A pedagogy of gentleness in order to prevent crime

Growing fears regarding violent and unpredictable behavior fed a powerful stereotype which became a constant preoccupation of animal welfare activists, namely that brutal treatment of animals inevitably leads to the brutal treatment of human beings; accustoming oneself to violent behavior toward animal is equivalent to preparing oneself to perpetrate criminal acts on fellow human beings. As early as 1751, the English painter William Hogarth published a series of engravings entitled *The Four Stages of Cruelty* which enjoyed great popularity and a lasting influence. Each engraving represents a stage in the life of the fictional Tom Nero. The first print, showing one of the poorest quarters of London, depicts him as a child torturing a dog. In the second plate Tom Nero, now an adult, is a hackney coachman and is shown beating a horse which has collapsed to the ground. In the third plate he is being arrested for the brutal murder of his mistress, and in the fourth, *The Reward of Cruelty*, the body of Tom Nero, who does not deserve to be given a proper Christian burial, is cut up and dissected in an anatomical theater. A passing dog devours Nero’s heart, which is lying on the floor among his entrails. The success and very wide distribution of these prints, which sold for a shilling a piece, contributed greatly to propagating the idea that children who are cruel to animals grow up to become violent criminals (Turner, 1980; Lansbury, 1985a). In 1782, the German pastor Christian-Gotthilf Salzmann mentions the instructive story of Tom Nero in *Elements of Morality for the Use of Children*, a book which enjoyed a great deal of success in Great Britain. By the 1820s, around the time the RSPCA was founded, the idea that cruelty to animals, particularly when perpetrated by children, would be a prelude to cruelty directed toward human beings was therefore by no means a novel notion (Grier, 1999). In 1876, the SPA bulletin commented at great length on *The Four Stages of Cruelty*, so remarkably described by Hogarth, and paid tribute to the way the work made a vital contribution to the spread of awareness of animal welfare issues in Britain: “the reproductions of these drawings were distributed throughout England and made a deep impression on the people who saw them” (BSPA, 1876, p. 78).

It is easy to imagine the anxiety that such a stereotype, if widely believed, could generate. In towns where the spectacle of animals left to the mercy of
members of the least educated classes was so widespread that any coach-
man, carter, shopkeeper or butcher who roughly handled an animal was
in danger of being taken for another Tom Nero, whose criminal instincts
could rise to the surface at any time. The name chosen for the very first
animal welfare organization in Europe is highly significant in this regard.
For the sake of linguistic convenience and because of the need for terms
which could be used throughout this book I have used the expressions “the
animal cause” or “animal welfare activists.” In fact it is clear that the RSPCA
– the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals – was not
initially concerned with “animal welfare” in the sense that the term would
later be understood. The scandalous state of affairs which activists were
determined to remedy was not the suffering of animals but the widespread
cruelty of those individuals who, having maltreated animals, threatened
to behave in a similar way toward humans. The upper echelons of British
society were convinced of the need to act as quickly as possible because
they feared that allowing the working classes to become accustomed to the
shedding of animal blood could lead the social order to be threatened. The
organization of societies dedicated to the prevention of cruelty – all cruelty
not only cruelty toward animals – were partly motivated by fear of social
change: “fear of imminent revolution, of a society increasingly dominated by
a ‘barbarous and brutal’ crowd; in short, the fear of anarchy” (Turner, 1980,
p. 54). This fear of social change gave the membership of the first animal
welfare organizations a predictable-class profile. It also meant that the only
activities which caused concern were those practiced by members of the
lowest and least-educated strata of society.

In France, a country which had lived through numerous revolutionary
episodes, there was also a fear of violence which would lead to threats to
the social order. More than the elites in any other European country, the
French upper classes were haunted by shocking images of uncontrollable
bestial crowds (Barrows, 1990). If this widespread concern over the control of
political violence had not been present animal welfare campaigners would
have struggled to convince others of the urgency of their cause. Indeed it is
significant that in 1850

as political tension in the Second Republic was at its height, with the
obsession with struggle between classes which were supposed to gather
their forces for the assault of 1852, and right in the middle of debates
around the Falloux Law, the National Assembly still found time to pass
the Grammont Law, which made the ill-treatment of domestic animals a
criminal offence. This demonstrates that people at that time believed that
cruelty toward animals made a significant contribution to the prevalent climate of violence, cruelty and barbarity. (Agulhon, 1988, p. 245)

There were other instances of mobilizations against cruelty toward animals occurring in a context of fear provoked by revolutionary riots. On 6 July 1802, the question of barbaric treatment of animals was brought up in the Institut de France at a moment when there was a clear desire to avoid any further revolutionary disorder. Similarly, it would seem that the closure of the amphitheaters in the Place du Combat in Paris – where dogs, which often belonged to butchers' assistants, fought bulls, mules, wild boar, bears and wolves – was partly motivated by the tense, violent atmosphere created by the riots of 1830-1832 (Pierre, 1998, p. 114). Furthermore, it is clear from the following statement by the Bishop of Nîmes, which condemns bullfighting, that the protection of animals was closely associated with concerns about social disorder and political violence:

