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CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
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**CITIZEN SOCIALISM: THE POLITICAL
PHILOSOPHY OF EUGENE DEBS AND JEAN JAURES**

Jonah Levy
September 1988

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PRELIMINARY DRAFT: NOT FOR CITATION OR ATTRIBUTION

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Citizen Socialism: The Political Philosophy of Eugene Debs and Jean Jaurès

The bourgeoisie had a true insight into the fact that all the weapons which it had forged against feudalism turned their points against itself, that all the means of education which it had produced rebelled against its own civilization, that all the gods which it had created had fallen away from it. It understood that all the so-called bourgeois liberties and organs of progress attacked and menaced its *class rule* at its social foundation and its political summit simultaneously, and had therefore become "socialistic."

- Karl Marx, *Eighteenth Brumaire* ¹

The late-nineteenth century marked the emergence of modern socialist parties in Europe and the United States. The intellectual seeds sown by Karl Marx found fertile ground in the millions of workers newly subjected to the brutal regimentation and exploitation of *laissez-faire* capitalism. The exact nature of the socialist harvest varied from country to country, however, with socialist founding fathers adapting Marx's teachings to their particular national context. This produced a "golden age of Marxism," in the words of one observer, an era of tremendous intellectual ferment and diversity among socialist movements.² This essay proposes to examine one of the more attractive yet little-studied variants of Marxism which emerged during the golden age: the ideals of "citizen socialism" put forward by the American, Eugene Debs and the Frenchman, Jean Jaurès.

There is no shortage of literature on either Debs or Jaurès, but none on the two men taken together. Simply stated, Debs and Jaurès are never mentioned in the same breath. Peruse the index of almost any work on Debs, and there will be no reference to Jaurès; leaf through a book on Jaurès, and Debs's name will not appear. This gap in the literature is especially striking given the innumerable similarities between the two figures.

Debs and Jaurès were contemporaries, the former living from 1855 to 1926 and the latter from 1859 to 1914. They both made their marks early in "respectable" society, rising quickly in their careers and marrying women from wealthy families, who were considered to be "above them" socially. Despite their traditional

¹ Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, (New York: International Publishers, 1981), p. 65.

² Leszek Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism: Its Rise, Growth, and Dissolution*, vol. II -- *The Golden Age*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), pp. 1-2.

backgrounds, Debs and Jaurès began to gravitate toward socialism during their middle years. The key factor in each case was involvement in vicious industrial strife in which employers were able to draw upon the support of the state against striking workers. Eventually, Debs and Jaurès became the leading socialist figures of their respective countries, although their brand of socialism was unorthodox and, in the eyes of many, deficient. Both leaders were celebrated for their speeches, for their passion and eloquence. They were also both respected for their tremendous humanitarianism.

Tragically, these two humanitarians and pacifists were martyred by World War I. Jaurès was assassinated on the eve of the outbreak of the War by a nationalist fanatic, who was enraged at his efforts to prevent the conflagration. If Jaurès was the first victim of the War (barring the Austrian Archduke), arguably, Debs was its last. Imprisoned in 1917 for speaking out against the War, Debs was finally pardoned and released in 1921. He emerged from jail out of touch with his socialist comrades and in ill health. In the meantime, his life's work, an American Socialist party, had been weakened and torn apart by wartime divisions, government repression, and the creation of the Third International.

The disinclination to consider Debs and Jaurès in comparative perspective despite the many parallels in their lives stems, no doubt, from the belief that the French and American socialist movements have never shared much in common. Biographical tidbits are all fine and well, the argument goes, but Debs and Jaurès stood worlds apart. American socialism, Louis Hartz maintains, was a marginal phenomenon, imported by foreigners, and unsuited to the American political context.³ How can one compare such an outcast movement to a party which currently claims the presidency of France?

Debs is long forgotten by most Americans. Jaurès, by contrast, is a national hero. France numbers countless "Lycées Jean Jaurès" or "Boulevards Jean Jaurès." Even today, Jaurès remains a potent political symbol. François Mitterrand, the day of his inauguration as president in 1981, led a procession to the Panthéon, where he deposited a rose on Jaurès' tomb. In his autobiographical *Politique 2 (1977-1981)*, published six months after his election, Mitterrand insisted that the ties of modern French socialists to Jaurès are not only emotive, but doctrinal:

Jaurès, for us socialists, is not an ancestor, a revered father, on whose bones we build the Cathedral of our party. He is a companion, still living, whose word preceded ours, but as a phrase in a speech precedes the phrase that

³ Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought since the Revolution*, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983), ch. 9; *The Founding of New Societies*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964), ch's 1-4.

follows. All is linked, and the sense, the force of persuasion are born out of the succession of these words that are thoughts, that are links in the chain.⁴

A comparison of the ideas and intellectual evolution of Debs and Jaurès sets itself against the conventional wisdom that, since French socialism and American socialism have very little in common today, they probably never did. Although the French and American Socialist parties have evolved in very different directions since the First World War, it will be argued that there were few if any signs of that divergent future during Debs's and Jaurès's lifetimes. If we look at the social and political environment confronting Debs and Jaurès at the turn of the century -- the strength and status of the working class, the political opportunity structure, and the national ideological context -- what is most striking is, not the distinctiveness of the American situation, but rather the similarity between the French and American contexts, especially in comparison to Britain or Germany.

Beyond narrowing the Hartzian gulf between European and American socialism, this essay has a second theoretical aim: to explore the elements of Debs's and Jaurès's political philosophy which set them apart from other socialist thinkers. This question has been largely neglected, despite a vast literature on both figures. By and large, two kinds of books have been written about Debs or Jaurès. The first group consists of well-documented, detailed, lengthy biographies.⁵ These relate the events of their subject's life quite capably, if at times a bit dryly, but give no consideration to Debs or Jaurès as theorists.

The second kind of book is little more than an anthology of speeches and articles.⁶ Most of these anthologies have been put together by close friends or socialist admirers of Debs or Jaurès. Typically, one finds a glowing introductory essay reminiscing about the author's contact with Debs or Jaurès. The rest of the book offers a straightforward collection of speeches and articles, or else, the author strings together pages of direct citations, unbroken except for the

⁴ François Mitterrand, *Politique 2 (1977-1981)*, (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1981), pp. 169-70. All translations from the French in this essay are the author's, except those passages cited in Harvey Goldberg, *The Life of Jean Jaurès*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1962).

⁵ Ray Ginger, *The Bending Cross: A Biography of Eugene Victor Debs*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1949); McAlister Coleman, *Eugene V. Debs: A Man Unafraid*, (New York: Greenberg Publisher, 1930); Max Gallo, *Le Grand Jaurès*, (Paris: Editions Robert Laffont, 1984); Goldberg, *op. cit.*; Marcelle Auclair, *La vie de Jean Jaurès ou la France d'avant 1914*, (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1954).

⁶ Jean Tussey Ed., *Eugene V. Debs Speaks*, (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970); *Debs: His Life, Writings and Speeches*, (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr and Company, 1908); David Karsner, *Talks with Debs in Terre Haute*, (New York: New York Call, 1922); *Speeches of Eugene V. Debs*, (New York: International Publishers, 1928); Charles Rappoport, *Jean Jaurès: L'Homme, Le Penseur, Le Socialiste*, (Paris: L'Emancipatrice, 1915); Félicien Challaye, *Jaurès*, (Paris: Mellottée, 1938); Shao Ho-Ting, *La Pensée de Jean Jaurès et sa Théorie de la Révolution*, Doctoral Thesis for the University of Paris, (Paris: Librairie russe et française, 1932).

occasional gushing praise. The net result, then, is that the existing literature offers little if any serious theoretical analysis of Debs and Jaurès.⁷

The raging debates among scholars of Debs or Jaurès tend to be biographical, rather than theoretical. The two leaders began their political careers as bourgeois reformists, before becoming socialists. Much controversy surrounds the precise moment at which the conversion from bourgeois reformism to socialism took place and the factors that precipitated this shift. In the case of Jaurès, there has also been a frenzied battle over the authenticity of the conversion -- whether Jaurès really did become a dyed-in-the-wool socialist, or whether he remained a bourgeois wolf clad in socialist's clothing -- and also over how he would have acted had he lived to face the First World War.⁸ In contrast to the events of their lives, the ideas of Debs and Jaurès receives scant attention. The presumption seems to be that, once they became socialists, their political philosophy was self-evident and unworthy of analysis. Much is made of their eloquence, of the poetic beauty of their speeches, but the ideas expressed in these speeches go almost unnoticed.

These ideas merit more serious consideration. Debs and Jaurès came to socialism quite late in their lives and, at that point, they did not simply embrace Marxist orthodoxy without question or reservation. Rather, it will be argued, they remolded socialist theory, infusing it with the values of their earlier years, to create a unique variant of socialism -- what will be called "citizen socialism."

Undeniably, several important qualifications must be made to this characterization of Debs's and Jaurès's thought. First, the ideas of Debs and Jaurès were not wholly different from anything that had come before them or has been seen since. There is considerable overlap with the ideas of democratic socialists of a more orthodox bent. However, there are also important and systematic differences, which this essay will explore. A second *caveat* is also in order. The description of both Debs and Jaurès as "citizen socialists" is not meant

⁷ The one exception to this critique is Nick Salvatore's biography of Debs. Salvatore does an outstanding job of situating Debs's ideological evolution within the context of turn-of-the-century American mainstream values. He dismisses Debs as a serious theorist, however, preferring to focus instead on the events of Debs's life and his role within the socialist movement. This essay, while borrowing liberally from Salvatore's biographical and contextual insights, seeks to use these insights to help improve our understanding of Debs's political philosophy.

