

The Republican Family and Republican Politics: Léon Laurent-Pichat and His Kin (1861-1883)

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As republicans assumed power in France in 1870, republican elder statesman Edmond Adam reportedly declared to his wife, Juliette:

Do you know what worries me Juliette? As I see my young friends ascending [to power], I see no women following them; Gambetta, Challemel, Spuller, Ranc, and so many others, have no wives. The next Republic will lack wives and widows. If cafés support the spirit of opposition, I seek in vain the domestic hearths that will preserve the Republic once it is established.¹

This conversation, recorded long after the event, was probably apocryphal. Juliette Adam's story nevertheless reflects the intense concern with the family, and with relations between the political and domestic realms, that many French republicans shared in the post-1848 period.

Judith Stone has demonstrated that leading republican militants and writers turned to the family for solutions as they pondered the disastrous unraveling and overthrow of the Second Republic, and considered how a Republic might successfully be instituted in the future. Victor Hugo, Jules Michelet and Eugène Pelletan were all convinced that only the creation of a thoroughly republican culture could “transform the authoritarian state into a republican one without civil war.” The family, along with

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¹ Juliette Adam, *Nos amitiés politiques avant l'abandon de la revanche*, 5th edn (Paris, 1908), 31.

the school, was vital to that task: it would “form republican citizens” who would ultimately change the state from within.²

The characteristics of the desired family were explored in a spate of mid-century works by these writers.³ The family they described was not egalitarian. Prevailing ideas about “equality in difference” meant that women were generally envisaged as wives and mothers, and men as heads of families.⁴ Pelletan recognized the philosophical contradiction between republican equality and domestic hierarchy, imagining a family in which the wife would be “Minister for the Interior” and her husband “Minister for External Affairs” in a joint “Council of Ministers.”⁵ But this formula replicated the prevailing assumptions in a more benign way. Republican feminists challenged versions of family life that subsumed women within the family and subordinated them, however lovingly, to men, but their ideas made little impact on the dominant discourse.⁶

If there was no single model of the ideal family, republican writings all aspired to create affectionate and expressive families that provided emotional fulfillment to their members and harmony within the home. Michelet’s portrait of domestic intimacy, in which a loving wife anticipated and fulfilled her grateful husband’s every wish, was cloying and improbable, but Pelletan’s ideal wife, having received a serious education, would be the intellectual companion of her husband, capable of sharing his thoughts and aspirations. Marie d’Agoult’s female-headed republican household, one in which men did not reign supreme, was also warm and affectionate, evincing the “charming intimacy” of “a sweet and gentle little republic.”⁷

This vision of an affectionate family based on companionate marriage was not new in the nineteenth century.⁸ It was, moreover, neither specifically republican nor explicitly French, but reflected a broader Anglo-European trend. Historians of the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie – Adeline Daumard and Peter Gay among the most eminent – have long noted the centrality of family life to “the bourgeois experience.” According to Gay, the family was crucial to bourgeois self-idealization: “the family

² Judith F. Stone, *Sons of the Revolution: Radical Democrats in France, 1862-1914* (Baton Rouge, 1996), 17-59 (quote from 34). See also Judith F. Stone, “The Republican Brotherhood,” in *Gender and the Politics of Social Reform in France*, Elinor Accampo, Rachel Fuchs and Mary Lynn Stewart, eds (Baltimore, 1995), 28-58; Susan K. Foley and Charles Sowerwine, *A Political Romance: Léon Gambetta, Léonie Léon and the Making of the French Republic 1872-82* (Basingstoke, 2013).

³ Jules Michelet, *La Femme* [1860], in *Œuvres complètes, vol. 18: 1858-1860*, ed. Paul Viallaneix (Paris, 1985), 429-591; Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables* (1862; repr. Paris, 1951); Eugène Pelletan, *La Famille: La Mère*, 3rd edn (Paris, 1866). On their theories of the family, see Stone, *Sons of the Revolution*, 17-59; on Pelletan, see Sudhir Hazareesingh, *Intellectual Founders of the Third Republic: Five Studies in Nineteenth Century French Republican Thought* (Oxford, 2001), 167-225.

⁴ Karen Offen, *European Feminisms 1700-1950* (Stanford, 2000), 116-17; Claire Goldberg Moses, *French Feminism in the Nineteenth Century* (Albany, NY, 1984), 177-78, 198-206.

⁵ Pelletan, *La Famille*, 344.

⁶ Susan K. Foley, *Women in France Since 1789: The Meanings of Difference* (Basingstoke, 2004), 134-44; Whitney Walton, “Republican Women and Republican Families in the Personal Narratives of George Sand, Marie d’Agoult and Hortense Allart,” in *The New Biography: Performing Femininity in Nineteenth-Century France*, Jo Burr Margadant, ed. (Berkeley, 2000), 99-136; Moses, *French Feminism*, 151-72; Karen Offen, “A Nineteenth-Century French Feminist Rediscovered: Jenny P. d’Héricourt, 1809-1875,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 13 (1987): 144-58.

⁷ Pelletan, *La Famille*, 328-31; Michelet, *La Femme*, 548-50; d’Agoult quoted in Walton, “Republican Women,” 126.

