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THE leaders of international socialism who had risen to eminence about the end of the last century seem to have included quite a number of really remarkable and even uncommonly big men. Amongst those I have myself known well, I will mention only the German August Bebel, the Austrian Victor Adler, the Swede Hjalmar Branting. To those militant members of the Socialist International who, like myself, were still under thirty when the World War broke out, they may have seemed even bigger than they were. The question is open to argument, and will probably not be settled until a good deal more historical perspective has been gained. But Jean Jaurès, who belonged to that generation, is in a class by himself.

Whenever the mental image of Jean Jaurès flashes across my mind, no matter how transiently and hazily, I experience a kind of feeling that I can compare only with the sudden widening of the "inner" angle of vision by which one subconsciously prepares oneself to look, say, at a mountain, after having looked at ordinary-sized things or beings. I have found that many men who have known Jaurès, even amongst those who were hardly younger than he, experience a similar feeling. One of them once expressed it by telling me that to him Jaurès seems to have been the last living representative of an extinct race of giants.

Of course, that feeling is founded on a sense of spiritual, not of physical, qualities. Yet, in the physical appearance of Jaurès, there was nothing to contradict that impression. True, he was only middle-sized, and his sturdy build, broad chest, and big bearded head sometimes made him appear rather smaller. But there was something in the *tout ensemble* that, even physically, seemed appropriate to fill a much bigger space, just as a "reduced" drawing of, say, a Michael Angelo statue, calls for an enlarged scale of vision. Perhaps the upward tilt of the head had something to do with it—for Jaurès usually carried his head

thrown backward on his steer-like neck, as if he were gazing at a distant region far above the horizon. May be, also, the powerful range of his voice even in ordinary conversation—and the impression of uncommon physical strength and energy he gave one. Furthermore, his attitude denoted, to an extraordinary degree, aloofness from irrelevant things and equally extreme awareness of big things, as if he filled a much larger "lifespace," as the Germans say, than ordinary mortals.

But these are the things which made me say that in his appearance and bearing there was nothing to contradict the "outsize" impression; yet in the main, that impression must have rested on something else. To put it in a nutshell, I should say it was the feeling that he seemed to radiate thoughts that represented something much bigger than the mere output of a single brain, something much more perennial, too, than the contents of a single life-span—something human rather than individual, something connected with mankind as a whole rather than with a particular person.

On second thought, I feel that the word "radiate" fits the essential idea I wanted to convey: Jaurès struck one, not as a man who "produced" or "had" ideas, but as a man in whom ideas were alive and active, a carrier less than an embodiment. And perhaps one should say, not "ideas," but "an idea"; and this would go a step further to explain the amazing impression of bodily and spiritual identity that connects the image of his personality with the feeling of a super-personal size.

To understand the full meaning of this, however, one must try to define, in concrete terms, what one might call the actual contents of Jaurès' mind, or, in other words, the peculiar quality of his socialism.

To describe that fitly, I think there is no better way than to call him "the humanistic socialist." A man like Bebel, who at one time faced Jaurès as the typical representative of "German" as opposed to "French" socialism, indisputably incarnated the mind of a class and of a big national party; but where Bebel embodied a class, Jaurès embodied a nation; and where Bebel represented a party, which after all stood but for a moment in a long

historical process, Jaurès represented a civilisation—the mind, or at least the result of the workings of the mind, of many generations of men. And we shall see presently to what extent he was inspired by the belief in the oneness of human values and socialist aims, arising from a still more fundamental belief in the oneness of all things, cosmic and human.

He was at the same time a leader and a thinker. And he was a thinker before he became a leader. The story of his life is essentially that of a man who, having reached the highest level of human culture to which his epoch could give access, tried to make socialism the application of the postulates of this culture to the condition of his time.

Jaurès was born in 1859 in Castres, a small town in the south of France. His family belonged to the local *bourgeoisie*, of small wealth but high respectability, and with strong strains of peasant blood. Among his relatives higher education was the rule, and quite a few rose to eminent positions in liberal professions and the public service. His brother and two other relatives were admirals in the French Navy.