⁸ On the authenticity of Jaurès's conversion to socialism, cf. Raymond Guillauneuf, "La SFIO et Jaurès (1914-1936)," in *Jaurès et la Classe ouvrière*, Collection Mouvement social, (Paris: Les Éditions ouvrières, 1981); Joseph Koën, *Les Idées économiques de Jean Jaurès*, Doctoral Thesis for the University of Toulouse, (Toulouse: Imprimerie Toulousaine, 1930); Harold Weinstein, *Jean Jaurès: A Study of Patriotism in the French Socialist Movement*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936). On the battle for Jaurès's posthumous blessing, cf. Guillauneuf, *op. cit.*; Gustave Hervé, in Weinstein, *op. cit.*, p. 185; Léon Jouhaux, in Jean-Jacques Flechter, *Le Socialisme français: de l'Affaire Dreyfus à la Grande Guerre*, (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1965), p. 209; Georges Clemenceau, in Georges Lefranc, *Le Mouvement Socialiste sous la Troisième République (1875-1940)*, (Paris: Payot, 1963), p. 121.

to suggest that their political visions are identical. As will be seen, there are substantial differences, particularly in their outlooks on the course of history and the role of the nation. Nonetheless, as "citizen socialists," Debs and Jaurès shared certain basic, distinct ideological and political characteristics.

Chief among these characteristics was the fact that their socialist message was forged out of bourgeois ideological materials. Citizen socialism derived from a trypic of historic symbols and values which were considered to be the birthright of every French or American citizen: individual rights, republican government, and the spirit and legacy of the revolution (1776 in the case of Debs, 1789 for Jaurès). These were the values of Debs's and Jaurès's upbringings. When the two men evolved toward socialism, they did not abandon these beliefs, but used them as the basis for their socialist visions.

For Debs and Jaurès, the values associated with the status of citizenship were prior to socialism, not only temporally, but intellectually and politically. In their view, socialism is not an independent free-standing doctrine; its attractiveness derives from its harmony with the ideals of bourgeois citizenship. Socialism is good because it stands for, it incarnates these values -- individualism, republicanism, and the spirit of 1776 or 1789 -- or else because it will help realize these values. It is certainly inseparable from these values. What is more, when orthodox socialism conflicts with the ideals of citizenship, it is orthodoxy which must give way. This offers perhaps the clearest illustration of the difference in outlook and emphasis between citizen socialism and democratic (but orthodox) socialism.

The following presentation is organized around three sets of parallels: contextual, biographical, and ideological. The first section compares the situation of the French and American labor during the early years of the twentieth century. It argues that the contexts were fundamentally similar and predisposed the emerging worker movements of both countries toward the kind of programs propounded by Debs and Jaurès. The second section traces brief biographical sketches of Debs and Jaurès, focusing on their evolution to socialism in their middle years. It claims that their common path of intellectual development -- most notably, the late conversion to socialism and the baptism by fire at Pullman and Carmaux -- played a key role in the creation of their unorthodox ideology. Finally, the third section explicates Debs's and Jaurès's political philosophy. While mindful of the differences between the two thinkers, it emphasizes the similarities. It seeks to show that both Debs and Jaurès crafted socialist visions out of the bourgeois ideals of individual liberty, the republic, and the spirit of 1776/1789 and that their visions differed in important ways from more conventional democratic socialism.

The American and French Socialist Movements at the Turn of the Century: Exceptional Similarities

At first glance, the idea of comparing the socialist movements of France and the United States seems ludicrous. Consider the current presidents in these countries, both two-time winners. Who could be further apart than François Mitterrand and Ronald Reagan? What could a country in which roughly half of the people vote for socialists or communists have in common with a country in which these two movements basically do not exist? If there is such a thing as a sure bet in political science, the claim that the French and American socialist movements have nothing in common, have never had anything in common, and never will have anything in common would seem to be it. Indeed, this is the guiding spirit behind much of the literature on American socialism. By and large, this literature has been a search for failure, for the distinguishing features that set America apart, that made the US uniquely inhospitable to socialism: open frontiers, the predominance of a liberal ethic, massive immigration, religious and racial cleavages, a fragmented political system, and the list goes on.¹

Clearly, the issue of American exceptionalism is both interesting and important. However, the preoccupation with this issue has tended to bias consideration of American working class history. Those who are trying to explain failure are least likely to notice the possibilities for success. Those who are looking for *the* factor which sets America apart are scarcely in a position to discern the resemblances to another country. Our knowledge of the "answer" -- socialism would succeed in France and other nations; it would fail miserably in the United States -- tends to foreclose certain questions: What was the situation of French and American workers as socialism first began to develop? How did they perceive socialist theory? How was it presented to them? Was there anything in common between the French and American contexts?

This section considers the French and American working classes in a different light. By dropping the intellectual constraint that any consideration of the American working class must be a search for exceptionality and the roots of failure, we arrive at a very interesting observation: the American situation does not appear all that exceptional. Indeed, in comparing the broad features of the sociopolitical environment under which Debs and Jaurès operated -- the strength and status of the working class, the political opportunity structure, the prevailing political culture -- one is struck, not by the differences, but by the similarities. This is especially true if the French and American contexts are compared to the British and

¹ For an overview of these arguments, see Joshua Cohen and Joel Rogers, *Rules of the Game*, (Boston: South End Press, 1986), ch. 1; Mike Davis, "Why the US Working Class is Different," *New Left Review*, No. 123, September/ October 1980.

German. What is more, the common features of *belle époque* France and the US seemed to provide an equally conducive environment for the development of citizen socialism.

The emphasis on the similarities between the French and American worker movements around the turn of the century argues against explanations of American exceptionalism deriving from some transcendent sociological or cultural feature of American history, since presumably, such a feature would have manifested itself by this time. The classic statement in this vein is that of Louis Hartz. According to Hartz, socialism never stood a chance in America because of the absence of a feudal past. Ideologies in Europe, he maintains, unfold according to a dialectic:

There is a process of contagion at work in Europe, enormously subtle and ramifying, in which ideologies give birth to one another over time.... Whiggery inspires with its first grand liberal formulations the Jacobin who later assails it. The Jacobin inspires with his more radical version of the Enlightenment, the socialist whom he ultimately fears. So that at every point, from medievalism to modernity, and within modernity itself, the European contagion is at work. Europe renews itself out of its own materials.²

In other words, the ideological tools used to overthrow the old order are subsequently refined by a new challenger and turned against their original formulator. The contradictions of the old ideology form the basis for the new ideology. If the initial conflict is interrupted, however, then the arguments necessary for a future challenger will not emerge. Such was the case in America. America has never experienced feudalism. The country was settled by liberal escapees from Europe and has been wholly liberal since birth. As a result, the debates between liberalism and feudalism, which in Europe furnished the materials for a socialist critique of liberalism, have been absent from the American scene.

Socialism thus finds itself without roots. Dialectical development has been precluded by the absence of an initial ideological antagonism; the loss is irreversible: "There is... no shrinking of the European past at any point which does not shrink the European future as well."³ The socialist future, adds Hartz, is shrunk in other ways by the lack of a feudal past. Because "socialism seeks to recapture the memory of the organic medieval community," the absence of such a memory from America weakens socialism's appeal.⁴ In addition, since the US did not have to overthrow feudalism, it

² Hartz, *The Founding*, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

remains "untouched by the flame of revolution which, out of European liberalism, entered together with the collective mood into the manufacture of socialism."⁵ Hartz discounts the American War of Independence as an "outburst" incapable of "sow[ing] the seed of the European social revolution."⁶

The great failure of America's socialists, according to Hartz, lay in their inability to understand that the ideological building blocks for European-style socialism did not exist in the US. Rather than adapt Marx's ideas to the American political context, they insisted on propounding a wholly foreign ideology: "[They] were children of Europe, 'un-American' to begin with, outside of America, equipped with meaningful Western categories: feudalism, capitalism, liberalism."⁷ Hartz derides "their persistent use of the European concepts of Marxism when the nation was frantically ruling them out."⁸ The net result, he claims, was a pale imitation of European socialism:

[American socialism] has the same relationship to the general pattern of Western Marxism that a postage stamp has to a life-size portrait: all the lines are the same, all the features, but the size is very small.⁹

Hartz makes only passing reference to Debs in his essay on American socialism. The omission may be more than mere coincidence, for as will be seen in the next two sections of this essay, the political career and ideology of Debs jibe rather poorly with Hartz's interpretation. This section responds to Hartz's claim that the absence of a feudal past foreclosed any socialist future in America. While it is true that America did not experience feudalism, whereas France did, this experience constituted but one element in the development of a socialist critique of liberalism. In many other ways, what was most exceptional about the American context at the turn of the century was its resemblance to the French. Three parallels stand out: 1) the weakness of labor; 2) the existence of a democratic government elected by universal manhood suffrage¹⁰; 3) the ideological heritage of a late-eighteenth century "bourgeois" revolution.

The working class in turn-of-the-century France and America was in a profoundly weak position. Numerically, workers constituted a minority in a predominantly rural country. The 1900 census found less than 40% of the American population living in urban areas (areas

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

¹⁰ That is, universal *white* manhood suffrage. For purposes of readability, the phrase "universal manhood suffrage" will be used throughout, even though black Americans were effectively disenfranchised. For the implications of black exclusion, see footnote 26.

with more than 2500 inhabitants).¹¹ While that percentage was rising rapidly under the impact of industrialization, the rural population remained in the majority on the eve of World War I. The same held true in France.¹² By contrast, a sizable majority of the British and German populations were already engaged in industry.¹³

Like population figures, unionization rates displayed a close similarity between the US and France and substantial differences between these two countries, on the one hand, and Germany and Britain, on the other. Facing ferocious opposition from both employers and government, unions in France and the US made few inroads. As the War approached, France counted only 1 million unionized workers out of a total population of 40 million.¹⁴ American figures echoed the poor performance of France: 2.6 million unionized laborers in a population of 99 million.¹⁵ At the opposite end of the spectrum, Great Britain, with roughly the same number of inhabitants as France, had over 4 million union members.¹⁶ Germany fell in between the two extremes: 2.5 million unionized workers in a population of 65 million.¹⁷

The weakness of French and American workers translated into the sphere of social legislation, which lagged decades behind that of Britain and Germany. Germany, of course, pioneered social insurance. Seeking to co-opt the burgeoning workers' movement, Bismarck introduced health, accident, old age, and invalidity insurance schemes during the 1880's. In 1911, these programs were consolidated into one code and many of the benefits extended to farmers and salaried workers.¹⁸ As for Britain, the Conservative-Liberal bidding war for working class support and the "Lib-Lab" alliance yielded a workmen's compensation act, an old age pension law, and a national insurance program by the First World War. In addition, the unions were able to use the political system to reverse menacing judicial decisions, such as Taff-Vale, which held unions liable for damages caused during picketing, and Osborne, which struck down the practice of

¹¹ Sanford Cohen, *Labor in the United States*, (Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill Books, 1960), p. 14.

