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The Plight of the Able-bodied Poor and the Unemployed in Urban France, 1880–1914

During the last ten years, several historians of French social policy have taken issue with the old view that France lagged behind other European nations in social-welfare provision.[1] Clearly, during the two decades before the First World War, the Third Republic made substantial progress in the area of maternal and infant welfare and medical care. France also made progress in assisting the elderly. Between the 1890s and 1914, the ill indigent were given access at the local level to medical assistance (provision varied a great deal from region to region). The elderly indigent were given the same sort of access to a modest monthly assistance programme and injured workers benefited from an 1898 law providing for accident insurance. In addition, protective labour legislation for women was passed (this could be seen as a negative development, inimical to equal rights); working women gained access to optional maternity leave of up to four weeks, and programmes for pregnant women and large families were introduced at the national level.[2] The departments and several major cities, Paris in particular, went beyond this, funding municipal crèches and successful maternal-welfare programmes and centres. Paris's social service agency, for example, assisted almost half of all women who gave birth in the city in the 1890s.[3] In this regard, certainly Paris and possibly urban France as a whole was a pioneer in Europe. In light of this, the traditional view of France as a social-policy laggard has, with good reason, been revised.[4]

The success of French social reformers in the realm of infant and maternal welfare and in the provision of relief for the elderly and ill indigent is a key component of the history of French social policy in the early Third Republic.[5] In this article I will discuss

European History Quarterly Copyright © 2000 SAGE Publications, London, Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi, Vol. 30(2), 147–184.
[0265-6914(200004)30:2;147–184;011934]

another part of the story, with an eye towards adding a complementary perspective. France pioneered social-welfare programmes for some categories of the population, but was decades behind other European nations in other areas.

For instance, what support was available for the able-bodied poor and the unemployed? How did this compare to the resources available in, say, Germany and England? How were rural migrants to cities treated? If one turns one's focus to general public assistance for able-bodied adults (excluding pregnant women and mothers) and towards the provinces, then the picture changes. The image of France as a social-policy laggard is accurate when one considers its record of dealing with the unemployed, the labouring poor, and rural migrants to cities. The history of social policy is like a never-ending pendulum, and in late nineteenth-century France, it swung against the interests of these marginal groups.

Hand in hand with the tendency for France as a whole to spend more on public assistance as the century ran its course (through the local, optional poor-relief bureaus, the *bureaux de bienfaisance*) was a tendency to assist in a different and often more effective manner, and to limit the fruits of this expansion to certain segments of the population. Increased assistance for some was matched by an increasingly repressive attitude (and actions) towards others. This was particularly so in several large cities. In an important 1983 article, John Weiss admitted that he was at a loss to explain 'the fact that whereas the number of welfare bureaus increased by 45% from 1871 to 1912 [due to the creation of bureaus in medium-sized towns], the population receiving aid showed no permanent corresponding growth' (indeed, it declined).[6] Weiss was also puzzled as to why the four most urbanized departments (the Nord, Rhône, Bouches-du-Rhône, and Seine-Inférieure) saw their combined populations increase by 31% between 1872 and 1911 yet witnessed the number assisted by their welfare bureaus decrease by 20% (from 344,000 assisted to 275,000). The answer is that authorities in large cities were cracking down on the able-bodied poor, often confusing them with beggars and with the vagabonds who were roaming French roads and descending on the major cities.[7] The French became obsessed with discriminating between the 'pauvres de profession' and the worthy poor, and they embraced American and British-style 'scientific charity' in order to distribute relief

more effectively (and, often, more generously) to a smaller, more 'worthy' sector of the population.[8] The statistics in some of France's larger cities tell the story, statistics which are lost when subsumed into the national ones. Even if we allow for the harsh conditions of 1871 in some parts of the country, and an increase of 10–15% in relief demands that year (as was the case, for instance, in Lille and Lyon), the decrease in relief available in these cities between the early 1870s and the 1900s is striking, especially given the extent of rural migration. Throughout the period 1830–80, the welfare bureau of Lille had usually assisted one-quarter to one-third of the city's population; the figure of 16% in 1905 represents a significant change.[9] As we will see, Paris and the Seine eliminated 67,000 people from the relief rolls in the 1890s and 1900s.

Table 1
The Decline in Public Assistance (*bureaux de bienfaisance*) in Major Cities

	Population		No. assisted		% of pop.	
City	1871	1905	1871	1905	1871	1905
Bordeaux	194,055	257,471	15,821	18,573	8	7
Dijon	39,154	74,113	7,000	3,435	17	4
Le Havre	86,825	127,639	11,085	8,942	14	7
Lille	158,117	205,602	49,074	32,934	31	16
Limoges	55,134	83,569	11,000	6,808	20	8
Lyon	323,417	459,099	35,214	13,779	10	3
Nantes	118,517	133,000	11,200	9,008	9	6
Nice	52,377	134,232	10,423	7,111	20	5
Rennes	52,044	64,395	12,000	4,748	25	7
Tourcoing	43,322	79,243	12,080	6,615	33	8

Source: Conseil supérieur de l'assistance publique (hereafter CSAP) 110 (1911), 'Rapport de M. Drouineau sur l'assistance à domicile', 158.

To be sure, workers' salaries were on the rise during the last quarter of the century, possibly reducing the periodic need for recourse to public relief, but French cities were also being overwhelmed by migrants from the countryside. Just as more and more able-bodied adults who might need assistance were moving to and living in cities, the relief networks were being scaled back and/or reoriented. Typically, from the early nineteeth century until c. 1880, major French cities provided assistance to between 7% and 9% of their population each year. By the turn of the

century, the figure was closer to 5%, yet the general need for relief was just as urgent. Cities were removing single adults (of both sexes) from the rolls and giving a smaller number of people, especially mothers and their children, as well as the elderly, more assistance. In the absence of an English- or German-style local right to assistance, marginal adults were forced to eke out an 'economy of the makeshift' existence right into the twentieth century.

Nationwide, the number of people assisted by the welfare bureaus peaked in 1891 and then fell every year thereafter right up to the war (and beyond). In 1890, 4.6% of the population received outdoor relief; by 1903, only 3.7% did — this at the height of the rural exodus.[10] Three-hundred-thousand fewer people were assisted in 1903 than in 1890, in large part due to the elimination of thousands of people from the relief rolls in most major cities.[11] By 1910, only 10% of the assisted were able-bodied males under the age of sixty; at times in the early and mid-nineteenth century, that figure had been 23%. In some cities, the figure had approached 50%.[12] Communal subventions to welfare bureaus declined by over 20% between 1903 and 1907.[13]

France's failure to even begin to address the plight of the unemployed and the able-bodied adult poor is manifest. In 1907, when Alfred Picard published his survey of progress in French society since 1800, *Le bilan d'un siècle*, he chronicled the impressive efforts made on behalf of child and maternal welfare as well as for the elderly, but he admitted that little had been done for the able-bodied poor, the working poor, and unemployed adults. This category of poor, he argued, 'belongs more to the domain of [private] charity'.[14] To the extent that private charity was available, this was indeed the case, yet a quick glance at a comprehensive inventory of the nation's charities, *La France charitable et prévoyante* (1st edn 1896) reveals that the overwhelming majority of the nation's charities were geared towards orphans, poor mothers and their children, and the elderly.[15] For any given department, the same types of charity were predominant: *Sociétés de patronage*; orphanages; *salles d'asile*; *colonies agricoles* and *colonies de vacances* for poor children and wayward teens; refuges and charities of all sorts for the elderly and widows; and refuges for the infirm. Unemployed adults were left to fend for themselves.

To be sure, as Steven Beaudoin has recently argued in an important article, French philanthropy was vibrant in large urban

centres and it helped to fill in some of the gaps left by cities and the state, but this argument should not be extended to cover the unemployed and the able-bodied adult poor, who were generally neglected by both public and private charity.[16] Consider three departments containing large cities with well developed charitable institutions: the Rhône, the Bouches-du-Rhône, and the Isère.

The Rhône's charities devoted to women and children numbered in the hundreds, and, when listed in the inventory, take up seven pages. This is where the French state and private charities alike focused their energies. Charities which assisted, to varying degrees, working adults, take up only one page, and many of these focused on widows, impoverished domestic workers, and abandoned women. In total, 284 of the Rhône's listed charities (most of them in Lyon) were devoted solely to children, mothers, and young women. There were also some fifty hospitals, hospices, dispensaries, and refuges for the sick and non-able-bodied; twenty-eight *maisons de santé* and retirement homes and refuges (many reserved solely for women); and thirty-three other institutions geared towards the elderly. In sum, over 400 institutions served children, the elderly and the non-able-bodied, yet only seventy-one charities assisted adults.[17] A few dozen of the seventy-one charities that assisted adults reserved their relief for women, and twenty-three of these seventy-one were chapters of the Société de Saint-Vincent de Paul, where the staunchly irreligious would have had difficulty receiving relief. The overwhelming majority of the charities were Catholic, and many imposed moral litmus tests that needed to be passed before relief was given.[18]

The Rhône was not atypical; in the Bouches-du-Rhône, another department with a large city (Marseille) and a rich charitable tradition, the numbers are very similar. In 1896 there were some 230 charities devoted to women and children, and eighty charities devoted to assisting adults (although many were punitive institutions, like the *assistance par le travail* charities which paid 25 centimes per day for hard labour, and many were also concerned with reintegrating prisoners into society). Thirty-three of these eighty charities were Saint-Vincent de Paul chapters. In the Isère, there were 147 charities devoted to children and mothers (mostly in Grenoble) and only seventeen devoted to assisting able-bodied adults, several of which excluded men.[19]

Nationwide, charities devoted to the able-bodied and/or the unemployed were few and far between, and little public money, from any level of government, was directed towards them. As the fundamental statistical survey of assistance and charity of 1885 by the Ministry of the Interior's Director of Public Assistance, Henri Monod, makes clear, the overwhelming majority of public monies were given to charities that catered to children. In 1885, the departments granted only Fr 113,913 in subventions to private charities which catered to the adult able-bodied without children. Charities which served abandoned children and orphans received over Fr 780,000 (one-half the total subventions of Fr 1,435,024). Charities catering to women and children received over 80% of departmental subventions. The central state and most cities channelled the lion's share of their subventions, too, in this direction.[20] To be sure, as others have argued and as these statistics would suggest, France had an active proto-welfare state even before the First World War, but it, and its allied charities, was geared in one direction.