⁸ David Garrioch, *Neighbourhood and Community in Paris 1740-1790* (Cambridge, UK, 1986); David Garrioch, *The Formation of the Parisian Bourgeoisie 1690-1830* (Cambridge, MA, 1996); Christine Adams, *A Taste for Comfort and Status: A Bourgeois Family in Eighteenth-Century France* (University Park, 2000).

was an emblem of what bourgeois wanted to be, or thought they were.”⁹ Recent ethnographic studies of the bourgeoisie – those that posit (as Carol E. Harrison argues) that “class was ‘made’ through cultural practice” – have also emphasized the significance of family life to bourgeois culture.¹⁰ Heightened expectations of affection and intimacy in an increasingly valorized domestic sphere were widespread, undermining the already shaky reign of the authoritarian *pater familias*.¹¹

If all bourgeois families aspired to be affectionate, however, what would make families “republican”? That is less clear in the works of republican writers. They certainly idealized women as “mothers of citizens” rather than simply as bearers of children. Michelet’s brief vignette of domestic republicanism, for instance, had the mother lead her children in singing the Marseillaise to their father before bed.¹² Clearly, the republican mother would share her husband’s republican values and instill them in the children. But the family was imagined primarily as a haven from politics: it was the counterpoint to, rather than the continuation of, the political domain. In the ideal families of Michelet and Hugo, women looked inwards to the family and the home, ignoring or turning away from politics. Eugène Pelletan alone envisaged female citizenship, though only in some unspecified future.¹³

Private papers, such as those of the Laurent-Pichat family, paint a picture of republican family life as it was lived in practice at this time.¹⁴ In addition, they reveal how such families engaged on a day-to-day basis with the republican project. The diaries of Léon Laurent-Pichat – poet and novelist; journalist and editor; financial backer of republican ventures; republican Deputy from 1871 and Life Senator from 1875 – carefully recorded the activities of the entire family for the years 1861 to 1885. The diaries, produced as a detailed record of daily life (a *compte-rendu*) served the writer’s private purposes, recording family activities, financial transactions, visitors and visiting and political events. They provide a rich picture of family life and of the intersections between the worlds of politics and family. Family correspondence adds an emotional dimension to this portrait. Writers sought to create and reinforce through the epistolary exchange the loving and deeply devoted family they described. In the

⁹ Peter Gay, *The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud*, vol. 5: *Pleasure Wars* (New York, 1998), 18-19; Adeline Daumard, *La Bourgeoisie parisienne de 1815 à 1848* (Paris, 1963); *Les Bourgeois et la bourgeoisie en France* (Paris, 1987).

¹⁰ Carol E. Harrison, “The Bourgeois after the Bourgeois Revolution: Recent approaches to the Middle Class in European Cities,” *Journal of Urban History* 31 (2005): 382-92 (quote from 386).

¹¹ John Heywood, *Growing Up in France from the Ancien Regime to the Third Republic* (Cambridge UK, 2007); Olivier Faron, “Father-Child Relations in France: Changes in Paternal Authority in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,” *History of the Family* 6 (2001): 365-75; Jean Delumeau and Daniel Roche, eds, *Histoire des Pères et de la Paternité* (Paris, 2000); Yvonne Knibiehler, *Les Pères aussi ont une histoire* (Paris, 1987); Eleanor Gordon and Gwyneth Nair, “Domestic Fathers and the Victorian Parental Role,” *Women’s History Review* 15 (2006): 551-59; Lenore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850*, rev. edn (London, 2002); Gracia Gómez Urdáñez, “The Bourgeois Family in Nineteenth-Century Spain: Private Lives, Gender Roles and a New Socioeconomic Model,” *Journal of Family History* 30 (2005): 66-85.

¹² Michelet, *La Femme*, 550.

¹³ Pelletan, *La Famille*, 331-33, 343-55; Stone, *Sons of the Revolution*, 49-52.

¹⁴ Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris, Fonds Claretie, 2^e partie: Léon Laurent-Pichat. All references to the diaries and to family letters refer to this holding. The diaries for this period (hereafter cited as “LLP, Journal”) comprise vols 8-10 of this collection. The correspondence of Laurent-Pichat (hereafter LLP) is found in vol. 6 (189 letters to his daughter, 1866-1885) and vol. 7 (which also includes 21 letters to Camille Risler, 1867-1880, ff. 1-42). The correspondence of his daughter, Geneviève Laurent-Pichat (hereafter GLP) is found in vol. 7 (122 letters to LLP, undated and 1870-1883). I would like to thank Mme Garion and the staff at the BHVP for their assistance.

process, the correspondence provides insights into family relationships and emotional interconnections over eighteen years.¹⁵

The Laurent-Pichat family papers not only illuminate internal family relationships but detail social interactions, casting light on the social practices of a broader network of republican families. Given its unconventional structure, the Laurent-Pichat family was neither a “typical” bourgeois family nor a “typical” republican family. It nevertheless replicated the close and affectionate relations valued by the bourgeoisie and fostered by republican theorists. While a broader study would be necessary to establish how representative this family’s relationships and practices were, the papers of the Laurent-Pichat family provide important insights into the connections between republican family life and republican politics as the Third Republic came into being.¹⁶

The Family Circle

In 1823, when Geneviève Leroi was seventeen, she bore an illegitimate son. Calling herself Rosine Laurent, she registered him as Léon Laurent.¹⁷ Some years later, a wealthy businessman named Étienne Pichat became Léon’s guardian; when Pichat adopted Léon in 1837, the boy became Léon Laurent-Pichat. At the age of fifteen, Léon inherited Étienne Pichat’s considerable fortune, enabling him to devote himself to political and literary causes in adulthood.¹⁸

Geneviève Leroi later married Louis-Achille Deslandes. They had three children, Rosine, Louis-Achille and Herminie.¹⁹ The sources suggest that Laurent-Pichat was close to these step-siblings in adulthood, especially to Rosine and her husband, Amédée Beaujean. Laurent-Pichat himself never married, but in 1856 he fathered a daughter, Geneviève, whose mother’s name was never revealed.²⁰ Geneviève was legally recognized in 1861. Laurent-Pichat’s diary for that year shows her living with him and his mother, though it is unclear how long she had been in the household.²¹ It was unusual for an illegitimate child to be made part of the family, as Geneviève was; at least, the sources rarely bring such examples to the historian’s

¹⁵ For a fuller analysis of the provenance of these intimate sources and the complexities of interpreting them, see Susan Foley, “Love, Anxiety and Longing: Representing the Bourgeois Family in Intimate Writings in the Mid-Nineteenth Century,” in progress.