¹² Gordon Wright, *France in Modern Times*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1981), p. 289.

¹³ Madeleine Rebérioux, "Le socialisme français de 1871 à 1914," in Jacques Droz Ed., *Histoire Générale du Socialisme*, vol. 2 - 1875-1918, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1974), p. 133.

¹⁴ David Thomson, *Europe since Napoleon*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), p. 326; Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 291.

¹⁵ US Bureau of the Census, *The Statistical History of the United States from Colonial Times to the Present*, (Stamford, CT: Fairfield Publishers, 1965), p. 7; S. Cohen, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

¹⁶ *British Labour Statistics: Historical Abstract, 1886-1968*, (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1971), p. 395.

¹⁷ Jacques Droz, "La social-démocratie allemande (1875-1914)," in Droz, *op. cit.*, pp. 34, 48.

¹⁸ Gaston Rimlinger, *Welfare Policy and Industrialization in Europe, America, and Russia*, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1971), ch. 4.

"contracting out," that is, of automatically allocating a portion of union dues for the Labour party unless a member specifically objected.¹⁹

The contrast with the French and American situation is striking. Gordon Wright describes the meager gains made by French workers during this period:

If France had a forgotten man in the pre-1914 era, it was surely the urban worker.... In 1884 trade unions had at last been formally legalized; in 1900 women and children were restricted to a ten-hour day; in 1906 Sunday rest was made obligatory; in 1910 an optional social insurance plan was established. This was not a very impressive record of reform; almost no other industrial state in those years granted so little to its labor force.²⁰

The only other industrial nation with as lamentable a social record was the US. As in France, virtually no important social legislation was passed prior to World War I. Some timid efforts were made at the state level, but the laws tended to be laxly drawn, were frequently struck down by the courts and, even when sustained, usually went unenforced.²¹ For all intents and purposes, in France and the United States, protection of union rights and the provision of basic forms of social insurance would await the New Deal and Popular Front governments of the 1930's.

Labor's weakness undercut the kind of bread-and-butter trade-unionism that was emerging in Britain and, despite the revolutionary rhetoric, in Germany as well. French and American unions were too feeble to press concrete demands effectively. This is not simply a *post facto* reading by sociologists, armed with data unknown to the participants at the time; it was a fundamental reality of Debs's and Jaurès's lives, acquired through painful experience. Debs's struggles with the American Railroad Union and Jaurès's battles alongside the workers of Carmaux made these leaders acutely aware of the limits of pure trade union action and of the willingness of the government to intervene systematically on behalf of embattled employers. Both men became extremely cautious about union-centered strategies, whether business unionism or revolutionary syndicalism. They insisted instead on a political solution to workers' problems -- on the Socialist party as the key vehicle for the realization of socialism.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, ch. 3; François Bédarida, "Le socialisme en Grande-Bretagne de 1875 à 1914," in Droz, *op. cit.*, pp. 347-400.

²⁰ Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 291.

²¹ Joseph Rayback, *A History of American Labor*, (New York: Macmillan, 1968), ch. 18; Melvyn Dubofsky, *Industrialism and the American Worker, 1865-1920*, (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1975), p. 76.

In Debs's and Jaurès's minds, the political system in France and the US offered a more favorable context for the worker movement than the industrial arena. This is not to say that the electoral performances of the French and American Socialist parties were stellar. Debs received less than 1 million votes in his 1912 campaign for president, or roughly 6% of the electorate.²² His party was more successful at the local level; it controlled the governments of 73 municipalities, including Milwaukee, Berkeley, and Schenectady.²³ The French Socialist party, the SFIO, fared somewhat better, capturing 17% of the vote and 103 seats in the Chamber of Deputies in the 1914 elections.²⁴ Nonetheless, in comparative perspective, the French and American achievements again appear unimpressive. The German SPD registered 35% in 1912 and the Labour party, although hindered, like its American counterpart, by a winner-take-all electoral system, had already managed to become a coalition partner with the Liberals and to extract important reforms.²⁵

Still, there were reasonable grounds for optimism about the effectiveness of political action in France and the US. The electoral results, while inferior to those of Germany, had risen fairly steadily. The final elections prior to the War represented highwater marks in both the US and France. More fundamentally, a unique feature of French and American political life increased the appeal of political action: France and America were the only industrial powers ruled by democratic governments elected through universal manhood suffrage. This meant that democracy held out the promise of wresting control of the state away from the monied class and using it to promote socialist aims. Unlike the German case, where the power of the working class bore little relation to its votes, or even the British or Italian cases, where suffrage was strictly limited, in France and America, the numerical strength of the workers could be expected to translate into political power.²⁶ It seemed to be only a matter of time before industrialization would swell the ranks of alienated workers and make possible a democratic transition to socialism.

²² Irving Howe, *Socialism and America*, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985), p. 3

²³ James Weinstein, *Ambiguous Legacy: The Left in American Politics*, (New York: New Viewpoints, 1975), p. 7.

²⁴ Reberieux in Droz, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

²⁵ Droz, in *Ibid.*, p. 34. At first glance, the discrepancy between the French and American electoral scores would seem to validate the claims of American exceptionalism. However, these numbers should be read with caution. The American Socialist party labored under two handicaps not faced by its French counterpart: a rival Progressive party in 1912 and, more important, an electoral system which heavily penalized third parties. The relevant comparison for the American Socialist party is to the British Labour party which, despite its bright future, was also fairing quite poorly at the time because of the winner-take-all system.

²⁶ The exclusion of blacks from the American voting ranks hurt the Socialist party, since the disadvantaged were presumably prime recruits. Nonetheless, although racism imparted a class bias to the electoral system, the system remained sufficiently representative of the population as a whole to fuel the dream of class-based politics.

Thus, the existence of democratic government and universal suffrage made the pursuit of socialism through the political system appear viable and undercut alternative strategies.²⁷ This is not to say that alternatives did not exist. Anarcho-syndicalism, business unionism, and revolutionary socialism all coexisted with citizen socialism. Jaurès had his Guesde and Debs his Gompers. Still, Debs and Jaurès were far more popular than their rivals, and this popularity cannot be attributed solely to personal charisma. No doubt, the potential held out by democracy contributed to the appeal of Debs's and Jaurès's vision and strategy, even in the face of the meager short-term gains from political action.

The significance of democracy for Debs and Jaurès was not only tactical, but symbolic. According to Hartz, the absence of feudalism from America removed a vital inspiration for socialist themes. However, other symbols were readily available. Both Debs and Jaurès erected socialist visions out of ideological building blocks with a long proud history in their respective nations: democracy, individual liberties, and the spirit of 1776/89. These visions will be explicated in the third section of this essay. For now, suffice it to say that, as with the other aspects of the sociopolitical environment, what united the French and American cases seems far greater than what divided them, especially in comparative perspective.

Certainly, it is true that America never experienced feudalism. However, like France, America did experience a revolution in the name of liberal bourgeois values, values that would form the basis for Debs's and Jaurès's unique socialist vision. The symbols of citizen socialism were largely absent from Germany, with its failed bourgeois revolutions and authoritarian and paternalistic traditions. Britain offered more promising ideological terrain: a healthy reverence for individual liberty and a long-standing push for democratization. Still, democratization was as yet incomplete, no written constitution enshrined individual liberties, and 1776 was something the British most definitely did not want to recall. This is not to say that an ideological vision similar that of Debs or Jaurès could not have emerged in England; only that the political culture in France and the US, the reservoir of historical symbols, was more amenable to citizen socialism.

²⁷ The syndicalist IWW was, in a sense, the exception that proved the rule. As Melvyn Dubofsky's relates, the Wobblies drew support primarily from those who could not avail themselves of the opportunities for democratic action: "Wobblies... had practical reasons for their apolitical approach; the workers whom they organized most successfully and appealed to most often lacked the franchise. American-born migratories, the IWW majority in the West and South, moved too often to establish voting residences; new immigrants were aliens, often confused by complicated electoral procedure, and also spatially mobile; and women, child workers, and nonwhites were simply disfranchised. Of what use was politics to those exploited groups?" Dubofsky, *op. cit.*, p.105.

We have seen that, along a variety of dimensions, the differences between the French and American sociopolitical contexts on the eve of the First World War paled in comparison to the differences between the French and American context, on the one hand, and the British and German, on the other. In both countries, the working class constituted a neglected minority, poorly organized, and unable to defend its interests on the shopfloor. Consequently, union-centered strategies appeared far less promising than in Britain or Germany. Political action, in the only two industrial nations ruled by democratic governments elected through universal manhood suffrage, seemed to offer the best prospects.

Contrary to Hartz's claim, the resemblances between the French and American contexts were ideological, as well as structural. French and American political culture shared much in common. In both countries, liberal bourgeois revolutions of the late-eighteenth century had spawned double-edged symbols, such as individual liberty and democracy, which could be diverted from a defense of the prevailing social order to more radical purposes. As will be seen in the third section, this is precisely what Debs and Jaurès did.

