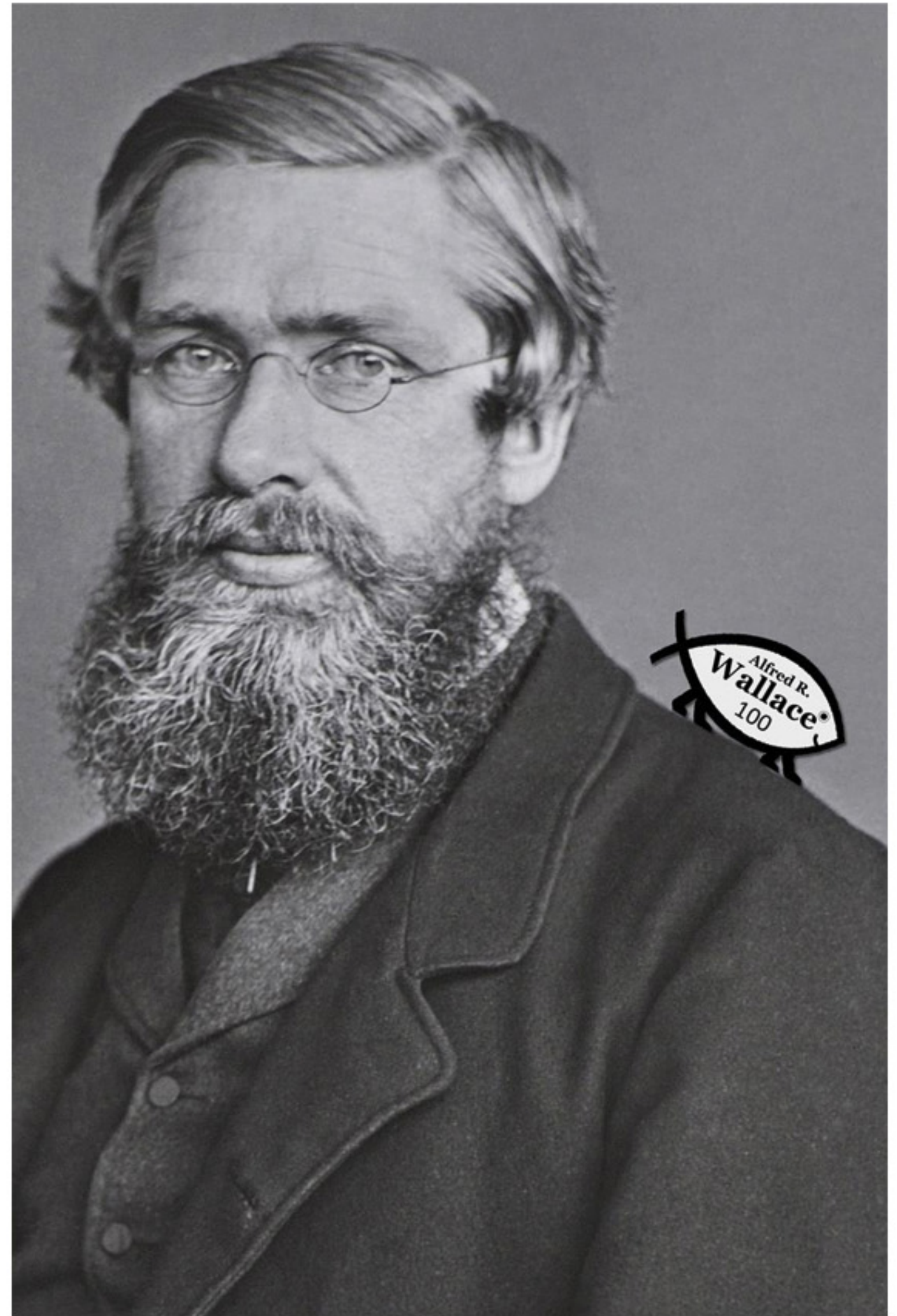


Alfred Russel Wallace: An early champion of women's rights

In his 1859 book *On the Origin of Species*, Charles Darwin argues that “all animals and plants have descended from some one prototype”. In none of the book's six editions does he refer to this common ancestor as being an animal-like hermaphrodite with male and female gonads, as Kimberly Hamlin suggests in her book on Darwinian feminism, *From Eve to Evolution* (reviewed in *Nature* **509**, 424; 2014). Hamlin writes, for example, that “the possibility of a hermaphroditic past ... opened up a new world of gendered possibilities”.

It was the co-discoverer of natural selection, Alfred Russel Wallace, who was a public advocate of women's rights. As reported in *The Times* on 11 February 1909, he wrote: “All the human inhabitants of any one country should have equal rights and liberties before the law; women are human beings; therefore they should have votes as well as men.”



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