The sight of blood excites an unquenchable thirst for more blood. In a country like ours, where there is so much mobility within the social order, where revolutions are sparked so easily and so frequently, it is a bad thing to nurture fierce instincts which could later be exploited in a moment of trouble and chaos, and allow our nation to tear itself apart in bloody saturnalia. (Quoted in BSPA, 1883, p. 223)

Thus, in France and in Great Britain, the passage of legislation for the protection of cattle was facilitated by the widely held belief that brutal treatment of animals can arouse criminal instincts, leading to behavior which causes harm to humans. In the course of the speech he made to propose his bill, Jacques Philippe Delmas de Grammont mentioned a recent incident where a young boy slit his little sister's throat, shortly after witnessing, as a fascinated spectator, a pig being slaughtered (Agulhon, 1988, p. 249). In the SPA bulletins it is striking how often three arguments recur. Firstly, that it is necessary to prohibit violent spectacles because they can provoke, particularly among the more uneducated, instincts which may give rise to unpredictable outbursts of brutality; secondly, that it is a matter of urgency that animals be protected in order to protect the whole society from horrible outbursts of criminal violence; and thirdly, that particular vigilance is required where children are involved, because habits acquired at an early age prefigure behavior which will persist and recur throughout adulthood.
We often see, particularly in villages and small towns, butchers slaughtering a calf or a sheep in the middle of the street. Children flock to witness the spectacle and take their first lessons in cruelty. (1802, quoted in Pelosse, 1981, p. 14)

But in Luchon the thing that aroused our indignation the most was the sight of children being allowed to witness the butchering of animals. We even saw babies playing right next to where calves were having their throats cut. Is it not immoral to accustom children to the sight of blood and to prematurely harden those who are made to feel pity? Furthermore, there were women helping their husbands with their unhappy task, either by tying up or by holding down the animals. Is it not an absolutely shameful and repugnant thing for members of the sex which is above all made for feelings of gentleness and humanity to witness bloody orgies, and in so doing serve an apprenticeship in crime? (BSPA, 1886, p. 306)

Thus, the protection of the sensibilities of refined men, discussed above, is not the only reason for banning the public ill-treatment of animals. Indeed, such men, who take an interest in the common good, are particularly concerned that if appropriate measures are not taken a terrible outbreak of violence will occur which it will not be possible to stamp out. Since the beginning of the 19th century, and right up to the present day, animal welfare activists have always seen their struggle as a way of thwarting mounting individual cruelty, as well as the spread of cruelty on a collective scale.

All our efforts must be directed at preventing the perpetration of ill-treatment of animals by men, even when such ill-treatment is committed out of anger, impatience or stupidity rather than wickedness. If we succeed in reducing the number of these brutal acts then that will constitute an important achievement. We will lessen the number of cases of ill-treatment, firstly all those incidents which we prevent directly, and then all those which would have been the consequence of bad examples followed. It is worth noting that anger is in a way, like certain nervous conditions, contagious. We must, as far as possible, protect children from these impressions, and not excite their curiosity with the spectacle of tortured animals struggling. It is healthy to cultivate the habit of being kind to animals not only for the present, but also and especially for the future. (BSPA, 1855, p. 51)
Protection societies, which have been set up all around the world, are increasingly aware of the importance of integrating animal welfare into the education of children and young people. A child has many more opportunities to protect or to ill-treat animals than adults do. He uses animals to test his strength. If he starts off by showing kindness, one can be optimistic about his future; if, on the contrary, the child indulges in acts of cruelty, care must be taken to prevent such habits from developing. If nothing is done the danger will be that, having spent his tender years tormenting animals, his first subordinates, he will go on to spend the rest of his life bullying anyone who is put under his command. [The behavior will be the same], the only thing that will change will be the victims. (BSPA, 1875, p. 185)