Today, we know that the future of the Socialist party was far brighter in France than in the US. At the turn of the century, however, there was little reason to anticipate this divergent evolution. Melvyn Dubofsky declares: "At no time before the end of the war (World War I)... could one say firmly that American socialism was dead, or that the working class had rejected left-wing alternatives."²⁸ Armed with this understanding, rather than 20/20 hindsight, the beliefs and actions of Debs and other American socialists appear less quixotic than they are commonly portrayed. If Debs was a starry-eyed dreamer for believing that socialism had a future in the US, was he any more of a dreamer than the founding father of the party that currently governs France?

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

Parallel Paths to Citizen Socialism: The Lives of Debs and Jaurès

Like the sociopolitical environment, the biographies of Debs and Jaurès bear a number of striking similarities. Many of these similarities are of merely anecdotal or psychological interest. Others, however, relate directly to the articulation by Debs and Jaurès of their unique ideology. This section chronicles the events of Debs's and Jaurès's lives, but it also stakes a theoretical claim, arguing that two common experiences in Debs's and Jaurès's lives were central to their development of citizen socialism: 1) involvement in vicious industrial strife -- Pullman for Debs and Carmaux for Jaurès -- in which workers were opposed not only by their employers, but by the state; 2) a relatively late introduction to the principles of socialism.

Early Years and Family Life

Debs's and Jaurès's early years gave little indication of their socialist future.¹ Neither man was reared in a proletarian setting. Jaurès hailed from Castres, a small village in the South of France. Debs grew up in Terre Haute, Indiana, an emerging but still relatively placid middle-American town. Nor was there anything particularly proletarian about Debs's and Jaurès's families. Jaurès's mother, Marie-Adelaïde Barbaza, came from "the best bourgeoisie" of Castres.² His father, Jules, was a legitimist, who kept a portrait of the Count of Chambord, the pretender to the throne, over his bed. A cousin on the father's side, Alexis Saussol, was Bishop of Sées, and two paternal uncles, Jean-Louis and Benjamin Jaurès, attained the rank of admiral. Benjamin Jaurès also served as Senator, Ambassador to Spain and Russia, and Minister of the Navy (the position he held upon his death in 1889). Jaurès's only sibling, his brother Louis, was a captain in the navy.

Although well-connected politically, Jaurès's family was not wealthy. Jaurès's father drank heavily and could not hold a job. Adelaïde somehow provided for Jean and Louis's needs out of Jules's meager earnings. She also made sure that both boys attended the best schools, selling her jewels when support from her brother and Jean's scholarships were not enough to pay both children's tuition. Jaurès revered his mother, and the two remained very close until her death in 1906.

¹ This account of Debs's and Jaurès's backgrounds and early political careers is drawn primarily from Salvatore, *op. cit.*, ch.'s 1-2; David Selvin, *Eugene Debs: Rebel, Labor Leader, Prophet*, (New York: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, 1966), pp. 11-68; Gallo, *op. cit.*, ch.'s 1-4; Gaston Poulain, "Biographie de Jean Jaurès," in Vincent Auriol Ed., *Jean Jaurès*, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962); Goldberg, *op. cit.*, ch.'s 1-2.

² Poulain, in Auriol, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

Like Jaurès, Debs came from a fairly distinguished and -- as fate would have it -- French background. His great grandfather served as a delegate to the National Assembly during the French Revolution. His paternal grandfather operated a textile factory in Colmar, in the Alsace region of France. Debs's father, Jean Daniel, was something of a non-conformist, more interested in literature than in the family business. He was disinherited for marrying Marguerite, a mere laborer in his father's textile factory and, to make matters worse, a Catholic. (The Debses were Protestant.)

The young couple immigrated to the United States, where they struggled at first. Possessing no special skills, Daniel was forced to work a series of ill-paying jobs. It was actually Marguerite, who turned the family fortunes around. In 1855, with Daniel unemployed and their first child on the way, she used the last of the Debs's funds to open a grocery store. The store proved to be a success, assuring a comfortable existence for the family.

Debs was born a few months after the store opened and four years before Jaurès (1859). Like Jaurès, he was a first-born son. Reflecting a certain level of social consciousness, his parents christened him Eugene Victor, after Eugene Sue and Victor Hugo, two French romantic novelists known for their vivid depictions of the plight of the poor and the wretched. Jean Daniel read these works to his son, and no doubt imparted the mildly progressive outlook which Debs bore in his early adulthood.³ Still, like Jaurès, Debs was much closer to his mother than to his father.

Debs and Jaurès rose rapidly in their chosen career paths. Debs became an intimate of the leading businessmen of Terre Haute. He declined various business opportunities, choosing instead to serve as the leader of a moderate, "responsible" craft union, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen. Admired by businessmen and workers alike, he won election as a city clerk at age 24 and as a member of the state assembly at 29. A promising career in either politics or business beckoned to this "blue-eyed boy of destiny."⁴

Jaurès's rise was even more meteoric. His brilliance was recognized early, yielding a series of scholarships to the best *lycées*. He was admitted first in his class to the premier university in France, the Ecole Normale Supérieure, where his only serious intellectual rival was a rather haughty Jewish student by the name of Henri Bergson. In 1885, after teaching in Toulouse for a few years while completing his doctoral theses, he became the youngest parliamentarian of his day at the age of 26.

³ Years later, the *Social Democratic Herald*, the official newspaper of the American socialist party, published regular excerpts from Hugo's *Les Misérables*.

⁴ The term is from a Terre Haute newspaper, quoted in Salvatore, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

Reflecting their mainstream backgrounds, both Debs and Jaurès were oblivious to socialism in their early political careers. Jaurès sat with the opportunists in the center of the parliament, not even with the radicals to their left. He later declared: "When I entered politics in 1885, I knew only two things -- the Republic on one side and the royalist-clerical reaction on the other."⁵ Jaurès's early votes certainly bear out this assertion. He supported the extension of the French empire, voted for religious subsidies, opposed the creation of an income tax, and declined to censure the government over its handling of the bloody Decazeville strike. Debs's record was no less conservative. He opposed strikes both in theory, and in practice, encouraging Brotherhood members to replace striking workers. He voted for the strengthening of state militias and advocated the civilizing invasion of the "copper-colored nations" of China and Japan.⁶

Despite Debs's and Jaurès's bourgeois origins and their many conservative public statements and votes, one finds occasional signs of their future political evolution. In tracing the roots of their socialist sympathies one is reminded of Emile Durkheim's claim that, "socialism is not a science, a sociology in miniature; it is a cry of pain."⁷ Jaurès declared during his initial electoral campaign: "I will not be a part of any group, any clique, and as a son of the people, I will vote for all reforms that will improve the lot of the suffering."⁸ Debs was motivated by similar concerns. He pronounced himself to be first and foremost, "a working man, with whatever duties attached to my position, as a representative of working men."⁹ As a state assemblyman, he championed legislation to protect and compensate the many railroad workers who were injured on the job. One proposed bill would have required railroad corporations to assume responsibility for employees injured by faulty equipment; another would have prohibited contracts compelling workers to sign a release for corporate responsibility as a condition of employment. To Debs's great disappointment, neither proposal was enacted into law.

Debs's and Jaurès's early successes in "respectable" society were crowned by marriage to women who were considered to be "above them" socially. Debs married Katherine Metzel, whose father owned the largest drugstore in Terre Haute and two of whose brothers would be millionaires by 1890. Jaurès's wife, Louise Bois, was the daughter of a wealthy cheese distributor. Both wives brought two things to their marriage: 1) a sizable dowry, which relieved their husbands from preoccupation with money;

⁵ Goldberg, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

⁶ Salvatore, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

⁷ Goldberg, *op. cit.*, p. 287.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.

⁹ Salvatore, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

2) values and a lifestyle that fit poorly with Debs's and Jaurès's subsequent career paths. Both women were religiously observant. The Debs and Jaurès weddings took place in church, and at Louise's insistence, the Jaurès's children were baptized and received Communion, a source of great scandal among socialists at the time. (Kate and Eugene were unable to conceive children.)

Religious differences were but the tip of the iceberg, however. Debs and Jaurès married as they were about to begin their evolution toward socialism. It was not a road that their wives would choose to take. Making matters worse, Kate and Louise would pay a high price for their husbands' late conversion to socialism. Kate believed that she was marrying a "blue-eyed boy of destiny"; instead, she wound up with an inmate of Woodstock Jail. Louise dreamed of salons and of the life of a cabinet minister; instead, she became a social outcast.

Bitterly disappointed, Kate and Louise never forgave their husbands' refusal to climb the bourgeois ladder of success. Relations between husband and wife ranged from glacial to indifferent (a sharp contrast to relations between son and mother). For all intents and purposes, husband and wife lived separate lives. Kate took refuge in conspicuous consumption, designing and decorating a lavish house made possible by an inheritance. Louise moved herself and the children to the country, leaving her husband alone in a small, dingy Paris apartment. This was probably just as well for Debs and Jaurès. Both were too busy with their work to be much concerned about their family lives. Both came to regard home as a resting place, an opportunity for recuperation, before plunging into political struggle anew.

Biographers of Debs and Jaurès have tended to judge Kate and Louise quite harshly. The women have been portrayed as cold, shallow, and socially awkward -- despite their pretensions to belong among the social elite. They have been denounced for caring more about the trappings of bourgeois wealth and power than about their husbands (and, by association, the impoverished masses). Jaurès's tattered appearance, his dirty and torn clothes, testified to his wife's neglect. In defense of Kate and Louise, however, it should be pointed out that, in a sense, they were married under false pretenses. Debs's and Jaurès's marriages were a product of an earlier era, when the two men seemed to be headed for bright bourgeois futures. Long after that hope had dissipated, Kate and Louise remained bound to their husbands -- a permanent and embarrassing reminder of the way of life that Debs and Jaurès had left behind. For the wives, the disappointment and lack of understanding must have been no less cruel than for the husbands.