¹⁶ An excellent study of the early Third Republic that includes cultural and family life is Philip Nord, *The Republican Moment: Struggles for Democracy in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge, Mass., 1995).

¹⁷ Archives de Paris (hereafter AP), Naissances: V3E/N1322: Laurent-Pichat (ci-devant Laurent), Léon, 11 July 1823. For fuller information on Laurent-Pichat’s birth, see Archives nationales de France (hereafter AN), MC Ét. XXXIII, carton 1204: “Reconnaissance d’enfant naturel par Madame Deslandes.”

¹⁸ Jaqueline Lalouette, “Laurent-Pichat, Léon 1823-1886,” in *Les Immortels du Sénat 1875-1918: Les Cent-seize inamovibles de la Troisième République*, Jean-Marie Mayeur and Alain Corbin, eds (Paris, 1995), 380-82; *Les Parlementaires de la Seine sous la Troisième République, vol. 2: Dictionnaire Biographique*, Arlette Schwartz, ed. (Paris, 2001), 355-56. A fuller analysis of Laurent-Pichat’s early years can be found in Foley, “Love, Anxiety and Longing.”

¹⁹ AP, Naissances: V3E/N718: Deslandes, Rosine Caroline, 30 Aug. 1829; Deslandes, Louis-Achille, 15 Sept. 1832; Deslandes, Herminie Alexandrine, 21 July 1839. I have not yet located the record of the marriage between Geneviève Leroi and Louis-Achille Deslandes senior.

²⁰ AP, Naissances: V3E/N1322: Laurent-Pichat, Marie-Geneviève (ci-devant Marie-Geneviève), 2 Aug. 1851.

²¹ AN, MC Ét. 84, carton 1136: “Reconnaissance d’enfant naturel par Mr. Laurent-Pichat,” 29 June 1861. Laurent-Pichat’s journals commence in October 1861. References to Geneviève are numerous from 26 Oct. 1861.

attention. Perhaps Laurent-Pichat's own illegitimacy made him sensitive to his daughter's precarious position and keen to acknowledge family bonds.

Following his mother's death in 1863, Laurent-Pichat turned to Rosine for assistance in raising his daughter. In November 1864, they all moved into a new residence at 39, rue de l'Université, in the wealthy seventh arrondissement of Paris. Piecing together references in his diary and in family letters, it appears that Laurent-Pichat occupied the top floor apartment. Rosine and Amédée Beaujean with their daughter, Clémence, lived on the floor below. Geneviève Laurent-Pichat lived with them, and the girls were raised like sisters. The two families operated as a single household, often taking their meals together, and Geneviève had frequent opportunities to be with her father.²²

A Bourgeois Republican Family under the Empire

Léon Laurent-Pichat's composite household was unconventional, marked by two generations of illegitimacy, adoption, the absence of key parental figures and the formation of step-families. It differed significantly from the ideal nuclear unit with the *mère de famille* at its heart as envisaged by his colleagues, the republican writers Hugo, Michelet and Pelletan. Despite its unconventional structure, however, the lifestyle of this family, along with the extended family of step-siblings, was that of an affectionate bourgeois family of the kind idealized by the mid-century middle classes. It cultivated family sociability through such events as weekly family dinners;²³ its interpersonal relations were expressive and affectionate; its members corresponded diligently to preserve the bonds of affection, and they did so using the intimate *tu* rather than the formal *vous*, whatever their ages and family positions.²⁴ The family's social practices resembled those described by historians of nineteenth-century middle-class family life across a number of locations.²⁵

Like many such families, the Laurent-Pichat family was also child-centered.²⁶ Laurent-Pichat's diary notes numerous outings organized for the girls, as well as purchases of treats and toys.²⁷ The education of Clémence and Geneviève in dancing, painting and piano was also typical of that received by bourgeois girls of their day and, like many republican children of their generation, they received some religious

²² LLP, Journal, 12 Nov. 1864; GLP to LLP, Eaux-Bonnes, 14 Aug. 1871, no. 27.

²³ LLP, Journal, e.g., 22 June 1862; 19 May 1863; 25 Jan. 1863; 29 Nov. 1864; 10 Oct. 1866; 25 Dec. 1864; 24 Dec. 1867.

²⁴ Cécile Dauphin, "Pour une histoire de la correspondance familiale," *Romantisme* 90 (1995): 89-99. On epistolary practices in this correspondence see Susan Foley, "Becoming a Woman: Self-Fashioning and Emotion in a Nineteenth-Century Family Correspondence," *Women's History Review* (20 Aug. 2014), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09612025.2014.948272>. On other family correspondences, see Cécile Dauphin, Pierrette Lebrun-Pézerat and Danièle Pouban, eds, *Ces Bonnes Lettres: Une Correspondance familiale au XIXe siècle* (Paris, 1995); Willemijn Ruberg, *Conventional Correspondence: Epistolary Culture of the Dutch Elite, 1770-1850* (Boston, 2011).

²⁵ John R. Gillis, "Ritualization of Middle-Class Family Life in Nineteenth-Century Britain," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 3 (1989): 213-35; Anne Martin-Fugier, "Bourgeois Rituals," in *A History of Private Life, vol. 4: From the Fires of Revolution to the Great War*, Michelle Perrot, ed. (Cambridge, MA, 1990), 261-337; Neil Armstrong, "English and German Christmas *Festlichkeit*, c. 1800-1914," *German History* 26 (2008): 486-503; John Gillis, "Making Time for Family: The Invention of Family Time(s) and the Reinvention of Family History," *Journal of Family History* 21 (1996): 4-21; Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, chap. 7.

