The SEPL, History of a reflection society at the service of the common good of the Lyon area

The city of Lyon in the 19th century:

An economic side :

      • The silk trade generates wealth that allows the city to innovate and industrialize.

      • New activities are born: electricity, mechanics, chemistry and textiles.

      • This is the "The beautiful era" of the Lyon industry.

A social side :

• Social and political struggles, resulting in severe control of successive regimes.

• A culture of secrecy develops within clubs or associations of notables, where modern ideas   are diffused.

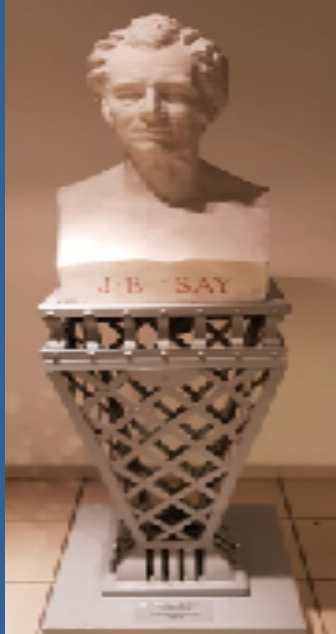• Charities and fraternal benefit societies are also being established.

Renowned persons who inspired the SEPL :

- **J.-M. JACQUARD :** *He was a French inventor, who created a programmable mechanical loom called Jacquard loom*

- **Pr DAMETH :** *A well-known author who has notably written on the subject of the Socialist Movement and political economy*

- **J.-B. SAY :** *The leading French classical economist*

- **E. FLOTARD** *: A French politician*

- **H. GERMAIN :** *Henri Germain, banker and founder in the nineteenth century Credit Lyonnais and French politician.*

- **A. COURTOIS :** *a politician murdered in January 1944 under German occupation*

- **F.-B. ARLES-DUFOUR : He** *was a humanist, a Lyon pro-European businessman and one of the main Saint-Simonians*

Jean-Baptiste SAY :

- Born in Lyon in 1767
- Senior French Classical Economist
- First member of the chair of political economy of the Collège de France
- Author of the law of outlets highlighting the importance of production in the balance of markets.

F.-B. ARLES-DUFOUR:

- Born in 1797 in Sète
- Commissionaire for the silk
- President of the Lyon Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- One of the main Saint-Simonians
- Initiator of the Lyon-Paris, Suez Canal, Crédit-Lyonnais railway

The creation of the SEPL:

- It is in this context that the SEPL was born on February 22, 1866.

- Free Review and Open Discussion Society, its members meet periodically to discuss issues of political economy.

- Without status or regulation, custom has shaped the physiology of society since.

• The SEPL is built with a certain degree of Saint-Simonism. Confidence in the future and progress are the pillars.

• It is in the Great Industry that its members see the condition of happiness, freedom and emancipation.

• The ideal tends towards "the exploitation of the globe by association".

• The company has an office, meeting twice a month or more to organize the discussions. These take shape during lunch-debates or conferences organized several times a year.

• Fundamental principle: everyone is free to express his ideas freely.

• The discussions are synthesized in an annual report.

- Among the first members of the SEPL, we can find a majority of members of the Bar. The others are largely financiers or traders.

- These members set up a mentoring system: former bosses guide new leaders in their quest for innovation.

Hosts of Honor invited to the Gala dinner of the SEPL since its creation:
- **Maurice Allais**, an Economic Nobel Prize,
- **Valéry GISCARD d'ESTAING,** former president of the French Republic,
- **Antoine RIBOUD,** founder of the Danone group

More recently, it is also the French politician, philosopher and political scientist **Luc FERRY**, as well as the former president of the European Central Bank **Jean-Claude TRICHET** or **Alain MERIEUX**, a pharmaceutical manufacturer and French politician from Lyon who honored us by their presence.

Brave positions, the example of Count Harcourt:

1941, Lyon is closely watched. Count Robert d'Harcourt organized a conference called "False Contemporary Mystics".

Disassembling The Nazi ideology, he did not hesitate to describe Hitler as "rogue" and "perverse".

He concluded "pessimism is not allowed .... The powers of darkness have their hour, they do not have every hour. The last will be made of clarity."

The role of the SEPL throughout its existence:

• Mission to establish a link between the economic fabric of the city and decision-makers.

• The minutes of the discussions are a contribution to political reflections on future directions.

• The SEPL serves as a "think tank" at the Lyon Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Non-exhaustive list of summary notes of recent years:

2007-2008: strengthen the team work between Lyon and the surrounding cities to create a multipolar metropolis.

2009-2010: strengthening synergies between research and industry in the Lyon metropolis

2013-2014: internationalization of companies in the Lyon region

2015-2016: the emergence of the circular economy: opportunities for businesses in the metropolis

2017-2019: the digital transformation of Lyon companies

Concrete achievements from SEPL reports:

• Opening of Lyon to the freedom of trade (XIX)

• Development of river freight on the Rhone (20th century)

• Creation of the port Edouard Herriot (XXème)

• Creation and implementation of the Lyon Metropolis (XXI)

Today

Governance and partners

Lunch debates

How are family businesses reinventing themselves?

Digitization of a country, digitization of a company, the Consul and the company director's points of view.

Conferences

France facing economic challenges

Succeed and anticipate your business transfer

An active Think Tank

Digital transformation and dynamic human resources

Publication of a white paper

The SEPL, 153 years at the service of the development of Lyon and its region.

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