Debs's marriage in 1885 and Jaurès's in 1886 drew the curtain on the initial conformist period of their lives. Socialism was an

obscure and little-appreciated notion at this point. However, as class conflicts hardened in the US and France and as Debs and Jaurès became drawn into worker struggles, their views began to radicalize. Of course, the evolution to socialism took place over a long period of time and was influenced by many factors. One factor, however, towered above all others: involvement in the brutal strikes of Pullman (1894) and Carmaux (1892 and 1895).

The School for Socialism: Pullman and Carmaux

Beginning in the late 1880's, Debs was involved in a series of industrial conflicts, culminating in the Pullman strike of 1894. These strikes shaped and reshaped his political vision. It is somewhat ironic that strikes were so essential to Debs's political development because, during his early years, he opposed them altogether. In 1877, at a time of upheaval along the Pennsylvania, Baltimore, and Ohio railroads, he denounced strikes in the harshest terms:

A strike at the present time signifies anarchy and revolution... The question has often been asked, "Does the Brotherhood encourage strikers?" To this question, we most emphatically answer, "No, brother." To disregard the laws which govern our land? To destroy the last vestige of order? To stain our hands with the crimson blood of our fellow beings? We again say, "No," a thousand times "No."¹⁰

Debs's opposition to strikes rested on faith in the fairness of employers. He believed that if the Brotherhood delivered "a class of sober and industrious men," then employers would give these workers their due: "The object of our institution is to make men out of crude material, and when we have succeeded in that, there will be no occasion for strikes, for when we are fully qualified to receive our rights, they will always be accorded us."¹¹ Gradually, however, this conservative and subservient vision of labor's role in society would give way to the realization that honest and sober behavior was not enough to assure a decent living for the workingman.

Nonetheless, as late as 1886, Debs remained opposed in principle to strikes, even urging the Brotherhood to scab against the Knights of Labor during the latter's battle with Jay Gould. The following year, though, the Brotherhood found itself allied with the Knights in a strike against the Burlington Railway. Suddenly, Debs was faced with the implacable hostility of employers, who had no intention of negotiating with unions, sober or otherwise. The strikers were also threatened with the possibility of an injunction. Ultimately, however,

¹⁰ Selvin, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

¹¹ Salvatore, *op. cit.*, pp. 30, 48.

what broke the strike was the strikers' own internal divisions and mutual scabbing.

The unsuccessful Burlington strike opened a period during which Debs would be a "confused and confusing labor leader," according to Salvatore.¹² On the one hand, Debs began to articulate a critique of capitalism as a threat to individual liberty and the Republic, which would become his trademark in future years. He accused American corporations of "trampling upon the divine declaration 'that all men are created equal,' as pagans trample upon the cross" and of seeking to replace the rule of the people with the rule of the dollar.¹³ He also defended the strike for the first time, depicting it as an essential liberty and associating it with the great revolution of 1776:

The strike is the weapon of the oppressed, of men capable of appreciating justice and having the courage to resist wrong and contend for principle. The Nation had for its cornerstone a strike.¹⁴

On the other hand, Salvatore notes, Debs tended to deny his ideological evolution, rather than try to explain and expand upon it. He also maintained the personal links to his earlier outlook: his friendships with Terre Haute business elites, his membership in the Democratic party, and his leadership of the conservative Brotherhood. Most important, Debs's ideological and strategic development remained incomplete. In a sense, the failure of Burlington offered two possible lessons. The first lesson, drawn from the frequent scabbing between the Brotherhood and the Knights, was that in order to oppose organized capital, the working class needed to be just as well organized. This meant that worker unity was essential. The second possible lesson, drawn from the threatened use of the injunction against the strikers, was that if workers won the industrial battle, they would likely have to fight a political and judicial battle as well.

In leaving the elitist, craft-based Brotherhood to found the American Railway Union (ARU), which was open to all railroad workers, regardless of craft or skill levels, Debs based his strategy on the first lesson, while largely ignoring the second. He later admitted as much:

I was bent on thorough and complete organization of the railroad men and ultimately the whole working class, and all my time and energy were given to that end. My supreme conviction was that if they were only organized in every branch of the service and all acted together in

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 97.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*.

concert they could redress their wrongs and regulate the conditions of their employment.¹⁵

At first, events seemed to bear out Debs's view. Founded in 1893, the ARU expanded rapidly, growing 3000% in one year, to 150,000 members.¹⁶ In May 1894, the new union won a major battle against the Great Northern Railroad. In this strike, worker unity held, the federal government declined to intervene despite the entreaties of the railroad, and local businessmen urged the Great Northern to settle quickly, so as to minimize disruption of the economy.

Following the victory, Debs was ecstatic. In a giant, unified worker organization, he had found a model for preserving worker dignity and establishing peaceful relations with employers on the basis of equity and mutual respect. Eventually, he argued, an organized working class might even be able to forego strikes:

An era of close relationship between capital and labor, I believe, is dawning, one which I feel will place organized labor on a higher standard. When employer and employee can thoroughly respect each other, I believe, will strikes be a thing of the past.... I hope to see the time when there will be mutual justice between employer and employees. It is said the chasm between capital and labor is widening, but I do not believe it. If anything, it is narrowing and I hope to see the day when there will be none.¹⁷

Pullman was to destroy this aspiration.¹⁸ Pullman was the epitome of the single-industry town. The town, like the company, was named for and owned by George Pullman. Houses, stores, churches all belonged to the company. The company's control over its workers was all-encompassing. Both prices and wages were set unilaterally. Petty abuses by foremen were legion, but such pettiness was not confined to the workplace. Workers seeking a drink were obliged to go to another town, since George Pullman did not approve of saloons. Needless to say, there were no unions in Pullman.

In good times, the oppressive environment of Pullman was mitigated by a certain benevolent paternalism. The town of Pullman was clean, with running water and libraries. On the other hand, the all-encompassing control of Pullman, if irritating and somewhat

¹⁵ *Social Democratic Herald*, 12 April 1902, p. 1

¹⁶ Salvatore, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

¹⁸ This account is drawn from *Ibid.*, ch. 5; Eugene Debs, "The Federal Government and the Chicago Strike," *Appeal to Reason*, 27 August 1904, reprinted in Arthur Schlesinger Ed., *Writings and Speeches of Eugene V. Debs*, (New York: Hermitage Press, 1948), pp. 140-60.

disturbing when the company was prospering, became quite threatening to workers in hard times. The backdrop to the strike was a series of wage cuts, reducing earnings by 33%.¹⁹ Whereas, in a typical recession, the factors squeezing wages also tend to operate to reduce prices, no such pressure was felt by monopolists like Pullman. Prices of services in Pullman remained unchanged, or even increased in some instances.

The dark side of paternalism -- Pullman's refusal to brook any interference or dissent from his actions -- soon became apparent. Three members of a committee of workers, who presented a list of grievances to the company and received assurances that no reprisals would be taken, were summarily fired. Efforts by the middle-class Civic Federation of Chicago to mediate the conflict were rebuffed by Pullman. The strike was on.

While approving money and men for the strike, Debs sought to prevent the ARU from becoming a direct participant. However, he was overridden by the rank and file, which voted to boycott all Pullman cars. The strike took on a national dimension, pitting the entire ARU against the General Managers Association (GMA), an organization of 24 railroad companies. The GMA, founded for the purpose of minimizing competition among its members and maintaining a union-free workplace, met just four days prior to the strike to plot a strategy for crushing the ARU.

Despite the massive wealth and close coordination within the GMA, the Pullman strike at first proved quite successful. Worker unity held, and the railroads were brought to a halt. It seemed that Debs's strategy for protecting worker interests might indeed be viable. However, the battlefield soon shifted from industrial terrain to the political and judicial realms, where the ARU found itself powerless.

Pullman revealed to Debs the awesome power of the railroad corporations to corrupt American democracy and individual liberty. Very quickly, it became apparent that the strike would not be between the ARU and the GMA, but between workers and government. President Cleveland's Attorney General, Richard Olney, was a corporate lawyer who served on the board of several railroads. Virulently anti-labor, he took the lead in the government's assault on the ARU. Olney applied for a sweeping injunction against Debs and the ARU on the grounds that the strike interfered with the mails and hindered interstate commerce, thereby violating the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. A federal judge granted the injunction, which effectively barred the ARU from any involvement in Pullman. This established two ominous precedents.²⁰ It was the first time that court injunctions were used to break strikes. It was also the first time that the

¹⁹ Salvatore, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

²⁰ Selvin, *op. cit.*, pp. 132-33.

Interstate Commerce Commission Act and the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, which had been enacted to curb unpopular business practices, were turned against the unions.

Pullman brought a further corruption of the American political system. Olney sought to send federal troops into Chicago to break the strike, but traditionally, such action required an appeal for help in preserving order from the mayor or state governor. This was not forthcoming, however, since the ARU was able to keep its members from committing any acts of violence or interfering with the mails. Both the mayor of Chicago and the governor of Illinois insisted courageously that no federal troops were needed to keep the peace. Nonetheless, for the Cleveland Administration, the doctrine of states' rights was less important than the task at hand; the troops were sent in anyway.

With the troops in place, civil liberties quickly went by the wayside. The government deputized an army of "thugs, thieves, and ex-convicts" in the words of the Superintendent of the Chicago police, who proceeded to go on a rampage, provoking the violence which they were ostensibly sent to prevent. Debs and other union officers were arrested on charges of conspiracy to obstruct interstate commerce and the mails. The local union offices were ransacked and the books and records confiscated by government agents.

Once order had been "restored" to Chicago and the Pullman strike quashed, Debs was given a first-hand demonstration of the corruption of the judiciary by corporate capitalism. Debs's conspiracy charge was brought to a jury trial. By contrast, members of the GMA, who had been colluding for years and who had met four days before the strike to discuss strategy, were never charged with any offense, nor were any of their documents seized. At Debs's trial, every single GMA witness testified that he could not remember any of the conversations that had taken place during the pre-strike meeting! As outrageous as this testimony may have been, George Pullman's behavior was even more egregious. Summoned to testify, Pullman ignored the subpoena, but was neither punished nor compelled to appear. A brief conversation with the judge in his chambers sufficed to settle the matter.