The most telling statistics are the following (Paris is excluded): in 1885, total municipal subventions in France to the primary public institution that catered (in a limited way) to the able-bodied and unemployed, the local *bureaux de bienfaisance*, were Fr 6 million. In contrast, the communes gave almost Fr 13 million to the hospitals, the departments granted almost Fr 20 million to programmes assisting the insane (a mandatory expense), over Fr 16 million to abandoned children (another mandatory expense), and another Fr 40 million to programmes assisting the non-able-bodied adult.[21] In Lyon, only 17% of municipal subventions to charities and *ad hoc* relief programmes in 1885 went to those that catered to the able-bodied adult of prime working age.[22] Almost half of the subventions went to those that served the elderly, and the rest went to charities that catered to women and their children. None of Grenoble's subventions were granted to charities that specifically aided the able-bodied without children. The same was true, Monod's survey reveals, for dozens of other cities. Clearly, to the administrators of both private charity and public assistance, the able-bodied poor and the unemployed without children were the least worthy categories. Accordingly, no commune or department was required by law to assist them. Not until October 1917 did the state compel the departments to create job-placement offices, but

once this was done, the state could not compel the offices to act. In the aftermath of the First World War, the state encouraged the communes to set up unemployment funds, but most chose not to do so. No legal entitlement for the unemployed was created before the 1950s.[23]

Indeed, many French observers looked across the Channel with scepticism in 1911, when the British passed an unemployment insurance law; there was very little support for the notion of state unemployment insurance in France, which appeared only in 1958. In a nation plagued by low population growth and labour shortage, few supported the notion that labour power might be removed, even temporarily, from the market at the expense of the state or employers. Many needy single men and women were neglected by public welfare authorities and by private charities. Their only recourse was to private charity, and, failing that, vagabondage, begging, and crime.[24] As Christophe Guitton argues, prior to the First World War, the French could not disentangle unemployment from penal policy;[25] the unemployed were regularly lumped together with vagabonds and beggars in discussions of the issue, revealing the persistence of *ancien regime* attitudes towards the problem. This is perhaps due to the fact that *ancien regime* conditions persisted in much of rural France.

There were an estimated 75,000 to 200,000 vagabonds roaming the roads of France in the early and mid-nineteenth century. There were an average of 2910 convictions each year for vagrancy and begging in 1826–30 yet 10,429 in 1876–80 and 19,723 (and over 51,000 arrests) in the early 1890s.[26] By the 1890s, the problem had worsened: now there were an estimated 400,000 to 500,000 vagabonds.[27] Guy Haudebourg estimates that 9% of Bretons were beggars. One-third to one-half of all arrests in Paris in the 1880s were for vagabondage. The French population was now more mobile than ever before, and this was part of the problem, for many arrested ‘vagabonds’ were in fact destitute rural migrants and the unemployed.[28] The Conseil supérieur de l’assistance publique (CSAP) noted in 1899 that the ‘involuntarily unemployed’ who took to the road in search of work were often arrested for vagabondage.[29] Nationwide, over three million people left agriculture between 1876 and 1911 (in contrast, only 790,000 had left the countryside between 1831 and 1851, and 1,715,000 had left during the thirty-year period

1851–81).[30] The rural exodus was at the root of the increase in vagabondage, yet public authorities showed little sympathy, choosing instead to scale back urban relief systems in the 1890s and to demonize the vagabond and the beggar, often confusing him or her with the unemployed.

If the period 1890–1914 is known as one of social reform, it should also be viewed as one of the more repressive in the history of modern France. This period witnessed the deportation of thousands of vagabonds and beggars to colonial *bagnes* (5000 deportations per year during the 1890s and over 9900 in 1902 alone); the revival of prisons designed to combat vagrancy and begging (*dépôts de mendicité*); the revival of punitive, forced work-relief programmes for arrested beggars and vagabonds; the scaling back of outdoor relief for the able-bodied poor; and the relative neglect of the unemployed.[31] For every Léon Bourgeois, a proponent of public assistance, there was a Léon Lefébure, an arch-opponent of public assistance, of 'legal charity'. This important counter-current, which was flourishing at the same time that republican *solidarisme* was developing into a coherent doctrine, deserves to be considered as a serious counterweight, or at least backdrop, to the social-reform movement of the time, for it set limits on what was possible.

I

As Louis Rivière wrote in the *Revue philanthropique* in 1911,

> Of all the problems raised by the goal of the rational organization of public assistance, the problem of relief for the able-bodied is perhaps the most difficult to resolve. In including this category of indigents in [the regime of] *secours obligatoires*, the Committee of Mendicity named by the Constituent Assembly compromised its work and rendered impossible the adoption of other reforms it had outlined. Thus the Conseil supérieur de l'assistance publique, in adopting an 1888 resolution concerning *secours obligatoires* [mandatory public relief programmes], wisely limited eligibility to 'those who are, temporarily or permanently, physically incapable of providing for life's necessities'. Since then, [responsibility for assisting] the involuntarily unemployed has fallen to *assistance facultative* [optional, municipal] and above all to private charity.[32]

The problem of what to do with the able-bodied poor and with the unemployed was perhaps the most vexing one for republicans, who tended to oppose class-specific social legis-

lation for fear of creating an outcast class treated differently from the general population.[33] The 'worthy' poor, on the other hand, presented fewer problems, and France's first successful social programmes targeted them (the ill indigent, 1893; the elderly indigent, 1905; pregnant women, 1904, 1913). Whereas England passed an unemployment insurance bill in 1911 (which was extended in 1920 and again in the 1930s) and Germany introduced its programme in 1927, the French remained opposed to providing a legal commitment to the unemployed.

Indeed, in the three decades before the war, relief dispensed to able-bodied adults by the local welfare bureaus (*bureaux de bienfaisance*) which existed in 60% of French communes was increasingly equated with the alms given indiscriminately to beggars in the street.[34] The two-time prime minister, Charles Dupuy, argued, in an 1888 report that he presented to both the Conseil supérieur de l'assistance publique and to the National Assembly, that there was a clear link between the expansion of the welfare bureaus throughout the century and the rise in vagabondage and mendicity (in 1833 there were only 6275 bureaus — which assisted 695,932 people — fifty years later there were 14,500 bureaus and 1.4 million people were assisted).[35] The welfare bureaus had come to symbolize blindly distributed charity, which, it was claimed, enabled professional beggars and vagabonds to survive. Several critics of public assistance, such as Marcel Lecoq, had been arguing since the 1880s that the *bureaux de bienfaisance* and other forms of public assistance should be abolished.[36] This attitude became widespread, prompting local poor-relief officials in several major cities to scale back their commitment to the able-bodied. As Dupuy argued in 1888, the Revolution had got it right: 'The more generous assistance became, the more rigorous were the laws of repression.'[37] Dupuy noted in a parliamentary report on vagabondage ten years later: 'The Constituent Assembly understood the necessity of "balancing assistance with repression." The more real needs were addressed, the more proper it was to demask and to punish idleness, vice, and fake misery.'[38]

For every step the French took forward at this time — and significant progress was indeed made on several fronts — it would seem that they felt compelled to justify it by taking another step back. There was no clear line of progress pointing towards the welfare state; reformers had to battle against a strong current

of opposition, which sometimes prevailed. From Henri Monod to Paul Strauss to Camille Ferdinand-Dreyfus, most of France's most important social reformers shared the view that assistance must be balanced with repression. This theme is a leitmotif in the social-policy debates of the era, and its roots extend deep into France's past. Dozens of articles and books from this period contain the phrase 'assistance and repression'; the two advanced side by side. As Woloch has shown, this dualistic approach dates back at least to the Revolution, when the Jacobins unveiled plans to both assist the needy in the most generous fashion and to repress the idle in the most ruthless way.[39]

In general, larger French cities now went out of their way to make migrants feel unwelcome, they encouraged migrants to return to their home towns, or they simply expelled them. Local elites cleared surplus hands from saturated labour markets. In several cities, a new emphasis on medicalization and on pronatalist programmes tended to squeeze the labouring (and unemployed) poor off the relief rolls. Public assistance came to be seen as a throwback to the *ancien regime*; it was deemed too 'unscientific,' too closely associated with the Church's (supposed) practice of blindly distributing alms, too wasteful and ineffective. Consider the case of Le Havre and several other cities.

II

In 1888, 7.45% (8328 people) of Le Havre's population was assisted by the *bureau de bienfaisance*, yet only families with four children or more were now eligible for assistance. Such severe restrictions effectively shut the able-bodied single-adult population out, not to mention those families with fewer than four children.[40] What were these people to do? According to Dr Joseph Gibert of the Le Havre hospitals, they 'address themselves to well-off families, particularly, those [families] with a long history of charitable practice'. As Le Havre put the principles of 'scientific charity' into practice, the welfare bureau was 'rationalized', that is to say, its clientele was scaled back.[41] Hand in hand with this retrenchment went the city's new work-relief programme, launched by the Société centrale havraise de secours, with municipal support. Established in 1890, the

Société's goal, in Mayor Duplat's words, was 'to reduce genuine misery, eliminate the parasite, attack mendicity, and find work for those who do not have it'. The founders of the Société viewed it as 'a rational public charity, scientific in a way'.[42] The Société blamed the rise in mendicity in France on the public assistance network and put the blame for poverty squarely on the shoulders of the poor themselves. One resident of Le Havre admitted that the Société performed a useful symbolic function: 'In a city like ours, where the supply of work is not constant, we must ensure that some work, however lowly, is available, so that we may shut up the beggars' ('pour fermer la bouche aux mendiants').[43] The Société hoped to rid the city of all excess foreign labour. It offered the following explanation of the rise of mendicity in the city, even if it showed no sympathy whatsoever with the increasing numbers of unemployed:

> The problem is rendered particularly difficult in Le Havre, by the fact that the city enjoyed a remarkable prosperity for a certain period of time. During this time, public charity was ample and generous in all its forms. Many people came here hoping to find an easy and profitable job, sure that they could always find ample relief.[44]

Workers, the Société noted, had come to the city to work on public works projects or to seek employment, but once work dried up and the labour market became saturated late in the century, there was nothing left for many of them. Too many workers became accustomed to the help of the welfare bureau; now it was time to send a clear message to the city's surplus labour force: it was no longer needed.[45]

The story was similar in Marseille, where the *bureau de bienfaisance* still assisted able-bodied unemployed adults in the 1890s, but the city had recently cracked down on mendicity, established a harsh new work-relief programme, and redirected one-half of the welfare bureau's annual expenses toward medical assistance as opposed to pecuniary relief. Significantly, during the 1890s, the bureau was no longer aiding foreign citizens (especially Italians), as had been common practice throughout the century; only French citizens and Marseille residents, the bureau noted, were now eligible.[46] Earlier in the century, foreigners had been regularly assisted by both the hospitals and the welfare bureau.[47] Indeed, they had provided the majority of the clientele. Marseille's Œuvre de l'assistance par le travail was

founded by Eugène Rostand, an arch-enemy of public social reform and author of several diatribes against public assistance, including his 1892 *L'action sociale par l'initiative privée* (*Social Reform through Private Initiative*).[48] But even Marseille's socialist mayor could agree with Rostand on the abuses rampant in public assistance. As Mayor Flaissères asked in 1892: 'Is it really the unfortunates who receive [assistance]? It goes to those who need it least.'[49]