²⁶ On republican child-raising, see Nord, *The Republican Moment*, 232-37.

²⁷ LLP, Journal, 16 Feb. 1862; 26 May 1862; 18 Oct. 1863; 25 Dec. 1866; 26 Dec. 1868; etc. Cf. David Hamlin, "The Structures of Toy Consumption: Bourgeois Domesticity and Demand for Toys in Nineteenth-Century Germany," *Journal of Social History* 36 (2003): 857-69; Martyne Perrot, "Noël, de l'enfant quêteur à l'enfant gâté: Le sens d'un passage," *Ethnologues* 29 (2007): 285-302.

instruction and made their First Communions.²⁸ To be sure, they attended the Duruy lecture courses that briefly offered a sketchy secondary instruction to bourgeois girls, but their attendance was fitful at best.²⁹ There was no obvious attempt, therefore, to shape them as “republican wives” or to give them an education designed to prepare them for that role.

Yet this was indeed a republican family that shared distinctive republican experiences. Moreover, it was bound by deep emotional ties to an extended republican family, with whom it pursued the political goals of republicanism in unison. Republicanism under the Empire was often a family affair by necessity. Strict controls on political activity blurred the boundaries between political life and family life. With political meetings banned, politics moved not only into the café (as Edmond Adam had noted) but also – and especially for bourgeois republicans – into the drawing room, in order to escape surveillance and prosecution. Police spies occasionally penetrated even there.³⁰

Léon Laurent-Pichat’s diary illustrates how extensively republican family life was conflated with republican activism. Those who visited his home to dine or to spend the evening included many political colleagues, while his weekly salon attracted the leading figures of the republican movement.³¹ Geneviève and Clémence would not have been present at such gatherings, especially in childhood. But during their youth they were immersed in a republican political culture, as well as a republican social world, because the two were largely inseparable. They got to know many republican leaders and activists; they became attached to those who were Laurent-Pichat’s close friends, like Étienne Arago and Léonce Anquez, who played with them in childhood and watched them grow up.³²

If drawing room gatherings reduced prosecutions for illegal assembly, they could not prevent prosecutions for breaching the censorship laws and advocating for the Republic. From the moment of the coup d’état in December 1851, many republicans were imprisoned or exiled for their political activities. The experience of persecution enhanced political solidarity within and between republican families, as this family’s experience also illustrates.

²⁸ LLP, Journal, 18 May 1865 (Clémence); 14 May 1868 (Geneviève). Cf. Marie-Françoise Lévy, *De Mères en filles: l’éducation des françaises, 1850-1880* (Paris, 1984), 103-114; Carol E. Harrison, *Romantic Catholics: France’s Postrevolutionary Generation in Search of a Modern Faith* (Ithaca and London, 2014), 28-65. Harrison notes that the daughters of both Victor Hugo and Jules Michelet made their First Communions.

²⁹ See LLP, Journal, entries for Dec. 1868, Apr. 1869; Nov.-Dec. 1869; Jan.-May 1870. Cf. Rebecca Rogers, *From the Salon to the Schoolroom: Educating Bourgeois Girls in Nineteenth-Century France* (University Park, 2005), 202-5; Françoise Mayeur, *Histoire de l’Enseignement et de l’Éducation, vol. 3: 1789-1930* (Paris, 1981), 140-44.

³⁰ Stone, *Sons of the Revolution*, 32-33; Jérôme Grévy, *La République des opportunistes, 1870-1885* (Paris, 1998), 171-78. Grévy reports Auguste Scheurer-Kestner’s humorous account of discovering a police spy hidden behind the drawing room curtains on one occasion (356, n97).

³¹ His diary lists numerous political colleagues as dinner guests. For attendees at the salon, see Grévy, *La République des opportunistes*, 185.

³² On Arago, see LLP, Journal, 30 Oct. 1861. On the “dolls’ tea parties” that Anquez shared with the infant Clémence, see LLP to Geneviève Risler (née Laurent-Pichat, hereafter GR), 14 Oct. 1877, no. 79. Anquez’s first name is never used in the sources, but it seems certain that this was Léonce Anquez (1821-1889), historian and professor at the Lycée Saint-Louis, and (along with Clémence’s father, Amédée Beaujean) Inspector of the Académie de Paris for the Department of the Seine. See “Les Inspecteurs de l’Académie de Paris au milieu du XIXe siècle,” *Textes Rares*, <http://pages.textesrares.com/index.php/Rubriques/Les-Inspecteurs-de-l-Academie-de-Paris-au-milieu-du-XIXe-siecle.html> (accessed 26 August 2014), 8.

Visits to political prisoners at Sainte-Pélagie became a ritual of solidarity that drew the republican family together. Laurent-Pichat's journal records many such visits: "Saturday 12th [April 1862]: visit to [Eugène] Pelletan at Sainte-Pélagie. I found [Alphonse] Fleury there. I went upstairs with him to visit [Auguste] Scheurer, and Madame Scheurer was there with M. and Mme Hingray."³³

In December 1865, Laurent-Pichat was himself fined and sentenced to three months in prison: an article he had written in October for the republican newspaper *Le Phare de la Loire* (one of several papers to which he contributed or which he financed) had "outraged and derided the Catholic religion."³⁴ On the eve of his confinement, his republican *confrères* hosted a banquet in his honor. Such banquets, which were well-established political rituals, filled several functions. As "private" events, they evaded the laws against political assembly and allowed for the speeches, toasts and camaraderie that cemented republican solidarity. They thus offered republicans a momentary "emotional refuge," a haven for the outpouring of otherwise-prohibited political sentiment.³⁵ Moreover, they celebrated the sacrifice made by imprisoned republican activists, sacralizing it by embedding it in republican ceremonial practices.

