd. Both propagandistic organisations were active in the field of housing reform and were affiliated to the GCTPA through substantial cross-membership and close collaboration. There was also cross-membership with professional organisations as the Town Planning Institute and Royal Institute of British Architects, but these organisations did not officially join the IFHTP. What kind of organisation was the GCTPA as main instigator of the establishment of the IFHTP and principal purveyor of active members?

The nature and history of the GCTPA is extensively documented in the two volumes GCTPA monograph by British planning historian Dennis Hardy, so I will only give a brief summary here. The history of the British garden city movement is tied up with professional shorthand writer and part-time inventor Ebenezer Howard (1850-1928). In 1898 he revealed his visions of garden cities in a small booklet entitled To-morrow. A peaceful path to real reform. It was not until the republication under the more popular title Garden Cities of To-
Prominent British members of the IFHTP in the period 1913-1920: president of the IFHTP and spiritual father of the garden city movement Ebenezer Howard, prominent paper contributor and architect of pioneering garden city schemes Raymond Unwin and honorary secretary Ewart Culpin. Barry Parker was not an active member of the IFHTP, but he was considered an important missionary abroad of the British garden city idea.
morrow (1902), that the garden city concept really took off. What did Howard’s garden city idea entail? Howard addressed the mechanism that was responsible for most evils in both urban and rural life: the unprecedented exodus of population from the countryside to the industrializing cities. According to Howard this migration was caused by ‘attractions.’ While the countryside offered fresh air and nature, it could not provide sufficient work and wages, nor adequate social life. He did not think people had to choose between town and country. He saw a third superior option: town-country. This alternative would combine “all the advantages of the most energetic and active town life, with all the beauty and delight of the country”.

This reconciliation could be brought about by establishing a garden city in the countryside. What did this garden city look like? Howard did not hand an attractive design, but he did provide an appealing diagrammatic representation. The new town had to be centrally placed on an estate of about 6,000 acres, covering roughly one sixth part. The surrounding grounds served as a natural greenbelt, serving as a refuse for the town. The town had a symmetric layout, composed of rings separated by concentric avenues. Six radial boulevards created equal ‘wedges’. Centrally placed was a public garden, surrounded by public buildings. Moving outwards, we cross a concentric park zone, followed by four residential rings. The outer ring was reserved for enterprises and industries, fronting the circle railway, which encompassed the whole town and connected the town to the main lines of the railway network. Howard explicitly stated that this diagrams were intended as a suggestion, not a rigid blueprint.

How was this garden city experience to be organised? Howard was an adamant militant of cooperative organisation. He firmly believed in an individual responsibility towards the community as the driving force behind his garden city experiment. He dismissed mere philanthropy and collective organisation. Especially the State was regarded with weary eyes. Howard’s strategy was relatively simple. First, the required estate in the countryside was to be secured at rock bottom, depressed-agricultural land values. The necessary budget was supposed to have been raised on mortgage debentures. The estate was to be legally vested in the names of a small group of gentlemen “of responsible position and of undoubted probity and honour”, who held it in trust, firstly, as a security for the financial backers, and, secondly, in trust for the community of the garden city which was intended to be build thereon. An essential feature of the scheme was that all ground rents should be paid to the trustees, who, after providing for interest to the debenture-holders and for the sinking fund, would hand the balance to the central council of the garden city community, to be employed in financing of amenities. Similarly, the ‘profits’ of the increase of the land value by building a garden city was to be directed to the community chest.

Howard aimed higher than merely building one garden city. To avoid the trappings of overpopulation, he drew a firm maximum of about 32,000 inhabitants. How then would the garden city provide for others who were in pursuit of a better life? Once the population limit
[v] Ebenezer Howard’s representation of Social City, a growing chain of garden cities (Howard 1902).
was reached, a new garden city had to be established. An inter-municipal railway would connect the garden cities to each other and to the old city, effectively creating a growing chain of garden cities in the countryside. Howard called this regional urbanization model Social City. The garden cities were to be perceived as basic building blocks in the progressive reconstruction of society. Initially, the Social City would be confined to the countryside, but it would also affect the old cities. It was all a matter of competition. In the long run the old city would have to counterbalance the growing magnetism of the garden cities. Howard predicted that the old city would answer by importing the countryside into the city and transform into a garden city.36

Howard was not just a dreamer; he quintessentially was a man of action. He rallied sympathisers to take steps of action. This resulted in 1899 in the establishment of the GCTPA, then still named Garden City Association (GCA). The GCA was a vehicle to propagate the garden city idea and ultimately to launch the first garden city experiment. Initially, the GCA was little more than a branch of the Land Nationalisation Society (LNS), of which Howard also was a founding father. The LNS provided the secretary and treasurer and the GCA was accommodated at the headquarters of the LNS. This first incarnation was not very successful. Things changed in 1901. Ralph Neville, the new chairman with a firm belief in a more businesslike approach, deliberately steered the GCA away from its radical, anarchist roots. The quest to raise necessary funds increasingly took place in “Edwardian company boardrooms and the panelled lounges of gentlemen’s clubs.”37 The warm nest of the LNS was traded in for an independent office and Thomas Adams was engaged as a paid secretary.

Under the guidance of Neville and Adams the garden city concept was affiliated with the successful model industrial settlements of Bournville and Port Sunlight in 1902. Thus the garden city concept was enhanced with garden villages. Two important conferences were held at Bournville and Port Sunlight, resulting in the establishment of the First Garden City Company. Neville’s befriended businessmen opened their purses and the required starting capital was subscribed in no time. The news of the Company’s birth was generally met with enthusiasm. Reformists embraced the garden city idea as a means to peacefully supersede capitalist society, whereas conservatives saw garden cities as havens where capitalism could be most easily preserved. The search for a suitable site to build the first garden city was on. In spring 1903 a site at Letchworth was purchased. Its vicinity to London was the decisive factor to secure this specific site.

Letchworth Garden City offered the fulfilment of a quintessential objective, but it also provided an example for others to follow. Adams played a vital role in the cultivating of the first garden city as a propagandistic tool. He lifted the reports of the progress at the Letchworth grounds from a mere site development account to an appealing image that was to become an icon for the wider reformist movement. Strategically, various groups were entertained at Letchworth. Thus, Adams could spread the garden city gospel and,
Letchworth (1904), designed by Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker (Purdom 1913)
simultaneously, help the garden city movement to become part of the wider reformist movement. However, he also recognized the dangers of this strategy: Letchworth threatened to outshine the original garden city idea, because it showcased distinct departures from Howard’s original tract. The site was smaller which came at the expense of the proposed greenbelt, the actual population came nowhere close to the intended 30,000 inhabitants and the management of the town was far more commercially coloured. More seriously, the brilliant architectural design and open layout, conceived by designer duo Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker, held an appeal on its own. The attractive form threatened to overshadow the underlying programme of social reform.

Shortly after the construction of Letchworth another garden city scheme was started: Hampstead Garden Suburb. Although very important for the future policy of the GCA, it was not involved in the construction of Hampstead. Both philosophically and physically Hampstead represented a considerable departure from Howard’s guidelines: it was not an independent town but a mere suburb. Hampstead did retain the higher social purposes of the garden city movement. Unwin and Parker also signed for the design of Hampstead. Hampstead’s design displayed a looser concept than Letchworth, reflecting Unwin’s general interest in German town planning and Camillo Sitte’s book Der Städtebau nach seinen künstlerischen Grundsätzen (1889) in particular. But the suburb was more than a reinterpretation of old romantic German towns. It featured a state-of-the-art differentiated road net, designed to keep unwanted traffic out. More importantly, Unwin demonstrated in situ that a proper planning scheme could create far more space, without using more land. The trick was to make a distinction between residential streets and thoroughfares so that the land needed for roads could be cut dramatically, resulting in cost reduction and more land available for open spaces and amenities.

The first schemes ‘on garden city lines’ put the GCA before a fundamental dilemma. Should it stick to a strict interpretation of the garden city idea, or should it embrace the changes as they manifested themselves at these schemes to secure a broad following? The GCA did not fail to notice that the bulk of the housing production in Britain bore little resemblance to Howard’s ideas. Could the potential of State intervention not be used to support the GCA’s aims? Protagonists of State intervention urged that legislation that would compel developers to plan their schemes along garden city lines was to be preferred above existing practice. The time seemed right to abandon civic action as the exclusive motor behind garden city schemes. The formation of a new Liberal Administration in 1906, followed by the appointment of Herbert Henry Asquith as Prime Minister in 1908, offered the perspective of more governmental intervention in the field of housing and town planning than under the previous conservative administrations. Secondly, British housing reform and town planning campaigners were obsessed with German town planning experience. T.C. Horsfall (1841-1932), renowned town planning protagonist and prominent member of the GCA, in 1904 published The Improvement of the Dwellings and Surroundings of the People: The Example of
[vii] Hampstead garden suburb (1907) near London, designed by Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker (Culpin 1913)
Germany. This book was an unreserved praise of the efficacy of German town-extension planning. It was well-circulated and its message eagerly digested.

Once the GCA had set its mind on town planning legislation, it quickly put its machinery into use to lobby for the desired legislation. To stress the newly-found focus the GCA changed its name to Garden Cities and Town Planning Association (GCTPA) in 1907. Things seemed to proceed as planned: in June 1909 the required Town Planning Act was passed. This legislation did not mark the end of the town planning campaign. On the contrary, it was an impetus to stir up the fire. Town planning was now officially raised as the new primary target of the GCTPA. The GCTPA message must have been appealing, for in 1913 Culpin reported on a remarkable advance of the garden city movement in his *The Garden City Movement Up-to-date*. He admitted that the garden suburb and garden village had outstripped the original garden city idea, but the GCTPA not for a moment considered the discouragement of them. He still held up the true garden city as the highest objective, although the GCTPA did not take serious steps towards a second garden city. This course was questioned by a purist minority, of which C.B. Purdom became a prominent spokesman. In *The Garden City* (1913) Purdom praised the Letchworth experiment and dismissed Hampstead and general town planning ‘on garden city’ lines as erroneous deviations of the Howardian faith.

To the outside world the official course of the GCTPA was probably best represented by Unwin’s influential *Town Planning in Practice* (1909). Unwin had already made a name as the foremost garden city architect and his 1909 publication would secure his position as the principal nestor of British town planning. It was primarily intended as a town planning manual. It offered practical recipes to design a town planning scheme on garden city lines. But *Town Planning in Practice* was much more than a mere manual. It offered the first comprehensive synthesis of British town planning experience on garden city lines and was a powerful argument to adhere to town planning principles. The central message was that a better environment could be achieved through town planning (on garden city lines). He was quick to stress that town planning was not merely a technical affair. To him it was a civic art that had to express civic life. In the best garden city tradition the preferred cooperative organisation of the whole enterprise was not forgotten.