In 1900, of all the heavily industrialized departments, only the Nord's welfare bureaus assisted as many people as it had earlier in the century, but here, too, the resources had been shifted: in 1900, 36,871 able-bodied males, 39,764 able-bodied females, 117,430 children, 7413 *infirmes*, and 26,326 *vieillards* (over sixty years of age) were assisted. As in the Seine, the Nord's welfare bureaus were now functioning primarily as child-welfare centres, when earlier in the century they had paid equal attention to unemployed workers. A more representative department was the Marne, where only 1930 of the 18,650 assisted were able-bodied males, 5300 were female, and the rest (two-thirds) were children and *vieillards*. Another typical example is the Gironde, where in 1900 2584 able-bodied males, 4454 able-bodied females, 10,107 children, 1648 male *vieillards*, 3522 female *vieillards* and 1965 *infirmes* were assisted by the welfare bureaus.[50]

In Lyon, an overpopulated labour market spelled the end of the city's relatively generous relief schemes for the unemployed.[51] In the opinion of the Lyonnais newspaper, *Le salut public*, 'the bureaux de bienfaisance only encourage mendicity'; there was no reason for them to continue operating. In March 1880, the municipal council advised the *bureau de bienfaisance* to restrict relief to the aged, infirm, sick, and *familles nombreuses*.[52] In 1881 the welfare bureau introduced inspectors to root out the 'pauvres de profession'. Over 8000 people were removed from the relief rolls.[53] The *bureau de bienfaisance* had served 20,000 to 35,000 people between 1830 and 1870 (most of them unemployed workers), and 15,000 to 28,000 during the 1880s. In 1880 the long-standing rule stipulating that one year's residency was required in order to receive aid from Lyon's *bureau de bienfaisance* was strictly enforced for the first time, and a new rule requiring foreigners to prove five years' residency in Lyon was also introduced. Foreign labour was no longer welcome. Stricter eligibility rules introduced in 1891 reduced the *bureau de bien-*

faisance's clientele from 27,325 that year to 10,793 in 1892.[54] By 1899, the welfare bureau assisted only two able-bodied men and seven able-bodied women (excluding pregnant women). No able-bodied adults under the age of sixty-three were aided after 1901. The goal, the bureau proudly announced in its annual reports, was to assist fewer people in general and to provide more women, children, and elderly infirm with meaningful assistance.

Indeed, this was done. But all of this reform occurred in an economically depressed department whose population had doubled in the three previous decades, chiefly as a result of the rural exodus.[55] As in Le Havre and Paris, an overpopulated labour market gave rise to a backlash against the idea that the able-bodied ought to be assisted at all. Civic elites attempted to clear the city of excess labour and to target a smaller portion of the population. Relief for migrants to Lyon was now a virtual impossibility. The mayor instructed his assistants: 'In order to ensure that the unemployed who live in the region, attracted by the prospect of receiving relief in Lyon, do not become a burden on the city, I ask that you do give relief only to those . . . who meet the official residency requirement.' Parisians applauded this crackdown in Lyon, holding it up as an example for the whole nation to follow.[56]

The backlash against outdoor relief also took place in Nancy, a pioneer in the (punitive) work-relief movement (*assistance par le travail*). The Nancy reforms were inspired by the Elberfeld system in Germany, where hundreds of visitors regularly visited the poor and determined who the 'truly deserving' were. The Nancy welfare bureau's director also cited the London-based Charity Organisation Society but above all American 'scientific charity' was the model held in esteem: 'le bureau de bienfaisance a fait l'essai de la méthode américaine'. All the city's charities now submitted lists of their relief recipients to the welfare bureau so as to avoid double billing.[57] In 1894, the welfare bureau was thoroughly reformed. Salaried inspectors replaced volunteers. A more detailed set of criteria for eligibility was introduced. The goal was to reduce the arbitrariness of the system, and to cut costs. As in Lyon, relief distribution was bureaucratized and professionalized: 'it cannot be left to the whims or . . . to the good faith of volunteer inspectors', declared the Nancy welfare bureau. The welfare bureau targeted the worthy poor, eliminating thousands from the relief rolls (from 11,937 assisted in

1892 to 7492 assisted in 1900, despite an increase in Nancy's population of over 14,000 people during this period). The bureau's directorship declared in a pamplet it issued attacking the very nature of the *bureaux de bienfaisance*, that bienfaisance 'must become rational and methodic'. As in Paris, Lyon, and at least a dozen other large cities, the goal was to concentrate on mothers and children, to discourage mendicity, and to weed the 'pauvres de profession', the able-bodied, and the unemployed off the rolls (these categories were often confused).

The backlash is also evident in Nice. The city adopted a strict ten years' residency requirement for relief applications in 1885. Whereas 10,850 people were aided by the welfare bureau in 1882, only 3120 were aided six years later. In March 1886, the Nice *bureau de bienfaisance* determined to refuse 'requests for relief from able-bodied indigents without work, regardless of the reasons which bring them to the bureau to seek aid, with the exception of the unemployed widowed having more than four children and residing in this city'.[58] *Filles-mères* were also assisted. Nice, like the majority of large French cities, was now favouring indigent women and their children over men. And the city now favoured work-relief over assistance. In the words of the director of the new work-relief programme, 'It is not an *œuvre d'assistance* which will clear a city [of vagabonds and beggars], it is the creation of a *dépôt de mendicité*, the necessary corollary of *assistance par le travail.*'[59]After 1886, men were effectively ruled ineligible for assistance in Nice. This new harsh policy was designed to keep male migrants away, but by the mid-1890s the city gave in and began to aid over 10,000 people, including men, once again.[60] Nice was simply swamped with those being pushed from rural destitution, and in the name of public order municipal authorities decided to return relief spending to the early 1880s level. But other cities, like Nantes, remained firm and strictly enforced new, longer residency requirements (in the case of Nantes, two years).[61] Unlike Nantes, Nice did not have an operating *dépôt de mendicité* (the Niçois built theirs only in 1908). In general, it would seem, those cities which could imprison beggars and vagrants in a nearby depot took harsher measures against the poor.

On the eve of the First World War, Montpellier, a southern city with a rich charitable heritage, had only one service for able-bodied adults: the (private) Bourse du travail ran a placement

service, independent of the city. Montpellier's charities were overwhelmingly devoted to the assistance of children and pregnant women. The Bourse received no grant from the city, and the city had reoriented its welfare bureau towards women, children and the elderly. The welfare bureau assisted the elderly (aged sixty and above), families with three children, widows and abandoned wives, *filles-mères*, and work-accident victims. No able-bodied male adults whatsoever were assisted.[62] To do so would invite the region's impoverished wine workers to settle in the city.

In Reims, as of the early 1880s, all relief applicants required a 'certificat du patron', not unlike the worker's *livret*, detailing wage and work information. The welfare bureau now required that its administrators must know relief recipients personally; this effectively cut migrants off the rolls. Door-to-door sweeps of the indigent population were carried out. Anyone found to be begging (or suspected of it) was immediately removed from the rolls. All relief recipients able to work were put to work cleaning the streets for 90 centimes a day.[63] For able-bodied adults, the receipt of public assistance was increasingly viewed as a badge of shame, and those who dispensed it seemed to go to extraordinary lengths to provide it on the most humiliating of terms.

III

Parisian reforms were the most important, given the number of people involved and the influence the capital had over the nation. As Jeanne Gaillard has shown, the concern to shut off the tap of provincial immigration to Paris was evident as early as the 1850s.[64] Since 1860, foreign citizens had needed ten years' residency in Paris for eligibility for *assistance à domicile* (outdoor relief); provincials needed one full year. These rules were strictly enforced. From the 1860s, Parisian welfare bureaus no longer concerned themselves with unemployed workers, and the 1860 regulations, in force until 1895, had no provision for relief for the unemployed.[65] In this type of atmosphere, begging and vagrancy were inevitable. Still, by 1872, only 23% of those assisted by Paris's welfare bureaus had been born in Paris.[66] This attests to the difficulties that provincials had in integrating themselves into

the urban economy, even after several years of residency in the city.

In 1861, the Seine's welfare bureaus assisted 121,826 people. Paris alone assisted 90,827.[67] Due to the rural exodus and the growth of the city's floating population, by 1886 the Seine was assisting 133,649 people. Several prominent social-policy observers, like Léon Lefébure, began to question why public assistance spending was on the rise (from a budget of Fr 27 million in 1870 to Fr 41 million in 1889); they argued it was a sign that the 'pauvres de profession' were abusing the system. There was too much double billing, too many fake poor.[68] Several reports were presented to the Paris municipal council in the 1880s and 1890s which made this argument. Assistance Publique (AP), the city's social service administration, was under attack from within and without, from the Ministry of the Interior, the city council, the general council, the press, and from AP itself.