Despite the unfair circumstances of his trial, particularly the lack of access to GMA documents, Debs was able to beat the conspiracy charge. The government suspended the case indefinitely when it became clear that the jury would not convict. Nonetheless, this did not stop Debs from going to jail. He still served six months in Woodstock Jail for violating the federal injunction against dealing with the strikers. In effect, Debs was accused, tried, convicted, and sentenced by a single judge.

Not surprisingly, the Pullman strike had a profound impact on Debs's political development. Pullman transformed him from a union leader into a socialist. This is not to say that other factors did not also enter into play. We have seen that, under the impact of earlier union activity, Debs had begun to develop some of his socialist themes even before Pullman. He was also influenced by Victor Berger, a leader in the American socialist movement and rather vulgar Marxist. Berger's strong intellect and self-confidence impressed and, at times, intimidated Debs. Finally, while imprisoned in Woodstock, Debs had time to digest the works of a number of socialists and American radicals. He was most taken with the writings of Bellamy, Gronlund, and especially Kautsky. These works provided a theoretical framework for Debs to make sense of his recent experiences.

As Salvatore points out, Debs did not convert to socialism overnight, or even in the course of his six-month jail term.²¹ His intellectual evolution continued to be somewhat confusing and uncertain. Upon his release from Woodstock, despite his increasingly strident tone and focus on the evils of capitalism, he resisted identification as a socialist. He was one of the few labor leaders to endorse William Jennings Bryan in the 1896 presidential campaign, and he made a number of speeches on behalf of free silver. He did not declare himself a socialist until after Bryan's defeat, and even at this point, his ideas continued to evolve.

While Debs's conversion to socialism was halting and gradual and while Pullman was not the only factor, there can be no denying its central importance. Debs was obsessed by Pullman. Years later, references to the strike continued to dominate his speeches. But Pullman was more than a symbol, more than a personal scar for Debs. It was also a pedagogical experience, a school for socialism.

In a 1902 article, Debs reflected that prior to Pullman, he had little interest or regard for socialism: "Up to this time I had heard but little of Socialism, knew practically nothing about the movement, and what little I did know was not calculated to impress me in its favor."²² As we have seen, Debs placed his faith in the ability of industrial unions to compel employers to treat their workers with dignity and respect. Pullman destroyed this hope, however. Employers were by no means prepared to bargain with unions on a reasonable, enlightened basis. On the contrary, no measure was considered too severe if it would prevent unions from gaining a foothold. What is more, the American government and judiciary stood behind the employers in this mission. Thus, peaceful, cooperative relations with capital were not in the offing -- class struggle was an inescapable reality.

²¹ Salvatore, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-61.

²² *Social Democratic Herald*, 12 April 1902, p. 1.

Pullman demonstrated the need for socialism in a second way. The events of 1894 showed Debs that the dangers of corporate capitalism were far graver than he had realized previously, that the threat posed was not just industrial, but political. In a speech at the Battery D in Chicago, upon his release from Woodstock, Debs depicted his experience at Pullman as but the most visible indicator of a broader capitalist assault against individual liberty:

Certain it is, in the light of recent judicial proceedings, that I stand in your presence stripped of my constitutional rights as a freeman and shorn of the most sacred prerogatives of American citizenship, and what is true of myself is true of every other citizen who has the temerity to protest against corporation rule or question the absolute sway of the money power.²³

Corporations are corrupting democracy as well as liberty, Debs argued, installing "men with heads as small as chipmunks and pockets as big as balloons" in the courts and legislature.²⁴ Of Longfellow's glorification of the "ship of state," the American Constitution, Debs declared:

... the poet wrote before the chart by which the good old ship sailed had been mutilated and torn and flung aside as a thing of contempt... before corporations knew the price of judges, legislators and public officials as certainly as Armour knows the price of pork and mutton.²⁵

Pullman had fundamentally transformed Debs's impression of the American corporation. Whereas before the strike, he had harbored the hope that capital-labor relations could be conducted peacefully, on the basis of mutual respect, such proto-corporatism was no longer envisageable. What is more, the corporation had become, not merely the enemy of labor in the economic sphere, but the corruptor of liberty and democracy for all citizens. Thus, with the American corporation both unredeemable and all-threatening, socialism seemed to offer the only viable response.

Like the Pullman strike for Debs, strikes in Carmaux (miners in 1892; glassworkers in 1895) were the central event in Jaurès's evolution to socialism. Again, this is not to say that other factors were not at work. Jaurès's conversion, like Debs's, was a gradual process open to many influences. As in the case of Debs, the exact moment of conversion has been widely disputed. Léon Blum points to an all-night conversation in 1899 between Jaurès and Lucien Herr, the librarian at the Ecole Normale and celebrated mentor for a generation of talented

²³ Schlesinger, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

socialists.²⁶ Others emphasize an earlier meeting with the father of French Marxism, Jules Guesde.

Events throughout the 1890's also radicalized Jaurès. France was ruled by a succession of reactionary ministries: Casimir-Périer, Méline, Dupuy, and Ribot. Signs of social and political decay abounded: the Dreyfus Affair, the Panama Scandal and innumerable smaller scandals, a wave of violent strikes, anarchist terror, culminating in the assassination of President Sadi Carnot in 1894, and government counter-terror in the form of the repressive "lois scélérates." Jaurès was a frustrated and angry leader during this period. Lashing out with uncharacteristic vituperation at the reactionary regime, Jaurès linked the scandals and violence together as symptoms of the sick state of French society: "When the same bark carries the corrupt politician and the murdering anarchist into hell, they will find much to talk about, for they will be complementary products of the same social order."²⁷

Without dismissing the importance of the political events of the 1890's, any explanation of Jaurès's conversion to socialism must start with Carmaux. Carmaux brought Jaurès, the ivory-tower academic and deputy, into the industrial battlefield. It showed him first-hand the corruption and immiseration which result from untrammelled capitalism. It led him to the inescapable conclusion that the problems of France were deep and systemic and in need of sweeping social reform. The political events of the 1890's may have reinforced this belief, but Carmaux forged it.

Like Pullman, the town of Carmaux was essentially the property of a single individual, the Marquis de Solages.²⁸ Carmaux was a two-industry town -- coal mines and glassworks -- and until the middle of the nineteenth century, the Solages family owned both businesses. As in Pullman, the vast wealth accruing from these interests permitted a certain paternalism. Workers were provided free lodging. When they retired, they received pensions, and when they died, the Marquis de Solages often employed their widows.

In Carmaux, as in Pullman, paternalism was becoming a thing of the past, however. In 1853, the coal mines were transformed into a corporation governed by a board of directors in Paris. Nine years later, Solages sold the glassworks to Fernand Rességuier, for whom it was the sole source of income.²⁹ Profits thus became the overriding concern in both industries. Worker-employer relations became dehumanized, as Solages' paternalistic policies were eliminated and

²⁶ Goldberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-63.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

²⁸ Joan Wallach Scott, *The Glassworkers of Carmaux: French Craftsmen and Political Action in a Nineteenth-Century City*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), p. 22.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 21, 74.

workers who had previously labored only when not tending their farms became proletarians, forced to take full-time jobs and move into the city.³⁰

As Joan Wallach Scott describes in her excellent *Glassworkers of Carmaux*, the glassworkers were especially disrupted by industrialization.³¹ Until the 1880's, their occupation had been a skilled craft, requiring years of training. Apprenticeship regulated the labor supply, wages were high, and the production process was in the hands of the craftsmen. However, a series of inventions during the 1880's opened glass-blowing to unskilled workers. As a result, the glassworkers gradually lost their elite status.

Jaurès was closely involved with the glassworkers as they sought to resist deskilling. He also championed the cause of the miners, whose conditions echoed those described in Zola's *Germinal*. The plight of the miners and glassworkers provided a sobering lesson in the consequences of industrial capitalism. Nor was this lesson limited to the economic sphere. Like Debs, Jaurès was given a first-hand demonstration of the all-too-close link between economic power and political power.

Throughout Jaurès's career, the Marquis de Solages deployed an impressive array of economic weapons in the political arena. Every election, Solages or the candidate he sponsored spent vast sums on money, while Jaurès had almost no funds.³² In addition, bands of thugs were hired to harass Jaurès and prevent him from speaking in Carmaux.³³ Solages did not hesitate to bring the strongest economic pressure to bear on his workers. A campaign poster in 1898 read, "Miners, in rendering you suspect before your employers, Jaurès makes it impossible to hire your children."³⁴ A few weeks before each election, the Marquis invited all workers to his château for a sumptuous banquet. As the election drew nearer, promises of jobs or promotions for those who voted for the "right" candidate and threats against those who did not were distributed with equal liberality.³⁵

Even when the workers resisted the Marquis' coercion and voted their conscience, the political struggle was not necessarily won. The 1892 strike began when Jean-Baptiste Calvignac, a trade union leader and the newly-elected mayor of Carmaux, was fired from his job in the mines for unauthorized absences. In spite of the company's

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 12, 21-22.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Rolande Trempé, "Jaurès député de Carmaux," in Auriol, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Jean Rabaut, *Jean Jaurès*, (Paris: Librairie Académique Perrin, 1981), p. 85.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

refusal to grant him a leave of absence, he had started taking off two days a week in order to perform his duties.³⁶

The 1895 strike was also fought on primarily political grounds. In this case, Fernand Rességuier, armed with a surplus of six million bottles, decided that the moment was ripe to break the glassworkers' union.³⁷ He provoked a walk-out by firing the union leaders without justification. The workers immediately struck and demanded arbitration. At this point, Jaurès intervened. Like Debs at Pullman, he sought to avert a conflict. Recognizing the danger of the glassworkers' position, he convinced them to return to work, but Rességuier then staged a lock-out.³⁸ After a long, bitter strike, the union was defeated and excluded from the factory. However, widespread sympathy for the plight of the Carmausins allowed them to raise funds nationwide and to found their own cooperative glassworks, the celebrated *Verrerie d'Albi*.