German active membership

Germany provided the largest foreign faction in the IFHTP. This is hardly surprising, considering the innate relation between the British and German town planning and housing reform militants. ³⁸ The British garden city workers were obsessed by the supposed efficacy of German city extension planning. The Germans on their part were obsessed by the superiority of the British cottage as opposed to German *Mietskaseren*. ³⁹ They showed up in large numbers at the pre-war meetings of the IFHTP, but this attendance radically ended as World War I broke out. After the War the Germans did not immediately return to the IFHTP. The British leaders favoured an early return of their German allies, but the Belgian and
French members fiercely opposed this idea and in the end it was resolved to temporarily bar membership for the Germans and first let old wounds heal.

The majority of the German delegates remained anonymous. Only a few names stand out in the reports in *Garden cities & town planning*: Adolf Otto and Bruno Taut. Taut presented a paper on a new garden city scheme near Berlin (the scheme is not specified, but it probably was Falkenberg) at the First International Garden City Congress of the IFHTP. In *The Garden City Movement Up-to-date* (1913) Otto is listed as director of the Deutsche Gartenstadtgesellschaft (DGG) and German correspondent of the GCTPA. What kind of organisation was the German cousin of the GCTPA? The DGG was established in 1902. Just like its English counterpart, the DGG initially found its backing among middle class reformists. Its founding fathers included many protagonists of the Friedrichshagener Dichterkreise and the Neue Gemeinschaft. Initially, the central figures were publicist Bernard Kampffmeyer and economist Adolf Otto. They were later joined by artisan-turned-economist Hans Kampffmeyer and some renowned German architects like Peter Behrens, Hermann Muthesius and Richard Riemerschmid.

The German garden city workers faced the same dilemma as their British peers: should they adhere to the original garden city idea or should they embrace the broader path of town planning on garden city lines? Unlike the GCTPA, the DGG unambiguously dismissed the independent, autarkic garden city and opted for the practical path of propagating garden villages, garden suburbs and city extensions on garden city lines. The utopian dream of the reconstruction of society increasingly was traded in for a pragmatic focus on land reform. It was Hans Kampffmeyer who was largely responsible for this reorientation, which enabled the DGG to find support in the wider public opinion.

But the German garden city workers also faced difficulties unknown in England. One major obstacle was the fact that most banks and institutions that lend money on mortgage considered cottages insufficient security and therefore were unwilling to back garden city schemes. Additionally, because most landowners opposed the “improved methods of housing the people”, most corporations objected to the new plans on garden city lines. Moreover, Germany suffered perhaps more than England from the promiscuous use of the term garden city. However, the chief problem operating against the advance of the garden city idea was the road problem. Almost everywhere municipal authorities insisted on wide expensive thoroughfares, preventing the application of the Unwin formula of separating residential streets to cut back costs and create extra open space.

Despite the difficulties the DGG had significant achievements to present. The biggest and most important of the German schemes was that of Hellerau, near Dresden. Bernard Kampffmeyer had already stated in 1908 that they wanted their own Letchworth. Perhaps a Howardian garden city in spirit, in reality Hellerau was of course a garden suburb at the end of a tramway. Physically it was a manifestation in the best Unwin-Parker tradition: open heath land acting as a natural greenbelt, terraced and semi-detached houses in a neo-
vernacular style, curving streets, a separation between residential streets and thoroughfares and a central market square. The architectural supervision was in the hands of Richard Riemerschmid. Besides Riemerschmid, the renowned architects Heinrich Tessenow, Hermann Muthesius, Kurt Frick and Georg Metzendorf designed whole streets and rows of houses. Like Letchworth in its early years, Hellerau was heavily saturated with the principles of the wider reform movement. Contrary to the ideas of the British garden city movement, Hellerau did not profess a cooperative spirit, but a collectivist one. Hellerau was an architectural form conceived for the ambition to unify working and living, culture and education, within an organism defined by Lebensreform. Reformers from all parts of Europe flocked to Hellerau to witness the practised reform of all aspects of life for themselves. One of the most famous reformers whose name is tied up with Hellerau was the well-known Swiss composer and musical pedagogue Emile Jaques-Dalcroze. Dalcroze had developed a rhythmic gymnastics and was giving performances throughout Germany to fill people with enthusiasm. At the invitation of Karl Schmidt he came to Hellerau, where he gave lessons in rhythmic gymnastics.  

**Russian active membership**

After Germany, Russia presented the largest foreign delegation at the first congress of the IFHTP. Most Russian delegates remain anonymous in the reports in *Garden Cities and Town Planning*. Only two Russian active members stand out: publisher Dmitri Protopopov and lawyer Alexander Block. These two Russians are also listed as the Russian correspondents of the GCTPA in Culpin’s 1913 book. Both Russians were executive members of the Russian Garden City Society. Block, who had already translated Howard’s little booklet in 1911, established this society in Saint Petersburg in 1913. The society mainly attracted middle-class activists. The majority of them was also member of the Socialist Revolutionary Party, which, despite its name, was not that radical at all. In their 1913 tract *Socialism Without Politics: Garden Cities of the Future and Present* the Russian garden city workers presented a non-revolutionary path to socialism based on municipal land acquisition and cooperative housing schemes supported by enlightened capitalists as their main objectives. Besides the propaganda by the Russian Garden City Society, the model garden city of Prozorovskaiia (circa 1913), a faithful adaptation of British models by architect Vladimir Semenov, was responsible for the rapid spread of the garden city idea in Russia. But the Russian supporters of Howard’s ideas were not blind followers. In the introduction of the 1916 book *Big City and Garden-Cities* by G. Kovalesky, G. Dubelir dismissed the true garden city in favour of applications on garden city lines in and near existing cities.

The garden city message survived the revolution, but the Russian Garden City Society disbanded during the chaos that followed. Once the bolsheviks were firmly in the saddle, the garden city idea briefly gained new importance. A new garden city society was started in 1922 under governmental auspices. However, the garden city concept was soon found wanting. It was dismissed as a mere utopian fantasy of petit-bourgeois intellectuals, unfit as an adequate concept to visualise the new socialist way of life. The enormous amount of new
CHAPTER 2 GARDEN CITIES TO THE WORLD 1913-1920

Two prominent foreign adaptations of the garden city idea: Hellerau (1909) near Dresden under supervision of architect Richard Riemerschmid [viii] and Prozorvskaja (circa 1913), near Moscow under supervision of architect Vladimir Semenov [ix]
towns during the first Five Year Plan (1928-1933) were not on bourgeois garden city lines, but were supposed to express the true spirit of socialist society. These events were largely ignored by the IFHTP. Russian participation never recovered to its pre-war size. More importantly, post-war Western Europe was anxious of a spread of the communist revolution. If the IFHTP was to gain sounder footing in governmental circles it had to distance itself from its old Russian members. Russian membership was not barred, but it was not encouraged either.42

French active membership
France also was a main supplier of active members. Already in 1903 a French Garden City Association was established. Two ringleaders of this French association, lawyer and publicist Georges Benoît-Lévy – who provided a loose translation of Howard’s booklet in 1904 - and professor of economics and prominent campaigner of the cooperative movement Charles Gide, were the official French contacts of the GCTPA and among the foremost pre-war active French members of the IFHTP. However, Benoît-Lévy’s participation was short-lived. He was not present at the first congress of the IFHTP, nor do we find his name in reports in Garden Cities and Town Planning in the following years. The reasons for his departure are uncertain. It is possible that he was obstructed by the other French participants that were affiliated to the Musée Social. His obstinate actions, averse to the policies of the Musée Social, made him a controversial figure in the housing and town planning circles in his country. The British leaders might have discouraged his continued participation. They were already distrustful of Benoît-Lévy’s lax interpretation of the garden city idea – basically “to each house a garden” – and his newly conceived hybrid of the linear city and garden city concepts must have amounted to treason in the eyes of the British garden city workers.

The linear city was the brainchild of Spanish engineer Arturo Soria y Mata (1844-1920). Already in 1882 he presented his vision of La Cuidad Lineal to the world and developed it into a full-scale proposal by 1892. Basically, this linear city amounted to the realisation of a city extension along both sides of a tramway track running out of the big city, establishing a planned linear suburb with an extraordinary linear accessibility. The linear city was never meant to be more than a commuter suburb, developed as a speculative affair. Of the original plan for a 48-kilometre linear city for Madrid, only the first tract of about 5 kilometres was actually realised. However, Soria y Mata dreamt grander dreams and ultimately Europe was to be united by a system of linear cities. Benoît-Lévy borrowed this idea from his Spanish colleague and interpreted it as a linear garden city.43 In 1957 he still stuck to his belief that garden cities and linear cities were but two sides of the same coin when he remarked “Et en somme la cité linéaire, n’est-elle pas une cité-jardin allongée (...).”44

Besides Benoît-Lévy and Gide, Parisian architect Augustin Rey, a representative of the Musée Social, was the most active French member of the earliest hour. In fact, the pre-war reports in Garden Cities and Town Planning identify Rey as the most prominent French participant. Unlike Benoît-Lévy, Rey did actively participate in the IFHTP after the War. He radically quit
the IFHTP in the early 1920s, probably because of the British persistence in readmitting the Germans – Rey was an outspoken opponent of German membership after the War. The void left by Rey was filled by housing reformers Henry Sellier and Auguste Bruggeman, whose stars rapidly rose in the ranks of the IFHTP after the War (see chapter 3). Apart from Benoît-Lévy, Gide and Rey, many members of the Musée Social and its affiliated bodies – besides the French Garden City Association amongst others the Société Française des Urbanistes, Société Française des Habitations à Bon Marché, and La Renaissance des Cités – attended the international gatherings of the IFHTP, but their infrequent attendance is insufficient to label them (dominant) active members.