This backlash against outdoor relief occurred despite the fact that, given rapid population growth, the percentage of the population assisted remained more or less stable (from 5.32% in 1870 to 5.91% in 1889).[69] What changed was the attitudes of the city's elites and the administrators of AP. The belief that Paris's relief system was thoroughly inefficient and that it only served to reproduce the pauper population became commonplace. In the period 1885–95, Parisians considered a wide array of reform proposals to streamline and rationalize the *bureaux de bienfaisance*.[70]

Reform began in 1886. A new regulation of that year said nothing at all about the unemployed. It reserved regular assistance for the chronically ill, the infirm, *vieillards* aged over seventy and orphans aged under thirteen. Only French nationals could receive this type of assistance.[71] Temporary assistance was possible for those temporarily incapacitated: pregnant women, the injured, and the ill.[72] The crackdown began in May 1886 and continued for a decade, at precisely the peak of the national obsession with vagabondage and mendicity. That year, 12,000 people were removed from the Parisian relief rolls.[73]

Between 1876 and 1881, 60,000 people had come annually to Paris; here was a sure way of stemming this tide, the city believed. More than 2000 foreigners were removed from the Parisian relief rolls following the 1886 reforms. In 1883, 3187 non-citizens were given assistance; in 1890, only 584 — the

oldest and most infirm — were assisted.[74] These reforms, however, were only the tip of the iceberg. There still prevailed the assumption that if more people were being assisted in the 1880s and in the early 1890s than in the 1870s, then there must be something inherently wrong with the relief system.[75]

This sentiment was encapsulated in two remarkable reports by Henri Fleury-Ravarin. He hailed from the Rhône and was familiar with and sympathetic to the Lyon reforms of 1891.[76] In his 300-page report to the Conseil supérieur de l'assistance publique in 1892, Fleury-Ravarin presented a case for the reform of Paris's outdoor relief system.[77] The problem was conceived of in terms of beggars and vagabonds, not as a result of a socio-economic crisis. The rural exodus was not a factor he considered. Fleury-Ravarin even saluted the great Naville and his 1829 bible, *De la charité légale*, an attack on public assistance, or 'legal charity'.[78] Citing de Watteville's famous dictum written in the 1850s (which itself was cited time and again at this time by critics of public assistance for the able-bodied), Fleury-Ravarin warned: 'In the sixty years that public outdoor relief has operated, no one has ever seen a single indigent pulled from misery and [rendered] capable of meeting his needs thanks to this type of charity. On the contrary, [public assistance] often turns pauperism into a hereditary state.' Fleury-Ravarin continued in his own words:

> The experience of all peoples proves that official assistance is incapable of resolving the problem of . . . the able-bodied indigent . . . Far from fighting misery, it creates and accentuates it . . . Relief necessarily takes the form of alms . . . Whatever means the collectivity takes to effectively assist indigents in this manner, will end in failure. It seems therefore that [cities] would do better to renounce it [assistance for the able-bodied]. Already, in several English and American cities, they have ventured along the path of suppressing or at least reducing relief for the able-bodied indigent and everywhere these efforts have brought the most satisfactory of results. It is in this direction, in our view, that we should reorient our service . . . The sums which are spent on ineffective relief for the able-bodied indigent could be redirected towards those who are incapable of all work. With more abundant resources at our disposal, we could then assist more effectively those who are the true clients of public assistance: the elderly and the infirm.[79]

A debate ensued at Assistance Publique and at the municipal council regarding whether or not the able-bodied should be eligible for any kind of assistance at all. The opponents of assisting the able-bodied quoted Henri Monod's address to the 1889

International Congress on Public Assistance and Private Charity, in which he argued that assistance was owed to 'those who, temporarily or definitively, find themselves physically incapable of providing for life's necessities'[80] (the Congress adopted the resolution). Fleury-Ravarin's guiding principle was a common one: 'Le secours doit être *rare*, c'est-à-dire limité au plus petit nombre d'individus possible.'[81] The one year's residency requirement for relief was not sufficient to Fleury-Ravarin and to many others. It dated back to the Revolution; now was time to change it to two years (in the end it was changed to three).[82] Fleury-Ravarin's report was followed the next year by Raoul Bompard's important report to the municipal council of Paris.[83] He seconded Fleury-Ravarin's proposals, arguing that there were far too many people receiving assistance.[84] Two years later, Bompard and Fleury-Ravarin's criticisms were answered.

The landmark 1895 Assistance Publique regulation stated that henceforth the *bureaux de bienfaisance* could assist only 'persons of French nationality domiciled in Paris for at least three years, incapable as a result of their age or invalidity of providing for their needs through work; as well as widowed, separated, divorced or abandoned women having exceptional family responsibilities and who meet the aforementioned nationality and residency requirements'.[85] Article 23 still allowed for the able-bodied to be assisted in exceptional cases. Three years' residency was now required for permanent (regular) relief for French citizens; foreigners remained ineligible.

In many ways, the 1895 reform was designed to reduce the availablity of relief to provincials. As Raoul Bompard reported to the municipal council of Paris in 1894, the year before the city's relief system was overhauled,

> the poor come from all parts of France, scarcely assisted or not assisted at all in their hometowns, and so they come towards our city attracted by the profusion — even the largesse — of public and private relief. 75.58% of the indigents assisted in Paris are from the provinces, and 1.69% from abroad. If it is reasonable that our city come to the aid of the elderly and the infirm who by virtue of their age have become incapacitated, and who have worked [in the city] and contributed to its prosperity, what of the ever-growing numbers of migrants who [come here to] assault our budget, sometimes with the complicity of municipalities which have provided them with travel money ['secours de route']?[86]

In order to prevent these people from receiving assistance, the principles of 'scientific charity', a rigorous system of screening relief applicants predicated on the assumption that most applicants were fraudulent, was implemented. More visitors were introduced to sweep through the homes of the poor. In 1899, 273,494 visits were made. Thirty AP officials visited an average of thirty-one homes per day (for a daily total of 900 homes) in order to weed out the unworthy and the ineligible. The welfare bureaus were geared towards the elderly, the infirm, widows, abandoned wives, and large families.[87] The 1895 decree did have the advantage of spreading AP's budget around the *arrondissements* in a more equitable manner.[88] But resources were also being shifted from the marginal, able-bodied population to the elderly, mothers, and children. It was not simply the cheats who were removed from the relief rolls.

By 1910, the cutbacks were well underway; Paris and the Seine had managed to remove 67,000 people from the relief rolls.[89] By the time the war broke out, Paris's twenty *arrondissements* served only 54,595 through their welfare bureaus.[90] Only 27,692 people were assisted by the Seine's welfare bureaus (outside of Paris), as they turned their attention away from the 'dangerous classes' to the 'worthy poor'. Of these 27,692, only 3844 were able-bodied males. Another 5394 were able-bodied females. Over 10,400 children, 2000 infirm, and 6900 *vieillards* were also assisted.[91]

The primary concern of local and national politicians was now with maternal and infant welfare, and it was here that social reformers' energies were directed.[92] As William Cohen suggests, a strong argument could be made that (limited) resources were now being spent in a wiser, more concentrated, and effective manner.[93] Medical and material assistance for mothers and children certainly had a positive impact on the infant mortality rate (especially between the wars); an ineffective drip-dole for the unemployed probably did not save many lives. In any case, the contrast with the bureaus' role during the first half of the century, when they were used by civic elites to preserve social order, assisting the thousands of migrants who were entering the city each year, is marked.[94] And this shift in attitudes and practice can help us to understand why at this time the intellectual and political climate in France was not conducive towards unemployment relief or insurance.

IV

There was a distinct current of thought which militated against traditional public assistance, and which underlay the reforms discussed above, although in a sense it simply sought to reinvent the wheel: the 'scientific charity' movement, an import from England, the United States, and Germany. The man who brought scientific charity to France was Léon Lefébure, joined in his mission by Louis Rivière, and the administrators of the *bureaux de bienfaisance* of Lyon, Nancy, and Paris. Some referred to Lefébure, the founder of the Paris-based Office central des institutions charitables (1890) as 'our Minister of Charity'.[95] Lefébure, a Catholic businessman, began his public career as a deputy for Alsace, then for Paris. (He can be seen as the antithesis of Henri Monod, the Protestant solidarist and advocate of state welfare programmes.) Next he moved on to become the under-secretary of the Ministry of Finance and an administrator for a large railroad company. Lefébure claimed that the Office central was

> born of the realization of . . . the contrast between the immensity of the efforts taken to relieve misery and the insignificant results achieved. Charitable works have multiplied enviously during the last several years; charitable donations to both public and private assistance keep increasing and increasing. And yet, we would do well to ask if misery has really decreased at all.[96]

In an 1893 address to the annual meeting of the Office central des institutions charitables (the name of the Office central underwent several mutations), Lefébure noted:

> You know of the enormous budget of Assistance Publique — close to 50 million francs . . .; private charities have [also] multiplied . . . and yet the poor continue to come at us from all sides. One must choose between two conclusions which can be drawn from these facts: either poverty has increased in extraordinary proportions, or there is a serious defect in the organization of [public and private] charity.[97]

This was precisely the spirit which underlay the Paris, Nancy, Le Havre, and Lille reforms.

Lefébure's Office central opened chapters in provincial cities throughout the decade (Bordeaux's opened in 1892, Lyon's opened in 1895). The office, which was unabashedly modelled after similar institutions in London and New York, and which

was in constant contact with charity experts there, drew up model questionnaires for private charities to use in order to screen applicants. It also set up central *fiches*, or file systems, in order to help charitable organizations prevent double-billing. Relief recipients were registered and given a sort of charitable *livret*, in which was recorded the amount of relief received and the source. The Office central was one of the principal defenders of private charity in the country, if not the main champion. It conducted an enormous, nationwide inventory of French charities in order to drive home Lefébure's point: that the nation's charitable effort was enormous, and only needed to be coordinated. In publishing this inventory of charities, *La France charitable et prévoyante* (1st edn, 1896, 3 vols), Lefébure seemed to suggest that there was no need for state-run programmes, nor, for that matter, for the foundation of more charities. Many people agreed with this line of reasoning.

To the proponents of scientific charity and *assistance par le travail*, their approach was the great panacea, the solution to an age-old riddle: 'The experience of several centuries has today enabled us to discover the reasons why assistance so often fails in its goal.'[98] To Maurice Jourdan, *assistance par le travail* was the answer — the only answer — to the problem of vagabondage and mendicity. Increasingly, to many Frenchmen public assistance for the able-bodied was seen as yesterday's solution. Pecuniary assistance was doubly troublesome. To avoid perpetuating 'rentiers de l'assistance', Jourdan argued, only assistance in kind, but preferably work-relief, administered according to the principles of scientific charity, should be offered.[99] The *bureaux de bienfaisance* were attacked by Jourdan and his allies, and we have seen some of the results.