Jaurès' father died early, leaving very little fortune, and Jean might have had some difficulty in pursuing his studies to the end, if he had not been helped along by a series of scholarships as an "exceptionally brilliant pupil." This took him right up to the *École Normale Supérieure*, the super-University where the French Republic gives the most promising of her sons, picked out by competition and supported by scholarships, what is probably the most intensive classical and philosophical education that can be acquired anywhere. The *Normale* is practically the training school for prospective University professors of the Literary and Philosophical Faculties. At the age of twenty-four, Jaurès thus found himself what amounts to a "don" at the University of Toulouse, where he specialized in the teaching of Plato's philosophy.

But Jaurès obviously was something more than a brilliant scholar. What saved him from being nurtured to death on the hotbeds of the French academic system, with its super-intensive and unilateral methods of intellectual

training, was something more than his exceptional intelligence and what one of his friends called his "monstrous" memory. For all his scholarly zeal and concentration, Jaurès was not born to be a book-worm. The all-devouring curiosity that drove him arose from what he once himself termed his *appétit de vivre*—his "life-hunger." One must have accompanied Jaurès on walks or travels to know how immediately and intensively he reacted to the outer world. He "took everything in" to an amazing degree, whether it was a picture in a museum, a trembling leaf above a brook or a human incident in the streets.

He once pleaded guilty to being nothing but a *paysan cultivé*—a cultured peasant. And indeed, he was primarily a peasant—a peasant with a poet's soul. The chief quality that made him—by general admission—the greatest orator of France was fundamentally poetic. The strength of what psychologists would call his "verbo-motor impulses" exactly corresponded to the strength of his innate instincts and emotions. And this explains why, even in his highest oratorical flights, and in spite of the "latin" abundance of metaphors and classical reminiscences he often indulged in, he never gave one the least impression of priggishness or "oiliness." There was no trace of cant or *cliché* about his eloquence, just as there was no trace of sentimentalism about his emotional raptures.

His sense of humour had no kinship with what the French call *esprit*, a quality bred of court-gossip and drawing-room repartee. It might rather be described as Shakespearian, and I might almost say plebeian, in the sense in which everything fundamentally human flows from sources common to all people.

For all his idealism, he undoubtedly had what the French call *malice paysanne*—peasant shrewdness—and he knew how to make the best of it when dealing with a difficult audience or with the intricacies of a tactical situation. But even where his intuition thus helped him to "adapt" himself to a situation, this adaptation never appeared as if he were sheltering behind something that was not really and fundamentally himself. Even where he used tactics, it all happened above board. For he then showed but a few of the many sides of an amazingly comprehensive

personality, yet without thereby showing anything that was not genuinely his own.

From the beginning of his career, Jaurès' urge toward verbal self-expression and combativeness in the service of ideas drove him to political activity. In 1885, at the age of twenty-six, he stood for Parliament in his native district and was elected a member of the Chamber of Deputies. He took his seat on the left of the House, as an advanced liberal, but without joining a party. Between that time and 1902, he was alternately beaten and re-elected at successive elections, so that on the whole he spent about half of those fifteen years as a deputy and the other half as a professor, and, incidentally, as an alderman of the city of Toulouse and a regular contributor to the well-known radical daily *la Dépêche*. From 1902 until his death in 1914, he was re-elected a deputy at each poll.

During the first term of his parliamentary career, he slowly developed from a man with general political ideas into a man with special political and economic knowledge. At first he spoke only on academic topics such as the educational system ; but he soon discovered the importance of social and economic questions. He studied them so earnestly that from the third year of his term he succeeded in impressing the Chamber not only by his eloquence as a speaker and debater, but also by his competence as an authority on social problems.

At the same time, he evolved from a *bourgeois* radical into a socialist labourite. In 1890, he publicly announced his adhesion to socialism. This attitude was emphasized by the energetic way in which he supported the strike of the miners of the neighbouring Carmaux district in 1893, which was one of the outstanding social struggles of that early period in French trade unionism.