The Musée Social was much more than just another continental garden city association. Established in 1894, it assembled a professionally and ideologically diverse group of reformers to study contemporary social and economic problems. It was a social laboratory that lobbied for social legislation. Naturally, the Musée Social was interested in housing and town planning and garden city experience as a specific adaptation, but it was not willing to confine itself to the restraints of the garden city idea. By 1914 Maurice Dufourmantelle of the Société Française des Habitations à Bon Marché ended his analysis of Howard’s garden city concept with the conclusion that legislative measures to counter speculation but still to make the inhabitants owner would be needlessly cumbersome. Although faubourg-jardins had become an obligatory element in French town plans by the 1920s, the French militants of town planning advocated a town planning that encompassed the whole of urban life, by Marcel Poëte called “science de la ville”, much in analogy to civics as proposed by Patrick Geddes.45 In this wider scientific approach the garden city idea was but one element of the whole, not a universal solution to all urban problems.46

Belgian active membership

Although the reports in Garden cities & town planning refer to a modest Belgian presence at the pre-war meetings of the IFHTP, they do not identify Belgian active members. Culpin’s 1913 book refers to a Belgian Garden City Association (1904), for which Charles Didier acted as official correspondent, so one would expect to find this Didier or other representatives of this Belgian association among the anonymous Belgian participants. However, this seems not to have been the case. Belgian architectural historian Uyttenhove has identified both Belgian attendants at the 1914 congress of the IFHTP: senator Emile Vinck and architect Jules Brunfaut. Neither of them represented the Belgian garden city workers. They represented the Union des Villes et des Communes Belges (UVCB), an organisation that had much more in common with the Musée Social than the GCTPA.

The reconstruction campaign propelled Belgian active membership from marginality into the heart of the IFHTP. In the beginning of 1915 a special town planning conference was organised to discuss the Belgian reconstruction. Belgian minister Joris Helleputte was appointed chairman for the occasion. The event attracted around 300 Belgian representatives. In the wake of the conference a reconstruction exhibition was organised
Verwilghen’s conception of the ideal city clearly reveals a garden city influence.

Ebenezer Howard (1), Emile vinck (2), Cecil Harmsworth (3) and Van der Kas (4) at the conference of the IFHTP in London in 1920.
CHAPTER 2 GARDEN CITIES TO THE WORLD 1913-1920

and an educational programme was set up to initiate Belgian professionals into the accomplishments of British town planning in general and garden city experience in particular (see paragraph 2.5). *Garden cities & town planning* published entire sections in French to keep a Belgian audience involved with the British efforts for a new Belgium.

In this new Belgian mass participation, two names stand out: architect-planner Raphael Verwilghen and UVCB representative Emile Vinck. Verwilghen only joined the educational programme at a later stage as an official representative of the Belgian government, but he rapidly absorbed the British town planning corpus and made his presence prominently felt in the study circles. Initially, Vinck’s presence was less prominent, although he was an influential, well-connected person. The British officers held high hopes to bind Verwilghen to the IFHTP as the official Belgian representative – according to Culpin, Verwilghen was the sole person in Belgium who actually understood the garden city idea – but it was Vinck who would rise as the undisputed Belgian representative. His UVCB hosted the first post-war conference in Brussels in 1919, and Vinck secured himself an executive position, a position that he would occupy for decades to come. 47

*Dutch active membership*

According to the reports in *Garden Cities and Town Planning*, Dutch participation started at the 1914 congress of the IFHTP. Although the Dutch attendants remained anonymous, we do know that they were critical – they condemned the small size of British cottages, stating that such a size would not be allowed under the Dutch Housing Law (1901) – suggesting that we are not dealing with representatives of the Dutch Garden City Movement (1906), which secretary Daniël de Clercq was an official foreign correspondent of the GCTPA. This is all the more plausible as Dirk Hudig, a prominent Dutch housing reformer, declared this Dutch Garden City Movement practically moribund by 1914. 48

At first sight Dutch participation did not alter during the War: the reports in *Garden Cities and Town Planning* on the activities of the IFHTP refer to a Dutch representation, but do not give particulars. However, if we turn to reports in Dutch periodicals on activities of the IFHTP, it becomes apparent that the Dutch Garden City Association did not actively participate. Its position was taken over by Dutch architects. Immediately after the War the Dutch Society of Architects emerged as the Dutch representation of the IFHTP. This change of representation might have been a silent acknowledgement of the fact that it was Dutch architects, rather than garden city workers, that attended the conferences of the IFHTP in the preceding years. It is also very likely that endeavours of the *Comité Néerlando-Belge d'Art Civique*, an occasional collaboration of Dutch and Belgian architects to discuss the Belgian reconstruction, brought the Dutch architects under the attention of the British leaders of the IFHTP as a superior alternative to the dormant Dutch Garden City Movement (the report on the 1919 conference of the IFHTP explicitly referred to members of this Comité). Once the Dutch Society of Architects had stepped forward, Dutch participation changed. Passivity was abandoned and the Dutch actively contributed conference papers.
However, they did not profess a serious interest in the policy-making of the international body.\footnote{49}

**American active membership**

Before the War the Americans constituted one of the larger foreign factions at the meetings of the IFHTP. Unlike most other national participations, American participation did not pivot around a central organisation. In the reports in *Garden cities & town planning*, individuals like reverend Josiah Strong and Richard Watrous stand out, rather than organisations they represented. There seems to have been little continuity in the composure of the American presence. The earliest American members did not participate constantly over a longer period of time. On the contrary, most of them only attended once. Their presence seems to have been defined more by opportunity and chance, rather than a deliberate decision to cross the Atlantic to visit events of the IFHTP. For example, Richard Watrous of the American Civic Association of Washington dropped in at the founding meeting, while visiting England as part of a European tour.\footnote{50}

British planning historian Stanley Buder has identified and analysed the group of American middle-class reformers that sympathized with the garden city idea: the Social Gospel movement. The American reformers had little in common with the Marxist rhetoric of class conflict. Their rationale was to be found in an ethic vision of Christian brotherhood. Cooperative and communitarian schemes long had provided a blueprint for their Christian socialism. Their quest for a Cooperative Commonwealth was a search for a just and supportive world, embodied in a thriving communal life that was not dominated by market forces, but individual responsibility to the community. By about 1900, communitarianism as such, ceased to be a significant part of this search – realization increasingly dawned that establishing new colonies alone would not do the trick – it did leave a legacy of ideas and values that were an influence to reckon. Especially, one particular colonization scheme, Albert Kinsey Owen’s grandiose project for an American colony and planned city in Topolobampo, Mexico, despite its utter fiasco was widely influential. The influence of the American Social Gospel movement on Howard’s ideas is widely recognized – Howard was responsible for the publication of Bellamy’s *Looking backward* in England and he explicitly referred to the ideas of Bellamy and Owen’s scheme in his famous 1899 publication- but Howard on his turn had an impact on his American inspirers. In 1906 the minister W.D.P. Bliss launched a short-lived American Garden City Association. Despite the premature demise of this American counterpart of the GCTPA, the British garden city idea remained in popular demand on the other side of the Atlantic. In 1913 Ewart Culpin was invited to make an extensive lecture tour through the United States, which resulted in the establishment of several local civic improvement groups. Culpin’s warm receipt might also account for the remarkable large American presence at the pre-war congress of the IFHTP.

The War brought an abrupt end to the participation of the American Christian socialists. They avoided war torn Europe during the conflict. However, after the War they did not
return. Post-war town planning was primarily dictated by rules of (economic) efficiency and professionalization, which left little room for Christian compassion. George Ford, an American architect-planner active in France for the International Red Cross, was the first American to join the post-war operation of the IFHTP. Once American participation had normalized, professional (architect-) planners from the US travelled to Europe to partake in the transnational trade of town planning and housing ideas.  

*Increase or decrease?*

On the basis of the above analysis of the membership of the IFHTP we can indeed conclude that the networks of foreign correspondents of the GCTPA provided the backbone of the IFHTP. If we also take the active members of the smaller national factions, for example Dobrzynski of the Polish garden city movement, Montoliu of the Spanish *Societat Civica Cuitat Jardi* (1912) and *Museo Social* (1909) - an institution inspired by the French *Musée Social* and Geddes’ “Outlook Tower” - and Gierløff of the *Norsk Forenning av Boligreformer* (1913), into account, this conclusion is only strengthened. The analysis clearly reveals that the IFHTP was not merely created to accommodate an explosive growth of the garden city movement. In fact, in some countries, most notably Belgium and the Netherlands, the national garden cities associations already collapsed or, like in France, fell into disgrace. The IFHTP provided little assistance to these faltering organisations. On the contrary, as a rule it traded them in for professional and propagandist bodies with more stability, although the majority of these new national representations by no means were exclusive followers of the true garden city belief.

*Recentralisation*

As the foreign correspondents of the GCTPA formed the basis of the membership of the GCTPA, we can conclude that the IFHTP was established on the intersection of the foreign networks of the GCTPA. The British garden city workers had set up this infrastructure for the internationalization of the garden city idea in the early 1900s as an ad hoc answer to foreign inquiries. It is unlikely that internationalization was part of the objectives of the GCTPA from the outset. Howard’s idea was obviously based on a British context – his scheme basically was a tailor-made solution for overcrowded and congested London – and the GCTPA initially exclusively focused on realizing garden cities on the British isle. Nevertheless, the unexpected foreign interest must have filled the British garden city workers with feelings of (national) pride, comradeship and obligation, for it turned them into transnational missionaries. Foreign inquirers were recruited as correspondents, propagandist booklets distributed on a global scale by the hundreds, the periodical of the GCTPA featured a foreign section entitled ‘Continental notes’, foreign visitors were received at GCTPA headquarters and shown around at the leading British town planning sites on garden city lines and British garden city workers toured abroad to preach the gospel. In 1904 the GCTPA hosted its First International Garden City Congress, the first of a whole series intended to unite and instruct a growing international garden city community.  

---

51

52

53
Initially, the GCTPA held a central position in the waking international garden city society, but this centrality diminished as the garden city idea popularized. British planning historian Sutcliffe has pointed out that the international diffusion of the garden city idea, albeit in a debased form, had done much to invigorate the whole of the international housing reform movement. The garden city concept provided a welcome common ground that before had been missing due to differences in housing conditions and public policies. Soon the garden city concept was being discussed, compared, amended and altered outside the framework of the GCTPA for internationalization at a plethora of (international) conferences, lectures, meetings, tours and exhibitions. As a consequence, the grip of the British garden city workers on the dissemination of the garden city idea loosened. Partly, the British garden city workers had to blame themselves. In their eagerness to spread the message, they basically accepted every invitation to present the garden city cause, regardless of the background and objectives of the hosting organisation. The fact that some British garden city missionaries mixed personal preferences with official GCTPA policies must also have undermined the internationalization of the garden city idea as envisioned by the GCTPA.