Jaurès actively championed the Carmausins' cause during the strike, repeatedly bringing the issue before parliament, criticizing the government for backing Rességuier, and making sure that the public heard the workers' side of the story. Not surprisingly, he became a prime target for abuse. In this case, no one had to hire thugs; the police, local officials, and courts did the job for free. The Prefect of the department, Pierre Doux declared during one meeting: "We must get Jaurès, one way or another, he must be brought down."³⁹ With the tacit approval of the Dupuy and Ribot governments, Doux orchestrated a campaign of systematic harassment against the Deputy from Carmaux.⁴⁰ Jaurès was chased through the streets by police on horseback. His person and his hotel room were searched without authorization and in violation of his parliamentary immunity. All attempts to hold demonstrations or meetings were broken up by the police, sometimes leading to bloodshed.⁴¹

As the strike dragged on, the courts were brought into the struggle, just as they had been at Pullman. The treasurers of the strike fund were arrested on trumped up charges of theft.⁴² Rességuier sued Jaurès for 100,000F for organizing an illegal, conspiratorial attack against him. The charge was absurd, and the trial court in Toulouse threw the case out, but the appeals court reversed this decision and ordered Jaurès to pay 15,000F.⁴³

³⁶ Scott, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-32.

³⁷ Goldberg, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

³⁹ The word used by Doux was "abattre," which can also be translated as "slaughtered" or "killed." Gallo, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

⁴⁰ Auclair, *op. cit.*, pp. 274-85.

⁴¹ Poulain, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

⁴² Goldberg, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 142-46.

It should come as no surprise that Jaurès's Carmaux experience exerted a strong radicalizing influence. According to Rolande Treppe, the leading authority on Carmaux, "The strikes were for him a veritable school of the proletariat."⁴⁴ Treppe and others have pointed to the inauguration of the *Verrerie ouvrière*, when Jaurès jumped on the banquet table and began singing *La Carmagnole* -- the bloodthirsty anthem of the Revolution, which still struck terror in the hearts of the French bourgeoisie -- as signalling that he had at last become a true socialist.⁴⁵

Without trying to pinpoint the moment of Jaurès's conversion, we can see the effect of Carmaux on his ideas. After the first strike, Jaurès professed his full, open support of collectivism for the first time.⁴⁶ In parliament, he became much more aggressive, fiercely criticizing the reactionary ministries of the era. He derided French politicians, declaring that, "For ten years, democracy has not stopped capitulating before the power of the wealthy."⁴⁷ Paul Lafargue, Marx's son-in-law and an ally of Guesde, described Jaurès with some satisfaction as a "devil of a man" and believed that he and Guesde had won a new convert.⁴⁸

Jaurès's behavior just after the second strike was even more indicative of the radicalizing impact of Carmaux. Whereas the first strike accelerated his evolution toward socialism -- that is, in the direction of his ultimate ideological destination -- the second strike pushed him well beyond the brand of socialism he would eventually profess. Indeed, if one did not know, it would be easy to mistake many of the statements made by Jaurès in 1895-96 for pronouncements by Guesde or Lafargue. For example, Jaurès asserted that the state was the tool of the ruling class:

Theoretically, the State today, especially the Republican State, is the expression and organ of the common will and the public interest. But, in fact, it is in the service of certain classes which enjoy, thanks to the luck of events of the underlying laws of society, *de facto* preponderance.⁴⁹

Jaurès also argued that employers could get around any social reforms -- by such tactics as speeding up workers if an eight-hour day were instituted or cutting wages if forced to contribute to pension funds. From this, he drew an uncharacteristically pessimistic conclusion:

⁴⁴ Treppe, "Jaurès et les grèves," in *Jaurès et la Classe ouvrière*, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Goldberg, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

⁴⁷ Gallo, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 111-12.

⁴⁹ Jaures, *Oeuvres*, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 305.

A reactionary and repressive policy will end in a revolutionary explosion; and a reformist, radical policy will end either in the deception of the workers or the opposition of the industrial bosses.⁵⁰

Jaurès, of course, later retreated from these positions, but he never retreated from his socialist principles. Like Debs, Jaurès had evolved to socialism for a variety of reasons and over a period of time, but the key factor was a baptism by fire in worker struggles against their employers and against the state. Nor was this the only parallel. For both men, involvement in strikes not only radicalized them politically, pushing them toward socialism; it also helped him to define the tactics for realizing socialism.

Refining Tactics: The Lessons of Industrial Strife and Political Democracy

The crushing defeat at Pullman left Debs in search of a new strategy. As with his ideological conversion, this would be a slow, halting process. Debs's first instinct upon his release from Woodstock was to simply give up on American society.⁵¹ In a throwback to the communal movements of the 1840's, he proposed that workers found a "grand co-operative scheme" in a western state. The colony would offer a refuge for persecuted workers from all over the country and, more important, would serve as a model, a living proof that an alternative to capitalism was possible. Eventually, the colonists would overflow into neighboring states "until the old barbaric system has been destroyed and the republic is redeemed and disenthralled and is, in fact, the land of a free and happy people."⁵²

Debs clung to the colonization plan for two years, and over the objections of orthodox socialists like Berger, he managed to get the program incorporated into the Social Democratic party platform. In a Fourieresque gesture, he wrote a letter to John D. Rockefeller appealing for funds to found a colony. Finally, at the 1898 Social Democratic convention, he declared that he could change the economic system of the country if given "10,000 men, aye, 1,000 in a Western state, with access to the sources of production."⁵³ Two days later, however, under intense pressure from Berger, he reversed his position and opposed colonization.

Having abandoned colonization, Debs refocused his efforts on changing -- as opposed to escaping -- the American social and political

⁵⁰ Goldberg, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

⁵¹ This account is drawn from Salvatore, *op. cit.*, pp.162-67.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 162.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

system. However, he brought with him a much more sober view of the possibilities for union-based action. Pullman had purged Debs of his old faith in the power of labor organizations. He declared repeatedly in the years immediately following the strike that, "I will never again have any official connection with a strike."⁵⁴ As time passed, he backed away from this extreme position, but he remained extremely skeptical of union-centered strategies. In a lengthy article, entitled "Unionism and Socialism," Debs argues that the willingness of the government and the courts to intervene on behalf of capital has made it essential for workers to move beyond industrial action:

The courts, so notoriously in control of capital, and so shamelessly perverted to its base and sordid purposes are, therefore, exercising a wholesome effect upon trades-unionism by compelling the members to note the class character of our capitalist government and driving them to the inevitable conclusion that the labor question is also a political question and that the working class must organize their political power that they may wrest the government from capitalist control and put an end to class rule forever.⁵⁵

The class struggle has shifted from the industrial realm to the political realm. This is the inescapable lesson of Pullman:

... the evolution of the injunction is making for Socialism. Nothing more clearly shows that the labor question is also a political question and that to conquer their exploiters the working class must build up the socialist party and capture the powers of government.⁵⁶

Despite his skepticism about industrial action, Debs became the leading spokesman within the Socialist party on behalf of union autonomy. Urging his fellow socialists to resist trying to dominate the unions, he called for a clear division of labor between the party and organized labor: "The trades-union expresses the economic power and the Socialist party expresses the political power of the Labor movement."⁵⁷ Each pillar of the socialist movement should support the other. The party should express sympathy for and publicize the arguments of strikers; the unions should encourage their members to vote socialist.

Notwithstanding the repeated assertions that political and industrial action are equally important, the former had moved to the center of Debs's socialist strategy. Unions, in Debs's post-Pullman

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

⁵⁵ Schlesinger, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-06.

⁵⁶ *Debs: His Life, op. cit.*, pp. 317-18.

⁵⁷ Schlesinger, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

outlook, occupy a subordinate position. They are to strive to mitigate the worst abuses of capitalism, to improve the lot of the workingman. They are also to perform important pedagogical functions: making the workers aware of the existence of the class struggle and the need for socialism and preparing them for the cooperative commonwealth. Indeed, this is their central task:

The most vital thing about this world [labor] movement is its educational propaganda -- its capacity and power to shed light in the brain of the working class, arouse them from their torpor, develop their faculties for thinking, teach them their economic class interests, effect their solidarity, and imbue them with the spirit of the impending social revolution.⁵⁸

If the unions are to play a key part in preparing the workers for socialism, no such role is envisaged for them in the actual transition to socialism. In Debs's view, the transition to socialism will be a political affair conducted solely by the Socialist party:

The difference between them [the Socialist party and the unions] is that while the trades-union is confined to the trade, the Socialist party embraces the entire working class, and while the union is limited to bettering conditions under the wages system, the party is organized to conquer the political power of the nation, wipe out the wage system and make the workers themselves the masters of the earth.⁵⁹

Lest there be any ambiguity, Debs cites approvingly the claim of Dr. George D. Herron that, "trade unionism is by no means the solution of the workers' problem, nor is it the goal of the labor struggle. It is merely a capitalist line of defense within the capitalist system."⁶⁰

The endorsement of political action over industrial action did not resolve all questions of strategy, however. It remained to be determined whether socialism would be realized by democratic or revolutionary means. Debs endorsed the former course of action, although he never completely abandoned the possibility of violent revolution. Two factors contributed to this choice. First of all, as we have seen, one of the principal reasons for Debs's conversion to socialism was his belief that it offered the only means of protecting the Republic from the assaults of corporate capitalism. To have supported a strategy of violent revolution would have been tantamount to destroying the village in order to save the village. Secondly, Debs had

⁵⁸ *Debs: His Life, op. cit.*, p. 240.