Faced with such a terrible danger, we can easily understand how mobilizations for animal protection could be presented as part of a civilizing mission of the greatest importance. Activists for the cause believed themselves to be working toward nothing less than the improvement of men and, as a consequence, the improvement of human beings’ ability to live together on good terms, in a society free of conflict. In their opinion “there seems to be no doubt that being kind, in particular toward pets, improves people, [and] makes their manners more gentle” (BSPA, 1855, p. 52). In 1886, the president of the SPA made a point of quoting “the stirring words of General Grammont pronounced at the sitting of the legislative assembly during which the law to which he gave his name was passed: “The prevention of ill-treatment is as much about the moral improvement of men as the physical improvement of animals!” (Loud applause)” (BSPA, 1886, p. 140). Thus, zoophilia can present itself as one of the most advanced forms of philanthropy because it aims to constitute a “propedeutics of gentleness,” the most suitable elementary basis for the cultivation of the love of men, which is indispensable for the progress of humanity (Agulhon, 1998; Pierre, 1998). Thus the earliest animal welfare activists thought of themselves and presented themselves as educators who, because of their knowledge and experience, offered to instruct and guide others for the benefit of the community. In Great Britain this attitude was closely linked to a large number of moral campaigns inspired by religious convictions, both Anglican and Evangelist. In France, a much more secular country, the earliest mobilizations against the ill-treatment of animals foreshadow the “demopedic fervor” (Rosanvallon, 1992, p. 355) which – particularly between 1880 and 1900 – promoted the education of the people, aiming to tear them away from their vilest habits, and thus enabling them to participate in the improvement of the civic order.
Why, [wrote Dr. Pariset in the introduction to the statutes of the SPA, which he drafted in 1848], would men so quick to get angry with an animal for no good reason not act in the same way toward their fellow men? Here is an important message to communicate, and to teach people. By a gradual and inevitable change in his sentiments an individual would go from showing gentleness, pity and fairness toward animals to experiencing the most tender compassion for his family and all people. Once these saintly habits were adopted they would no doubt save people from the shameful excesses their intemperate behavior could lead to. (Quoted in BSPA, 1904, p. 152)

Thus, confirming the Eliasian hypothesis which we have adopted, one of the most powerful motives behind animal welfare mobilizations was the growing revulsion with which members of the upper classes of society regarded violence. It should be stressed that this disgust at brutality was so great that it influenced the way in which the moral entrepreneurs of the cause conceived of the ideal way of absorbing it. They considered that using persuasion to convince the people to adopt civilized behaviors was all the more praiseworthy because it avoided the use of coercion (Foucault, 1975). Arguing for obtaining change forcibly would implicitly rehabilitate the use of force and violence, which had been so heavily criticized. What is more, analysis of authoritarian approaches revealed them to be irrational and even counterproductive, because “the punishment often fails to achieve its objectives” (BSPA, 1855, p. 54).

In people of bad character punishment produces bitterness which always seeks vengeance; it causes indignation in the false spirits who are unable to recognize that it is in the man’s own interest that he receive the punishments, which he brings down upon himself. (BSPA, 1861, p. 182)

That is why the entrepreneurs of the cause celebrate the ability of those able to tame the fiercest and most stubborn natures with gentleness, tact, diplomacy and delicateness. To achieve this they use sensitizing devices which will be discussed below. For now, it is important to note the continuity that the moral entrepreneurs establish between controlling human violence and the domestication of animals. Refining the habits of humans and taming the savage nature of animals are part of one and the same civilizing mission.

No More Collars Which Use Force; Train a Dog of Any Age, Even the Most Difficult Animal, to Retrieve within a Few Days, was the title of a brochure which Monsieur Ferez, a shopkeeper in Lalinde, entered in our
To enlighten the ignorant, to refine the barbarian

competition. The title of this work gives a good indication of the spirit in which it was composed: the welfare of the animal was of primary concern. The principles which the author advocates regarding the training of dogs to retrieve seem very simple, and the Protection Society will work to have them adopted more generally. The author repeatedly recommends gentleness, calmness, and patience. The prize committee therefore saw fit to award Monsieur Ferez’s brochure its bronze medal. (BSPA, 1875, p. 173)

Subduing a yak [...]. If anyone has any doubts about the effects softness, patience and good treatment have on animals they have to follow our society’s useful works and see the positive contribution they makes on morality, agriculture and commerce; allow me to submit a note which will inform you of one more fact to be added to so many other similar observations. [There follows the description of the soft method used to subdue a troublesome yak]. That was the method I used to control an animal which had been considered untamable and dangerous [...]. But, I have always noticed that to achieve success patience and gentleness have always been absolutely indispensible. Repression must be used sparingly, tactfully and at the right time, otherwise not only will it not obtain the desired results, but it can actually be counterproductive. (BSPA, 1860, p. 80)

Along similar lines, we can note the enthusiasm with which members of the SPA greeted the news of the creation of a new hornless breed of cattle, named Sarlabot II and Sarlabot III.