In short, by the end of the nineteenth century, many Frenchmen had become tired of the persistence of poverty, vagrancy, and mendicity in light of the nation's growing wealth and in light of its charitable effort. Many philanthropists and social critics lost patience with the able-bodied poor, and instead of advocating greater state involvement to help them, they pointed their fingers at an inefficient relief system and turned to the panacea of scientific charity. The feeling became widespread that enough was in fact being spent to solve the social question, only it was being spent and distributed unwisely, to the undeserving poor.[100] To the proponents of scientific charity, there was an

indisputable 'discrepancy between the resources devoted to charity and the results achieved'.[101] As J. de Pulligny of the new Office du travail (the government agency that one would expect to be the most aware of structural unemployment) noted in 1896, 'Public and private charity possess enormous resources, most of which serve to maintain the voluntarily unemployed.'[102] As the work of Christian Topalov makes clear, in their concern for and awareness of structural unemployment, not to mention their actions on behalf of the unemployed, the French were considerably behind the British and even behind several American states.[103]

The Office central's goal of preventing double billing, did, in fact, work wonders in many smaller cities. But the problem of vagabondage and mendicity, not to mention extreme urban poverty, did not simply go away. Nonetheless, the Office central was a success in that many municipal authorities welcomed it and availed themselves of its services. In Paris, for instance, in the period 1890–7, more than 100,000 demands were verified by the Office central. In the period 1890–1900, the Office also conducted 279,000 visits and/or investigations.[104] The Paris municipal council recognized the Office as an *établissement d'utilité public* in 1896 and the Académie des sciences morales et politiques conferred upon it one of its most prestigious prizes in 1897.[105] The assumption under which the Office ran, that abuse was rampant in public-assistance institutions like the *bureaux de bienfaisance*, was challenged by very few and embraced by most during the 1890s (even by renowned reformers like Paul Strauss), as large cities set out to scale back their public-assistance systems.[106]

For the able-bodied, cities like Paris increasingly offered but two choices: no relief or work-relief. The Paris Office central set up a work-relief programme in Auteuil and another one operated in Nanterre. During the last three decades of the century, several French cities engaged in expulsion schemes to clear the streets of beggars and the casual labouring population.[107] The Office central des institutions de bienfaisance helped coordinate these deals with railway companies in several cities in order to effect the 'repatriation' of the nation's floating urban population. In 1889, for instance, Marseille 'repatriated' 243 persons, of both French and Italian origin. Bordeaux and Versailles were the two cities most committed to repatriating French provincials, usually

males.[108] In its first decade of operation, the Paris Office central repatriated 13,644 persons; Marseille's Office repatriated 1272.[109] The Paris municipal council enthusiastically supported the repatriation of provincials, and also supported an organization that sent the unemployed able-bodied to the colonies.[110] In Lille, the municipal council gave similar support to the Office central lillois des Institutions sociales et charitables, which was involved in repatriating migrants.[111]

In 1890, as the nationwide crackdown on outdoor relief got underway, there were scarcely five work-relief programmes in France. By 1901, there were sixty, twenty-seven of them in Paris, almost all of them created in the previous ten years, many under the aegis of the Office central. By 1910, there were one hundred programmes, but between them they spent less than one million francs — only a little more than the annual budget of the (much streamlined) welfare bureau of one large city, Lyon.[112] On the whole, they should not be seen as an effective alternative to unemployment insurance or even to traditional public assistance. The poor were usually put to work at menial jobs, often on public display.[113] This must have served as a disincentive for prospective applicants. *Assistance par le travail* centres like Nanterre, on the outskirts of Paris, paid only Fr 10 to Fr 30 per month, whereas an unskilled labourer could earn Fr 60 to Fr 100 per month.[114]

How did workers feel about *assistance par le travail*? The archives are for the most part silent on this score, and my evidence is thin, but many of the nation's *bourses du travail* fought against these projects, for they saw them as humiliating and oppressive and they feared the competition of cheap labour. Typical in their opposition were the *bourses* of Lille — 'your programme does not create consumers' — and Lyon — 'work-relief is alms which demeans workers under the pretext of helping them'.[115] Unemployed steel and lace workers in Saint-Chamond were put to work breaking stones for local construction companies. In Pithiviers, a town of 5000 in the Loiret, the elderly were put to work breaking stones for 40 to 60 centimes per day. These two typical cases were precisely what the *bourses du travail* deplored.[116]

On the whole, it is important not to view the *assistance par le travail* movement as a constructive step towards dealing with unemployment. There were indeed some members of this movement who saw it as a useful tool in the fight against

unemployment and a means to reintegrate outsiders into society. But for the most part they were throwbacks to the old *ateliers de travail*, or temporary work projects dating back to the *ancien regime*. And these programmes were more often than not founded by the same men who were involved in the national crackdown on vagabondage and mendicity, like Rivière, Leféubre, and Théodore Homberg. Work-relief programmes were usually part and parcel of a given department's fight against vagrancy and they were often discussed in tandem with this problem. As the Société des agriculteurs de France noted, the Meurthe-et-Moselle, on the Eastern frontier, 'is constantly invaded by nomads coming from Germany and Luxembourg . . . This department has a *dépôt de mendicité* at Faux; an *assistance par le travail* service operates in Nancy and has brought about excellent results' in reducing vagabondage.[117] The rationale for the work programme in Goincourt (Oise), its statutes reveal, was that 'The department of the Oise is traversed by a great current of vagabondage. In no other department is the need for a *maison d'assistance (par le travail)* greater.'[118]

In the reports of prefects, the nation's general councils, and agricultural societies (bodies which were most often forced to deal with the problem), work-relief schemes were viewed not as positive remedies to industrial unemployment or rural crisis but rather as punitive measures in the battle against vagabondage, to be used in conjunction with the *dépôts de mendicité*.[119] Among the most ardent supporters of work-relief programmes were the directors of *sociétés de patronage des prisonniers libérés* and the directors of child-welfare agencies, who feared that orphans and recently released prisoners were prime candidates for slipping into vagabondage — and indeed they were.[120] Depots and work projects were seen in the same light: they would introduce the vagabond to the work ethic and scare him — invariably the vagabond was male — out of his shameful habits.[121] Here, as in the Ariège, the Vienne, Melun, Versailles, Amiens, and elsewhere, it was common for authorities to put vagabonds and migrants to work, against their will, on work-relief projects.

Is this too harsh a verdict to pass on this social experiment? To be sure, there were several *assistance par le travail* programmes that were not founded in the same spirit of harshness towards the poor that permeated Nanterre, and some provided useful skills and training. Those which aided young children and older

women tended to be somewhat less draconian and militaristic.[122] Even some designed for men performed useful services: of the 687 people given shelter and work by the Assistance par le travail du XVIè arrondissement de Paris in 1904–5, 211 were desperate *journaliers* (day labourers), by far the largest group.[123] Sure enough, some work-relief services did succeed, to an extent, in reducing vagabondage. The largest contingent of those given work by some of the programmes, such as the Maison hospitalière pour les Ouvriers sans asile et sans travail in Belleville, were peasants who had migrated to the Paris region in search of food and work (one-third of the total). One quarter of those assisted by the work-relief service at Amiens were *journaliers*; one quarter of those assisted by Grenoble's programme were vagabonds; one third of Le Havre's assisted were *journaliers* and 'gens sans profession'.[124] Many of these men would no doubt have fallen into vagabondage without the aid of *assistance par le travail*.

The problem, of course, was that work-relief programmes could only supply displaced peasants (and others) with temporary, menial work. Efforts were rarely made to teach skills or to reinstate these people back into the community. Furthermore, these services amounted to a drop in the bucket — they never came close to assisting even one tenth of the 300,000 people who were removed from the municipal relief rolls in the 1890s. Most paid less than Fr 1 per day — a far cry from a living wage, and only one-third and one-sixth the going wage for an unskilled labourer in the provinces and in Paris, respectively. While there were many devoted administrators, like the Pasteur Robin in Belleville, who operated these institutions in a spirit of humanity, it cannot be denied that many of them were not run in the same spirit, or that this approach was a sorry alternative to unemployment insurance or a national system of labour exchanges, as had been introduced in England in the 1900s and as existed, *de facto*, throughout Germany and in several parts of Switzerland. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that *assistance par le travail* was, in the final analysis, more of a symbolic than a meaningful experiment.

What else does the nationwide *assistance par le travail* movement represent? Many of its supporters saw it as an alternative to traditional public assistance dispensed by the *bureaux de bienfaisance*, which they attempted to discredit. As Louis Rivière

addressed the Comité central des Œuvres d'assistance par le travail of Paris in January 1899, 'You all know, ladies and gentlemen, that, in a general manner, the goal of *assistance par le travail* is to substitute meaningful relief distributed in the form of paid work for banal and ineffective pecuniary relief given by the *bureaux de bienfaisance*.'[125] There was a growing sense that unless assistance came with strings attached, it would demoralize its recipient. This line of reasoning had, of course, existed decades earlier, but never had it been so strong as it was at the end of the century.[126] The answer was to cut back traditional public assistance for able-bodied adults and replace it with either nothing or with work-relief.

In practice, the opponents of public assistance for able-bodied adults did not make up for the abandonment of the welfare bureaus (in some cities) or their reorientation towards women, children and the elderly. Most work-relief programmes could only assist between twenty and two-hundred people at a time, yet many cities had removed several thousand people from their relief rolls during the 1880s and 1890s. The programme at Le Havre, for instance, aided only 856 people (never more than a few dozen at a time) in 1905–6, yet the city's welfare bureau was serving several thousand fewer people than in the 1890s.[127] Whereas the welfare bureau of Nancy had removed over 4000 people from the its relief rolls, the new work-relief service, opened in 1896, could only assist, as late as 1910, sixty people at a time during the winter months and fifteen to twenty during the summer.[128] In the first five months of 1913, it served 1096 people in total, but rarely more than 150 at a time. The average work stint was twenty days, at Fr 1 per six hours of work, making *fagots*. Almost 700 of those served were single men.[129] Although a direct correlation is impossible to make, there can be little doubt that many of those removed from the welfare bureau rolls ended up part of the growing statistics of vagabondage and mendicity.

V

None of this is meant to deny that the French were beginning to become more aware of structural unemployment and the socio-economic roots of the rural exodus during the period

1890–1914, for, as Salais, Topalov, and others have shown, this certainly was the case. But it would take several more decades before the French would move from words to deeds. In 1906, for instance, Férdinand Engerand introduced a bill in the National Assembly to promote the development of smaller rural towns in order to stem the exodus to large cities, but nothing became of it.[130] The Office du travail was now conducting studies on the agricultural crisis, the insufficiency of wages, and on industrial *chômage* in general, but legislation did not result. Some of those involved in the Comité central des Œuvres d'assistance par le travail, such as Emile Cheysson, as well as the directors of the Musée Social in Paris were particularly troubled with the problem of industrial unemployment, but there were still many more who held firm in their belief that most of the idle were 'voluntary'.[131] This current of thought proved more powerful, and it persisted. Temporary measures (for example, the *ad hoc* municipal unemployment funds of the post-First World War era and the departmental funds of the 1930s) were preferred.

Some cities operated small unemployment funds, but more often than not, these monies were distributed to the respectable working class, to those with (relatively) stable artisanal or blue-collar jobs who had been thrown out of work temporarily and who were well established in the community. The funds were not meant for rural migrants or for the marginal, floating population of urban France, nor were they channelled in that direction.[132] In any case, these funds were always meant to be temporary measures, and they were not very generous by any stretch of the imagination. Across the nation, *caisses de chômage* would sprout up like mushrooms after the rain, only to disband once the local crisis had subsided. To the advocates of *assistance par le travail*, the fact that between 1890 and 1895 114 communes had responded to the tune of Fr 5 million with temporary *fonds de chômage* (a small sum) was not something to be proud of. Indeed, since this aid was distributed in money, they opposed it.[133] Above all, they opposed it because they saw it as nothing less than alms.

