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Social Darwinism in France*

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Le Darwinisme social, a cheap anarchist tract published in 1880 by Emile Gautier, presents two contrasting connotations for the term social Darwinism and thus well illustrates an important feature of late nineteenth century discussion of the social implications of Darwinism. The first example of the term darwinisme social which I have discovered in French sources, Gautier's polemic began with the complaint that contemporaries often assumed that the application of Darwinism to human affirs supplied a justification for a brutal economic struggle for life. However, Gautier hoped to persuade readers to identify social Darwinism with the anarchist slogan "aid for existence."[1] These two connotations cited by Gautier confirm the standard observation that contemporaries appealed to Darwin to support credos of cooperation as well as conflict and found passages in Darwin's work appropriate for their differing purposes.[2] Nonetheless, historians have generally not equated social Darwinism with the entire range of applications of Darwinism to human society. Instead, following the model of Richard Hofstadter, they have linked the terms with arguments employing the well known Darwinians catchwords "struggle for existence" and "survival of the fittest" to justify laissez-faire economics and the outcome of military, colonial, or racial conflicts.[3] While some "revisionist" American historians, most notably Robert Bannister, have challenged Hofstadter's picture of a Gilded Age permeated by

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[1]Emile Gautier, Le Darwinisme social (Paris, 1880), pp. 4, 15, 68, 89.

[2]Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 1959 ed., s.v. "Darwin, Charles Robert," by Frank H. Hankins.

[3]Richard Hofstadter, Social Darwinism in American Thought, rev. ed. (Boston, 1955), p. 6; Gertrude Himmelfarb, Darwin and the Darwinian Revolution (Garden City, N.Y., 1959; Anchor Books, 1962), pp. 416, 418. Herbert Spencer actually coined the expression "survival of the fittest" which Darwin added to the fifth edition of the Origin of Species in 1869.

social Darwinism,[4] German historians have searched for social Darwinist themes in pre-Nazi racism.[5]

In this paper I wish to argue that the development of the familiar conflict-oriented type of social Darwinism was obstructed in France and that a major reason for the obstruction was the nature of French "official culture," as defined by politicians, prestigious academicians and writers, and the Ministry of Public Instruction which supervised education from the primary school level to the university. The term official culture is employed to describe not a single philosophy but rather a sharing of political and social views supportive of first the Second Empire and then the Third Republic. In addition, I want to indicate that while the French mind was not "dominated" by social Darwinism,[6] the name of Darwin often figured in the biologistic social theories constructed in France during the late nineteenth century. Especially after 1870 there was a vast amount of discussion of how the theory of biological evolution, whether Darwinian or Lamarckian or some combination of the two, related to human society. Gautier's contention that Darwinism support an ideology of social cooperation was not simply a leftist position but rather resembled what became a standard package of republican statements about the utility of evolutionary biology for social thought. As Henry Guerlac observed, "the cult of reason and science provided . . . the central mystique and served as a useful political blunderbuss" for the anticlerical Third Republic. However, social Darwinism was not a typical weapon republicans derived from this cult of science.[7]

[4]Robert Bannister, "Survival of the Fittest Is Our Doctrine: History or Histrionics," Journal of the History of Ideas 31 (1970):377-98; Social Darwinism, Science and Myth in Anglo-American Social Thought (Philadelphia, 1979). See also Irvin G. Wyllie, "Social Darwinism and the American Businessman," in Pivotal Interpretations of American History, 2 vols., ed. Carl Degler (New York, 1966), 2:157-70.

[5]Han-Günter Zmarzlik, "Social Darwinism in Germany, Seen as a Historical Problem," in Republic to Reich: The Making of the Nazi Revolution, ed. Hajo Holborn (New York, 1972), pp. 435-74; Günter Mann, "Rassenhygiene--Sozialdarwinismus," in Biologismus im 19. Jahrhundert, ed. Günter Mann (Stuttgart, 1973), pp. 73-93.

[6]H. Stuart Hughes speaks of a European mind "dominated by social Darwinism" in Consciousness and Society: The Reorientation of European Social Thought, 1890-1930 (New York, 1958), p. 39.

[7]Henry E. Guerlac, "Science and National Strength," in Modern France: Problems of the Third and Fourth Republics, ed. Edward Meade Earle (Princeton, 1951), p. 89.

The findings presented here are based on a study of the writings of leading intellectuals, academicians, journalists, politicians, and political publicists. Hundreds of books and forty-five journals covering scientific, literary, political, economic, sociological, anthropological, and philosophical issues have been utilized. The search for discussions of social Darwinism in popular culture sources has been largely unrewarding. A reading of twelve years of Le Petit Journal, the first Parisian daily to attain a circulation of one million, turned up only a few references to Darwinism in the course of a given year and still fewer allusions, either positive or negative, to social Darwinism.[8] Cheap pamphlets with titles promising a discussion of evolutionary biology and social issues were often the work of leftwing writers who, like Gautier, were eager to ally Darwin and Lamarck with anarchist or socialist causes and so did not produce social Darwinist arguments.[9]

During the Second Empire there was relatively little consideration of the implications of Darwinism for social thought. As the philosopher Alfred Fouillée later noted, immediately after the publication of the Origin of Species in 1859 the French were most interested in evaluating the scientific accuracy of Darwinism and assessing its religious and metaphysical consequences.[10] Most well established French biologists were committed to Cuvier's doctrine of the fixity of species and so greeted the Origin of Species with skepticism.[11] Thus Darwin was not initially a recognized authority whom writers of the 1860s might wish to cite for confirmation of their social theories. However, there were some expressions of social Darwinism in France during this decade, and the best example was strategically placed. Clémence Royer, an obscure female author, added a controversial forty-five-page preface to her translation of the Origin of Species in 1862 and in the last eight pages stated some social Darwinist positions.