The protection society can only applaud the devotion and perseverance of our colleague Monsieur Dutrone who hastened the realization of this great agricultural progress, namely the substitution of bovine breeds for dangerous breeds who are armed with horns. (BSPA, 1860, p. 140)

There is no doubt that a general increase in the number of hornless breeds would lead to the suppression of more or less violent coercive methods in the handling of cattle, in the same way as the greater knowledge of rabies as set out in Monsieur Sanson’s work, and the appreciation of its probable causes led to the suppression of the chains and muzzles, which bothered the poor dogs on which they were used. (BSPA, 1861, p. 189)

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12 It is worth noting that in the 19th century, before Pasteur’s discoveries in this field, rabies in dogs was thought to be caused by brutal ill-treatment by men: “In fact we are the very ones who cause the madness and then the rabid condition of our dogs. The protection society must
Here we can see the extent to which the attention given to domestication techniques, as well as the acclimatization of new animal species, is closely linked with the explicitly stated desire to reduce the various kinds of violence which threaten social order. Significantly, acts of cruelty committed by domestic animals tend to be attributed to lack of self-control on the part of those who attempt to train them. The perseverance and tact of animal protectionists are presented as the best qualities needed to combat this violence, and to pave the way toward an ideal world, inhabited by animals without horns, chains or muzzles who obey peaceful, affable men. One has no difficulty in seeing how this ideal could echo political watchwords relating to the nature of the relations which should prevail between men: praising good domestication “has become the archetype of other kinds of social subordination. It is a paternalist model in which the sovereign is the good shepherd. Docile loyal animals obeying a thoughtful master set an example for all the servants” (Thomas, 1985, p. 55).

Discipline, reward and punish

“Remind uncertain souls, [and] undecided hearts of the righteous path,” “make them understand the great significance of the work which we carry out with such ardor and courage” (BSPA, 1881, p. 182). As we have already noted, a mission of such benevolence aimed to be able to do without coercion and rely more on the use of rewards, a method which was far more in tune with the way of thinking which animated and motivated the servants of the cause.

Punishment often does not achieve its stated aim. When the short-tempered and brutal coachman gets back to the stables after being punished he may well take it out on his horse. A punishment can imitate certain characteristics which gentleness corrects. A man who receives a punishment does not boast about it, whereas one who obtains a reward is happy to talk about it; he shows his medal to his workmates. He will not only be encouraged to act well, but he will also encourage the others to imitate him; he will become an apostle for our good works. He will be a very useful helper since his advice will carry a lot of weight with men of the same profession; his words will be listened to more attentively, and examine how best we can avoid this evil of which we are the authors and for which we must consider ourselves responsible” (BSPA, 1875, p. 255).
better understood than our own. Let us, therefore, continue with this policy, which was pioneered by the Paris and Munich societies. (BSPA, 1855, p. 54)

A large proportion of the sensitizing devices put in place by the first protection societies were, therefore, prizes, distinctions, and bonuses whose aim was to “offer rewards in order to inspire gentleness in men” (BSPA, 1855, p. 66). Throughout the 19th century “prizes,” “encouragements” and “bonuses” often constituted, after running costs, the largest item of expenditure of the French SPA.

Every year the society holds a special meeting for the distribution of awards: bonuses, medals and honorable mentions. Rewards are presented in the following categories:

- Farm boys, coachmen-grooms, animal drivers, butcher boys, and any other person who has demonstrated a high level of good treatment and intelligent care and compassion toward animals
- Inventors and promoters of devices designed to decrease the suffering to working animals […]
- Authors of memoirs regarding topics suggested by the society, or of literary, scientific, artistic or economic publications or works which make useful contributions to its work (BSPA, 1860, p. 1)

As we can see, the award-giving initiatives mentioned here were underpinned by two distinct yet complementary logics. For inventors and authors of memoirs, receiving an award gave them the feeling of joining the ranks of people of superior knowledge and intelligence. The bonuses awarded to those who showed compassion to animals in the course of their work constituted, on the other hand, initiatives designed to stimulate – outside the core activist group – the emotions needed for the propagation of the cause. This use of rewards is quite openly presented as a sort of moral orthopedics aiming to reform the behavior and attitudes of those categories of the population who are more likely to abuse animals. So, in 1876, the Frankfurt protection society “offered bonuses to butcher’s assistants who use the Bruneau [mask] for slaughtering cattle” in order to encourage them to kill the animal more “humanely” with a single blow from a mallet (BSPA, 1876, p. 364). In London, from 1880 to the beginning of the 20th century, animal welfare campaigners organized a parade during which street sellers were encouraged to “consider their humble donkeys as a spectacle, an object worthy of visual attention – and humane care” (Kean, 1998, p. 76).
The owner of the best-turned-out donkey received a prize offered by the queen, or distinguished lady patronesses such as Baroness Angela Burdett-Coutts. The Paris SPA, for its part, organized a school where coachmen were taught that gentleness was a defining feature of the elite members of their profession: “the first quality required of a carter is compassion. Even if a carter possesses all the other requisite qualities in abundance, if he is not compassionate, he will never be other than a vulgar driver who can behave unjustly or inhumanely on the slightest pretext” (Roche, 1880, p. xii). In 1908, the SPA leadership was proud to announce that they had trained no less than three hundred Paris coachmen: “each of our most serious students was presented with a certificate which he will be able to use as a kind of passport in employment agencies” (BSPA, 1908, p. 116).

