

“L’Affaire Pasteur” Prompts Canadian Outcry

A decision to publish three Pasteur Institute journals in English is denounced as a blow to French culture. The institute now plans a new journal—in French—summarizing the contents of the three.

GALLIC PRIDE took it on the chin last month when scientists from one of France's former colonies accused their European colleagues of promoting Anglo-Saxon imperialism. Their alleged crime: proposing to publish three French scientific journals entirely in English.

The decision to take English titles was made by the editorial board of three journals published by the Institut Pasteur in Paris. Currently known as the *Annales de l'Institut Pasteur Virology*, *Immunology*, and *Microbiology*, respectively, according to their content, the journals will in future be known as *Research in*. . . .

The decision went relatively unnoticed in France, where most scientists are now prepared to accept English as the international language of science. But not so in French-speaking Canada, where the language question is highly sensitive.

“People have the impression here that France is not fighting for the protection of French culture,” says Michel Bergeron, chairman of the Department of Physiology at the University of Montreal and North American editor of the French-language journal *Médecine-Sciences*.

“What is particularly sad is that they have erased the name of Pasteur [from the title],” says Bergeron. “Pasteur belongs to the world, and to forbid French in the magazine founded by him, it would be like preventing Pavarotti from singing in Italian at La Scala in Milan.”

Perhaps so. But over the past few years, French scientists have become increasingly international in their outlook, and most of them have come to accept English as the lingua franca of the scientific community. All science undergraduates are expected to learn the language—many take postgraduate training in the United States deliberately in order to do so—and English is now widely used as the working language in many French laboratories, particularly those that have foreign research students or visiting fellows.

The French government has tried to check this process. Soon after the socialists came to power in 1981, for example, research minis-

ter Jean-Pierre Chevènement issued a directive that state-funded scientists taking part in international conferences should deliver their papers in French—even though they were subsequently allowed to answer questions on the paper in English!

But French scientists are not following their government's lead. Many now see the Anglicization of French science as an inevitable process. They point out that tradition-

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ally there has always been one common language for international communication among scientists. For many centuries, this was Latin, the language in which Newton is said to have conversed with Voltaire; today it's English.

Nevertheless there remain fierce pockets of resistance. Groups ranging from the prestigious Académie Française, the traditional protector of the purity of the French language, to the Canadian-

French Association for the Advancement of Science, have banded together to protest the actions of the Institut Pasteur.

The institute's transgression was first flagged by a French-speaking Canadian hydrologist, Andre Drapeau, of the Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal. Drapeau says he decided to go public with his complaints when he was asked to revise a paper initially submitted in French and was sent a new (English only) version of the journal's guide

to authors. The new instructions urged contributors to submit their papers in English “to reach a wider audience.”

A covering letter from editorial director Jerri Bram added that it was envisaged that, at some point in the future, only papers in English would be published, a decision “necessitated by a desire to become truly international.”

Officials at the Institut Pasteur have produced figures showing that in 1988, out of a total of 249 manuscripts received, only 6% were written in French—even though 50% came from Francophone countries. Furthermore, according to the institute's director, Maxime Schwartz, about 90% of the articles published in both 1987 and 1988 were in English.

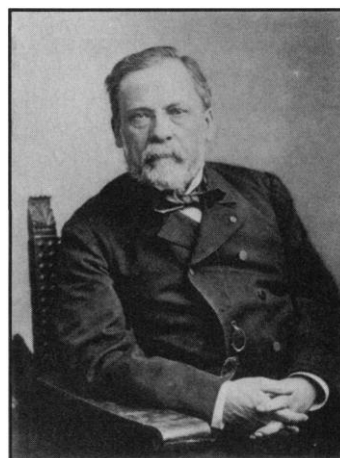
Justifying the adoption of an English title, the editor of the virology journal, Pierre Bureau of the rabies laboratory at the Institut Pasteur, points out that “at least ten French scientific journals have changed their name from a French title to an English title over the past year.”

But Canadian Drapeau, who says he has been fighting for more than 20 years to maintain a French scientific language, criticizes French scientists for giving in too easily to international pressures. Drapeau argues that he has “nothing against English, it is an excellent language.” But French, he says, “must at least stay in the race; after all, there is an Olympic spirit in cultural affairs, just as there is an Olympic spirit in other activities.”

“It is an Anglo-Saxon point of view to say that science is universal and that the language of scientific communication should be English because of that,” says Drapeau. For example, he claims that French-speaking scientists often do not take the trouble to invent a French neologism for a new scientific concept, but “merely borrow the English term, which becomes rapidly absorbed into the language.”

A letter from Drapeau to the French newspaper *Le Monde* provoked widespread media coverage and critical comment on both sides of the Atlantic. The French daily headlined one article on the affair “Anglomaniac,” while a Montreal columnist wrote that “the scientific community here is not abandoning ship as easily as the French.”

Pasteur Institute director Schwartz last week issued a statement confirming the decision to change the name of the



Louis Pasteur

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three journals into English. He said it was made on the grounds that the institute wanted them to appear as "international journals."

Schwartz argued that a French title "makes it appear that the contents are also in that language," while the inclusion of the name of the Institut Pasteur in the title "gives the impression that they are internal reviews of an institution, only publishing work which is carried out at that institution."