[8] Le Petit Journal (Paris), 1868-1869, 1878, 1881, 1887-1888, 189-1893, 1899, 1902.

[9] See Louis Dramard, Transformisme et socialisme (Paris, 1882); Alfred Marpaux, L'Evolution naturelle et l'évolution sociale (Dijon, 1894).

[10] Alfred Fouillée, "La Morale de l'évolution et du darwinisme en Angleterre," Revue des Deux Mondes, 3d ser., 40 (1880): 112.

[11] For the reception of Darwin by French scientists see Yvette Conry, L'Introduction du Darwinisme en France au XIX^e siècle (Paris, 1974); Robert E. Stebbins, "France," in The Comparative Reception of Darwinism, ed. Thomas G. Glick (Austin, 1974), pp. 117-63.

Because the three editions of Royer's translation were the only French version available before 1873, French readers of the Origin of Species automatically encountered bits of social Darwinism.[12] Royer shocked religious sensibilities by announcing enthusiastically that the book challenged Christian dogma. She also found in its pages support for laissez-faire economics and the naturalness of inequality among races or individuals within a nation or race. Moreover, she condemned "blind and imprudent charity" for weakening "the human race" by its promotion of the survival of feeble individuals who, left unaided, would have perished.[13]

When Royer produced her translation, she was an outsider to the world of French letters and lacked scientific credentials. She resided in Switzerland and would form a longlasting liaison with Pascal Duprat, a republican politician in exile during the 1860s.[14] Royer's first claim to fame as an intellectual was a prize won for a study on taxation, submitted in a contest sponsored by the Swiss canton of Vaud in 1860 and published in 1862.[15] Not only did the Origin of Species and Royer's preface fail to impress much of the French scientific community; they also aroused the hostility o official university philosophers who during the Second Empire were still spiritualists adhering to the eclectic doctrine developed by Victor Cousin under the July Monarchy.[16] Spiritualists objected that the emphasis on chance in Darwinism challenged their notion of a divine final cause of life.[17] The spiritualist viewpoint prevailed in the pages of the Revue des Deux Mondes, the most prestigious literary review of the day for the haute bourgeoisie and supporters of their values.[18] Royer, alienated from official imperial culture, contributed instead to La Pensée nouvelle, a short-lived review published by some young republicans and materialists from 1867 to 1869.

[12]The 3 editions of the Royer translation appeared in 1862, 1866, and 1870; Guillaumin (later Guillaumin and Masson) was the publisher. Darwin's discontent with the Royer translation led to the appearance of new versions by J.-J. Moulinié, published by C. Reinwald in 1873, and Edmond Barbier, also published by Reinwald, in 1876. Other Royer editions were published in 1883 and 1918; the Barbier translation was reissued in 1876, 1880, 1882, and 1907.

[13]Cleménce Royer, "Préface de la première édition," in De l'Origine des espèces par sélection naturelle, ou des Lois de transformation des êtres organisés, 2d ed., trans. Royer (Paris, 1866), pp. lii-lix.

[14]From a French Legitimist background, Royer (1830-1902) met Duprat in Lausanne.

[15]La Théorie de l'impôt.

[16]Doris Goldstein, "Official Philosophies in Modern France: The Example of Victor Cousin," Journal of Social History 1 (1968): 258-279.

[17]Paul Janet, "Le Matérialisme contemporain," Revue des Deux Mondes, 2d ser., 48 (1863):584-85.

[18]The Revue des Deux Mondes had 16,500 subscribers in 1866.

After the Franco-Prussian War Léon Gambetta proclaimed that the new republic must be scientific or it would not be. The term science became a standard republican catchword in propaganda attacks on monarchist and clerical enemies whose alleged hostility to modern science was said to have warped the educational system of the Second Empire and thus contributed to the military debacle of 1870.[19] Republicans paired politics and science by claiming that while the new regime freed Frenchmen from despotism, science freed minds.[20]

References to Lamarck as well as Darwin figured in the emerging republican cult of science, for as French biologists, especially younger ones, became more enthusiastic about theories of evolution, they often asserted patriotically that Darwin had merely elaborated upon a foundation laid by a great and often ignored Frenchman.[21] Transformisme rather than darwinisme became the favored French label for evolutionary theories because it covered Lamarck as well as Darwin.[22] The fact that many French biologists adhered to Lamarck's views on environmental influences on evolution and the inheritance of acquired characteristics--notions which Darwin downgraded without completely rejecting[23]--did not prevent the entry of the Darwinian catchwords "struggle for life" (lutte pour la vie or concurrence vitale) or "natural selection" (sélection naturelle) into either journals of high culture or the daily press.[24] Furthermore, beyond scientific and academic circles unsophisticated writers simply ignored Lamarck and credited Darwin with arousing the current interest in evolution. For example, members of the Society of Anthropology were far more likely to be Lamarckians than Darwinists, but when the anthropologists'

(Claude Bellanger et al., Histoire générale de la presse française, 4 vols. [Paris, 1969-1975], 2: 311).

[19] Guerlac, "Science," in Earle, pp. 81-91.

[20] Emile Alglave, Revue scientifique, 2d ser., 1 (1871): 1.

[21] Conry, Introduction, pp. 27, 39-40, 309-17.

[22] Ad. Bertillon, Dictionnaire des sciences anthropologiques (Paris, 1884), s.v. "Transformisme," by P.G. Mahoudeau.

[23] While always insisting that natural selection was the primary factor in the modification of species, Darwin indicated in later editions of the Origin of Species that in the first edition he had underrated the importance of Lamarckian views. Charles Darwin, The Origin of Species, 6th ed. (New York, 1960; New American Library ed.), p. 442.