Nevertheless, the fact that the award scheme induced the changes in behavior which animal welfare campaigners were demanding was not the only reason it was prioritized. Another important function, indeed the most important function, of prize-giving initiatives was that they gave the entrepreneurs for the cause the opportunity to experience gratifying feelings.

Finally it is necessary to reward those who are already on the right track, those whose hearts are so sensitive that every kind of suffering causes them to suffer and who should, consequently, have their names recorded in the annals of the animal welfare movement. Yes, awarding these prizes is a most agreeable and consoling role for us, and you will soon discover that there are indeed numerous good souls among us. (BSPA, 1881, p. 182)

An “agreeable” and “consoling” role: in other words the use of rewards has the advantage of testing an emotional economy which is the source of much of the satisfaction that activists derived from their involvement in the movement. In fact the charitable act established a relationship system between two agents: on the one hand the individual who acts in a benevolent way, the benefactor, on the other hand the individual who benefits from their action, the beneficiary, who cannot fail to show the gratitude which for the philanthropist is central to the “total feeling of pleasure one experiences when carrying out a charitable action” (Helvétius, quoted in Duprat, 1993, p. xx). Animal welfare campaigners demonstrate even higher levels of moral excellence because they are able to replace their initial feelings of repugnance toward the wrongdoers with an attitude of
charitable indulgence. Their intention is to lead these offenders back to the right track by rewarding them, which, in turn, increases their own feelings of self-worth. When the benefactors reward farm boys, coachmen, butchers and others who – rejecting the cruel practices which were then common in their lines of work – show compassion toward animals, they expect the award winners to make a show of gratitude, which in turn is gratifying for the benefactors themselves. In other words, the use of awards establishes an emotional economy which reaffirms the moral preeminence of the benefactors, and the asymmetry of the reciprocal expectations which joins them to the beneficiaries of their actions. By accepting to be rewarded for having respected the stipulated norms the “repentant deviants” play their part in reaffirming the superior social status of the moral entrepreneurs (Gusfield, 1986, p. 66). This is further proof, if any was necessary, that the first animal protectors were as preoccupied with relations between men as they were with relations between men and animals.

It goes without saying that the emotional economy which the prize-giving initiatives were intended to establish was an ideal which was not always achieved. Indeed such an emotional economy appeared to be far too delicate and subtle to be in a position to influence “certain brutes with human faces” (BSPA, 1883, p. 168). Such individuals were quite unmoved by the benevolence of the animal protectionists, would reprimand those who remonstrated with them, and sometimes even mocked the compassion which was being advocated. Far from being moved in a constructive way by gentleness, or by bonuses bestowed by generous benefactors, these heartless unintelligent creatures only understood force. This is why statements by animal protectionists made repeated references to the fact that coercive measures are a necessary evil, a second choice, a “regrettable necessity” to which, because of the urgency of their mission, good men are sometimes forced to resort.

Repression, which is a back-up option, is unfortunately all too necessary in our country, a country so proud of its civilization, where the cruel treatment of animals led a compatriot to make this following painful admission: “I have never seen anything as bad as this, even in Russia.” (BSPA, 1855, p. 108)

The agents of the authority, faithfully following their instructions to the letter, every day contribute zeal and devotion to the great cause of animal protection. They conscientiously apply the law of 2 July 1850, the Grammont Law, without which our society would be deprived of its main purpose, and of the right to call itself, as it does with such pride, the Society for the
Protection of Animals. We can always rely on them to be there when it is necessary to remind certain brutes with human faces that men do not have the right to cruelly take advantage of their moral and physical superiority over innocent creatures which nature put in their care. (BSPA, 1883, p. 168)