As a socialist deputy, Jaurès played an authoritative part in most of the great parliamentary debates of the nineties, such as those that exposed the financial corruption of a large section of politics after the so-called Panama scandal. It was not until 1898, however, when the Dreyfus case began to capture public attention, that Jaurès rose to national eminence.

The heroic struggles of those times, which re-determined



the grouping of the main political forces in France down almost to the present day, also crystallized the position of Jaurès both as the chief representative of the "Left" with regard to the country at large and as the leader of a particular tendency in the labour movement with regard to the Socialist Party.

The "*Affaire Dreyfus*" practically brought about the birth of Jaurèsism, which to this day puts its peculiarly national stamp on French republicanism and socialism.

The opposite tendency was Guesdism, so named after Jules Guesde, the leader of the *Parti Ouvrier* that competed with the *Parti Socialiste*. Guesde was practically responsible for the introduction of Marxism into France. A particularly extreme and uncompromising kind of Marxism at that, since the Marxist conception of the class struggle could not be popularized in France without putting an exceptionally strong emphasis on its opposition to *bourgeois* democracy. France being a country of peasants, artisans and *petits bourgeois* rather than of industrial workers, and French socialism having arisen from the first as a continuation of the *bourgeois* revolutionary movements of 1789, 1830, and 1848, Marxism could not have been born but elsewhere. As soon as it began to be imported into France, it appeared that its growth was practically limited to the few regions with a developed factory system, such as the mining and textile districts of the Nord and the Pas-de-Calais. These hotbeds of French industrialism were also the hotbeds of Guesdist socialism.

In most of the rest of France, however, conditions were different. They made socialism appear less as a class attitude of the proletariat than as the general concern of all those who wished the maxim of 1789 "*Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*" made as true with regard to the domination of the rich as it had been made true with regard to the domination of the nobility and the clergy. As the miners and factory hands of the industrial north listened to the new watchword of the class struggle, the artisans, peasants and intellectuals in France at large continued to respond to the old watchwords of "*Republican defence*," Democracy and the Rights of Man. To them, socialism meant an idea, common to all the true heirs of France's old revolu-

tionary tradition ; to the Guesdists, it embodied the economic interest and the political will-to-power of a new class of society. In order to make the proletariat class-conscious, the Guesdists felt compelled to denounce the democratic, humanistic and idealistic conception of socialism as a "*petit bourgeois* deviation," a snare to entrap the workers into fighting the battles of their class enemies, an illusion to be exposed in the light of the materialistic conception of history.

Nowhere more than in France, therefore, was the dual soul of socialism, as a humanistic idea adopted by a proletarian class, to appear as a living antithesis, which had to manifest itself in its full strength before any kind of synthesis could be successfully attempted.

Jaurès' task was to be, first to affirm the antithesis to Guesdist Marxism, and then to bring about its absorption into a new synthesis.

The clash reached its climax over the Dreyfus case. From the beginning, Guesde had taken the uncompromising position that the fate of an army officer, rightly or wrongly court-martialled as a spy as the result of an anti-Jewish officers' intrigue, was no concern of a workers' party. True, Guesde held that Dreyfus was innocent and that he deserved a new trial, but that, he said, was a private and not a political issue. Socialism, he argued, had nothing to gain by joining the movement that had received its chief impetus from Émile Zola's open letter *J'accuse*. The class-consciousness of the workers could only be confused by a movement that splits, not *bourgeois* and workers, but Dreyfusards and anti-Dreyfusards, republicans and anti-republicans, pacifists and militarists.