[24] Natural selection was first rendered as élection naturelle by Royer but then changed in the second French edition to sélection naturelle.

interest in evolution was mentioned in the press in conjunction with a Paris anthropological exhibition in 1878, journalists assumed that their evolutionism stemmed from Darwin and did not mention Lamarck.[25]

Royer participated in both the revival of Lamarck and the popularization of Darwin.[26] Although she often complained that as a female she was denied the status and influence to which her writing entitled her, she acquired some valuable connections in the world of republican politics and letters, partly because of her liaison with Duprat, who was elected to the National Assembly in 1871 and the Chamber of Deputies in 1876.[27] During the late 1860s Royer had begun publishing articles in the liberal economists' Journal des Economistes, the organ of the Society of Political Economy, of which Duprat was a member. In 1870 she became the first woman to join the Paris Society of Anthropology, a major center of support for evolutionary theories.[28] After the founding of the Third Republic, she contributed occasional reviews to Paul Bert's scientific section of Gambetta's newspaper, La République française. Some of her articles of the 1870s reiterated the social Darwinist premises of her 1862 preface and an 1869 book.[29]

However, Royer's pointed statements about natural inequality and the inevitability of the struggle for life did not match the rhetoric of republican politicians and educators eager to emphasize liberty, equality, and fraternity and as the watchwords of the new regime. Republicans hoping to create a stable government in a country subjected to a series of political and social upheavals since 1789 were unlikely to adopt an ideology making discord permanent within a society. Nor would public emphasis on inequality and conflict harmonize with the efforts of the middle class republican elite to negate theories of

[25] Conry, Introduction, pp. 59-90; La Liberté (Paris), 7 August 1878; La Petite République française (Paris), 11 August 1878.

[26] Royer, "Lamarck: Sa vie, ses travaux et son système," Philosophie positive 3 (1868): 173-205, 333-72, 4 (1869): 5-30.

[27] Royer's complaints about neglect by French intellectuals are numerous in her undated autobiographical fragment and in a "testament" dated 5 May 1895, both available at the Bibliothèque Marguerite Durand, Paris.

[28] Conry, Introduction, pp. 50-90.

[29] Royer, Origine de l'homme et des sociétés (Paris, 1869), pp. 520, 533-37, 583. In the Journal des Economistes see "Des rapports des principes généraux de l'histoire naturelle avec la solution du problème social," 3d ser., 27 (1872): 305-29; "La Nation dans l'humanite et dans la série organique," 40 (1875): 234-49; "Les phases sociales des nations," 43 (1876): 74-87; "Considérations sur le groupement des peuples et sur l'hégémonie universelle," 46 (1877): 271-83; "Causes internes de la dissolution des peuples," 4th ser., 3 (1878): 39-59.

class struggle by persuading workers and peasants that in a regime based on universal suffrage, solidarity could prevail even if class divisions remained basically unaltered.[30]

Two major ingredients in the official republican ideology developed during the 1870s and 1880s were neo-Kantian idealism and positivism.[31] Neo-Kantian idealism was promoted by Charles Renouvier in the Critique philosophique. This review repeatedly attacked the use of biological analogies in social thought on the grounds that such analogies were simplistic and, furthermore, employed by the Germans to rationalize a cult of force. France, by contrast, was supposed to represent social idealism. If one wished to believe that human will and intelligence made the molding of a better society possible, then the argument that men were subject to the automatic operation of a law of struggle for existence was inappropriate.[32] Hostility to drawing conclusions for social thought from Darwinism also marked contemporary positivism. Carrying on Comte's opposition to Lamarckian evolution, influential positivists such as Emile Littré attacked both Darwinism and its alleged social implications.[33]

Despite the warnings of Renouvier and Littré, Darwinian catchwords did appear in political and philosophical discourse, and some leading intellectuals, such as Alfred Fouillée, sought appropriate French uses for Darwin and Herbert Spencer. Fouillée's efforts of the early 1880s coincided with the entry of both Darwinism and Spencer's evolutionary philosophy into official educational literature. For example, the Dictionnaire de pédagogie, a standard reference work for primary school

[30] For a discussion of the official republican ideology presented in the schools see Sanford Elwitt, The Making of the Third Republic, Class and Politics in France, 1868-1884 (Baton Rouge, 1975), pp. 170-229. For specific textbook examples of the stress on social harmony see the best-selling manual of the Third Republic: Mme. Alfred J.E. Fouillée [G. Bruno], Le tour de la France par deux enfants, 120th ed. (Paris, 1884), pp. 155, 191, 306. See also Dominique Maingueneau, Les livres d'école de la République, 1870-1914 (Paris, 1979).

[31] John A. Scott, Republican Ideas and the Liberal Tradition in France, 1870-1914 (New York, 1951, 1966), pp. 52-86.

[32] See in the Critique philosophique, François Pillon, "Un conférence de Max Müller sur la philosophie de Kant," 4 (1873): 141-142; Charles Renouvier, "La philosophie de l'inconscient," 5 (1874): 295, "Le crédo publique de la France et des races latines," 6 (1874): 70; "De la ressemblance mentale de l'homme et des autres animaux selon Darwin," 10 (1876): 184-91.