The lengthy entry in Laurent-Pichat's diary reveals the emotional significance he placed on this farewell. As he noted there, the republican family, like the intimate family, was bound together by emotional bonds, not merely by political conviction. The entry stressed his ardor and his attachment to his comrades, celebrating the fraternal links to his republican colleagues that the banquet both reflected and cemented: "I replied [to the toast] that parties, like families, have spoilt children, that I am one of those, and that, at the very moment I was about to endure suffering, I felt their friendship, which transformed the imprisonment that I was about to undergo into something welcome."³⁶

His own family's response to Laurent-Pichat's imprisonment also highlighted their shared emotional commitment to the republican project. Rather than being a source of shame, imprisonment bestowed a badge of honor in the domestic sphere, as well as in the political sphere. Rosine, Amédée and the girls accompanied Laurent-Pichat to prison to see him installed. They visited him daily – sometimes the entire extended family visited – and family members joined him for lunch or dinner several times per week. His own manservant, Aimable, cleaned his cell. Family life thus continued as usual in many respects, despite Laurent-Pichat's imprisonment. Moreover, since the immediate family embraced his sentence, Laurent-Pichat became a representative of *their* commitment to the Republic; his endurance celebrated the family's undaunted republican spirit as well as that of his colleagues.³⁷ Rather than turning inwards, away from the political domain, the Laurent-Pichat family embraced the republican struggle.

The wider republican family also embraced colleagues exiled under the Empire, making pilgrimages to expatriate centers like Geneva and Basel to preserve

³³ LLP, Journal, 12 Apr. 1862. Both Fleury and Hingray had been Deputies during the Second Republic, Fleury returning to public office in 1870-71. Scheurer, whose marriage to Cécile Kestner made him "Scheurer-Kestner" and united him to the leading family of Alsatian republicans, became a Deputy in 1871 and Life Senator in 1875. See "Base des données des anciens députés," *Assemblée Nationale*, www.assemblee-nationale.fr (accessed 26 August 2014).

³⁴ Quoted in Lalouette, "Laurent-Pichat," 382.

³⁵ See William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge, 2001), 129, 152-3.

³⁶ LLP, Journal, 19 Dec. 1865.

³⁷ LLP, Journal, 19 Dec. 1865-19 Mar. 1866.

friendships and offer comfort. Exile punished republican activists, both male and female. Wives often accompanied their husbands into exile even if they were not prosecuted themselves. Other women struggled to support their families and manage affairs in the absence of their husbands.³⁸

Laurent-Pichat travelled to Switzerland on several occasions to visit Jean-Baptiste Charras, Victor Chauffour and other members of the Kestner family, prominent republicans from Alsace.³⁹ The enduring friendships cultivated by these visits were evident in 1871 following the Franco-Prussian War, as the vanquished French ceded Alsace and Lorraine to Prussia. Laurent-Pichat experienced the loss as a family tragedy, in both national and personal terms, grieving for his abandoned compatriots: “My dear friend,” he wrote to Camille Risler, “I can’t get my mind off your household.... Madame Kestner and Madame Charras will be widowed twice over. And your young women! Reaching such a happy age and enduring such distress! Do not console them; it is their soul that is afflicted; it is their national virtue that bleeds; but take care of the health of this dear group.”⁴⁰ In subsequent years, this political friendship became a family friendship uniting the Kestner, Risler and Laurent-Pichat families, who visited each other in Paris and during seaside holidays.

The links between the Laurent-Pichat and Risler families were cemented in 1877 by the marriage of Geneviève Laurent-Pichat to Charles Risler (son of Camille).⁴¹ This was a solidly republican marriage, an alliance between families of similar social and political status: Laurent-Pichat was by then a Life Senator and had long been a major financier of the republican cause; the Risler-Kestner family was one of the great political dynasties of the early Third Republic.⁴² Several of Charles’s uncles were or had been republican deputies: Victor and Ignace Chauffour and General Jean-Baptiste Charras during the Second Republic, Charles Floquet and Auguste Scheurer-Kestner during the Third Republic. Jules Ferry (who was married to Charles’s sister, Eugénie), would be one of the most influential politicians of the Third Republic, steering the Republic’s education laws through the National Assembly, helping shape colonial policy and serving as President of the Council of Ministers (Prime Minister) on three occasions.⁴³

The marriage of Charles and Geneviève was arranged by the couple’s fathers but it was also a marriage of choice: they had become acquainted over several summers spent in adjacent seaside resorts on the Channel coast.⁴⁴ As the couple set off on their honeymoon, passing through Basel, Laurent-Pichat wrote to Geneviève: “This town has happy memories for me. I love it because it’s there that I met, got to know and loved Charras, and through him, met, got to know and loved the Kestner

³⁸ Sylvie Aprile, “De l’exil à l’exilée: une histoire sexuée de la proscription outre-Manche et outre-Atlantique sous le Second Empire,” *Le Mouvement social* 225 (2008): 27-38.

³⁹ LLP, Journal, 22-25 Sept. 1863; 10 Oct. 1864; 23-26 Jan. 1865.

⁴⁰ LLP to Camille Risler, 5 Mar. 1871, ff. 17-18.

⁴¹ AP, Mariages, 7^e arr., 20 June 1877: V4E 3314: Risler-Laurent-Pichat.