Probably one of the main causes for the dwindling British control over the dissemination of the garden city idea can be found among the foreign contacts of the GCTPA. Initially, the garden concept was new and exciting and foreign debutants were eager to receive instructions and support from Britain. However, once they had mastered the garden city idea, the foreign disciples turned into evangelists themselves. None of them adhered to a strict interpretation of the original Howardian idea. Some of them deliberately mixed or confused the true garden city idea with (elements of) other homemade conceptions of housing reform and planning – a lot of countries had their own (industrial) model settlements and villa colonies – whereas others compromised the original idea to adapt it to the specific context of their own country. They were eager to share their ideas and experiences with and offer support to likeminded activists. For example, Culpin referred to the missionary work of Benoît-Lévy, who supported the establishment of several garden city groups across Europe that were not entirely ‘on all fours’ with the official GCTPA policies.

Effectively, just before the outbreak of World War I there was an intense transnational trade of garden city interpretations among internationally orientated reformers and housing and planning professionals. To some extent, the GCTPA participated in this trade, but to a large extent this trade took place outside the infrastructure of the GCTPA. In these expanding networks the British garden city workers still held authority as the originators of the garden city idea, but they no longer occupied an exclusive position as sole experts in the field. In this light, the establishment of the IFHTP by the British garden city workers can be seen as a strategy to reclaim lost ground, an attempt to recentralize the international dissemination of the garden city idea as an international infrastructure, provided and controlled by the British garden city workers.
2.4 Transnational civil society

If we scrutinize the organisation of the IFHTP in its formative years, we cannot but conclude that it formally was an international non-governmental organisation, that was neither profit-making nor a governmental instrument. Of course, during the Belgium reconstruction campaign the clear delineation as non-governmental temporarily blurred as (representatives of) the Belgian government directly participated in the IFHTP. As a voluntary association it was an exponent of what in recent literature has been dubbed the transnational civil society. The establishment of the IFHTP fits the trends described in literature on the transnational civil society at large and the Urban Internationale as a specific niche for the discussion of urban affairs - including housing and planning - within the transnational civil society. Sociologists Boli and Thomas refer to a growing volume of international nongovernmental organizations from the mid-19th century to the early 20th century. French historian Saunier produces a similar prognosis for the Urban Internationale as he identifies a “firework of meetings which gave birth to several voluntary associations that took up systematizing the interchanges of experiences at the transnational level.”

The spectacular rise of transnational activity was facilitated by a range of different factors. In a recent working paper Thomas Richard Davies has demonstrated that the transnational civil society moves in a cyclical pattern, rather than the linear progress that is assumed in most literature on transnational civil action. He discerns five categories of main factors that affected the evolution of transnational civil society: technological, economic, social, external and internal political factors. At times these factors in some ways contributed to the expansion of transnational civil society, at other times the same factors contributed to its decline. In the course of the nineteenth century the growth of railways, steamship travel and communication by telephone and telegraph facilitated the expansion of transnational activity. Developments such as these facilitated economic globalization and interdependence. The advancing urbanisation, ousted by the industrialization, prompted a range of common urban issues that provided a basis for transnational dialogue. Together, these contributed to the rise of a ‘global consciousness.’ Political factors also played their parts. Intergovernmental activities included major congresses, such as the 1878 Berlin congress and the 1899 and 1907 Peace Congresses in The Hague. The consolidation of the nation state in Europe provided rule of law and enabled the development of domestic associational activity which in turn forged cross-border links. Imperialism, with its affect of opening up new frontiers and its accompanying missionary activity, contributed as well.

At the onset of World War I transnational civil activity collapsed. Many international non-governmental organisations disbanded or were forced to close their doors for the duration of the armed conflict. Most of the factors that previously facilitated the rise of transnational civil society, now worked against it. The rise of the nation-state, for example, not only produced a context in which domestic associational activity could thrive; it also provided a foundation for nationalism. Globalisation and interdependence contributed to a war of an
unprecedented scale. Technological innovation could and did produce unconceivable atrocities. Transnational civil society contributed to its own decline. It was blinded by its own utopian vision of a new rational, peaceful world that was within reach through transnational collaboration and failed to recognize the writings on the wall in the real world. On the threshold of World War I transnational activists were still eagerly looking forward to the Third Peace Conference in The Hague and the Third World Congress of the Union of International Associations in San Francisco, both programmed for 1915.61

During the First World War the trajectory of the IFHTP diverted from the transnational civil society and the Urban Internationale. It also felt restrictions imposed by the War, but nevertheless it managed to expand its operation by means of the reconstruction campaign. As such, the War provided an occasion to strengthen its position and build an advance for the post-war resumption of transnational civic exchange. Why was the IFHTP more fortunate than other international institutions, such as the IHC and the UIV? It was guilty of the same naiveté that characterised the transnational civil society as a whole. Only weeks before the outbreak of war it had enthusiastically discussed the organisation of its next congress, to be held in Germany in 1915. Mostly practical circumstances separated the IFHTP from its less-fortunate rivals. Its central office was safely located in London, far removed from the frontlines, whereas the organisations located in Brussels, an epicentre for transnational activity, suddenly found the War at their doorsteps. Moreover, the IFHTP was not truly independent. It was run by the British GCTPA from its London headquarters. As pointed out before, the IFHTP could not have survived on its own during the conflict. This British domination meant that the drawing up of the wartime agenda was largely a matter of a British diktat, not negotiating a tedious consensus among warring and neutral national factions. After the War, also more fundamental differences between the IFHTP and its immediate international competitors came into play, but I will discuss these differences in the next chapter.

2.5 Ad hoc activities

To the outside world the IFHTP was primarily defined by its activities, not by membership lists and internal struggles. It seems that from the outset the organising of international congresses was considered the main activity of the IFHTP. However, during the War it was not feasible to organise international congresses. The international body chose not to throw in the towel, but embarked in a new activity: the Belgium reconstruction campaign. This campaign was a thematic umbrella that covered a range of new activities. Which activities did the IFHTP offer and how were they adjusted to fit the wartime context? Before I will address this question I first want to briefly examine the factors that constituted the context for the activities of the IFHTP.

Harmony and centrality

Most of the internal factors that dictated the context for the activities of the IFHTP have already been discussed in the first paragraph of this chapter. Roughly we are dealing with
three closely interrelated factors: organization, membership and culture. We already established that the British garden city workers of the GCTPA, first and foremost the secretary Ewart Culpin, were in total control over the international body. This domination did not originate in a British usurpation of power; the foreign members handed the leadership over the international organization on a silver plate to the British leaders. The British garden city workers used this *carte blanche* to model the IFHTP according to their customs and beliefs. The international organization was little more than an extension of the GCTPA, intended to pursue its policies on a global scale. It was run by GCTPA-officers from the GCTPA-offices in London. Moreover, it was not financially independent; it depended on (financial) support from the GCTPA. Effectively, the GCTPA dictated the agenda of the IFHTP and also was primarily responsible for the organization of activities.

On paper the IFHTP had a strict hierarchical structure, with an executive committee dominated by British (GCTPA) members at the top. However, reports on activities and meetings of the early IFHTP convey an atmosphere that was far from formal. The future course of the IFHTP was decided upon in an atmosphere of informality. All members were allowed to have their say and issues were settled on the basis of harmony and unanimity. The British leaders did not have to resort to formal authority to have things their way. Of course this is hardly surprising. We already saw that the British garden city workers initially primarily recruited members for the IFHTP among their foreign correspondents and sympathizers who regarded a British lead in matters related to the propagation of the garden city idea as only natural. Only during the Belgium reconstruction campaign the first cracks in the mirror of harmony and unanimity appeared. During this campaign, the IFHTP looked beyond its original members, the garden city enthusiasts of the earliest hour, to establish contact with Belgian (and French) governmental and professional town planning circles in order to gain sounder footing on the Continent. This new target group embraced the British notion of comprehensive town planning, but it regarded the creation of true garden cities as a means to solve the pressing housing shortages too fanciful. It was the culture of harmony and unanimity that prevented an escalation. The continental skeptics were careful not to offend the British leaders and voiced their reservations in guarded terms. The British leaders on their turn, although reluctant to accept the continental skepticism, in time compromised and handed the final treatment of the reconstruction theme to the countries involved, before it was silently erased from the agenda.

*From underdog to champion*

Also outside the IFHTP factors were to be found that influenced its activities, both directly and indirectly. Largely we are talking about the same factors that Davies mentions as responsible for the increase and decrease of transnational civil activity. However, one additional factor deserves explicit mentioning here: international competitors. Although competition between rivalling international bodies only became a dominant factor in the 1920s, we can be sure it also played a role in the early years. I already argued that growing competition from the Urban Internationale was an important motivation for the British
garden city workers to start the IFHTP. Moreover, at the founding meeting the issue of the scope of the IFHTP prompted the question of how to position the organisation in the Urban Internationale. Vinck’s proposal to join the recently launched UIV was dismissed. The wider scope of civics, as pursued by the UIV (1913) and the IHC (1889), was dismissed in favour of a clearly delineated, practical garden city path. Effectively, the IFHTP appropriated a niche in the Urban Internationale that primarily served garden city enthusiasts. Although it claimed to follow a unique trajectory, there was of course a substantial overlap with the wider working spheres of the two aforementioned international competing bodies. As a relative latecomer, it held the underdog position.

Ironically, it was the War that significantly improved the position of the IFHTP in the Urban Internationale. The armed conflict affected transnational civic activity as a whole and also did not fail to have an effect on the activities of the IFHTP. Nevertheless, it managed to stay in business and even initiated a new campaign dedicated to the reconstruction of Belgium. The IHC and the UIV were less fortunate. The former had to cease all activity and the latter did not do much better. The International Union had to abandon its office in Brussels and found temporary shelter at the Dutch Union of Local Authorities (1912). Largely inactive itself, the Comité Néerlando-Belge d’Art Civique, an occasional alliance of Belgian and Dutch architects to discuss the Belgian reconstruction, acted as its principal agent. The International Union could do little more than acknowledge the initiative of the IFHTP. Vinck attended meetings that were part of the reconstruction campaign as an observer and the Comité considered itself bound by the resolutions passed at the reconstruction conference organised by the IFHTP in February 1915. The town planning reference book Prélaminaires d’Art Civique (1916) by Louis van der Swaelmen, a prominent member of this committee, basically was an elaborate answer to the London resolutions. Once the focal point of the Belgian reconstruction efforts moved from the British isle to France (see paragraph 2.2) the International Union made an attempt to take over the initiative by proposing to install a new study group in Paris and lure Raphael Verwilghen, one of the most prominent Belgian participants in the Belgium reconstruction campaign of the IFHTP, into becoming an official contact of the International Union.