In this sort of atmosphere, coalitions in support of meaningful unemployment insurance or assistance programmes for the able-bodied were impossible. Indeed, there was very little support in France for the idea of permanent unemployment funds, let alone for a national, legal right to unemployment insurance. As the Conseil supérieur du travail noted in 1895, twenty-two depart-

ments that contained cities of over 100,000 people had not set up work-relief services in the period 1890–5, preferring to establish them only in times of dire need.[134] Permanent programmes, it was believed, would only institutionalize dependency. Even those who displayed sympathy for the working class, like Edouard Cormouls-Houlès, the author of an impressively researched, 800-page study of unemployment, vagabondage, and *assistance par le travail*, shared this view.[135] Permanent programmes of work-relief existed in only 114 of the nation's 36,000 communes. Strongly divided along regional lines and intensely fearful of the English model of nationally mandated 'legal charity', the French preferred to deal with the problem at the local level as it arose.

In practice, this was often a recipe for inaction. As Cormouls-Houlès noted, 'the unemployment funds still have only a very limited role in France'.[136] And as the Office du travail noted, temporary relief was deemed better by French municipal authorities since 'the communes have found this more advantageous, in that they do not have to deal with public assistance expenses which necessarily rise in proportion with industrial crises and unemployment'. And of course the Office made an inevitable reference to the English Poor Law, and the dangers of a permanent system of relief.[137] Only 312 worker-run *caisses* existed in 1910, covering 30,000 workers. In addition, there were forty-five *bourses du travail* in 1896, but they made only 32,615 placements, a figure which paled in comparison with tiny Belgium's effort and with Germany's, where at least 1500 placement bureaus, 900 unions, 300 mutual-aid societies and charities, and 50 cities found over 1.3 million jobs for workers in 1903.[138]

In 1904, municipal placement offices were officially sanctioned by the French state (and cities larger than 10,000 were required to establish them), and in 1906, the Clemenceau government created the Ministry of Labour, signifying, it is argued frequently, a new stance on the part of the state towards the social question. Most cities, however, did not bother to create placement offices; by 1910, only 127 of France's 260 cities with a population over 10,000 had complied, and only 84,000 workers had been placed.[139] In general, the situation was grim for unemployed French workers, and rather bleak for the floating marginal population. In the latter case, the French opted for neglect and repression rather than assistance. Much time was

spent debating the philosophical implications of assisting the unemployed; little cash followed from it.

VI

By the time the war began, much of urban France had gone to great lengths to create new social services in support of mothers, children, and the elderly. The government was also deeply concerned with improving the health of the general population. Two important — if imperfect — pieces of social legislation were passed in 1893 and in 1905 in the name of the ill and the elderly. But in an atmosphere increasingly hostile towards 'deviants' and marginals, rural migrants and the urban unemployed were often sacrificed in the name of those deemed more worthy and valuable to the nation's future. Across the political spectrum, vagabonds and beggars were demonized and declared to be racially unfit, and therefore not worthy of assistance.[140] The floating, casual urban population fared no better. Although the general trend during the period 1890–1914 was toward increased social spending, we must keep in mind that this money was now spent on a narrower segment of the population than had been customary, and that as some segments of the population saw more resources channelled in their direction, other segments sometimes had to help to pay the price.

In the end, the fear of giving relief to 'the parasite' often outweighed all other concerns. The elderly indigent (aged seventy and above — fifteen years over the average life expectancy), the infirm, pregnant women, new mothers, and children were indisputably, and immediately recognizable 'worthy' poor — able-bodied unemployed adults were another matter. The fear of giving to the 'unworthy' often militated against giving at all. As Georges Montorgueil wrote in the *Revue philanthropique* in 1897: 'This exasperating parasite . . . is the terror of the budget of charity; it devours a larger and larger part of it . . . And what do we give to this beggar? *Le bien des pauvres.*'[141] This widespread attitude often translated on the local level into a backlash against the able-bodied. In the end, it often proved easier to give many of them nothing at all than to worry about giving to the 'pauvres de profession'.

As hundreds of thousands of demobilized soldiers returned

from the front in 1918–19, the French state was ill-prepared to deal with the problem of unemployment and placement. It had had ample opportunity in the previous decades, but had chosen to let the communes cope on their own. To be sure, many communes, wary of the central state trespassing on their (limited) local freedoms, preferred it this way. In 1919–22, the French state spent Fr 60 million to relieve unemployment. This was a significant advance over the prewar record, but a small country like Switzerland (population: 3.75 million) spent the equivalent of 127 million French francs![142] In 1923, the government turned off the financial taps. Many French politicians explained away their relative parsimoniousness with reference to the persistence of the strong agricultural sector, which served as a safety valve for urban unemployment. Of course such a policy of benign neglect often spelled misery and dislocation for those workers forced to eke out a sort of 'economy of the makeshift' existence. By 1923, there were still only 265 unemployment funds (these were not mandatory, unlike the placement offices), and the state gave them only Fr 1 million. As late as 1938, fifteen French departments still provided no unemployment assistance at all. Unemployment funds existed in only 3313 of France's 36,000 communes in 1932, covering, in theory, 20 million people (roughly half of the population, and centered in urban areas).[143]

France's history of providing generous assistance for the unemployed is a short one, dating back three decades at the most.[144] In light of the nation's record of dealing with this problem, the current concern for the unemployed is all the more striking. After the Second World War, a major shift in opinion took place, resulting in programmes for the unemployed that were generous by international standards. But the human costs of France's treatment of the problem before the advent of national unemployment insurance in 1958, and particularly during the interwar years, remain to be told.

Notes

I should like to thank the Advisory Research Committee of Queen's University for its financial assistance. Thomas McStay Adams and anonymous referees provided useful suggestions for revision.

1. Some of the most recent and convincing arguments against the view that France lagged behind other nations are: Philip Nord, 'The Welfare State in

France, 1870–1914', *French Historical Studies* (Spring 1994): 821–38; Rachel G. Fuchs, *Poor and Pregnant in Paris: Strategies for Survival in the Nineteenth Century* (New Brunswick, NJ 1992); Elinor A. Accampo, Rachel G. Fuchs, and Mary Lynn Stewart, eds, *Gender and the Politics of Social Reform in France, 1870–1914* (Baltimore 1995); Sylvia Schafer, *Children in Moral Danger and the Problem of Government in Third Republic France* (Princeton 1997).

2. Mary Lynn Stewart, *Women, Work, and the French State: Labour Protection and Social Patriarchy, 1879–1919* (Montreal 1989).

3. Fuchs, *Poor and Pregnant in Paris*, 124.

4. Whether they approach the story from a Whiggish, Marxist, functionalist, or pronatalist perspective, however, some historians of European social-welfare policy tend to recount the events as if they unfolded in linear fashion, towards a particular end that they have in mind: a social democratic, corporatist, or probusiness welfare state, a repressive system of social control, a maternalistic welfare state, or simply a more developed welfare state. This is particularly the case where John Weiss's important article is concerned: 'Origins of the French Welfare State: Poor Relief in the Third Republic, 1871–1914', *French Historical Studies* 13 (Spring 1983): 47–78. This article seeks to nuance Weiss's findings. Social policy does not move in linear or uniform fashion. In the case of France during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it is more accurate to identify the alternating currents of thought and action that existed and which often played against one another. In addition, some who have studied the social question in France (including myself) have tended to pass general verdicts on the nation's commitment to the poor based on its treatment of one category of the assisted: T.B. Smith, 'Public Assistance and Labor Supply in Nineteenth-Century Lyon', *Journal of Modern History* 68 (March 1996): 1–30.

5. See T.B. Smith, 'The Ideology of Charity, the Image of the English Poor Law, and Debates over the Right to Assistance in France', *The Historical Journal* 40 (Dec. 1997): 997–1032.

6. Weiss, 'Origins', 72.

7. For the magnitude of this problem in one region, see the impressive study by Guy Haudebourg, *Mendiants et vagabonds en Bretagne au XIXè siècle* (Rennes 1998).

8. Maxime Du Camp, 'L'assistance par le travail: La fausse indigence, la charité éfficace', *Revue des deux mondes* 85 (1888): 300–36.

9. On Lille see Pierre Pierrard, *La vie ouvrière à Lille sous le Second Empire* (Paris 1965).

10. Ministère du travail et de la prévoyance sociale, Statistique générale de la France, *Statistique annuelle des institutions d'assistance. Année 1906* (Paris 1908), 21.

11. By 1910, the nation's welfare bureaus assisted 186,065 valid males under the age of sixty, 210,009 valid females under the age of sixty, 448,646 children, 60,822 men over the age of sixty, 96,322 females over the age of sixty, 27,176 infirm men, 30,234 infirm women, and 9192 infirm children. In total, 1,182,360 were assisted. Ministère du travail et de la prévoyance social, Statistique générale de la France, *Statistique annuelle des institutions d'assistance. Année 1910* (Paris 1912), 39.

12. A. de Watteville, *Rapport à son Excellence le Ministre de l'Intérieur sur l'administration des bureaux de bienfaisance et sur la situation du paupérisme en*

France (Paris 1854), 13.

13. From Fr14,611,000 in 1903 to Fr11,790,000 in 1907. Ministère du travail et de la prévoyance sociale, Statistique générale de la France, *Statistique annuelle des institutions d'assistance. Année 1907* (Paris 1909), 16.

14. Alfred Picard, *Le bilan d'un siècle (1801–1900)*, vol. 6 (Paris 1907), ch. 20, 'Assistance', 69.

15. Archives de l'Assistance Publique, Paris (hereafter AAP), *La France charitable et prévoyante* (Paris 1897–8, 3 vols).

16. Steven M. Beaudoin, '"Without Belonging to the Public Sphere": Charities, the State, and Civil Society in Third Republic Bordeaux, 1870–1914', *Journal of Social History* 31 (Spring 1998): 671–99.

17. This figure excludes the *caisses d'épargne* or savings banks and mutual-aid societies, which were only semi-charitable institutions, serving those workers who could afford to put aside a portion of their income, and excluding the *dépôt de mendicité*, a repressive institution.

18. On this theme, see T.B. Smith, 'Republicans, Catholics and Social Reform: Lyon, 1870–1920', *French History* 12 (Sept. 1998): 246–75. The Rhône's charities are listed in *La France charitable*, Section 67, 1–32. Lyon's charities were overwhelmingly devoted to children, mothers, and the elderly. This was typical of large cities. See Abbé Vachet, *Lyon et ses œuvres* (Lyon 1900) and Francis Sabran, *Manuel des œuvres de Lyon* (Lyon 1893).