[33] Emile Littré, "De la condition essentielle qui sépare la sociologie de la biologie," Philosophie positive 2 (1868): 199. Walter M. Simon, European Positivism in the Nineteenth Century (Ithaca, 1963), pp. 18-19, discusses formal positivist opposition to Darwinism.

teachers edited by a high official in the education ministry, contained listings for both darwinisme and transformisme.[34] In the prestigious Revue des Deux Mondes Fouillée argued that Darwin and Spencer readily supported republican liberalism On the one hand, he rejected the position most often cited to epitomize Spencer's social Darwinism--namely, Spencer's view that government programs aiding the poor and weak were bad because they permitted the survival of too many unfit human specimens.[35] Fouillée insisted that the French tradition of social idealism supported state philanthropy.[36] On the other hand, he liked much of Spencer's Data of Ethics, a book approved by the education ministry for public libraries.[37] Fouillée agreed with Spencer's contention that as militaristic societies gave way to modern industrial civilization, the struggle for life became less brutal and altruistic sentiments replaced egotistical motivations. Furthermore, Fouillée found a similar stress on altruism and cooperation in some of Darwin's statements about human society.[38]

Many other contemporaries echoed Fouillée's assertion that Spencer's secular ethics promoted altruism rather than a brutal struggle for life. Thus French intellectuals did not portray Spencer as being first and foremost a social Darwinist. As premier, Jules Ferry asserted in the Senate that Spencer's views were completely in accord with the teachings of Christianity and Kant; all shared in the golden rule of considerate treatment of one's fellow man.[39] In an 1881 book Royer brought her ideas closer to the emerging republican consensus on evolutionary ethics by reducing the element of conflict and stressing the steady growth of altruism, a position which she recognized as similar to Spencer's.[40] A standard French biographical

[34] Ferdinand Buisson, ed., Dictionnaire de pédagogie et d'instruction primaire (Paris, 1882), s.v. "Darwinisme," by Louis Rousselot, and "Transformisme," by Edmond Perrier.

[35] Emile de Laveleye, a Belgian economist, applied the label "social Darwinist" to the attack on state charity in Spencer's Man versus the State (1884). First published in the Contemporary Review (1885), Laveleye's critique was subsequently published in Florence (1885) and as an appendix to later editions of his Socialisme contemporain. See Appendix II: "L'Etat et l'individu ou darwinisme social et christianisme," in ibid., 5th ed. (Paris, 1890), pp. 375-402.

[36] Fouillée, "La philanthropie scientifique au point de vue du darwinisme," Revue de Deux Mondes, 3d ser., 55 (1882): 407-45. On Fouillée see Scott, Republican Ideas, pp. 159-69.

[37] Herbert Spencer, An Autobiography, 2 vols. (New York, 1904), 2: 436.

[38] Fouillée, "La Morale," pp. 122-43.

[39] Jules Ferry, Discours et opinions, 7 vols. (Paris, 1893-1898), 4: 177-78.

[40] Royer, Le Bien et la loi morale (Paris, 1881), pp. xxviii-xxix, 231, 293.

dictionary also recorded in 1880 that the essence of Spencer's law of social evolution was the development of altruism.[41] In the meantime, the philosopher and sociologist Alfred Espinas had used Spencer to develop the argument that cooperation rather than conflict prevailed in animal societies, which he considered a model for human societies.[42]

Espinas also cited the physiological principle of the "division of work" among the cells of an organism to provide a scientific foundation for emphasizing the naturalness of cooperation and downgrading the Darwinian struggle for life.[43] Similar references to the "division of work," a concept developed in France by Henri Milne-Edwards,[44] had also been forthcoming from various scientists. From 1880 onward Edmond Perrier, the Lamarckian zoologist of the Museum of Natural History, regularly drew social lessons from biology. Viewing the "division of work" and "association" as far more important natural laws than Darwin's struggle for life, Perrier insisted, in turn, that human progress depended upon "association" and "solidarity" rather than struggle.[45]

Having argued that social Darwinism clashed with republican pronouncements on social harmony, an image frequently not mirroring reality but good propaganda, I do not wish to deny that there were many instances when Darwinian catchwords figured in political rhetoric and the literature of classical political economy. Defenses of laissez-faire economics supply the best examples. The Journal des Economistes, edited by Gustave de Molinari from 1881 to 1909, contained many comparisons between economic competition and the Darwinian struggle for life, although authors often added Spencer's point that industrial rivalry lacked the brutality of military clashes.[46]

[41] Gustave Vapereau, Dictionnaire universel des contemporains, 5th ed. (Paris, 1880), 6th ed. (Paris, 1893), s.v. "Spencer, Herbert."

[42] Alfred Espinas, Des Sociétés animales, 2d ed. (Paris, 1878), pp. 131-53.

[43] Ibid., pp. 214, 219, 258.

[44] Conry, Introduction, p. 39.

[45] Edmond Perrier, "Le Transformisme," Revue scientifique, 2d ser., 19 (1880): 194-204; Les Colonies animales (Paris, 1881), pp. 750, 760-83; "Darwinisme et transformisme," Nouvelle Revue 15 (1882): 351-55.

[46] See in the Journal des Economistes Gustave de Molinari, "L'évolution économique du XIXe siècle," 3d ser., 48 (1877): 5-27; Maurice Block, "Aphorismes économiques et moraux," 5th ser., 7 (1891): 356; Emile Macquart, "Revue des principales publications économiques de l'étranger," 6th ser., 2 (1904): 67. Among Molinari's numerous books see L'Evolution économique du dix-neuvieme siècle (Paris, 1880), pp. 85-88, and Notions fondamentales d'économie politique et programme économique (Paris, 1891), pp. 2-5, 13-14.

During the early 1890s Léon Say, a conservative republican prominent in the world of high finance, and Joseph Chailley-Bert, another republican politician, included a striking article on economic competition in their Nouveau dictionnaire d'économie politique. The article was by Paul Beauregard, a member of the Paris Faculty of Law who later served in the Chamber of Deputies. Beauregard generalized that competition "is nothing but the application to humanity of the general law which presides over all the development of life on earth: the law of the struggle for existence and natural selection."[47] Yet there were limits to Beauregard's use of Darwinian notions. In a text for secondary schools he had explicitly denounced employing Darwinian language to condemn state charity, which he supported.[48]