Jaurès, however, threw himself heart and soul into the movement for the revision of the Dreyfus case. Socialism to him meant more than a class struggle for the overthrow of capitalism. It necessarily implied, he thought, the defence of the Republic against the reactionary forces of Cæsarism and clericalism, the safeguarding of civil liberties against military authoritarianism, the broadest human solidarity with the victims of any kind of oppression and injustice. Class interest itself does not mean much if it does not identify itself with the claims of justice and human



dignity. Even in a capitalist state, the function of law is not, as the Marxists say, merely to defend capitalism; law is also the means to safeguard certain elementary rights common to all men, such as the right to a fair trial, without any racial or religious bias. Captain Dreyfus, to whom this right had been denied, must therefore cease to be considered as a military servant of the *bourgeois* state; as the victim of an abominable miscarriage of justice, he represents "mankind itself, in the worst state of dejection and despair that imagination can picture." So "we need not be unfaithful to our principles of class action in order to lend our ear to an appeal for pity; we may be revolutionaries without ceasing to be human beings; we need not, in order to remain within the bonds of socialism, free ourselves from the bonds of humanity."

No wonder, therefore, that when Jaurès had to choose a name for the daily paper which the Socialist Party of France launched in 1904 under his directorship, he called it *l'Humanité*. And his first leading article thus justified this title:

"The name of this paper, in all its conciseness, expresses exactly what our party strives for. All socialists work to realize humanity. Humanity hardly exists thus far. It is being frustrated and outraged, within all nations, by class antagonisms, by the unavoidable clash between the interests of a capitalist oligarchy and the working masses, and, between the nations, by the passions of nationalist egoism and chauvinist pride. The task allotted to socialism is to resolve those antagonisms by suppressing the classes through socialisation of the means of production and by making of each nation, restored to its own unity, a constituent part of humanity."

Humanity, after having been the watchword of the antithesis to Guesdist class bigotry, was to become the keyword of the synthesis that ultimately created a united French Socialist Party, devoted at the same time to the interests of the workers and the claims of an ideal of justice for all.

For this is the superiority of the broader humanist view of socialism over the narrower view represented by Guesde's Marxist orthodoxy, that the former could under-

stand and therefore absorb the latter, whilst the narrower view could only be absorbed or remain aloof, but never provide room for the other.

The unification of the various fractions of French socialism, which culminated in April, 1905, in the foundation of the United Socialist Party, was chiefly Jaurès' achievement, because of this broadness of vision. Moreover, it was in the very nature of Jaurèsism to include a fundamental striving towards unity. From his earliest writings on metaphysical problems, Jaurès appears to have considered the universe itself as a "continuous striving towards oneness." His pantheistic optimism was based on the belief that the whole cosmic order meant "unity in the making," a slow but progressive resolution of antagonisms, aimed at oneness between Man and God, mind and matter, nature and civilisation, instinct and reason, just as the meaning of history was to resolve classes and nations into the higher unity of mankind redeemed by socialism.

What Jaurès called his "idealist conception of history," therefore, was meant less as a denial of the truth of the Marxist "materialist" conception of history, than as an attempt to show that it was merely a half-truth, and required insertion into a broader frame. In a series of brilliant academic debates with defenders of the orthodox Marxist faith such as Jules Guesde and Paul Lafargue (Karl Marx's son-in-law), Jaurès outlined these theoretical foundations of his socialist faith. Marx, he argued, was right in emphasizing the importance of technical progress, economic interests and class motives in the making of history. His economic interpretation of history is correct as far as it goes, viz., as far as it gives us the key to the understanding of the growth and decay of capitalism, and generally speaking of all social states based on class hierarchy, as a consequence of the class antagonisms engendered by economic motives. But there is more than that in history, even in the history of socialism. Apart from the causes we see at work in economic developments, we must consider ends that are inherent in the nature of mankind and in the living world at large. There is a perpetual striving for other values than economic values, there is an evolution of ideas that transcends even class interests, because it

represents the need of mankind to understand the world, to grasp truth, to realize equity and unity.