In fact there is a repressive aspect to the work of animal welfare societies which should not be overlooked. These societies did not content themselves with merely lobbying for the first legislation which outlawed cruelty to animals, they also dedicated a significant part of their budget to funding projects which ensured that the law was applied. Once more it was the RSPCA which took the lead, setting an example for its continental counterparts to follow. The RSPCA appointed two inspectors as early as 1832. Their job was to patrol the streets of London, and identify and report anyone guilty of committing offences under the provisions of Martin Error! No bookmark name given.'s Act. Since that time the role of RSPCA inspectors has been substantially redefined and their number has continued to rise, in order to maximize the amount of the country covered by the organization: in 1974 there were two hundred inspectors in England alone, with Scotland and Northern Ireland covered by inspectors from their own animal protection societies. In France the institutionalization of methods of control and repression of those who violated animal protection legislation came in two distinct stages. Initially the SPA conferred a surveillance role to its members. This was facilitated by the fact that the public authorities acknowledged that SPA members were particularly competent in this regard. “In 1856 the police prefect authorized each member to carry a special card. The card specified their function and enabled them to call for the intervention of public law enforcement agents” (BSPA, 1884, p. 276). Four years later this special card was described as a “diploma” and was proof of membership of the SPA: “Members are presented with a diploma. With their diploma the new member receives a card which entitles them to request the intervention of police officers for the purpose of certifying contraventions of the Grammont Law” (BSPA, 1860, cover page). In other words, once again, the awarding of a special card amounts to a distinctive honor which enables members to experience the pride of belonging to an elite dedicated to promoting justice and upholding the law, as well as authorizing them to track down and expose any wrongdoings committed by their fellow citizens. In fact, at SPA meetings some of the more zealous members would proudly report having been instrumental in the recording of a large number of police statements. In order to encourage these kinds of action the SPA bulletin published a model complaint form for “members of the protection society who found themselves obliged to require
a police officer to issue a fine for cruelty” (BSPA, 1886, p. 124). In order that as many offences as possible were punished the SPA organized the awarding of bonuses “to law enforcement officers who were zealous in their application of the laws and regulations governing cruelty to animals” (BSPA, 1876, p. 364). Thus the bulletin of the society would publish lists of the police officers to whom they had awarded bonuses, which were calculated by counting the number of breaches of the Grammont Law they had dealt with.

Later, from 1881 onward, the SPA adopted the British model and financed a team of uniformed inspectors who patrolled the streets of the French capital. They recruited individuals with qualities not normally associated with respectable members of the SPA: successful applicants needed not only to be experienced around horses, but also be “perfectly prepared to respond to carters in their own language, to be able to intimidate them despite their bravado, to tackle them physically, and not to be put off by anything in the course of taming these savage beasts” (BSPA, 1879, quoted in Pierre, 1998, p. 260). The number of inspectors in both the “repression department” and the “inspection department” was constantly on the increase. Nevertheless, [shouted an SPA official at a meeting] “in 1884-1885 ten inspectors is not enough. At least twenty are needed, one per arrondissement. It is now the second highest item of expenditure, along with awards” (BSPA, 1885, p. 34). In fact, from then onward the combined budgets for the “repression department” and the “inspection department” – including salaries, bonuses and uniforms – took up an ever-increasing proportion of spending on animal welfare.

Thus, the legal effectiveness of the Grammont Law was for a long time one of the major preoccupations of animal welfare campaigners, who regularly monitored and commented on the way the courts applied the law, and tended to closely associate the defense of their cause with a substantial advance in the law. Thus the sentences handed out in animal welfare cases came to be regarded as an indicator of how the cause was progressing, and something which activists could be proud of.

There have been over 950 offences committed under the provisions of the Grammont Law. We firmly believe that this figure will fall until the day, the day we are looking forward to, when, as a result to the impact of our doctrines on public morality, the law will no longer be needed because cruelty [toward animals] will have stopped. (BSPA, 1883, p. 138)

On the plus side, this year there have been far fewer contraventions than in previous years, which is clear proof that abuse and cruelty are in decline. (BSPA, 1904, p. 180)
Generally speaking, the estimation of the evolution in the number of members of campaigning organizations constitutes a particularly tricky exercise. Indeed, the researcher can never be sure of the accuracy of the figures at his disposal (methodical count or approximation? Actual or inflated membership count?). Moreover, and it is the case here, the information available may be far from complete. Throughout the 19th century mention of the total membership numbers only appear in SPA bulletins irregularly and fortuitously: in a president’s speech, a secretary general’s report, in the counting of subscription charges contributing to the income of the organization, etc. Despite the fact that the information gathered is incomplete and of questionable reliability, a number of conclusions may be drawn from it.

Although the long-term trend was that the number of members steadily rose, there were periods when membership dropped. Aside from the quantitative aspect of these variations, the significant turnover of activists – namely the constant flux of those who join, stay in, and leave – should not be forgotten (Fillieule, 2005). As it happens, as we shall see below, the sociological profile of SPA activist membership, as well as that of the wider animal welfare movement, changed radically.

Secondly, in the 19th century the SPA was not a mass movement. Its leadership only became preoccupied with maximizing recruitment at the beginning of the 20th century, and then in order to make changes which we will examine below.
Assisting the authorities

The earliest animal welfare organizations, whose membership was made up of highly respectable and prominent personalities, certainly did not need the support of large numbers of activists to obtain the ear of the public authorities. Throughout the 19th century animal welfare campaigners concentrated on exploiting their connections within the political decision-making elite. We have already mentioned how in Britain there were close ties between the RSPCA and the nobility, the judiciary, the clergy and members of Parliament. In France proximity to the authorities may be inferred from the fact that from 1845 onward “from the time of its formation the SPA was authorized to hold meetings in the Paris Town Hall” (BSPA, 1904, p. 56). Furthermore, as we have noted, the French SPA, like its British counterpart, had a team of inspectors, which amounted to a private police force authorized to assist the official forces of order in a domain which was, in principle, under the control of the state. Registered as a charity in 1861, the SPA also managed to extend its influence into the public administration two other key domains: agriculture and public education.