⁴² Grévy, *La République des opportunistes*, 138.

⁴³ “Base des données des anciens députés,” *Assemblée Nationale*, www.assemblee-nationale.fr (accessed 26 August 2014); Benoît Yvert, ed., *Dictionnaire des Ministres (1789-1989)* (Paris, 1990), 456, 459.

⁴⁴ GLP to LLP, 19, 25 July 1873, nos. 40, 42; 15 July 1874, no. 48. Arranged marriages were often marriages of affection as well. See Adeline Daumard, “Affaire, Amour, Affection: le mariage dans la société bourgeoise au XIX^e siècle,” *Romantisme* 68 (1990): 33-47; Denise Z. Davidson, “‘Happy’ Marriages in Early Nineteenth-Century France,” *Journal of Family History* 37 (2012): 23-35.

family. It's an easy path from there to Charles."⁴⁵ Family ties and political ties were closely interwoven in leading republican circles like these.

Family and Politics in the Third Republic

The political oppression of the Empire, as we have seen, encouraged a shared sense of solidarity within and between republican families. Both men and women were committed to enduring whatever was necessary to bring the Republic into being. While the defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870 was lamented for the loss of Alsace and Lorraine, it also saw the collapse of the Second Empire and the proclamation of the long-desired Third Republic. Still, 1870 created a regime that was republican in name only; it was to be seven more years before an authentic republican regime, controlled by republicans and implementing a republican agenda, would be attained.⁴⁶

Anticipation resonated in the letters of the Laurent-Pichat family for weeks ahead of the elections of October 1877, which were widely expected to bring a definitive republican victory. The men of the family were heavily involved in campaigning, both in Paris and in Chablis, where Eusèbe Beaujean (the father of Rosine's husband, Amédée) chaired republican electoral meetings, and Jules Rathier (father of Geneviève's friend, Marguerite) was the republican candidate.⁴⁷ On voting night, anxiety about the elections gripped all at the family dinner in Paris.⁴⁸

On this important occasion, however, the demands of the intimate family and the republican family came into conflict. Geneviève and Charles had married in June 1877. In September, Geneviève was confined to bed in Thann (Alsace), apparently in the early stages of pregnancy and in danger of miscarrying. Alsace was now part of the German Empire, however, and residents who had retained their French citizenship had to return to France in order to vote. Geneviève could not join the family exodus to Paris.

Laurent-Pichat anguished about his divided loyalties but decided to remain in Paris. "Don't scold me for not having come to you," he beseeched Geneviève. "It's not my love that is lacking." His status as Senator was essential, he explained, for mobilizing the republican vote in his district:

We need to form a committee and put up posters on the walls. There are few people we can call on to appear in public, because, as I have told you, the good fellows of our arrondissement are not inclined to take the initiative and their reserve is excusable, because the pressure of the reactionaries still exerts its hold over the small businessmen of our neighborhoods.⁴⁹

If Laurent-Pichat prioritized his political family at this moment, Geneviève's regrets were also framed in political terms, ignoring the personal crisis that she was undergoing. Her account was nevertheless full of emotion: "I would really like to

⁴⁵ LLP to GR, 20 Sept. 1877, no. 60. Charras's wife, Mathilde Kestner, was Charles's aunt.

⁴⁶ Grévy, *La République des opportunistes*; Jacques Chastenot, *Histoire de la Troisième République, I, Naissance et Jeunesse* (Paris, 1952); Jean-Yves Mollier and Jocelyne George, *La Plus Longue des Républiques 1870-1940* (Paris, 1994), chap. 2; Charles Sowerwine, *France Since 1870: Culture, Society and the Making of the Republic*, 2nd edn (Basingstoke, 2009), chap. 3.

⁴⁷ LLP to GR, 26 [Sept. 1877], nos. 64 and 65; 7 Oct. 1877, no. 72.

⁴⁸ LLP, Journal, 14 Oct. 1877.

⁴⁹ LLP to GR, 2 Oct. 1877, no. 70. See also 7 Oct. 1877, no. 72; 13 Oct. 1877, no. 78.

have been in Paris on election day, such an exciting day,” she wrote to her father. Affirming his decision and her own republican loyalty, she added: “I will wait patiently for news.... We will forget our troubles if we have good elections, won’t we?”⁵⁰ Hope and despair mingled in her letters, as the prospect of joining the family for this long-awaited political triumph receded. As a good republican wife, Geneviève also assumed responsibility for preventing Charles from fulfilling his patriotic duty: “My father-in-law is leaving for Paris on Friday.... He is going to vote. I really wish that Charles could do the same.”⁵¹ But Charles would not leave his wife at such a critical moment. On the morning of election day, she put on a brave face to her father but reiterated that she was “very upset about keeping Charles here on such a serious and important day.” As for Charles’s emotions, Geneviève reported only that “my poor husband has not expressed for a moment the regret he must feel about not being able to be useful to his country this year.”⁵²

Isolated in Thann, the couple could only participate vicariously in the excitement unfolding in Paris, following the count via telegrams and newspapers, and rejoicing at the emerging electoral success of family and friends. Charles passed the time creating a map of France, colored to reflect the unfolding results.⁵³ Laurent-Pichat weighed up the electoral results to assess whether the moment was ripe for Abel Hovelacque (husband of Clémence Beaujean) to enter the political fray: “The election in the seventh [arrondissement] still holds some interest. The consequence of success would give us information in our district which would show Abel what he could expect, if he should decide to stand in the municipal elections.”⁵⁴ Indeed, Abel Hovelacque would soon become a municipal councilor in the seventh arrondissement, and later Deputy for the Seine in the National Assembly.⁵⁵ In 1882, Charles Risler would begin a long term as Mayor of the seventh arrondissement.⁵⁶ Together, they would carry the family’s republican commitment into the next generation. Their dominance in the arrondissement that incorporated the once solidly aristocratic Faubourg Saint-Germain, moreover, confirmed the transformation of the social elite.