In several volumes devoted to the history of the French Revolution, Jaurès showed that economic motives, important though they were, did not explain away the enormous influence of those individual achievements Thomas Carlyle ascribed to his "heroes," nor the all-permeating action of ideas. Even the French *bourgeoisie*, in preparing its economic revolution, he said, would not have succeeded if it had only had in mind its material interests, if it had not been "inspired by the belief that it was fighting the battles of mankind at large." And in the long process of intellectual fermentation that prepared the Revolution, "philosophy was at work, not only or not even chiefly amongst the oppressed classes, but amongst all, and in favour of social changes that appeared necessary to the conscience of all thinking men before they promised any advantage to a particular class."

Similarly, to-day, "every thought that arises trying to meet the future meets one of the currents of socialist thought." Hence, the big intellectual advantage of the working class is that, alone of all classes, it "has no need of lies," whilst its opponents fight "with the sun of truth blinding their eyes." Hence, moreover, socialism, even in its most revolutionary aspects, is heir to a millenarian tradition of intellectual progress, of which Greek philosophy, mediæval catholicism, Renaissance humanism, eighteenth-century anti-clericalism were but previous stages. Therefore, even the chief intellectual opponent of the French Revolution, Roman Catholicism, viewed as the incarnation of a great historical force that has perhaps not spent all of its creative energy, can be met by socialism "without genuflexion but without anger." Socialism, in short, is nothing but the contemporary form of a perennial movement of humanity towards its self-realisation, its emancipation from primeval fear, age-long ignorance, internecine dissension, the horror of war and the injustice of poverty.

French socialism thus having, according to Plato's image, "taken over the torch" from the hands of the *bourgeois* revolutionaries of 1789, essentially means the

continuation of their task, by transforming political democracy into social and economic democracy.

Applied to the field of political strategy, these principles resulted in the following main postulates, which might be considered the essential tenets of Jaurès' political faith as a party leader :

(1) Socialism, though it naturally appeals in the first place to the industrial working class as the chief victim of capitalist oppression, must extend its appeal to all men, and especially to the peasants, lower middle classes and intellectuals ;

(2) It may never separate its cause from the maintenance and development of the Republic, as the embodiment of the constitutional liberties won in the victory over monarchism, feudalism and clericalism ;

(3) The natural allies of the Socialist Party therefore are those " radicals ", viz. "*bourgeois* democrats," who, without yet agreeing to go so far as social democracy, at least remain faithful to the *défense républicaine*, the maintenance of the Republican and democratic State against the offensive return of Royalism, Cæsarism or Popery ;

(4) In a case of emergency arising out of such a reactionary menace, the solidarity with *bourgeois* republicanism may extend to participation in a coalition government ;

(5) Socialism demands democratic self-government of nations as well as world unity, the Socialist Party therefore must strive for peace whilst accepting the duty of taking part in the defence of democratic nations against aggressive military powers ;

(6) To achieve that double aim, the Socialist Party must demand the organisation of the army on a democratic and defensive basis, viz. the "*nation armée*" as opposed to a professionalized standing army with a long term of service, whilst actively pursuing its opposition to entangling alliances with reactionary powers, the solution of international conflicts by negotiation and arbitration, and active resistance of the workers against " wars of aggression " by means of the general strike.

These were, indeed, the leading principles of French socialism under Jaurès' guidance, that is to say from the Unity Congress of 1905 till 1914.



In actual practice they meant that, with regard to home politics, the Socialist Party tried to take liberalism in tow for the realisation of social reforms, whilst in foreign politics it put itself at the head of a pacifist policy, based simultaneously on labour internationalism as a check to wars of aggression and on "*bourgeois* pacifism" as a means to reconcile national defence with a policy of international conciliation and arbitration.

For ten years Jaurès fought heroically to realize that programme, in the teeth of growing warlike nationalism, even in his own country. The chapter of the history of Europe that closed in August, 1914, tells the story of how he failed, and why he was bound to fail.