19. *La France charitable*, Section 14, 1–28, and Section 39, 1–20.

20. AAP C-1632, Ministère de l'Intérieur, *Statistique des dépenses publiques d'assistance faites en France pendant l'année 1885*, by Henri Monod (Paris 1889), 60, 175 (hereafter Monod).

21. Monod, 183, 211.

22. Municipal subventions in Lyon totalled Fr 432,244 in 1885. Only Fr 75,000 went to charities that catered, to varying degrees, to the able-bodied adult.

23. Albert Peyronnet, *Le Ministère du travail*, 1906–1923 (Paris 1924), 10.

24. See T.B. Smith, 'Assistance and Repression: Rural Exodus, Vagabondage and Social Crisis in France, 1880–1914', *Journal of Social History* 32, 4 (Summer 1999): 821–46, for a more detailed discussion of this theme.

25. Christophe Guitton, 'Le chômage entre question sociale et question pénale en France au tournant du siècle', in M. Mansfield, R. Salais, and N. Whiteside, eds, *Aux sources du chômage, 1880–1914: Une comparaison interdisciplinaire entre la France et la Grande-Bretagne* (Paris 1994), 63–89. On unemployment see also R. Salais, *L'Invention du chômage: Histoire et transformations d'une catégorie en France des années 1890 aux années 1980* (Paris 1986), and Christian Topalov, *Naissance du chômeur, 1880–1910* (Paris 1994).

26. Gordon Wright, *Between the Guillotine and Liberty: Two Centuries of the Crime Problem in France* (New York 1983), 158; Ministère de la Justice, *Compte général de l'administration de la justice criminelle en France* (Paris 1882), 142–3; *Bulletin de la Société des prisons* (1893), 508.

27. An 1895 inquiry found that 466,000 people had been sheltered by night shelters during the previous year. Cited in Archives Nationales, Paris (hereafter AN) C 5622, No. 651, Chambre des Députés, Annexe au procès-verbal de la séance du 25 janvier 1899, Jean Cruppi, 'Proposition de loi relative aux moyens d'assistance et de coercition propres à prévenir ou à réprimer le vagabondage et la mendicité', 2.

28. Haudebourg, *Mendiants et vagabonds en Bretagne*, ch. 1; Smith, 'Assistance and Repression', 829.

29. CSAP 73 (1899), 'Les dépôts de mendicité', 10.

30. Georges Duby, ed. *Histoire de la France rurale, v. 3, De 1789 à 1914* (Paris 1976), 68, 204.

31. Francois Martineau, *Fripons, gueux et loubards: Une histoire de la délinquance de 1750 à nos jours* (Paris 1986), 262; Joseph Viple, *La répression pénale de la mendicité* (Paris 1905), 99–100. On relegation, see Wright, *Between the Guillotine and Liberty*; Patricia O'Brien, *The Promise of Punishment: Prisons in Nineteenth-Century France* (Princeton 1982), 258–68; Michel Pierre, 'La Transportation (1848–1938)', in Jacques-Guy Petit et al., eds, *Histoire des galères, bagnes et prisons* (Toulouse 1991).

32. Louis Rivière, 'Œuvres de la bienfaisance privée (I): L'assistance par le travail', *Revue philanthropique* 26 (15 July 1911), 279.

33. 'L'assistance aux necéssiteux valides sans travail au Congrès de Rouen', *Revue philanthropique* (1897), 651–55. I explore this theme in 'The Ideology of Charity'.

34. For example, Albert Maréchaux, *L'assistance publique: Sa suppression* (Paris 1893), 54–9; Jean Voirien, 'Assistance par le travail', *Revue philanthropique* (10 Dec. 1897), 256. His views were seconded by Guillaume Beer in the following edition of the journal, (10 Jan. 1898), 349–74, and by the various contributors to 'Assistance par le travail', ibid., (10 Feb. 1898), 572–91. Othenin d'Haussonville also discussed this issue in 'L'assistance par le travail: Faut-il faire la charité?', *Revue des deux mondes* 122 (1894), 40–71.

35. CSAP 19 (1888), 26; Smith, 'Assistance and Repression'.

36. Marcel Lecoq, *L'Assistance par le travail en France* (Paris 1900), 35. The *Revue philanthropique* 11 (1902) contains several articles and the minutes of several sessions of the Société internationale pour l'étude des questions d'assistance devoted to the issue of how better to organize and rationalize assistance, prevent fraud, eliminate parasites, beggars, and vagabonds.

37. CSAP 19 (1888), 'Dépôts de mendicité. Rapport au Conseil supérieur de l'Assistance publique', Charles Dupuy, 14.

38. AN C 5622, No. 651, Chambre des Députés, Jean Cruppi, 'Proposition de loi', 3.

39. Isser Woloch, *The New Regime: Transformations of the French Civic Order, 1789–1820s* (New York 1994).

40. Dr Joseph Gibert, *De l'assistance publique au Havre* (Le Havre 1891), 17.

41. Gibert, *De l'assistance publique au Havre*, 43.

42. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (hereafter BN) 8.R.14593, Dr Lausiès, Société centrale havraise de secours, *Histoire de l'assistance par le travail au Havre* (Le Havre 1897), 14, 15.

43. Lausiès, *Havre*, 52.

44. Lausiès, *Havre*, 42–3.

45. Lausiès, *Havre*, 38.

46. Emile Camau, *Les institutions de bienfaisance, de charité, et de prévoyance à Marseille* (Marseille 1893), 137–9.

47. Lucien Gaillard, 'La misère et l'assistance à Marseille sous le second Empire et les premières années de la IIIè République', *Provence historique* 27 (Oct.–Dec. 1977), 345–46.

48. *La France charitable*, Section 14, 16; Eugène Rostand, *L'action sociale par l'initiative privée* (Paris 1892).

49. Quoted in William B. Cohen, *Urban Government and the Rise of the French City: Five Municipalities in the Nineteenth Century* (New York 1998), 184.

50. Statistique de la France, *Statistique annuelle des institutions d'assistance. Années 1899 et 1900* (Paris 1902), 124–5.

51. Smith, 'Public Assistance and Labor Supply'.

52. Conseil municipal de Lyon, Délibérations (hereafter CML), 10 March and 2 Dec. 1880.

53. CML, 2 Feb. 1882, 8 Nov. 1882.

54. Archives municipales de Lyon (hereafter AML) 744/wp/101, Bureau de Bienfaisance (BB), *Compte-moral, Année 1891.*

55. AML 744/wp/101, BB *Compte-moral, Année 1899*, 11; Statistique de la France, *Statistique Annuelle des Institutions d'Assistance. Années 1899–1904* (Paris 1904), 19; *Statistique de l'Assistance Publique de 1842 à 1853* (vol. 6) (Strasbourg 1858), table 4.

56. AML 742/wp/15, Mairie de Lyon, Cabinet du Maire, 16 Dec. 1901; Raoul Bompard, 'Le bureau de bienfaisance central de Paris', *Revue politique et parlementaire* 71 (May 1900), 378.

57. BN 8.R.Pièce 9190, Bureau de Bienfaisance de Nancy, *Secours à domicile: Leur caractère d'aumône, cause d'inefficacité . . . Etude sur le paupérisme*, by Léon Lallement (Nancy 1902), 4, 9, 10.

58. AAP C-1300, Marie-Dominique Augey, 'L'Aide sociale à Nice: Assistance et bienfaisance de 1860 à 1914', Mémoire de maîtrise, Université de Nice, 1969, 90, 91, 132.

59. Quoted in Edouard Cormouls-Houlès, *L'Assistance par le travail* (Paris 1910), 745. A fundamental book for historians of French social-policy history.

60. Augey, 'L'Aide sociale à Nice', 64.

61. BN 8.R.24584, C. Cholet, *Supplément pour Nantes à l'Assistance française . . . présenté au 5è Congrès national d'assistance* (Paris 1911), 21.

62. AAP B-816/20, *Montpellier charitable* (Montpellier 1914), 9–10.

63. Dr Henri Henrot, *Rapport sur l'assistance publique à Reims* (Reims 1883), 19–21.

64. Jeanne Gaillard, *Paris, La Ville (1852–1870)* (Paris 1977), 311–15.

65. Paul Feillet, *De l'assistance publique à Paris* (Paris 1888), 73–5.

66. CSAP 19 (1888), 'Dépôts de mendicité', 31.

67. Statistique de la France, *Statistique de l'assistance publique de 1854 à 1861* 15 (Paris 1867), lxx, xciv; Léon Lefébure, *L'organisation de la charité privée en France* (Paris 1900), 57.

68. Lefébure, *L'organisation*, 51, 54.

69. Lefébure, *L'organisation*, 57.

70. The reform proposals, culminating with the new 1895 regulations, are gathered together in AAP C-345/1–22.

71. AAP C-345/1, 13.

72. CSAP 40, 'L'organisation de l'assistance à domicile dans la Ville de Paris: Décret du 12 août 1886', 181–2.

73. Ibid.

74. CSAP 40, p. 74.

75. For instance, AAP C-345/20, Conseil Municipal de Paris, *Rapport . . . du*

Comité du budget et du controle sur les budgets et comptes de l'Assistance Publique présenté par M. Navarre, 1895, 43–4; CSAP 41, p. 10.

76. AAP C-345/1, 30, 43.

77. AAP C-345/1, Henri Fleury-Ravarin, 'Secours à domicile à Paris', CSAP (1892), Documents Annexes (hereafter AAP C-345/1); and Fleury-Ravarin, 'Rapport sur les secours à domicile dans Paris', CSAP 40 (1892) (hereafter CSAP 40). See also CSAP 41, Session de mars 1893, 'Projet de décret sur l'organisation des secours à domicile à Paris', for the ensuing debates.

78. AAP C-345/1, 7.

79. AAP C-345/1, 8–9. See also his remarks in the same spirit in CSAP 40, pp. 70–1.

80. CSAP 40, p. 70.

81. CSAP 40, p. 87.

82. AAP, Assistance Publique de Paris, Procès-Verbaux des séances du Conseil de Surveillance (hereafter AP-CS), 12 Feb. 1894, 54; CSAP 41, p. 16. AP's Conseil de surveillance considered a proposal from the Société internationale pour l'étude des questions d'assistance to extend the residency requirement to five years.