Darwinian expressions also appeared in republican political discourse, although largely in incidental fashion. Defending laissez-faire economics against Catholic and Radical republican attacks, the Opportunist premier Ferry stated in the Chamber of Deputies in 1884 that the economic "lutte pour la vie" was bitter and produced many ruins "on the battlefield of modern competition." Furthermore, he veered from the usual republican insistence on the reign of social harmony by doubting that a reduction of economic conflict was imminent.[49] To this the Radical Georges Clemenceau, himself a regular user of Darwinian phrases, retorted that despite the struggle for life, a civilized society could not permit a single person to die of hunger.[50] Comparing relations between nations to the struggle for existence also figured occasionally in republican rhetoric, especially before the Boulangist episode highlighted a growing separation between many republicans and militant nationalists. Thus in 1880 Gambetta stated that nations ignoring the importance of modern science "will be crushed" in the "combat de la vie."[51] The moderate republican Raoul Frary deliberately appropriated Darwinian language in his alarmist best seller, Le Péril national. Appearing in six editions between 1881 and 1888, this book warned that the falling French birthrate might again cause France to lose to Germany in the "lutte pour l'existence."[52]

[47] Léon Say, and Joseph Chailley-Bert, ed., Nouveau dictionnaire d'economie politique, 2 vols. (Paris, 1891-1892), s.v. "Concurrence," by Paul Beauregard.

[48] Beauregard, Eléments d économie politique (Paris, 1889), p. 287.

[49] France, Journal officiel de la République française, Chambre, Débats, 31 January 1884, 247.

[50] Ibid., 250. For Clemenceau's analogies between the struggle for life and human society, see his American Reconstruction, 1865-1870, ed. Fernand Baldensperger, trans. Margaret MacVeagh (New York, 1928), p. 207; La Mêlée sociale (Paris, 1895), p. x; In the Evening of My Thought, 2 vols., trans. Charles Miner Thompson and John Heard (Boston, 1929), 2: 187, 428.

[51] Léon Gambetta, Discours et plaidoyers politiques, 11 vols. (Paris, 1881-1906), 10: 107.

[52] Raoul Frary, Le Péril national (Paris, 1881), pp. 23-25, 263, 338.

The casual use of the expression struggle for life became more rare in republican vocabularies during the 1890s and thereafter because of the explicit rejection of the term in the Radical republicans' solidarist philosophy. Formulated to defend democracy and capitalism in the face of a growing socialist appeal and mounting labor unrest, the solidarist credo received one of its classic expositions from Léon Bourgeois who became premier in 1895.[53] Bourgeois called solidarism a doctrine superior to both individualism and socialist collectivism and argued that it carried the force of a "'biosociological' law." While continuing the republican penchant for insisting that morale must be scientific, he stated pointedly that the shorthand expression for solidarist ethics was the "union for life," not the "struggle for life."[54] By the mid-1890s, the practice of contrasting slogans like "aid for life," "union for life," "association for life," or "cooperation for life" with the "struggle for life" was hardly original. A staple in anarchist and socialist discourse since the late 1870s,[55] the practice had also received respectably underpinnings from such scientists as Perrier, cited previously, or the Lamarckian J.-L. de Lanessan, a doctor turned republican politician.[56] Furthermore, Charles Gide, an eminent professor of political economy, had made the contrast between solidarity and the lutte pour la vie a key feature of the doctrine which he and like-minded academicians developed to modify laissez-faire economics.[57]

Once formulated in political circles and supporting university centers, solidarism was widely disseminated. By the mid-1890s texts stated the maxim that "association for life," not the "struggle for life," should dominate human society.[58]

[53] Léon Bourgeois, "Lettres sur le mouvement social--La Doctrine de solidarité," Nouvelle Revue 93 (1895): 390-98, 640-48. On solidarism see Scott, Republican Ideas, pp. 157-86; J.E.S. Hayward, "The Official Philosophy of the French Third Republic: Léon Bourgeois and Solidarism," International Review of Social History 6 (1961): 19-48; Theodore Zeldin, France, 1848-1945, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1973-1977), 1:640-82.

[54] Bourgeois, Solidarité, 3d ed. (Paris, 1902), pp. 12, 16, 39.

[55] Gautier, Darwinisme social, p. 68. Such slogans often appeared in the Revue socialiste, founded in 1885.

[56] J.-L. de Lanessan, La Lutte pour l'existence et l'Association pour la lutte (Paris, 1881), Le Transformisme (Paris, 1883), La Lutte pour l'existence et l'évolution des sociétés (Paris, 1903), La Concurrence sociale et les devoirs sociaux (Paris, 1904).

[57] Charles Gide, "L'idée de Solidarité en tant que programme économique," Revue internationale de sociologie 1 (1893): 394.

[58] Mathilde Salomon, A nos jeunes filles, Lectures et leçons de morale d'après le programme des ecoles primaires supérieures de jeunes filles (Paris, 1893), pp. 71-73; Emile Thouverez, Le livre de morale des ecoles primaires supérieures (Paris, 1914), pp. 79, 262-63.

Readers of popular newspapers like the Petit Journal could also learn from page one articles with such titles as "La solidarité chez les animaux" that leaders in the world of high culture judged the law of solidarity more significant than the "combat for life."[59]

The solidarist rejection of certain Darwinian catchwords was part of a general attack on social Darwinist ideas. Typically social Darwinism was associated with critics or outright enemies of the current republican orthodoxy. Edmond Demolins, Gustave Le Bon, Jules Soury, and Georges Vacher de Lapouge were four French writers actually branded as social Darwinists by contemporaries.[60] Although two of them held academic positions, the four shared some degree of alienation from official culture.