Due to its reconstruction campaign, the IFHTP had an advance on its competitors once the transnational trade of ideas and experiences resumed after the War. It could build on wartime experience, whereas the UIV and the IHC first had to reestablish themselves. Thus the IFHTP found itself in a situation practically free of competition and had unchallenged space to transform from an underdog to one of the undisputed leaders in the Urban Internationale. This transformation to a large extent was made possible because the two rivals were very slow in restarting their activities — the IHC never really got on its feet again. This delay was partly fed by fierce competition from the IFHTP, but above all originated in organizational, cultural and ideological differences, that made the rival less equipped for adaptation to the new postwar context. I will discuss these differences in the next chapter (paragraph 3.2.).
International congresses

The organizing of international congresses for its members was intended as one of the prime objectives of the IFHTP. However, in its formative years it was unable to pull off these congresses on a regular basis, mainly due to the War. It only organized three international congresses for its members – I do not label the special Reconstruction Conference of 1915 as a genuine international congress for members – in the period 1913-1920. It seems there was no long term planning for the congresses. On the contrary, decisions to organize an international congress were made ad hoc. At the congresses, the choice for the next congress was made on the basis of (internal and external) circumstances, invitations and possible combinations with other (inter)national housing and town planning events. This short-term organization of congresses was made possible by the centrality of the executive powers. Basically, it was the British secretary at London who arranged the congresses and coordinated the local organization.

It is hard to distinct a common pattern in these congresses. Evidently, the fixed congress formula that would develop in the 1920s (see paragraph 3.2) did not have a clear antecedent in the preceding period. The first congresses did not provide a clear distinction between business and pleasure. There was a basic distinction between meetings of the executive and general committee on the one hand, and meetings open to all members and guests on the other hand, but a strict order in the congress program was missing. The professional exchange (speeches and discussions), the policy-making of the international body and the maintenance and expansion of (personal) networks were conducted simultaneously at the excursions, luncheons, banquets, afternoon teas, receptions and evening entertainment. Only at the 1920 congress in London formal working sessions were introduced, that separated the papers presentations from (professional) excursions, an inspection of the exhibition, meetings of the bodies of the IFHTP and entertainment.

Belgium reconstruction campaign

The IFHTP aimed higher than merely handling correspondence during the War. It embarked in a new campaign that sought to use the reality of war to its advantage. The German invasion of Belgium not only caused international outrage, but also united internationally orientated architects, planners, housing reformers and politicians in scattered initiatives, all aimed at supporting the Belgians in their tremendous reconstruction task. The British leaders of the IFHTP were quick to claim a prominent position in these international efforts. They joined forces with the Town Planning Institute and the Royal Institute of British paternalism. A genuine desire to help the unfortunate Belgians was but one motivation for this campaign. There were other, less noble, considerations as well. The garden city movement had never gathered substantial backing in Belgium, and the Belgian campaign offered an opportunity to give the garden city idea sounder footing in the country. Additionally, the tabula rasa in the ravished country offered a playground to experiment with modern planning principles on an unprecedented scale. A new Belgium, designed as a model country with model (garden) cities, would be a powerful example to be followed at
[xvi] Poster for the Belgium Reconstruction Campaign, designed by Frank Brangwyn (1915)
CHAPTER 2 GARDEN CITIES TO THE WORLD 1913-1920

home and abroad. On a more general level, the campaign was exactly the kind of quest needed to get the IFHTP through the darkest days of the war. It kept members actively involved and made it clear that the IFHTP was not a dormant body.

I will only discuss the Belgium reconstruction campaign briefly, as Belgian architectural historian Uyttenhove has already thoroughly researched it. The reconstruction campaign took the IFHTP far beyond the scope of a voluntary association. The activities were not primarily aimed at its members, nor were the actions executed exclusively by members. The reconstruction campaign could also not be labeled as a mere membership recruitment campaign, although the increased (Belgian) membership must have been a welcome side effect. It was a deliberate attempt at influencing the mindset – i.e. the application of (British) modern town planning principles - of external parties, in this case a whole nation. Intended external influence would remain a characteristic of the IFHTP in the years to come, but direct external actions would not occur again before the Second World War. Instead, it would adhere to the ‘traditional’ scope of a voluntary association.

In February 1915 the reconstruction campaign kicked off with a special Town Planning Conference in London. To stress the fact that the conference was dedicated to the Belgians, the proceedings were exclusively conducted in French and Belgian Minister Joris Helleputte was trapped into acting as chairman. Over 300 Belgians were drawn to the event. Representatives from affiliated foreign bodies and a large British presence completed the international party. Two days were reserved for paper presentations and discussions. The majority of these papers were of Belgian origin, but the British leaders signed for the three principal papers. At the end of the conference, the gathered body of knowledge was summarized in six unanimously passed “resolutions for modernity” that were to transform Belgium into a model country.

Later that year, the Belgian government passed interim-legislation, the Besluitwet, that incorporated some of the principles adopted in the resolutions. Although the Besluitwet fell short of what the resolutions proposed, the IFHTP nevertheless claimed some credit for it.

In the wake of the Town Planning Conference the Belgium Town Planning Committee was installed to initiate the Belgian debutants into the realm of (British) modern town planning. Raymond Unwin acted as chairman and Culpin added another secretarial post to his expanding portfolio. The committee was staffed with representatives from Belgian governmental circles, a range of British professional and propagandist bodies in the field of housing and town planning, the IFHTP and the International Union of Towns plus representatives – in reality probably mainly correspondents – of the garden city societies of Great Britain, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Poland, Russia and Spain. The committee organized three activities: a special reconstruction exhibition, a series of lectures and the installation of Belgian study groups. The exhibition, supervised by British town planning professor Stanley Adshead, opened at the School of Architecture, University College, London, on April 7th 1915. The exhibition received much critical acclaim. Around the same
Van der Swaelmen followed the resolutions adopted at the 1915 Special Town Planning Conference of the IHFTP (Van der Swaelmen 1916)
time the lectures started. The lectures consisted of three series. The first series treated the different aspects of (British) town planning. All bigwigs of British town planning were called upon to give lectures on the history of town planning, relevant legislation and architectural and urban design. The second series was dedicated to the architecture of Belgian towns. This time mainly Belgian lecturers were responsible for the course. The third series, starting in autumn 1915, was reserved for technical experts. Originally separate specialist programs for engineers, lawyers, hygienists etc. were planned, but only the engineering programme came through.\footnote{The study groups consisted exclusively of Belgian members and were meant to discuss the problems of the reconstruction task. After several meetings the \textit{Cercle d’Etude pour l’Examen des Problèmes de Reconstruction en Belgique} was established of which Culpin was appointed \textit{President d’Honneur}.\footnote{Early 1916 the Belgians decided to join the French for their \textit{Exposition de la Cité Reconstituée} (1917). The activities of the Belgium Town Planning Committee and the \textit{Cercle d’Etude} were formally transferred to the IFHTP, that used this formal transfer to justify a continuation of the reconstruction campaign.\footnote{During the War it continued to gather town planning documentation for the Belgians and after the War the reconstruction theme was placed prominently on the agenda of the first postwar congresses. The formal transfer of course could not conceal the fact that the British had lost the lead in the international reconstruction efforts. The focal point of the endeavors had moved to France. The IFHTP had no part in the French-Belgian collaboration, but this did not stop it from claiming (partial) credit for the outcome. It presented the \textit{Ecole Supérieure d’Art Public} as a direct outcome of the work of the Belgium Town Planning Committee, contently noting that former committee members such as Georges Risler were involved.}2.6 \textbf{The mission dictated}

\textit{Defining garden city experience}

The GCTPA established the IFHTP to disseminate the garden city message on a global scale and to clearly distinct faithful interpretations from counterfeits. Therefore it is hardly surprising that the garden city theme dominated the agenda of the IFHTP. However, providing an unambiguous definition of the Howardian concept was difficult. It was one thing to separate acceptable schemes on garden city lines from speculative schemes that had appropriated the garden city moniker promiscuously, but it was quite another thing to draw a clear line between acceptable and unacceptable variations as propagated by the different national garden city associations. Misunderstandings, practical adaptations ‘along the way’ and more fundamental reorientations to address different (national) political, cultural and constitutional realities, had created a rather diffuse corpus of ideas and experiences that together composed the garden city movement.

Howard’s paper exercise was misinterpreted and compromised almost immediately. He partly had to blame himself for the misunderstandings surrounding his concept. He had borrowed the name garden city from the United States where the label represented
[xviii] Riverside Suburb near Chicago (1869), designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, according to British planning historian Peter Hall the origin of the name of the garden city concept.
something different. Planning historian Hall thinks the term garden city derived from Chicago which at that time universally was known as the Garden City. Howard resided in Chicago in the 1870s and must have witnessed the construction of the Riverside suburb. In the early 1920 Howard himself suggested that he had borrowed the name of his concept from Alexander Turney Stewart’s Long Island scheme with the same name. Whatever the exact source was, in America the term garden city did not refer to independent new towns in the countryside. It was almost part of the American dream, the achievement of ‘for each a house with a garden in suburbia.’ In Europe this ‘American’ interpretation of garden cities was especially represented by French garden city militant Georges Benoît-Lévy. Did Benoît-Lévy conceive his own deformation of the Howardian faith or did he simply refer to the older American tradition? Benoît-Lévy certainly was familiar with the American garden city tradition. Additionally, some countries had their own prophets that proposed the establishment of new towns, like Theodor Fritsch in Germany, Tony Garnier in France and Arturo Soria y Mata in Spain. Although these alternative conceptions of new towns by no means were identical to Howard’s idea, obvious similarities did give way to confusion.

The garden city campaign of the GCTPA had also contributed to the confusion. Strategically, the affiliation with the model settlements Bournville and Port Sunlight in 1902 was a smart move, but these industrial settlements of course were not garden cities in the original Howardian sense. By incorporating the garden village into the garden city corpus, the British garden city workers plugged into a well-established tradition. Most countries had their own model industrial settlements, for example Cité Dollfus in Mulhouse, France and Agnetapark in Delft, the Netherlands. The arrival of Hampstead Garden Suburb on the scene further clouded the clear delineation of the garden city idea. The British garden city workers decided to embrace garden suburbs and industrial settlements as temporary solutions for immediate relief, but to uphold the true Howardian garden city as the only lasting remedy against the evils of urbanization. Most foreign garden city workers dismissed the original Howardian garden city as impracticable and settled for the pragmatic garden suburb and garden village path instead, which in reality often amounted to ‘city extensions on garden city lines.’