Once the Third Republic was in place, however, the role of the family in political life diminished, though it did not cease. The operation of democratic politics inevitably distinguished the political roles of men and women more decisively than previously, given that women were not enfranchised.⁵⁷ Republican family sociability around the dinner table or in the salon still made and sustained friendships. Yet Laurent-Pichat’s diary illustrates how electoral politics and an array of civil associations increasingly consumed men’s time and energies, drawing them away from the intimacy of republican family life to a world of republican male camaraderie. By the mid-1870s, participation in organizations like Masonic lodges and educational associations had become a mark of commitment to republicanism. For men deeply

⁵⁰ GR to LLP, 10 Oct. 1877, no. 91.

⁵¹ GR to LLP, 10 Oct. 1877, no. 91.

⁵² GR to LLP, 14 Oct. 1877, no. 93.

⁵³ GR to LLP, 18 Oct. 1877, no. 96.

⁵⁴ LLP to GR, 14 Oct 1877, no. 79. See also LLP to GR, ‘jeudi. 18.’ [Oct. 1877], no. 84.

⁵⁵ “Base des données des anciens députés,” *Assemblée Nationale*.

⁵⁶ See the list at “Les maires de Paris-07 (7ème arrdt),” *Maires: FranceGen Web*, www.francegenweb.org/mairesgenweb/resultcommune.php?id=1367 (accessed 5 August 2014).

⁵⁷ See Nord, *The Republican Moment*, 218-32.

committed to republican politics, these organizations were important and appealing outlets for political engagement, and aided candidates' electoral success.⁵⁸

Léon Laurent-Pichat, Charles Risler and Abel Hovelacque were all freemasons.⁵⁹ In addition, each pursued his particular political interests. Risler was active in the *Association générale d'Alsace-Lorraine* (General Association for Alsace-Lorraine) that kept alive the cause of the "lost provinces" and assisted those displaced by the Franco-Prussian War.⁶⁰ Hovelacque, professor of linguistic anthropology at the school founded by Paul Broca, was involved in the Anthropological Society.⁶¹ Laurent-Pichat supported the *Ligue de l'Enseignement* (Education League), which promoted free, compulsory and secular education and financed popular libraries. He was also active on the administrative committee of his local welfare bureau and in the League for the revision of the constitution.⁶² In 1878, all the men of the family attended the series of events marking the centenary of the death of Voltaire, remembered as an exponent of freedom of thought and expression.⁶³ Both Abel and Charles dined in their Republican Circles or Masonic Lodges on a regular basis, and political banquets honoring (for instance) Garibaldi, or the Revolution of 24 February 1848, continued to provide occasions for male sociability.⁶⁴

Female sociability, like male sociability, also served broader political ends, but philanthropic activities remained women's primary means for pursuing their republican commitment outside the home. One of the most important endeavors of the women in Laurent-Pichat's family was the *Société pour l'enseignement professionnelle des femmes* (Society for the Professional Education of Women), which ran vocational courses for working-class women. It supported a network of schools by 1880, and in Paris was presided over by Louise Boissonnet, wife of prominent republican, Jules Simon. That a Catholic counter-organization was established (*La Société des écoles professionnelles catholiques*, the Society of Catholic Professional Schools) confirmed the Society's republican credentials.⁶⁵

The Society held a sale of handiwork each year as its major fundraising activity. Aunt Rosine, Geneviève and Clémence spent many weeks before the sale painting Egyptian-style vases to sell at their counter; in later years, Aunt Victorine assisted Rosine on the stall in the absence of the girls, now married women with small

⁵⁸ Grévy, *La République des opportunistes*, 130-33, 141-49; Katherine Auspitz, *The Radical Bourgeoisie: The Ligue de l'Enseignement and the Origins of the Third Republic, 1866-1885* (Cambridge, UK, 1982), 76-95.

⁵⁹ LLP, Journal, 23 Jan. 1876; 10 Jan. 1878; 14 Feb. 1883; 29 May 1884. On republican Freemasonry, see Nord, *The Republican Moment*, 15-30.

⁶⁰ LLP, Journal, 25 Mar. 1878; 8 Apr. 1878; 14 Oct. 1878. On the *Association générale d'Alsace-Lorraine*, see Grévy, *La République des opportunistes*, 138-40.

⁶¹ LLP, Journal, 2 Nov. 1876; 8 Nov. 1876; 4 Apr. 1878; 9 May 1885. On Hovelacque, see *L'École d'anthropologie de Paris, 1876-1906* (Paris, 1907), esp. 7, 12, 15-16, 22, 38, 55, 152-60.

⁶² LLP, Journal, 14 Mar. 1876; 21 Feb. 1883; 8 Mar. 1883; 19 Mar. 1883; 20 Jan. 1884; 11 Mar. 1884; 10 Mar. 1885. See Auspitz, *The Radical Bourgeoisie*; Grévy, *La République des opportunistes*, 130-35.

⁶³ LLP, Journal, 30 Mar. 1878; 27 May 1878. On the cult of Voltaire, see Nord, *The Republican Moment*, 195-97.

⁶⁴ LLP, Journal, 4 July 1875; 7 Dec. 1876; 10 Jan. 1878; 24 Jan. 1878; 2 Feb. 1878; 23 Feb. 1878; 21 Mar. 1878; 3 May 1878; 30 May 1878.