Edmond Demolins was a sociologist operating outside the academy. With the Abbé Henri de Tourville, he headed a school of sociologists who in 1886 had broken off from the circle adhering to the doctrine of the Catholic conservative, Frédéric Le Play. The rift was prompted more by differences in ideology than methodology. Le Play's emphasis on the family unit for conservative purposes conflicted with the individualism which Demolins and de Tourville promoted in their journal Science sociale.[61] In 1897 Demolins published his best seller, A quoi tient la supériorité des Anglo-Saxons. His answer was that English and American institutions prepared individuals for the inexorable "struggle for life." In France, by contrast, old values and habits, now preserved by the republican credo of solidarity, promoted the subordination of the individual to the family and other social groups. Demolins advised the French to become more individualistic if they wished to catch up with the English in the economic "struggle for life."[62] Although his support of capitalism matched republican economic values, Demolins's repeated use of the expression struggle for life conflicted with the rejection of that phrase by the solidarists. Moreover, Darwinian catchwords were not prominent in the Durkheimian sociology then gaining a university base or in the majority of contributions to René Worms's eclectic Revue internationale de sociologie.[63]

[59] Le Petit Journal (Paris), 31 August 1902. The article discussed a recent contribution by Fouillée to the Revue des Deux Mondes.

[60] Gabriel Ambon, "Darwinisme social," Journal des Economistes, 5th ser., 39 (1899): 343-52; Eugène Fournière, L'Artifice nationaliste (Paris, 1903), p. 136; Jean Lagorgette, Le rôle de la guerre (Paris, 1906), pp. 521,555.

[61] Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 1968 ed., s.v. "Le Play, Frédéric," by Jesse R. Pitts, and "Tourville, Henri de," by Terry N. Clark.

[62] Edmond Demolins, A quoi tient la supériorité des Anglo-Saxons (Paris, n.d.), pp. 46, 105, 173, 366. By 1907 26 editions had been published.

[63] L'Année sociologique, 1896-1912; Revue internationale de sociologie, 1893-1918.

The interest of Demolins and his associates in forming aggressive French entrepreneurs and their critique of government economic regulations were calculated to please commercial and industrial leaders. For businessmen afraid that Radical solidarist rhetoric about expanding state aid to the unfortunate might be translated into more costly programs than ever actually materialized, Demolins provided useful anti-solidarist arguments. He asserted that the cooperative instincts emphasized by Bourgeois were far less typical of human nature than desires for personal gain and the manipulations of others.[64] While Demolins devoted himself to the journal Science sociale and the Ecole des roches, an expensive boarding school founded to promote his educational ideals, other members of the Science sociale cluster of sociologists actively served private enterprise. Paul de Rousiers was president of the armaments lobby, and Robert Pinot was general secretary of the Comité des Forges. Both also taught at the Institut des hautes études commerciales, the leading Paris business school.[65] It is most likely, however, that a businessman's interest in the Science sociale group stemmed from its general defense of capitalism rather than the use of the expression struggle for life by Demolins and some of his associates, such as de Rousiers.[66]

Like Demolins the social psychologist Gustave Le Bon linked the term "struggle for life" to economic competition.[67] He also employed it to describe relationships between nations and races. A medical doctor who did not practice, Le Bon long persisted in annoying spokesmen for official culture with his claims that despite the familiar republican rhetoric about "liberty, equality, and fraternity," unremitting struggle and inequality actually characterized human life.[68] L'Homme et les sociétés, his first major venture into social evolutionism in 1879, contained approving references to Spencer's arguments on the dangers of keeping the unfit alive through artificial state interference with the process of natural selection.[69] A discussion of war in Darwinian terms figured prominently in Les premières civilisations where Le Bon wrote: "The struggle for existence is the natural and permanent state of human races as well as animal species. Far from being, as some have wished to believe, a residue of barbarism in the process of disappearing, war seems an essential condition of the existence of civilization."[70] Those who were most successful in combat

[64] Demolins, A quoi, pp. 322-44.

[65] Terry Nichols Clark, Prophets and Patrons: The French University and the Emergence of the Social Sciences (Cambridge, Mass., 1973), pp. 108-9.

[66] Paul de Rousiers, La vie américaine (Paris, 1892), pp. 6, 423, 528, 681, 683; "Douze ans d'éducation nouvelle," Science sociale 27 (1912): 19-21.

[67] Gustave Le Bon, L'Homme et les sociétés, 2 vols. (Paris, 1879-1880), 2:88-90; Les premières civilisations (Paris, 1889), p. 173.

[68] Le Bon, La Vie, Physiologie humaine appliquée à l'hygiene et à la médecine (Paris, 1874), pp. 2, 826, 900; Homme 1:123.

[69] Le Bon, Homme 1: 134.

[70] Le Bon, Premières civilisations, p. 172.

and other forms of the struggle for existence were judged a natural elite of the fittest: "The right of the strongest! It is in vain that the humanitarian philosophers would contest its power from the confines of their studies. It is the only law which is always imposed, and it is also the one which has made humanity progress the most."[71] After Le Bon's classic, La Psychologie des foules, made him a literary celebrity in 1895, he acquired a reading audience much larger than that of most academic philosophers and sociologists. Moreover, as Robert Nye has shown, Le Bon had contacts with certain conservative republican political and military leaders.[72] Nonetheless, Le Bon's social Darwinist positions were not characteristic of the social philosophy publicly professed by most republican politicians, ideologues, and academicians. Complaining in 1910 about the neglect of his social theories by universitaires, Le Bon noted his distance from official culture when he remarked that "one should never hesitate to say what ought to be said even when one is alone in saying it."[73]

The physiologist Jules Soury, like Le Bon, wrote of an inexorable struggle for life between nations and races. A professor at the Ecole des hautes études, Soury was an anti-Dreyfusard and sometime mentor of the nationalist Maurice Barrès.[74] As early as 1877 Soury had suggested that "natural selection" was a major explanation for the superiority which he alleged that Aryans held over Semites.[75] In his anti-Dreyfusard polemic of 1902, Campagne nationaliste, Soury asserted that the fact of race determined "the actions and reactions of the individual in the struggle for life" and was thus "the great explanation of the history of civilization."[76] He also warned that it was necessary, "if the French are not condemned to disappear, that the scientific ideas of Darwin on the struggle for life and natural selection prevail, at least in the struggle of ideas, over the political dogmas of the

[71] Ibid., p. 174.