Not only the presupposed decentralization of Howard’s city fell prey to compromise. Also his almost anarchistic ‘DIY’ mentality was challenged. Abroad, several social reformers considered Howard’s cooperative organization needlessly cumbersome. Why not make an appeal to the government and propagate municipal housing or State-sponsored housing? Even the British garden city workers did not fail to see the potential of State intervention. The majority of housing production in Britain had little in common with Howard’s idea. Therefore the GCTPA embraced town planning (legislation). Although the immediate construction of a growing chain of garden cities was not feasible, compulsory planning on garden city lines was to be preferred above existing housing practice. It is important to stress that town planning in the GCTPA ideology was an agent towards fulfillment of the promise of the Social City. It most certainly was not intended as an objective in itself.
Plan of Agnetapark, Delft (1884) by landscape architect Louis Paul Zocher. The scheme is inspired by the older ideal industrial model settlement Cité Dolfuss in Mulhouse (1853).

The Cité Ouvrière (also known as Cité Dolfuss) in Mulhouse by architect Emile Muller (1853)
Thus by 1913 ‘town planning on garden city lines’ had grown into a heterogeneous body. Although the GCTPA was proud of the very success of the garden city idea, it was less content with the manifested heterogeneity. As the garden city idea popularized, both in Britain and beyond, the GCTPA lost its grip on the dissemination and interpretation of the garden city idea. Culpin’s *The Garden City Movement Up-to-date* can be considered as a step towards regaining control by separating faithful garden city schemes from counterfeits. The establishment of the IFHTP perfectly fits in this strategy. It was a vehicle to reclaim a lead in the transnational dissemination of garden city experience and to instruct foreign garden city workers in separating right from wrong. An international consensus on proper planning on garden city lines of course could also be used for the pitched battle at home against all counterfeits. But how to define a correct interpretation of the garden city idea, without alienating befriended foreign fellow campaigners or, even worse, putting their back up? In the following text I will discuss the treatment of the garden city idea in the IFHTP in its early years.

The Cooperative Garden City

The First International Garden City Congress in London in the summer of 1914 served two goals: it was to provide the fresh international organization with a sound internal footing and it was to set a standard for the IFHTP’s garden city campaign. Contrary to future congresses, the British leadership of the IFHTP did not claim an exclusive poll position for itself. A speaker from every participating country was allowed to deliver a lecture on the national housing and town planning practices and the garden city work that was being carried out. Thus the presentations enabled the delegates to learn each other’s backgrounds and create a mutual understanding. The risk of dissonance was minimal. The congress delegates had primarily been recruited among sympathizers with and correspondents of the GCTPA. Moreover, the supposed universal applicability of the garden city concept and the naturalness of British leadership over the international garden city community had already been unanimously acknowledged at the Paris meeting earlier that year.

Although the British leaders did not resort to explicit instruction, they did want to mark out British garden city experience as the appropriate blueprint. They could not resort to the songs of praise, arranged by the French for the earlier meeting in Paris. Such praise of their own work would be bordering on outright arrogance. But they had a card up their sleeve. They could make use of realised garden city and garden suburb schemes. Physical examples could tell far more than words, and the GCTPA by now was seasoned in exerting garden city developments for propagandistic aims. Thus the first international congress became a grand tour with some meetings and lectures thrown in. The tactic chosen was successful. The general receipt was one of admiration, not unmixed with envy.

A closer look at the British garden city experience that was being dished up to the foreign delegates, reveals that Culpin’s *The Garden City Movement Up-to-Date* (1913) had served as
Brentham Garden Suburb (1901-1915) in Ealing, Eastern London was presented as a perfect example of co-partnership housing. The co-partnership housing development started in 1901, but Brentham only assumed the character of a garden suburb once Raymond Unwin was contracted in 1907 as supervising architect.
a reference book. In his book Culpin reported on the remarkable advance of the garden city movement in Britain and abroad. He gave a brief history of the GCTPA to end with its actual policies. Besides the true garden city, as embodied in Letchworth, the GCTPA also embraced garden villages and garden suburbs. However, garden villages and garden suburbs were only regarded as temporary measures for immediate relief. The true garden city was still upheld as the ultimate lasting solution for the advancing urbanization. Not all developments ‘on garden city lines’ carried Culpin’s approval. He voiced a heartfelt concern about a growing volume of town planning schemes that used the garden city label promiscuously. To clearly distinct faithful adaptations from counterfeits, Culpin introduced a shortlist of ‘approved’ garden city schemes. It hardly needs saying that the congress’ itinerary only included entries in this shortlist.

What characteristics defined Culpin’s shortlist? Obviously the list featured the ‘classic’ British garden city achievements. However, familiarity among the public was not a decisive factor. The familiarity of most entries did not transcend their local context. Culpin wanted to stress that correct garden city interpretations encompassed more than regarding proper town planning principles and offering cottages in an open layout. Social reform through cooperative organisation and land reform were considered the essential characteristics. This emphasis on cooperation clearly manifested itself in the congress agenda. The British hosts did not focus on the original Howardian proposal for a co-operative organisation – the notion that social responsible men of power and influence should provide a mortgage debenture, to be paid out of the rents – but introduced a thriving, superior alternative: co-partnership housing. Henry Vivian, chairman of the Co-Partnership Tenants Limited that co-hosted the event with the GCTPA, delivered a keynote speech on “The Organisation of Co-Partnership Housing”. Of course the tour featured the best of British co-partnership housing schemes.

The pioneering co-partnership suburb of Ealing near London by far attracted the most interest of the foreign delegates. Already in 1901 land was secured to erect nine houses. The enterprise quickly expanded and by 1904 a grander vision came in the picture. Initially they had set for the building of modest cottages, but now artists were contracted to design the layout and the buildings, transforming Ealing into a beautiful garden suburb. A Co-Partnership Tenants Society developed this suburb. All tenants were shareholders that thus benefited from profits made by the Society in the shape of additional shares. Thus the tenant was made partner of the whole enterprise. Although a tenant could never claim the ownership of his house, the shareholding created a feeling of co-ownership nonetheless.

This focus was not chosen at random. The GCTPA was struggling to get at terms with governmental interference in housing affairs. Qualified forms of intervention, foremost subventions, were considered admissible, but governmental agencies acting as developers of garden city schemes were still distrusted. Additionally, the GCTPA increasingly found it necessary to separate faithful garden city implementations from municipal, or even worse,
speculative, developments that mimicked the garden city idiom of urban design, but lacked the higher social objectives. Moreover, in some countries, notably France, co-operative housing was already on the wane among garden city workers to make place for collective forms of housing. The conference agenda therefore must have served to reassert the importance of co-operation as the motor of social reform in garden city experience.

An international model garden city
The Belgium reconstruction campaign introduced significant changes in the international garden city campaign of the IFHTP. On a practical level the international propagation of the garden city idea temporarily narrowed to the propagation of the garden city idea in Belgium, after the War extended to Northern France. But there were more fundamental reorientations at play. The British leadership relinquished its ‘primer inter pares’ position that it had adopted for the first congress of the IFHTP and turned into a dominating presence. From now on the British leadership exclusively provided the keynote speakers and papers at the meetings. Additionally, the gentle British guidance of the first congress was traded in for a far more aggressive mode of (persistent) instruction. At the special Town Planning Conference (1915) in London, Culpin now openly lashed out against continental faubourgs-jardins, and prescribed the strictest of interpretations of British garden city experience. The Belgians were instructed to adhere to a faithful interpretation of British garden city experience. Why were continental interpretations suddenly explicitly rejected? A continuing, or perhaps ever growing, annoyance with continental perversions of the garden city concept – already in 1913 Culpin complained about foreign garden city workers whose actions were not ‘on all fours’ with official GCTPA policy – might have been one motive. However, it is more likely that an eagerness to finally realise the Howardian promise on a grand scale overruled any consideration of the specific Belgian situation. At home, the British garden city workers had been tug-at-war for years about initiating a second garden city, without tangible results. Now, on the other side of the Canal the ravaged fields of Flanders offered a tabula rasa where Howard’s growing chain of garden cities, the Social City, could be realised without substantial compromise.

Therefore, the British leadership of the IFHTP raised the stakes. Proper town planning ‘on garden city lines’ was the required minimal standard, not just the preferred standard. Howard welcomed the Belgians at Letchworth at the end of the 1915 conference. He delivered a heartfelt plea for the application of garden cities in Belgium after the War. He recommended the Belgians to concentrate on at least one real garden city, on far more generous lines then witnessed at Letchworth. Such a garden city was to be an international garden city. “All the civilised nations of the world would surely contribute to the building of such a City. It would be a permanent monument of the sanctity of treaties and the inviolability of nationalities, however small [...] To the building of such a city would go forth the finest talents of all the people of the earth. Even its industries might well partake of an international character, for it might be, not a temporary but a permanent exhibition of the finest art and highest manufacturing skill of the whole world. It might become, too, the most
CHAPTER 2 GARDEN CITIES TO THE WORLD 1913-1920

cosmopolitan of all cities: a monument of light and leading, of skill and enterprise, and above all of goodwill – a monument which no nation on earth so fully and completely deserves to have erected on its soil, made for ever sacred by self-sacrifice, as does the great-small nation of Belgium.”

Literature has a tendency to dismiss Howard’s plea as a mere old man’s folly. But is this assessment accurate? Culpin also launched the idea of an international garden city in his paper for the 1915 conference. Could this international garden city have been a secret item on the agenda of the British leadership for the international conference, to be mentioned in passing during the proceedings? The assumption is not that farfetched. The British leadership of the IFHTP must have seen the potential of an international garden city to be erected under its aegis, both as a propagandist tool to raise the prestige of the IFHTP and a powerful example to be imitated abroad (including Britain). Exciting and inspiring though it was, the idea of an international garden city was not featured in the conference resolutions. The Belgians were not susceptible to the idea of an international garden city. They preferred garden suburbs to offer immediate relief near existing centres. Moreover, the methodology and generosity of Howard’s proposal were totally off the mark. The necessity to provide as many houses as soon as possible made Howard’s one-garden-city-at-the-time approach hopelessly outdated. The required cost reduction made housing schemes ‘on far more generous lines then witnessed at Letchworth’ inconceivable. However, the British leadership was not put off. The agenda of the first post-war congress in Brussels again featured Howard’s grand proposal. Again, the idea was half-heartedly received. This time, the British leadership got the message and silently abandoned the idea. Howard made one final effort to raise support for his international garden city idea in corridor chats at the 1920 congress in London. By his own unconventional methods, he would get his second garden city. However, it was not to be an international garden city on Belgian soil, but the well-known Welwyn garden city (1920).