In 1876, the SPA award-giving program obtained the official support of the Ministry of Agriculture and Trade (BSPA, 1876, p. 226). Moreover, the animal welfare organization received an annual grants from this ministry, and from the Ministry of Education (BSPA, 1875, p. 150). It is worth stressing the privileged relations the SPA enjoyed within the ministry which formulated national education policy: they go a long way to explaining how the earliest animal protectionists managed to exert considerable influence on a number of political decisions which had a transformative effect on French society. The close natural affinities between the SPA and those who administered the education system were to do with the obsession with pedagogy which was characteristic of European animal welfare activists throughout the 19th century. As early as 1855 Dr. Blatin recommended “the formation of a propaganda committee whose mission would be to influence the minds of children, either by arousing interest in our cause among schoolmasters and primary school teachers, or by spreading our doctrines in the many useful collections of articles, published with a view to entertaining and instructing the young” (BSPA, 1855, p. 40). From that time onward, the urgent necessity to distribute pedagogical materials suitable for the younger generations would become a recurrent theme in discussions among SPA activists.

In fact, the kind of instruction which enables men to make a living and prosper through work can sometimes become dangerous when it
is not moderated and completed by, and above all directed toward the cultivation of goodness by education. Current teaching does not include a program for education of this kind; and the cultivation of the heart is left up to the good faith and spontaneous initiatives of individual primary school teachers. It is therefore important to ensure that we obtain the cooperation of these men, who are entrusted with the development of our children’s hearts. It is for this reason that we have recently sent round a circular to all the schools affiliated to our organization in which, after summarizing our doctrines and principles, we explain that a prize will be given each year to the pupil who has best put into practice these doctrines and principles. Our circular is accompanied by a poster on which there is the text of the Grammont Law and the conditions which must be fulfilled in order to be eligible for the prize we are offering. We would like this poster to prominently displayed in the school all the year round. (BSPA, 1875, p. 150)

By sowing the seeds of zoophilia in children’s hearts we will reap the harvest in the hearts of men. There is no surer method of improving humanity. (BSPA, 1933, p. 28)

Many different methods were employed to reach this crucial objective. Firstly, the SPA offered special subscription rates to people who worked with children: while most members paid 10 francs, “for clergymen, ministers of recognized religions, primary school teachers and schools the subscription charge is reduced to 5 francs” (BSPA, 1875, cover page). Furthermore, discussions at SPA meetings often centered on defining the didactic strategies best suited to influencing the children. In 1858, “the conclusions of the report, beautifully written by the Countess of Corneillan, [express] the wish that nursery schools be provided with prints and books which would encourage the love of animals”: three years later a member of the SPA, curious to know if these recommendations had been acted upon, visited several Paris nursery schools and was concerned when he found no materials of this kind. The response to this unsatisfactory state of affairs was immediate: “it would be desirable if Monsieur Hachette [a school textbook publisher], who is one of our members, would be good enough to modify these materials, which he publishes. If he agreed, a committee could be given the task of deciding on the content of the replacement materials” (BSPA, 1861, pp. 117-118). These attempts to influence the educational establishment seemed to have been a success: in the second third of the 19th century the French SPA and the administrators of the national education system worked together very
closely. Victor Duruy, who was Minister of Education from 1863 to 1869, introduced animal welfare into the training of primary school teachers, and demonstrated his favorable attitude to the animal welfare organization in a number of ways: the purchase of multiple copies of animal welfare textbooks, the establishment of awards for teachers who were particularly zealous in the promotion of the cause, and the inclusion of a letter from the SPA in a collection of administrative acts (Pierre, 1998, p. 535). Later, in 1871, Claude Auguste Valette, Chief Inspector of Education, became president of the SPA and managed to recruit two education ministers to the society (Pierre, 1998, pp. 113 and 178). Furthermore, and even more importantly, the message of SPA doctrines was widely relayed by French schoolteachers, who quickly adopted pedagogical devices similar to those used by the British Bands of Mercy.14

Every year we hear of schoolchildren forming new animal welfare organizations. One primary school teacher found a clever name for them: the little league for the public good. Statistical inventories are sent to us which clearly show the number of bird’s nests which are protected by these societies, the numbers of chicks which have survived and flown away, as well as how many have been stolen from the nests […]. There are so many of these zealous protectors of animals that, in several schools, the teacher, having promised prizes for the most deserving children, has felt obliged to have the children draw lots, as all of them appeared to be deserving. (BSPA, 1875, p. 185)