[72] Robert A. Nye, The Origins of Crowd Psychology, Gustave Le Bon and the Crisis of Mass Democracy in the Third Republic (London and Beverly Hills, 1975), pp. 84, 113.

[73] Le Bon, La Psychologie politique et la défense sociale (Paris, 1910), p. 116.

[74] Soury (1842-1915) was named maître de conférences at the Ecole des hautes études in 1881. His influence on Barrès is discussed in Robert Soucy, Fascism in France: The Case of Maurice Barrès (Berkeley, 1972), pp. 179-84, and Zeev Sternhell, Maurice Barrès et le nationalisme français (Paris, 1972), pp. 11-13, 252-67.

[75] Jules Soury, Etudes historiques sur les religions, les arts, la civilisation de l'Asie antérieure de la Grèce (Paris, 1877), pp. 232-26, 351.

[76] Soury, Campagne nationaliste, 1899-1902, 2 ed. (Paris, 1902), pp. 7, 52, 123-215, 134.

of the Declaration of the Rights of Man."[77] Such pronouncements explain why commentators by the turn of the twentieth century began observing that appeals to Darwin and evolutionary biology, once strictly typical of French republican and socialist discourse, now also characterized conservative propaganda.[78]

The French theorist most often branded a social Darwinist after 1900 was Georges Vacher de Lapouge,[79] a librarian who held positions at the Universities of Montpellier, Rennes, and Poitiers.[80] A former student at the independent School of Anthropology in Paris, Vacher de Lapouge called his doctrine anthroposociology and also Darwinian political science.[81] He described it as the study of relationships between race and social milieu.[82] In controversial lectures, given as cours libres under the auspices of the Faculties of Science and Letters at Montpellier, and in the books Sélections sociales, L'Aryen, and Race et milieu social, he attempted to demonstrate correlations between social status and racial makeup. The naturalness of human inequality seemed to him a major implication of Darwinism, and he praised Royer for being among the first to note this. Vacher de Lapouge also deplored the fact that in modern society artificial constraints interfered with the process of natural selection and thereby, he alleged, contributed to racial degeneration. Like the English eugenicist Francis Galton, he proposed to reverse this trend by preventing

[77] Ibid., p. 213.

[78] Letter from Paul Bourget to Charles Maurras, 19 August 1900, in Maurras, Enquête sur la monarchie (Paris, 1914), pp. 112-115; Célestin Bouglé, La Démocratie devant la science, 3d ed. (Paris, 1923; 1st ed., 1904), pp. 17, 30-36, 191; D. Parodi, Traditionalisme et Démocratie (Paris, 1924; 1st ed.,1909), pp. i, 11-12, 102.

[79] Parodi, Traditionalisme, p. 102; Lagorgette, Le rôle, p. 521; Charles Brouilhet, Le conflict des doctrines dans l'économie politique (Paris, 1910), p. 12; Jacques Novicow, La critique du darwinisme sociale (Paris, 1910), p. 50.

[80] Vacher de Lapouge (1854-1936) studied medicine and law at Poitiers and then went to Paris to study philology and science at the Ecole des hautes études and Museum of Natural History. Appointed assistant librarian at Montpellier in 1886, he was transferred to Rennes as chief librarian in 1893 and to Poitiers in 1900. For more biographical details see Günter Nagel, Georges Vacher de Lapouge (1854-1936), Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Sozialdarwinismus in Frankreich (Freiburg i. Br., 1975).

[81] Georges Vacher de Lapouge, L'Aryen, son rôle social, Cours libre de science politique professé a l'Université de Montpellier, 1889-1890 (Paris, 1899), p. 2.

[82] Vacher de Lapouge, Race et milieu social, Essai d'anthroposociologie (Paris, 1909), p. vii.

unfit human specimens from reproducing and encouraging the physically fit to do so.[83]

In keeping with one of the anthropological fashions of the day, Vacher de Lapouge considered skull size basic to racial classifications and therefore measured thousands of heads. His work contained tables designed to correlate skull measurement with such factors as social class, altitudes, and rural or urban places of residence. Individuals with relatively long or "docicocephalic" skulls were judged superior to those with round "brachycephalic" head shapes. On one occasion, his method of accumulating data on the contemporary French created a serious personal crisis, for in Rennes in 1896 he was accused but not convicted of molesting adolescent girls whom he had photographed seminude for the anthroposociological record.

Officials evaluating Vacher de Lapouge's professional performance for the Ministry of Public Instruction recorded that his controversial writing brought him renown abroad but not at home.[84] Similarly, contemporary reviewers noted that someone pushing a version of Aryan racial superiority, as Gobineau had done, was likely to be more popular in Germany, the United States, and England than in France.[85] Actually Vacher de Lapouge asserted that his findings on the superiority of Homo Europaeus in his book L'Aryen were not the equivalent of espousing Aryan racial superiority. He explained that he had chosen the inaccurate title Aryen for a book really about Homo Europaeus only to attract public attention.[86] However, his Homo Europaeus was blond, blue-eyed, tall, had a lower cephalic index that inferior brachycephalic Alpine types, and so resembled many descriptions of Aryans in contemporary polemics and pseudoscience. Sociologists of Emile Durkheim's school

[83] Vacher de Lapouge, Les Sélections sociales, Cours libre de science politique professé a l'Université de Montpellier, 1888-1889 (Paris, 1896), pp. vi, 198-443, 459-61, 475-87; Aryen, pp. 406, 504-8. Vacher de Lapouge wrote on Galton in "Revue critique--L'Hérédité," Revue d'anthropologie 15 (1885): 512-21.

[84] Archives Nationales F^{17} 22640 (Dossier personnel of Vacher de Lapouge in the files of the Ministry of Public Instruction). Nagel's study of Vacher de Lapouge's writings does not employ this file or a variety of critical French commentaries on his works.