However, Schwartz described as a "misunderstanding" suggestions that in future the journals would only publish papers in English. All three would "continue to accept articles in French," he said.

This will go some way to bring the journal into line with an increasingly common practice in the European scientific publishing world, which is to aim to carry the majority of articles in English, but to accept publication of a few articles in languages such as French or German.

"It is better if the normal good scientific paper is published in English," says Guy Ourisson, director of the Institute of Chemistry of Natural Substances of the National Center for Scientific Research and editor of the chemistry journal *Tetrahedron*. "But of course, if a paper is exceptionally good, the language it is written in does not matter," he says.

In the meantime, the publicity surrounding the whole affair means that it has taken on a broader political significance. At a recent preparatory meeting in Paris for a summit of the Francophone countries due to take place in Senegal next month, the Canadian environment minister (and former ambassador to Paris) Louis Bouchard expressed his "disappointment, concern, indeed almost discouragement" at what was referred to as the "affaire de l'Institut Pasteur." He described the institute's proposals for changing the name of the journal into English as "absurd."

The French government, sensitive to the claim that it should be doing more to defend the French language as part of the country's cultural heritage, has now stepped in to regain some of its lost honor.

After discussions with the government, Pasteur director Schwartz announced that the institute would shortly be publishing a new journal—entirely in French. Known as *Annales de l'Institut Pasteur: notes, débats et résumés*, this will contain both original articles and a summary of all papers and articles appearing in the other three journals. According to institute officials, a government grant to help offset the cost of publishing the new journal is being sought.

■ DAVID DICKSON

Gramm-Rudman Avoided, for Now

The budget agreement reached last week between the White House and the congressional leadership may be good news for researchers who rely on the federal government for funds. If it sticks, the agreement will put off for another year the threat of the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings deficit-reduction machine, the fiscal chain saw that is poised to lop large chunks off the 1990 federal budget—including the new growth proposed for many federal science programs.

There had been talk in Congress earlier this year of simply giving up on producing a 1990 budget and letting Gramm-Rudman do its work in cutting federal spending across the board. In an effort to squelch that idea, House Budget Committee chairman Leon Panetta (D-CA) sent a letter to his colleagues on 20 March, spelling out the consequences. For some science programs, they would be devastating: \$2.8 billion would be lopped off the \$12.2 billion requested for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the National Science Foundation would see its budget request plummet from \$2.17 billion to about \$1.8 billion, and the general science programs funded by the Department of Energy would end up with about \$900 million—nearly \$300 million less than the amount requested.

The agreement reached last week sketches the broad outlines of the fiscal 1990 budget, penciling in the totals that Congress will appropriate—and that the Administration will accept—for defense, domestic programs, and foreign affairs. On paper, at least, it would bring the federal deficit next year down to \$99.4 billion, a shade under the \$100-billion limit set by Gramm-Rudman and a whopping \$60 billion less than this year's estimated deficit.

The totals will now be incorporated into a budget resolution that is expected to be endorsed by Congress. Then the appropriations committees will get to fight out the details of how much each individual program will receive. It is there that the fine print of the R&D budget will be written. Although the threat of automatic Gramm-Rudman cuts has receded, science programs still face a tough time.

The agreement provides for a total of \$157.5 billion for all so-called discretionary domestic programs. This includes the entire \$23.3 billion proposed for civilian R&D in the Reagan and Bush budgets; together with a lot of politically popular programs in areas such as housing, education, and health. As Representative Vic Fazio (D-CA) put it at a AAAS symposium on the R&D budget last week, "science is competing with the disadvantaged" for its share of the budget. Moreover, as Robert Reischauer, the director of the Congressional Budget Office, pointed out, science programs stand out because they constitute about the only areas of growth in the discretionary part of the budget. The combination of prominence and stiff competition "is likely to dampen any increase in the science and R&D budget," he warned.

The \$157.5 billion agreed to last week is about \$5 billion more than the amount included in the Reagan and Bush budgets, however, so the competition will at least be slightly eased. Some of the additional funds came from shaving a little off the total proposed for defense.

The budget agreement has not exorcized the Gramm-Rudman demon entirely—only put it off for another year. The deal includes no significant new taxes and does not curb growth in expenditures on pensions and other "entitlement programs." Moreover, many of the devices used to shrink the projected 1990 deficit below \$100 billion—such as selling off federal assets, taking the Postal Service off the budget, and shifting some farm support payments into fiscal 1989—will not affect the 1991 deficit. Gramm-Rudman, which requires the deficit to shrink below \$64 billion in 1991, will clearly be looming over next year's budget as well.

Robert Grady, the newly appointed assistant director of the Office of Management and Budget who is responsible for the budgets of most nonmedical civilian science programs, told the AAAS symposium that "we are not investing enough in science and technology." But he warned that the budget trends over the next few years indicate that "we are going to be gobbled up" by increases in entitlement programs.

Grady also told the audience, which consisted mostly of researchers and research managers, "you in this community are being outlobbied by senior citizens, environmental groups, and others, and I don't think that's healthy." Said Fazio, "we don't get a lot of cards and letters from home about the need to support research."

■ COLIN NORMAN