National garden cities
In its eagerness to sell the garden city idea to Belgium, the British leadership of the IFHTP did not put all their eggs in one basket. At the 1919 congress in Brussels, they offered an alternative path to the establishment of Howard’s Social City in Belgium. C.B. Purdom delivered a paper in which he proposed a national garden cities programme. This paper of course reflected the national garden cities policy as proposed by the National Garden Cities Committee in Britain. This committee was established during the War by Purdom, Howard and W.G. Taylor (a director of the publisher Dent & Sons) to revive the fundamentalist message of garden cities. They argued that the true faith had been diluted by the related garden suburb movement and by the emergence of a muted form of official town planning. Purdom convinced fellow campaigner F.J. Osborn (1885-1978) to join them and write their manifesto. This manifesto, New Towns After the War, written under the pseudonym The New Townsmen, was published in 1918.
The message of New Towns after the War (1918) was spread in the IFHTP by C.B. Purdom
Osborn’s book conveyed a reaffirmation and updating of Howard’s original tract. Twenty years on, and with the Letchworth experience to draw on, the updating included some distinctly new elements. By 1918 the housing shortage was generally acknowledged, so Osborn could start from the premise that a national policy was overdue. He estimated that as many as a million houses would have to be built in England in the first five years of peacetime, a formidable target that best could be achieved through the construction of 100 new towns. This massive construction programme should be seen as part of a wider restructuring of British capital, renewing the country’s industrial potential as well as its housing. The most striking difference with Howard’s original ideas was the prominent role attributed to the State. The scale of the proposed enterprise made it no longer feasible to look first to the private sector. However, this did not mean a dismissal of co-operative organisation. The central message was the advocating of state-sponsored new towns, not state-initiated new towns. The new garden city radicals primarily looked to the State to provide the necessary capital to bring Howard’s Social City into being after the War.  

Purdom acknowledged that it would be difficult to implement the vision of the New Townsmen in Belgium, but he already had formulated a solution. He proposed “unifying the rural population of Belgium into some social and economic grouping.” Basically, Purdom did not adapt his interpretation of the garden city idea to Belgium; he proposed Belgium to adapt to his version instead. Unsurprisingly, the Belgians also ignored Purdom’s plea. They sought practical solutions to increase the housing volume and moving people around in the Belgian countryside simply did not offer that.

Glimpses of a modern town planning science
The IFHTP was not only dedicated to garden cities, but also to town planning. In the previous text (paragraph 2.2) we already saw that at the founding meeting a broad treatment of an all-encompassing town planning discipline was rejected in favour of a pragmatic focus on garden city experience. As a consequence, the first congress of the IFHTP in 1914 centred around housing schemes ‘on garden city lines.’ General town planning issues were largely ignored; town planning primarily was considered as a means to achieve proper garden city schemes. The treatment of town planning was mainly confined to the local level of single garden city schemes; regional (and national) dimensions – for example the issue of allocation or means of transportation and communication - were largely overlooked. This restricted vision of town planning proved to be untenable during the Belgium reconstruction campaign. The War had ravaged entire regions. The reconstruction called for a comprehensive approach and central coordination.

The British leaders of the IFHTP were no fools, so they also addressed the need for organisational and legislative measures. At the 1915 special town planning conference two British keynote speakers gave an outline of what needed to be done. Henry Aldridge presented a set of practical measures to get the reconstruction started: assessment of the damage, preparation of general plans of layout and active governmental intervention.
Raymond Unwin’s contribution by far attracted the most attention. He presented an introduction to modern town planning principles. On the technical side, he drew attention to planning, architectural composition, hygiene and aesthetics. He stressed that town planning was not just a technical affair. It also had a social dimension, of which the subordination of private interest to the public interest was of quintessential importance. He advocated the introduction of a gradual town planning regime, ranging from the national level to the regional and local level.\textsuperscript{101} If adopted, this threefold planning regime would have been an unprecedented novelty for Belgium. Dutch architect Jos. Cuypers was quick to note that such a regime was exactly the kind of thing the Dutch \textit{Woningwet} was lacking and what was needed to contain the urban sprawl at the State Mines in Limburg.\textsuperscript{102} Thomas Adams went even further and proposed to treat the whole of Belgium as one giant (garden) city. The concept of a national plan placed Belgium in the context of the plans for ‘\textit{Gross-Berlin}’, ‘Greater London’ and ‘\textit{Le Plus Grand Paris}’. According to Stanley Adshead the concept of Belgium as one national city offered opportunities to build one giant communication network that opened up the whole of Belgium. Emile Vinck seconded Adshead’s view. It could serve to create one community that united rural and industrial life, thus reinforcing the physical and mental efficiency of the nation.\textsuperscript{103}

At the end of the conference the gathered body of knowledge was summarized in “six resolutions for modernity” that were passed unanimously on the motion of Helleputte:

1. A general plan for Belgium was to be drawn up, including a plan of the roads, railways and canals; a plan of the towns partially destroyed; and a plan of the towns and villages completely destroyed.
2. These plans should be in harmony with the principles of the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association.
3. The application of existing laws and new laws eventually to be introduced should be such as to constitute a compulsory minimum standard and these laws should be so flexible as to be adaptable to the aesthetic and hygienic necessities as they may be clearly defined.
4. Any reconstruction whatever of the whole or part of a town which has been destroyed should be preceded by the drawing of a plan of lay-out, extension and improvement, which should determine the arrangement and disposition of the different quarters, should fix the direction and width of the streets, the situation and the area of the squares, public gardens, parks and other open spaces, should indicate those parts, whether wooded or otherwise, to be used for hygienic or athletic purposes, and any other necessary conditions.
5. The procedure in connection with the drawing-up, the examination and the approval of the plan, should be as simple, economical and rapid as possible.
6. The distribution of State grants should be made subject to the adoption and execution of plans of layout, extension and improvement.\textsuperscript{104}

Can this outcome be labeled truly internationalist? At first sight, the resolutions (especially the first three) seem to reflect the recommendations of the British principal papers of Culpin, Aldridge and Unwin. Therefore within British town planning circles the vision of a
modern Belgium was claimed to be quintessentially British. The recommendation to adhere to the garden city principles was British enough, but as a whole, the resolutions were drenched in the spirit of German \textit{Städtebau} that British town planners were well familiar with. Jos. Cuypers was quick to praise Unwin’s proposal, but he also clearly recognized the German origin of the idea.\footnote{But the British hosts had not exclusively dictated the resolutions. Uyttenhove draws attention to the fact that the last three resolutions were of French origin. French delegate Dépinay, representing the \textit{Société Française des Habitations à Bon Marché} and also a member of the \textit{Musée Social}, had a confidential relation with Helleputte and used this position to cash in the ideas on town planning embraced by the \textit{Musée Social} on an international stage. The resolutions, proposing a plan of layout and extension and modalities for the execution of the reconstruction (expropriation and compensation), handed the Belgians a legislative framework, similar to the one proposed in France. Of course, French town planners had looked to Germany and later to England for inspiration, so the British and French resolutions were a good match. By embracing the resolutions Belgium would follow the footsteps of other European nations with town planning legislation, like Sweden (the \textit{Building Law for the Towns in the Realm} of 1874), the Netherlands (the \textit{Woningwet} of 1901), England (the \textit{Housing and Town Planning Act} of 1909) and, above all, Germany (legislation initiated by the Prussian \textit{Fluchtliniengesetz} of 1875 and Cologne’s zoning ordinance of 1885).}

The 1915 special Town Planning Conference only marked the beginning of the Belgium reconstruction campaign. In the wake of the conference an educational programme was started to initiate the Belgian debutants into the realm of modern town planning (see paragraph 2.5). Belgian architect-planner Raphael Verwilghen, who attended this programme as official representative of the Belgian government, did not just want to learn more about British garden city experience, but was also particularly enthusiastic about Geddes’ ideas. The Scottish biologist and town planning pioneer Patrick Geddes introduced his civics concept in \textit{Civics: As Applied Sociology} (1905/1906) and later in \textit{Cities in Evolution} (1915). From the outset civics, as propagated by Geddes parallel to the garden city gospel, had a far broader outlook than the garden city concept. It regarded the city and the countryside as a continuum. Civics not only regarded the technical dimensions of town planning, but also beheld its social and spatial dimensions. It was saturated with regional thinking, borrowed from French social geographers, and handed the method of Civic Survey, to map the body of knowledge necessary for town planning to act as a supervisory science on a regional scale.

Geddes’ ideas were not contradicting the garden city idea and they could be used to complement Howard’s original ideas. Verwilghen saw the civic survey as an appropriate method to elevate town planning to a more rational and scientific approach. He advocated an analytical research in libraries and of maps and plans, which was to form the foundation of a diagnosis of the Belgian towns.\footnote{Such analyses could provide welcome work for unemployed Belgian architects residing in England. Of course, by proposing this Verwilghen
[xxiii]Patrick Geddes' Outlook Tower
followed the British example. In Great Britain by late 1914 a large-scale ‘Survey’-studies program, covering London and other major British cities, was started to provide work for unemployed architects. Verwilghen wanted to use the gathered documentation to build a traveling exhibition after the war that could be exerted to convince the public and local authorities of the benefits of rational town planning based on scientific principles. The ghost was out of the bottle. The wider civic approach that had been dismissed at the founding meeting of the IFHTP was back. It had gained new actuality in the new reconstruction context and became a serious contender for the definition of modern town planning.

Verwilghen was not the only continental planner looking for a new conception of a modern town planning profession. Although the housing question was at the heart of the reconstruction debate, the conceptions of comprehensive planning that were brought up encompassed a lot more than building new homes in suburbia: infrastructure, park systems, restructuring of the industrial potential (industrial decentralisation), redevelopment of the old city centers and the sanitation of slums, securing food supplies etc. New town planning reference books like *Cities in Evolution* (1915) by Geddes, *Préliminaires d’Art Civique* (1916) of Belgian architect-planner van der Swaelmen or *Comment reconstruire nos cités détruites?* (1915) of French architect-planners Agache, Aubertin and Redont clearly revealed that the town planning profession was moving away from its (garden city) roots as mere architecture of urban ensembles to a modern interpretation of town planning as a supervisory science of spatial coordination. This modern town planning broke through traditional scales. Soon the traditional planning unit of the city extension (or garden suburb) was abandoned and the entire city become object for planning, followed by regional planning and national planning.