[85] Ernest Seillière, "Une ecolé d'impérialisme mystique--Les plus récents théoriciens du pangermanisme," Revue des Deux Mondes 59 (1909): 196-228; Emile Houzé, L'Aryen et l'anthroposociologie, Etude critique (Brussels, 1906), p. 107.

[86] Vacher de Lapouge, Aryen, pp. 2, 23. He denied that he had been familiar with Gobineau before 1889, by which time he had developed his own racial theories.

deplored Vacher de Lapouge's methods and unpleasant conclusions.[87] So did Worms and other members of his International Institute of Sociology, even though not all participants in this group had discarded evolutionary biology as a foundation for sociology.[88] Various anthropologists also attacked the theories Vacher de Lapouge based on head measurements.[89] Léonce Manouvrier, professor at the independent School of Anthropology, spoke for many Paris anthropologists when he denounced anthroposociology in the Revue mensuelle de l'Ecole d'anthropologie.[90] The aristocratic pretensions of Darwinian anthroposociology aroused the wrath of the aging anthropologist Joseph-Pierre Durand de Gros. He noted that Lamarckism, the evolutionary theory preferred by most French anthropologists, was more egalitarian in its implications than Darwinism because the idea of the inheritance of acquired traits held out hope that one generation improved by educational advances could pass on its gains to the next.[91]

The education ministry's dossier on Vacher de Lapouge reveals that in his three university settings a difficult personality and unpopular ideas gained him many enemies. Education officials who regarded him as "un peu excentrique" or "un esprit bizarre" would not help him obtain the transfer from the provinces to Paris which he sought repeatedly,[92] In turn, Vacher de Lapouge presented himself as a victim of official scorn and unwarranted neglect. His suggestion that the slogan "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" be replaced by "Determinism, Inequality, Selection" was not calculated to win him republican support.[93] Vacher de Lapouge's racial

[87] Emile Durkheim, "La Sociologie en France au dix-neuvième siècle," Revue Bleue, 4th ser., 13 (1900): 647-52; Bouglé Démocratie, pp. 18, 37-41.

[88] René Worms, Les Principes biologiques de l'évolution sociale (Paris, 1910), pp. 96-97; Novicow, Critique, p. 50.

[89] Houzé, Aryen, is an anthropologist's refutation which also cites other anthropologists hostile to Vacher de Lapouge.

[90] L. Manouvrier, "L'indice céphalique et la pseudosociologie," Revue mensuelle de l'Ecole d'anthropologie de Paris 9 (1899): 233-50, 280-96.

[91] Joseph-Pierre Durand de Gros, Questions de philosophie morale et sociale (Paris, 1901), pp. 96-100.

[92] AN F[17] 22640.

[93] Vacher de Lapouge, "Préface," in Ernst Haeckel, Le Monisme, trans. Vacher de Lapouge (Paris, 1897), pp. 3-4; Race, pp. xix, xxiv, 289.

determinism conflicted with the optimistic views expressed by representatives of official science who believed that ameliorating the environment would improve the French race. Edmond Perrier spoke for many scholars when he contended in 1912 that in France race did not define the nation but was instead defined by the nation.[94]

During World War I French attacks on social Darwinism were numerous, for writers frequently portrayed the deriving of social lessons from Darwinism as a quintessentially German pursuit.[95] Before 1914 some French commentators had also indicted the English for creating a cruel social Darwinist philosophy, but in wartime such attacks on an ally ceased. France and England were depicted as nations wedded to democratic principles and moral idealism. By contrast the enemy mind was allegedly dominated by authoritarian, militarist, and racist credos reinforced by misappropriations of Darwinism. A French social Darwinist like Vacher de Lapouge was simply written off as a unique figure not well accepted by his compatriots.[96] As in previous decades, the Lamarckians Perrier and Lanessan repeated the familiar republican adage that "association for life" was a more important natural law than the "struggle for life."[97] The longstanding French belief that men could unite and use raison

[94] Eugénique 1 (1913): 45-46.

[95] Pierre Imbart de la Tour, "Le Pangermanisme et la philosophie de l'histoire," Revue des Deux Mondes, 6th ser., 30 (1915); 481-520; Paul Gaultier, "La Conception allemande de la guerre," Revue Bleue 96 (1916): 89; Félix Rocquain, "Le Pangermanisme," Revue hebdomadaire 26 (January 1917): 22-24.

[96] G. Poisson, "La Race germanique et sa prétendue supériorité," Revue anthropologique 26 (1916); 30 Jules Duhem, "Quelques apologies allemandes de la guerre," Grande Revue 87 (1915): 283; Frédéric Masson, "Gobineau," Revue hebdomadaire 24 (October 1915): 296.

[97] Lanessan, "La Morale du transformisme," Revue anthropologique 25 (1915): 186, Les Empires germaniques et la politique et Allemagne (Paris, 1915), pp. 141, 284, 299, "Biologie et politique," Revue hebdomadaire 27 (January 1918): 466.

to design a better society contradicted the social Darwinist assumption that people were simply prey to the operation of natural laws over which they had little or no control.

It would take the fall of the Third Republic to make official French culture more receptive to social Darwinist ideas. In 1943 Vacher de Lapouge's son Claude praised the Vichy Regime and the Nazis for reviving French racial thought and approving the creation of an Institute of Anthroposociology which would enable him and others to carry on his father's work.[98]

[98] Claude Vacher de Lapouge, "Préface," in Hubert Thomas-Chevallier, Le racisme français (Nancy, 1943), pp. ix-x. The short life of the Institute of Anthroposociology is discussed in Joseph Billig, L'Institut de l'étude des questions juives; officine francaise des autorités nazies en France (Paris, 1974), pp. 79-80.