83. Raoul Bompard, *Rapport au Conseil municipal de Paris* (Paris 1893), 24. See also M. Vanlaer, 'Le chômage de l'ouvrier', *Le Correspondant* (25 Nov. 1892), 753, for similar attitudes towards workers.

84. See, for example, AP's reaction to the CMP's and Fleury-Ravarin's reform proposals, AAP AP-CS, 31 May 1894, 724–37. See also AAP AP-CS, 12 July 1894, 960.

85. AAP C-345/18, Assistance Publique à Paris, *Décret portant règlement d'administration publique pour l'organisation de l'assistance à domicile à Paris. Décret du 15 novembre 1895*, 7. See also Conseil municipal de Paris, Délibérations (hereafter CMP), 2 May 1894, 213–25.

86. AAP C-345/4, Conseil Municipal de Paris, *Rapport au nom de la 5è Commission, sur le projet de réorganisation du service des secours à domicile, présenté par M. R. Bompard*, 1894, 31; Bulletin Municipal Officiel de Paris (hereafter BMO), 3 May 1894, 955–6.

87. Fleury-Ravarin, *De l'Assistance Publique de Paris* (Paris, 1900), 148.

88. AAP AP-CS, 12 Dec. 1895, 150–1.

89. Ministère du travail et de la prévoyance sociale, Statistique générale de la France, *Statistique annuelle des institutions d'assistance. Année 1910.* (Paris 1912), 7. Now only 100,322 were assisted by the entire department's bureaus.

90. Of these, 29,410 were elderly indigents, 19,976 were infirm, 3739 were given small pensions, and 1416 were single mothers (several programmes in favour of women operated independently of the welfare bureaus). No able-bodied unemployed were assisted at all (during the early stages of the war, however, the unemployed were assisted by the welfare bureaus).

91. AAP D-307 (1915), Administration générale de l'Assistance Publique à Paris, *Compte-moral et administratif de 1915*, 60. Nationwide, in mid-century, most of the welfare bureaus' clientele had been male and 57% had been adult. Now, by 1900, 48% were adult. Statistique de la France, *Statistique annuelle des institutions d'assistance (1899–1904)* (Paris 1905), 1; A. de Watteville, *Rapport à M. Le Ministre de l'Intérieur sur l'administration des hôpitaux et des hospices* (Paris 1851), 23; Statistique de la France, *Statistique annuelle des institutions d'assistance*

(1899–1904) (Paris 1905), 1.

92. Fuchs, *Poor and Pregnant in Paris*, passim.

93. Cohen, *Urban Government and the Rise of the French City*, ch. 8. The evidence from other cities discussed in this article should serve to answer Cohen's critique of my analysis of Lyon (Smith, 'Public Assistance and Labor Supply'). As this article would suggest, Lyon's case was not unique.

94. Louis Chevalier, *Classes laborieuses et classes dangereuses à Paris, pendant la première moitié du XIXè siècle* (Paris 1978), 580–92.

95. BN 8.R.Pièce 7849, H. Deglin, *L'organisation et les organisateurs de la charité* (Nancy 1898), 3.

96. Léon Lefébure, 'L'organisation méthodiqe de la bienfaisance privée au moyen des Offices centraux', *Revue philanthropique* (15 mai 1911), 42.

97. AAP A-2167/5, Office central des institutions charitables, Deuxième assemblée générale annuelle, 30 mai 1893, *Rapport de M. Léon Lefébure*, 5–6. Beaudoin cites the operation of the Bordeaux chapter of the Office central as an example of how public and private authorities could meet on middle ground to cooperate in support of the poor. While this was true for Bordeaux, it was not necessarily true for other cities. Indeed, the very *raison d'être* of the Office central in some cities was to discredit public assistance. Where this was the case, the Office central had the following goals: to ensure that public assistance assisted fewer people, and to demonstrate the power of private institutions (the Office central itself) to solve the social question. In Paris, Lille, Marseille, Nancy, and Lyon, for instance, the same people who launched an attack on public assistance and conspired to scale back relief for the able-bodied founded the Office central. Beaudoin, ' "Without Belonging to Public Service" '.

98. BN 8.R.17372, Maurice Jourdan, *De l'intervention des pouvoirs publics en matière d'assistance par le travail* (Paris 1901), 2; H. Rodel, *Rapport . . . à l'office central de la Charité bordelaise* (Bordeaux 1894); Cour d'Appel de Poitiers, *L'Assistance par le travail. Discours prononcé par M. Clement* (Poitiers 1894).

99. Jourdan, *De l'intervention*, 18.

100. Emile Cheysson, Office central des œuvres de bienfaisance, *Les enquêtes de l'Office central* (Paris 1908).

101. Deglin, *L'organisation*, 4, 5.

102. Office du travail, *Note de l'Office du travail sur les sociétés d'assistance par le travail* (Paris 1896), 2.

103. On French, British and American attitudes towards unemployment, see the massive, impressive study by Topalov, *Naissance du chômeur*. His bibliography is a veritable goldmine.

104. AAP B-284/18, 16.

105. Deglin, *L'organisation*, 20–1.

106. Paul Strauss, *Assistance sociale: Pauvres et mendiants* (Paris 1901), ch. 11.

107. Rivière, 'Œuvres de la bienfaisance privée', 288; Smith, 'Assistance and Repression'.

108. Congrès international d'assistance publique et de bienfaisance privée, Administration et gestion des œuvres d'assistance par le travail dans les départements, *Rapport présenté par M. le pasteur Aeschimann* (Melun 1900), 14.

109. AAP B-284/18, Léon Lefébure, *L'Organisation de la charité privée en France. Rapport décennal sur les travaux de l'Office central des œuvres de bienfaisance depuis sa fondation* (Paris 1900), 13, 34; Jourdan, *De l'intervention*, 120.

110. Jourdan, *De l'intervention*, 124.

111. Musée Social, Paris (CEDIAS), Office central lillois des Institutions sociales et charitables, *Rapport et Compte-rendu. Octobre 1895 à decembre 1896* (Lille 1897).

112. Cormouls-Houlès, *L'assistance par le travail*, 585.

113. Othenin d'Haussonville, 'L'assistance par le travail (II)', *Revue des deux mondes* 123 (1894), 402–5.

114. Jourdan, *De l'intervention*, 104.

115. Quoted in Cormouls-Houlès, *L'assistance par le travail*, 612.

116. Conseil supérieur du travail, *Note de l'Office du travail sur les travaux de secours contre le chômage* (Paris 1895), 57.

117. AAP B-4791/5, Session annuelle de la Société des agriculteurs de France, 'Vagabondage et mendicité', (8 mars 1901), 3.

118. Quoted in Cormouls-Houlès, *L'assistance par le travail*, 379. Other examples can be found in AAP B-4791/5, 5; Louis Rivière, 'La répression de la mendicité et l'assistance par le travail en Prusse', *Revue pénitentiaire*, 2 parts (Dec. 1893, Jan. 1894). Typical in their conflation of the two issues were: 'Vagabondage et mendicité', *Revue des établissements de bienfaisance* (May 1895), 137–45; Henri Joly, 'Assistance et répression', *Revue des deux mondes* 29 (1905), 117–51, and *La France criminelle* (Paris 1889); idem, 'Contre le chômage', *Revue philanthropique* (1897), 464–5. For a local example, see BN 8.R.Pièce. 3863, *Projet d'Organisation d'établissements d'assistance publique* (Chartres 1887). As Emile Sinoir began his address to the March 1905 meeting of the Laval *assistance par le travail* directors' meeting, 'Nous abordons un problème social d'une importance capitale. Il s'agit de se défendre contre le double fléau du vagabondage et de la mendicité.' The same sort of proclamation was issued at a meeting of the *Société de patronage des prisonniers libérés et du sauvetage de l'enfance de la Haute-Marne*, BN 8.R.Pièce 10365, Emile Sinoir, *L'Assistance par le travail. Conférence donnée à l'Hôtel-de-Ville de Laval le 5 mars 1905* (Laval 1905), 3; BN 8.R.13802, P. Pérrenet, *L'assistance par le travail* (Langres 1896).

119. AAP B-4791/5, 5; Louis Rivière, 'La répression de la mendicité et l'assistance par le travail en Prusse', *Revue pénitentiaire*, 2 parts (Dec. 1893, Jan. 1894).

120. For example, *Assistance par le travail: Conférence faite à Chaumont par M.P. Pérrenet, à l'Assemblée générale de la Société de patronage des prisonniers libérés et du sauvetage de l'enfance de la Haute-Marne le 16 mai 1896* (Langres 1896).

121. See Smith, 'Assistance and Repression', 836–7, for a brief discussion of this theme.

122. Cormouls-Houlès, *L'assistance par le travail*, ch. viii.

123. Ibid., 307.

124. Ibid., 306–9.

125. *Revue philanthropique* (1898–9), 470.

126. On the earlier period see Smith, 'The Ideology of Charity', 1001–5.

127. Cormouls-Houlès, *L'assistance par le travail*, 383–5.

128. Ibid., 422.

129. M. Yvon, 'Compte rendu du bureau de bienfaisance de Nancy (exercise 1912)', *Bulletin de la Société médicale des Bureaux de bienfaisance de Paris* (Feb. 1914), 76.

130. Cormouls-Houlès, *L'assistance par le travail*, 47.

131. 'Comité central des œuvres d'assistance par le travail', *Revue philanthropique* (1898–9), 464–79.
132. Cormouls-Houlès, *L'assistance par le travail*, 124.
133. Office du travail, *Note sur les travaux de secours contre le chômage* (Paris 1895); Jourdan, *De l'intervention*, 115; Lecoq, *L'assistance par le travail.*
134. Conseil supérieur du travail, *Note de l'Office du travail sur les travaux*, 21.
135. Cormouls-Houlès, *L'assistance par le travail.*
136. Ibid., 129.
137. Conseil supérieur du travail, *Note sur l'Office du travail sur les travaux*, 77–9.
138. Cormouls-Houlès, *L'assistance par le travail*, 136–8.
139. Peyronnet, *Le Ministère du travail*, 10.
140. See Smith, 'Assistance and Repression'.
141. Georges Montorgueil, 'Le pauvre et le mendiant', *Revue philanthropique* (1897), 812.
142. Peyronnet, *Le Ministère du travail*, 45.
143. Peyronnet, *Le Ministère du travail*, 44; Jean Perret, *Désordre économique et chômage: Causes, palliatifs et remèdes pour la France* (Lyon 1932), 44, 11–13.
144. On this theme, see the important article by Miriam Cohen and Michael Hanagan, 'Politics, Industrialization and Citizenship: Unemployment Policy in England, France and the United States, 1890–1950', *International Review of Social History* 40, Supplement 3 (1995), 100.

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