⁶⁵ Mayeur, *Histoire de l'Enseignement*, 132-33; Sylvie Aprile, "Bourgeoise et républicaine, deux termes inconciliables?," in *Femmes dans la Cité 1815-1871*, Alain Corbin, Jacqueline Lalouette and Michèle Riot-Sarcey, eds (Grâne, 1997), 214; Phyllis Stock-Morton, "Secularism and Women's Education: The Case of the *École Professionnelle de Jeunes Filles* of Marseille," *French History* 10 (1996): 355-74.

children.⁶⁶ That Geneviève bought gifts for her father from the stalls run by Mme Floquet (aunt of Charles) and Mme Millard (wife of the family physician) indicates the “familial” nature of this particular endeavor.⁶⁷ Rosine likewise purchased gifts for the children and, later, the grandchildren from other counters,⁶⁸ while Laurent-Pichat spread his donations and purchases widely, ensuring the even-handedness that close family ties demanded.⁶⁹

Nothing in the family records suggests that the women of the Laurent-Pichat circle were attracted to the republican feminist organizations that began to re-emerge after 1877, as press censorship and restrictions on assembly were eased. These organizations mainly sought to improve female education and reform the Civil Code. Indeed, the organizers of the International Congress of Women’s Rights, held in Paris in 1879, banned Hubertine Auclert (leader of the only suffragist society, *Le Droit des Femmes*) from raising the suffrage question.⁷⁰ It would take some years for feminist organizations to flourish, and they attracted very limited support during the 1880s.⁷¹ Magazine surveys reveal that many women of the Belle Époque still looked to companionate marriage and “republican motherhood” as women’s primary role.⁷² If the women of the Laurent-Pichat family kept their distance from feminist political activism, therefore, they resembled the majority in their day that eschewed radical ideas about women’s political participation and accepted their assigned roles as wives and mothers.

Conclusion

Léon Laurent-Pichat and his kin were passionately invested in family life, forming a close-knit group united by ties of affection. In this respect, their family life was typical of the Anglo-European bourgeoisie in the mid-nineteenth century. But this family also illustrates how the affectionate family could, and did, become a sanctuary for nurturing the republic: a prospect sketched only vaguely by mid-century republican writers. Children were incorporated into republican sociability from infancy, imbibing republican values as they imbibed bourgeois social mores and emotional codes. They did so even in an unconventional composite family like the Laurent-Pichat family. Moreover, it was not the emotionally-charged and introspective domestic unit portrayed in the sentimental texts that fostered republicanism, but an extended political family bound by ties of intimacy and affection, sustained by intense sociability, and reproducing itself through marriage alliances as well as by shared political conviction.

This case study points to the evolution of republican family life in the 1860s and 1870s. Edmond Adam had emphasized the need to create republican families in order to “preserve the Republic once it [was] established,” but the role of the family was probably more important in the hostile environment of the Empire, when ties of

⁶⁶ LLP, Journal, 12, 20, 26, 28 Feb. 1875; 8, 16 Mar. 1875; 20 Mar. 1876; 14-18 Mar. 1877; 12, 19-21 Mar. 1878; 13 Mar. 1883, etc.

⁶⁷ LLP, Journal, 15 Mar. 1877.

⁶⁸ LLP, Journal, 4 Nov. 1867; LLP to GR, 13 Mar. 1883, no. 143; 21 Mar. 1883, no. 147.

⁶⁹ LLP, Journal, 16, 18 Mar. 1875; 20 Jan. 1878.

⁷⁰ See Moses, *French Feminism*, chap. 8; Laurence Klejman and Florence Rochefort, *L'Égalité en Marche: Le féminisme sous la Troisième République* (Paris, 1989), chap. 1; Offen, *European Feminisms*, 150-52; Steven C. Hause, *Hubertine Auclert: The French Suffragette* (New Haven, 1987).

⁷¹ Steven C. Hause with Anne R. Kenney, *Women’s Suffrage and Social Politics in the French Third Republic* (Princeton, 1984), 40-45.

⁷² Lenard R. Berlanstein, “Ready for Progress?: Opinion surveys on Women’s Roles and Opportunities in Belle Époque France,” *French Politics, Culture and Society* 27 (2009): 1-22.

affection sustained hope and commitment within the republican family, and individual families acted in unison to support the republican endeavor. The family's importance diminished, though it did not end, once republicans became the holders of social and political power. Universal male suffrage, implemented in a sustained way for the first time with the Third Republic, ensured that aspects of political life became more thoroughly masculine. While the family remained a bulwark of republican sociability and the seed-bed of political commitment, men's duties as citizens took them into a host of civic organizations from which women were excluded, and politics was increasingly practiced outside the home.

Besides, for men coming of age in the 1870s, like Charles Risler and Abel Hovelacque, the Third Republic opened up political careers just as their wives – typically several years younger than their husbands – were bearing children and establishing family homes.⁷³ The divergent experiences of women and men as republicans and as family members, and their divergent contributions to the republican cause, were accentuated by that conjuncture. A recurring image in Laurent-Pichat's diary after 1877 – of the aging Laurent-Pichat sharing the dinner table with Geneviève and Clémence, whose husbands were fostering their political careers in their Lodges and political Circles – captures in miniature the shift in political culture and family life that marked the triumph of the Third Republic.⁷⁴

⁷³ Clémence Beaujean was ten years younger than Abel Hovelacque; Geneviève Laurent-Pichat eight years younger than Charles Risler. On the age differential, see Foley, *Women in France*, 39; Bonnie G. Smith, *Ladies of the Leisure Class: The Bourgeoises of Northern France in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, 1981), 60 and Table 2, 223.

⁷⁴ LLP, Journal, 10 Jan. 1878; 18 Feb. 1878; 25 Feb. 1878; 7 Mar. 1878; 16 Feb. 1884.