Societies for animal welfare in schools: influenced by our doctrines, a certain number of schoolteachers, who were members of our society, organized the pupils in their schools into animal protection societies. Their example was followed by other teachers who, though not members of our group, nonetheless contributed to the spreading of its doctrines. We cannot encourage the development of this propaganda network enough. The formation of societies for the protection of animals in schools will not only help our principles to be applied, it will also serve to teach the children, from an early age, the duties and benefits of cooperation. From

14 In 1875, British evangelists, soon followed in 1882 by a similar American group, organized Bands of Mercy, groups of children who were invited to work for animal welfare in order to promote Christian morality. According to Catherine Smithies, the founder of the first Band of Mercy: “the teaching of children to be kind and merciful to God’s lower creatures is preparing the way for the gospel of Christ” (quoted in Li, 2000, p. 8).
childhood they will be accustomed to work in groups to carry out joint projects for the greater good of the nation. (BSPA, 1876, p. 166)

At its annual award-giving ceremony the SPA set up two prizes: a special prize for primary school teachers who had introduced the teaching of animal welfare in their schools, as well as the Grosselin prize for children: “the winner, who was aged 8, received a bronze medal and 25 francs put in a savings account, the 2nd and 3rd placed children were given 15 francs and 10 francs respectively, also put in savings accounts” (BSPA, 1875, p. 190). As well-informed pedagogues, the SPA leadership also make every effort to increase awareness of their cause among children by encouraging the emulation of virtuous conduct: “as well as the normal Society for the Protection of Animals awards, every year a special prize is given to a pupil of one of the schools involved in our good works, who is nominated by his schoolmates for his exceptional gentleness toward animals. This year there were twenty candidates for the prize” (BSPA, 1876, p. 387).

The SPA’s various schools initiatives received staunch support from a succession of Education ministers: “in the lists of award-winners were schoolteachers and pupils, nominated by school inspectors who, in 1896, received reports directly from the SPA regarding how many candidates each school had put forward, and containing the information necessary for their application to be properly examined” (BSPA, 1904, p. 220). In 1881, the president of the SPA requested and obtained the support of Jules Ferry, the Minister of Education, for the project of having the Grammont Law displayed in every school (Pierre, 1998, pp. 533-534). Fourteen years later close relations with the public authorities had been maintained:

[T]he Ministry of Education [the secretary general of the SPA is happy to announce] has consented to contributing to the delivery costs of the 40,000 Grammont Law posters which were sent to every primary school teacher in France. The Ministry of Agriculture authorized that the posters be printed on official paper at the national printing works. (BSPA, 1895, p. 217)

Given the generally favorable attitude toward the SPA among the teaching profession it is likely that a significant proportion of new members recruited at the beginning of the 1880 were schoolteachers (see Graph 2). The importance attached to this rise in membership was reflected in the fact that the detailed account of recent recruitment published in the SPA bulletin included a special column dedicated to the primary schoolteachers
and the schools who had rallied to the cause. In fact the doctrines of the SPA seem to have been entirely incorporated into the demopedic mission which French republicans conferred on the country’s “brave army” of primary school teachers. Thus, Chapter 4 of Alfred Mézières’s textbook *Éducation morale et instruction civique à l’usage des écoles primaires* (Moral and civic education for the use of primary schools) outlines men’s duties toward animals, and explains to children the contents of the Grammont Law as well as the mission of the SPA:

> It is said that at your age you have no pity children [the author writes]. You are certainly without pity when you are ignorant. If you were aware of the harm that your actions cause, you would not commit them. If you think for a moment that animals are sensitive, that they suffer like you, they love like you, then you will not dream for a moment of pulling a little bird’s wings off, of breaking the eggs that you find in a bird’s nest, or of depriving mothers of the children they are raising. You will do some soul-searching. You will remember that you too are afraid of suffering, of loneliness, of being abandoned. (Mézières, 1883, p. 89)

Following three chapters about duties to oneself, to the body and to the soul, the “elementary morality” lessons advocated gentleness toward animals with a view to molding a citizen who masters himself, demonstrates self-control, does not allow himself to behave with intemperance, and is in control of his conduct, his emotions and his passions (Déloye, 1994, pp. 88-89). This widespread appropriation of animal welfare by the pedagogues of the Republic undoubtedly modified the significance and the influence of the original demopedic register advocated by elites, who were far more conservative. The animal welfare movement, which had initially been preoccupied with controlling popular violence, was co-opted by advocates of a republican civic order constituted by morally autonomous and responsible citizens. This meant that the integration of animal welfare into the program of moral instruction in the Republic’s compulsory education system inevitably had a major impact on the evolution of the sensibilities of the French population over several generations, making shameful certain behaviors which children had indulged in and which, over time, would be made to appear increasingly “monstrous” (pulling birds’ wings off, destroying eggs found in birds’ nests, etc.).