A year before the unification of the French Socialist Party, at the Congress of the Socialist International held at Amsterdam in 1904, Jaurès had said, in his famous oratorical duel with August Bebel, the leader of the German Social-Democratic Party :

"There is a menace that hangs over Europe and the world, a menace to peace, to our liberties, to the development of the socialist and labour movement, to political and social progress at large. . . . This menace is the political impotence of German social-democracy. Certainly, you are a great and admirable party, which has given international socialism some of its most powerful and deepest thinkers, and the example of methodically co-ordinated action and progressively strong organisation. . . . Yet, the more your power increases, the more manifest becomes the contrast between your apparent political importance, as measured by the increasing figure of your votes and your representatives in public administration, and your real influence, your real force of action. On the day after the June elections, when you polled a three million vote, it became clear to all that you had an admirable recruiting power, but that neither the traditions of your proletariat, nor the mechanism of your constitution put you in a position to utilise this apparently colossal strength. . . . Even if you gained a majority in your Reichstag, your country would be the only one where socialism would remain out of power in spite of its parliamentary majority, for your parliament itself is powerless."



But France itself reacted to the menace of the growing international antagonisms and the accelerated race of armaments by strengthening the links of its alliance with Tsarist Russia, and by steadily increasing its standing army, going as far as extending the term of compulsory military service to three years.

Jaurès' last big political fight was against the so-called three-year-law. His pacifism may have been *bourgeois* or have lacked the uncompromising radicalism of the post-war peace movements, but, such as it was, it was genuine and unyielding. The reactionary and nationalist newspapers branded him as a traitor to his country and an agent of her enemies, and some of them hardly disguised their appeals to assassination.

In July, 1914, as the shadows of death that hung over Europe grew closer and more menacing day by day, Jaurès had forebodings that he himself already stood on one of the darkest spots. I heard him say so, in the almost jocular tone of a man to whom duty means so much that fear means nothing besides, on July 28th, the last day of the last executive conference of the Socialist International, where an eleventh-hour appeal had been made to the workers of Europe to check the war preparations of their governments. The two next days in Paris convinced him that the odds against that appeal being heard had become well-nigh overwhelming. On the evening of July 31st, on leaving the office of *l'Humanité* for a quick meal before writing another desperate appeal to the French government, he said to his friend, Captain Gérard: "We are in for war, and this war is going to awaken bestiality in men as no war has done before; we must be prepared to be shot down at any street corner." A few minutes later, as Jaurès sat down to a sandwich at the *Café du Croissant*, with his back to the open street window, a shot rang and a bullet pierced his brain from behind. It had been fired by a half-witted maniac, whom the jingo papers had convinced that Jaurès was the worst enemy of France.

On the 23rd of November, 1924, his body was translated to the Panthéon, France's Westminster Abbey, dedicated to the greatest of her sons, under the inscription: "*Aux grands hommes la Patrie reconnaissante.*" The coffin was

borne on the shoulders of a group of miners of Carmaux.

If he had needed a personal epitaph, this could have been found in a sentence that was spoken at one of the last big parliamentary debates Jaurès took part in, by a conservative member of the Chamber of Deputies, one of his most determined opponents. Jaurès had made a desperate effort in speaking in favour of a motion that, according to party lines, could rely only on the support of a minority. But he so carried away the whole House that, when he began a sentence with the words "*La majorité de cette Chambre, Messieurs . . .*," his opponent could not help interrupting: "*Mais vous êtes, à vous seul, la majorité !*"\*

And indeed, on that occasion, as on many others, Jaurès appeared as "a majority by himself." That is, no doubt, an uncommon tribute to the persuasive power of his eloquence, and even more to the truth of his own saying that the cause he fought for put its adversaries in the position of having to fight "with the sun blinding their eyes." But it is also a highly significant tribute to democracy. For though a democratic constitution does not necessarily mean that truth, justice and progress must win every single battle, it means that they cannot be prevented from fighting their battles on a field where they must in the long run prevail. For on this field the stake is the minds of men, and the mightiest weapon, in the end, is the argument that appeals to feelings and values no one can deny without turning his own conscience and his own reason into enemies of those who "have no need of lies."

\* But you are a majority by yourself !