The first post-war congress in Brussels in 1919 offered the Belgians an opportunity to report on their homework. The sessions revealed that they were susceptible to the distinction between mere housing schemes and comprehensive town planning, but the pressing need for houses overruled the acknowledged principles of modern town planning. The Belgian government had passed the interim *Besluitwet* (1915), but this legislation fell short of the resolutions that the 1915 conference had proposed. So modern town planning legislation was scrutinized once more. Verwilghen provided an international comparison of rational town planning in various countries. Swedish architect Albert Lilienberg initiated his international audience into the aspects of the Swedish Town Planning Act of 1874 and the 1907 Land Act, while Dutch architect Cuypers presented an outline of Dutch town planning legislation since 1862. However, the prime spot was claimed by the British speakers Henry Aldrigde and George Montagu Harris who elaborated on the 1919 Addison Act, the post-war housing and town planning legislation that had just been passed in Britain. Strangely enough, the French were not given an opportunity to present their *Loi Cornudet*, the first comprehensive French town planning act adopted on March 14th 1919. Could the British leadership have resented the French take-over of the reconstruction campaign during the War (see paragraph 2.5) and can the absence of a French speaker in Brussels thus be
interpreted as an implicit sanction? Without additional archival evidence this question can never be wholly solved, but the omission of the *Loi Cornudet* does not make sense otherwise.

The British leadership of the IFHTP was not planning to clench the Belgian thirst for civic science as professed by the likes of Raphael Verwilghen. However, the Belgian interest in civics could not completely be ignored. Thus Belgian architect Victor Creten was allowed to present a paper on civics in Brussels. He acknowledged that civics was still in a stage of infancy, but he firmly believed that ultimately theory would be tested and come to earth, enabling to take all civic needs into account and to develop a truly national type of dwellings adapted to modern life. However, Creten’s contribution was overshadowed by the keynote presentations of Purdom and Howard, who offered the Belgians another piece of dry garden city propaganda to digest. Clearly, the insistence on the garden city idea still thwarted the exploration of a nascent comprehensive town planning discipline. The 1919 congress of the IFHTP was far from progressive, especially if we consider that planners such as Pepler, Lanchester, Aldridge (England), Risler, Jaussely, Bonjean (France) and many others were already discussing the foundations of a comprehensive town planning science, based on international comparison at the 1919 Inter-allied Town Planning Conference of the French Society of Urbanists in Paris.\(^{111}\)

If anything, the 1919 congress revealed that the Belgians would not take the reconstruction task at hand along the lines envisioned by the British leadership. Thus the British leaders lost interest in the reconstruction issue and sought a path to silently abandon the reconstruction campaign without losing face. The fact that the continuous focus on the reconstruction prevented an early return of the befriended German garden city workers might also have been a consideration to drop the subject.\(^{112}\) For the next congress in London in 1920, only one session was reserved for the reconstruction task. It was the last time that the reconstruction task featured independently on a congress agenda. The treatment of the subject showed significant differences compared to former times. The scope had geographically expanded to include Northern France. More importantly, this time the Belgian and French members were allowed to theorize on the reconstruction tasks themselves, rather than be instructed by a British leadership. They did not use this new liberty to dismiss the garden city idea. The true garden city as advocated by Howard and Purdom was not to their liking, but they did embrace the open layout on garden city lines as prescribed in Unwin’s *Town planning in Practice* (1909) and *Nothing Gained by Overcrowding!* (1912).

Garden suburbs had become an obligatory element in most French reconstruction plans. Frenchman Henri Sellier told that reconstruction plans for Arras, Armentières, Lille and Verdun were completed and that they were working on a plan for Reims.\(^{113}\) The architect of this Reims plan, the American planner George Ford, reported on the work of *La Renaissance des Cités* in connection with the re-planning of Northern France. *La Renaissance des Cités*
The so-called ‘Plan Ford’ (1919), the reconstruction plan for Rheims prepared by American planner George Ford.
was established in 1916 as a new organization to assist local communities with their reconstruction by acting as an intermediary between the State and local authorities. The reconstruction of Northern France was best exemplified by Ford’s reconstruction plan for Reims, adopted in April 1920, which basically proposed a chain of garden suburbs, similar to Sellier’s chain for Paris.\textsuperscript{114} Apparently, French town planners had transcended the traditional planning unit of the city extension; now complete cities were made object of planning. The reconstruction plans encompassed a lot more than building garden suburbs: reconstruction of the damaged city centres, infrastructure, park systems, zoning, a wide range of amenities et cetera. Architect Augustin Rey addressed one of the key issues in the drafting of reconstruction plans: land use. He advocated an active municipal land policy to oppose speculation. This land policy was also to facilitate a re-parcelling of the land, to enable the erection of better houses through a scientific orientation of streets and houses “to get the fullest advantage of the sun’s rays throughout its daily course,” a message he would later elaborate upon in his highly influential \textit{La science des plans de villes} (1928).\textsuperscript{115}

Compared to the French efforts, the Belgian achievements were scant. Verwilghen pointed out that the public had initially opposed public initiative, making Purdom’s garden city programme, even in the condensed form of garden suburbs impossible. However, shortly of the 1919 Brussels congress the Belgian government had initiated an experimental housing scheme at Roulers, putting (part of) the British example into practice. Verwilghen of course was referring to the model \textit{tuinwijk} Batavia. At Batavia parts of the British example were put into practice. Verwilghen showed the international party a ten-acre plot on which a hundred houses were disposed in groups of from two to six, every house with its own small garden. The centre of the estate was reserved for allotments. Batavia primarily served as an exercise in cost-reduction. The costs of infrastructure were reduced by the introduction of Unwin’s distinction between thoroughfares and residential streets. Additionally, the scheme experimented with new (cheaper) materials and construction methods.\textsuperscript{116}

2.7 Conclusion

The earliest incarnation of the IFHTP, the International Association for Garden Cities and Town Planning, was established by the British Garden Cities and Town Planning Association (GCTPA). An international association in name, in reality it was little more than an international extension of the GCTPA. It was run by GCTPA officers from GCTPA headquarters in London. The British leaders used their domination to model the international organization after its British parental body (a voluntary association characterized by hierarchical structures and a harmonious culture of decision-making). Officially, the IFHTP was to serve as international rallying point for garden city enthusiasts from all parts of the world in order to combine forces. However, the British parent had less noble, more practicable considerations as well. It wanted to gain control over the transnational dissemination of the garden city idea to exorcise erroneous interpretations and counter growing competition from organizations such as the \textit{Union International des
CHAPTER 2 GARDEN CITIES TO THE WORLD 1913-1920

[xxv] Model tuinwijk Batavia at Roulers, Flanders, designed by Raphael Verwilghen (1919)
CHAPTER 2 GARDEN CITIES TO THE WORLD 1913-1920

*Villes* (1913) and the International Housing Congresses (1898). The international garden city congresses that the GCTPA had been organizing since 1904 were found inadequate to achieve these aims, so the GCTPA created an international outpost to provide more internationalist stature to its campaign of internationalization of the garden city creed. It seems that from the outset the organizing of international congresses was considered to be the most important medium for internationalization.

The earliest foreign members of the IFHTP were mainly recruited from the network of foreign contacts of the GCTPA (mainly garden city workers), complemented with housing associations and town planning organizations that acknowledged the practicability of the garden city idea. Thus the IFHTP attracted a motley crowd of middleclass reformers, enlightened patricians and professionals with an interest in housing and/or town planning. They not only acknowledged the lead of the British garden city workers, but they actually urged them to take the lead in the new international organization devoted to garden cities. These foreign members were rallied to attend the first international congress of the IFHTP in London in 1914. The event was characterized by an atmosphere of informality and the absence of a clearly defined program, giving it a sense of ‘merry chaos’, clearly indicating that the organization was still in a stage of infancy. Confronted with the many interpretations of the garden city idea, some considered admissible, others dubious or outright counterfeit, the British hosts adopted a moderate tone and elaborated on the particulars of British garden city experience and emphasized the element of cooperative organization to distinguish right from wrong. Evidently, the congress did not only serve to bring kindred spirits together, but also was intended to educate and instruct.

The War turned the initial outlook of the IFHTP upside down. Foreign participation dropped and it proved impossible to organize international congresses, putting the fresh organization financially in a tight position. As an independent organization it would not have survived. Contacts with the larger foreign factions that had been among the most outspoken supporters of the views of the British leaders were severed. The German garden city workers were barred from membership, contact with the Russian garden city workers became impossible and after the Bolshevist take-over a renewal of this contact was shunned, and the American Christian socialist avoided belligerent Europe and also did not return after the War. In the face of adversity, the IFHTP chose not just to resign and await better times. Instead, the IFHTP embarked on its Belgium reconstruction campaign, after the war geographically expanded to include Northern France. It looked beyond its original backing and explicitly addressed an external party: the Belgian government. The reconstruction campaign provided a sense of purpose, needed to keep members actively involved and make it clear to the outside world that the IFHTP was not a dormant body but an organization actively pursuing its aims, and it of course provided an excellent opportunity to spread its message and raise its backing.
In the absence of the American, German and Russian factions, the Belgian and French members, that were in the centre of attention of the reconstruction campaign, gained influence. Although they by no means opposed the garden city idea, their conception of modern town planning was not confined to garden city experience. They embraced garden suburbs as a part of a broader comprehensive modern town planning discipline. The British garden city militants largely failed to account for these Belgian and French sentiments. In their eagerness to transform Belgium into a model garden city nation, their tone hardened. Gone was the pre-war moderateness. They attacked continental garden suburb experience. Belgium was to embrace the true Howardian garden city and not be content with watered down variants. The reconstruction campaign brought the outlines of a necessary modern town planning science into sight. The discussions revealed that the participants were very susceptible to modern town planning and wanted to pursue this subject. However, the insistence on the garden city idea prevented the exploration of a new supervisory town planning discipline.

Although the IFHTP was affected by the restrictions imposed by the War, it was better off than its foremost competitors and transnational civil society at large, that were forced to close their doors (International Housing Congresses) or adopt a far humbler profile (Union Internationale des Villes). Thus it was able to strengthen its position in an international arena practically free from competition during the War. Once the transnational trade of ideas and experiences resumed and intensified after the War it could immediately facilitate this trade, whereas former competitors struggled to get on their feet again. It was in a perfect position to claim a leading position in the Urban Internationale, although the reconstruction campaign had made painfully clear that the IFHTP desperately needed to reassess its garden city objectives and orientation towards modern planning, if it wanted to secure such a prominent position in the new postwar context.