⁵⁹ *Schlesinger, op. cit.*, p. 111.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

tremendous faith in the power of the ballot to effect sweeping change, as the following remark from his speech at the Battery D indicates:

It [the ballot] has been called "a weapon that executes a free man's will as lightning does the will of God." It is a metaphor pregnant with life and truth. There is nothing in our government it cannot remove or amend. It can make and unmake presidents and congresses and courts. It can abolish unjust laws and consign to eternal odium and oblivion unjust judges, strip from them their robes and gowns and send them forth unclean as lepers to bear the burden of merited obloquy as Cain with the mark of a murderer. It can sweep our trusts, syndicates, corporations, monopolies and every other abnormal development of the money power designed to abridge the liberties of workingmen and enslave them by the degradation incident to poverty and enforced idleness as cyclones scatter the leaves of our forest. The ballot can do all this and more. It can give our civilization its crowning glory -- the co-operative commonwealth.⁶¹

Jaurès's tactics evolved in much the same manner as Debs's. Like Debs after Pullman, Jaurès emerged from Carmaux extremely wary of union-centered strategies for achieving socialism. He described strikes as a "barbaric means of struggle imposed on the workers by a barbaric society" and as a "deplorable fact of life."⁶² They are something to be avoided, not pursued. Strikes, in his eyes, had become synonymous with economic hardship, division among workers, violence, and police intervention. Furthermore, Carmaux had shown him their very limited effectiveness. Employers could live off accumulated wealth and wait for the plight of the workers to become desperate. If the workers held out, political power and the army could be mobilized against them.

Despite his concerns about the costs and risks associated with strikes, Jaurès could not avoid the issue of industrial action. The revolutionary strike occupied a prominent place in the political mythology of turn-of-the-century France. The writings of Proudhon and Sorel, along with the anarcho-syndicalist pronouncements of the leading union in France, the CGT, placed this question at the forefront of the debate among socialists. Jaurès's public pronouncements, while sympathetic to the workers and their struggles, made it very clear that he did not view the revolutionary general strike as a viable means for achieving socialism.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁶² Rolande Treppe, in Auriol, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-05.

In a 1901 article, Jaurès argues that a revolutionary general strike can only fail.⁶³ Few workers would be motivated by the abstract notion of creating "communism." Even if they were, gaining control of the factories would not suffice to overthrow the regime. After all, governments in the past had survived much greater shocks, including civil war (1793) and foreign invasion (the Hundred Years War). In the end, Jaurès asserts, a revolutionary general strike would lead to counter-revolution and repression:

... it will leave standing the capitalist system, but arm it with an implacable furor. The fear of the leaders, and even of the large part of the masses, will vent itself in a long series of years of reaction. And the proletariat will be disarmed, crushed, bound for a long time.⁶⁴

While disapproving of the revolutionary general strike, Jaurès does allow that a non-revolutionary general strike could be effective under certain circumstances. He cites three conditions as indispensable: 1) that the goal of the strike be extremely important to the proletariat, such as the defense of worker rights; 2) that the public recognize the goal as fair and reasonable; and 3) that the strike appear to be the exercise of a legitimate right, rather than a form of "disguised violence."⁶⁵ That this cautious endorsement of narrowly defined strike action by no means constitutes faith in a revolutionary transition to socialism is evident in the concluding phrase of Jaurès's article: "Outside of convulsive outbursts which escape all predictions and laws and which are sometimes the only resource of history held at bay, there is today only one sovereign method for socialism: to conquer the majority by legal means."⁶⁶

Seven years after this article appeared, Jaurès enshrined his cautious view of the role of strikes as Socialist party doctrine. The 1908 Toulouse Declaration, which was drawn up by Jaurès, lays out the SFIO's positions on a variety of issues.⁶⁷ The section on the general strike was intended as a figleaf to try to woo the CGT -- which had recently declared its total independence and disregard for political action -- back into the political fold. Consequently, it can be viewed as Jaurès's most conciliatory stance on the issue of the general strike.

The Toulouse Declaration accepts the principle of the general strike employed in the defense of worker rights or to press for reforms of great importance to the proletariat, but makes no reference to the revolutionary general strike. Furthermore, like Debs, Jaurès

⁶³ Jaurès, *Oeuvres*, vol. 6, *op. cit.*, pp. 331-43.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 334.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 342-43.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 343.

⁶⁷ Georges Lefranc, *Le Mouvement Socialiste sous la Troisième République (1875-1940)*, (Paris: Payot, 1967), p. 165.

limits the role of the trade unions in the process of "social transformation" to "the education and organization of the proletariat." No mention is made of any role in the actual overthrow of the system. Finally, while the declaration affirms the right of the proletariat to resort to "insurrectional force," it does not refer to any specific circumstances and cautions against inappropriate initiatives:

[The proletariat] does not confuse skirmishes, in which the workers would launch themselves into adventures against the bourgeois state, with those vast collective movements that can only surge forth from the general and profound emotion of the proletariat.⁶⁸

Like Debs, Jaurès managed to enjoy good relations with the unions while relegating them to a secondary role in the transition to socialism. Part of the reason was that Jaurès was simply more diplomatic than other French socialist leaders, especially Guesde. Jaurès at least paid lip service to the idea of the general strike, and he opened the columns of the party newspaper to contributions from CGT leaders. No less important, in clear contradiction with the analysis presented above, Jaurès advocated a revolutionary general strike in one situation -- as a means to prevent war.⁶⁹ This extended the possibilities for a rapprochement with the virulently anti-militarist CGT.

Thus, Jaurès's tactical evolution paralleled that of Debs. Starting from a basis of tepid reformism, he was profoundly radicalized by involvement in worker struggles. Jaurès emerged from Carmaux a socialist. Unlike Debs, however, he had always emphasized political action, so jettisoning syndicalist schemes was not nearly as wrenching for him. Nonetheless, Jaurès's positions on union action were transformed by Carmaux. The final product reflected his experiences in 1892 and 1895, combining a great deal of respect and sensitivity for the everyday struggles of the workers with a sober understanding of the limits of such tactics.

Having ruled out the syndicalist strategy, Jaurès, like Debs, opted for a reformist over a revolutionary political strategy. The reasoning was very much the same in both cases. Jaurès cherished the Republic; it formed an integral part of his socialist vision. Consequently, the idea of a violent revolution was fundamentally at odds with his outlook, especially since, like Debs, Jaurès was deeply pacifistic.

Jaurès's strategy was based on tactical considerations, as well as moral ones. Like Debs, he had tremendous faith in the power of democracy. In the conclusion to *L'Armée nouvelle*, Jaures's proposal

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 398.

⁶⁹ This position will be examined in the next section.

for reforming the French military, he considers the implications of French democracy for socialist strategy. Jaurès argues that because France has a republican form of government, it is both possible and necessary to use the political system to gradually and peacefully transform society. It is possible because, sooner or later, democracy translates shifts in public opinion into changes in policy:

Democracy, despite insufficient or falsified information, always manages to know the essential facts of public life, and it registers, it approximates, the states of mind [of the public]. Thus, on the one hand, the possessing classes are warned of the extent of popular grievances, of the force and persistence of demands; and the proletarian classes measure the forces of resistance and the thickness of the obstacles. The bourgeoisie is therefore obliged to make timely concessions and the proletariat is dissuaded from vain and furious revolts.⁷⁰

A strategy of gradual democratic change is necessary, Jaurès argues, because Frenchmen are attached to their Republic. Any movement that seeks to operate outside of democratic institutions will become an outcast, doomed to impotence:

... the proletariat cannot remove itself from the sovereign arbitration of democracy, because democracy is the milieu in which classes mix, and if the proletariat tried to escape it [democracy], it would be to agitate in emptiness and to lose itself in abstraction.⁷¹

Indeed, Jaurès asserts that democracy has made a successful violent revolution all but impossible:

Democracy provides guarantees to both classes, and while lending itself, while helping the proletariat in its quest for a new order, it acts as a moderating force in the great social conflict. It protects the possessing class against violent surprises, against the risks of uncoordinated movements. As the regime of a nation becomes more democratic, as universal suffrage becomes more powerful, more enlightened, better organized, more effective, coups, accidental and adventurous revolutions become more difficult.⁷²

Debs's and Jaurès's tactical evolution illustrates a recurrent pattern in their intellectual development: the old did not simply give way to the new; it shaped the new. Pullman and Carmaux shifted their

⁷⁰ Jaurès, *Oeuvres, op. cit.*, vol. 4 - *L'Armée nouvelle*, p. 344.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 347-48.

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 343-44.

objectives from bourgeois reformism to socialism. But how was this goal to be realized? The bitter experience of industrial struggle pushed Debs and Jaurès away from syndicalist methods. This left revolution and reform as possible strategies. Revolution was not unknown to either country. Indeed, throughout the previous century, in both the US and France, major social and political change had occurred primarily through violent means. The historic anniversaries in both nations mark violent upheavals: 1776 and 1860 in the US; 1789, 1830, 1848, and 1871 in France.

And yet, Debs and Jaurès did not become revolutionaries. Both men believed too strongly in democracy -- as a means for effecting peaceful social change and as an ideal, the highest form of political organization -- to succumb to the revolutionary temptation. The republican ideals of their youth colored the socialist tactics of their adulthood. As will be seen, the same process operated over their entire socialist outlook. Debs's and Jaurès's socialist vision would be erected out of bourgeois materials.

The Mature Socialists

Debs and Jaurès were not young men when they reached the end of their intellectual odyssey. Jaurès declared himself a socialist at the age of 34; Debs at 42. They had spent the greater part of their lives operating within the political mainstream and imbibing its values. But for Pullman and Carmaux, they might well have continued along a tepid leftist path: progressive, but not too progressive; socially and politically well-connected; in short, the ideal husbands for Kate and Louise.

Pullman and Carmaux interrupted this trajectory, however, pushing Debs and Jaurès into the socialist camp. But, they were to be socialists of a peculiar sort. They were socialists who were too old and too attached to the ideals of their upbringing to simply discard their past and swallow the official party doctrine, as presented by a De Leon, Berger, Lafargue or Guesde. Their ideals, like their wives, would carry over into their later lives. (Fortunately, the mixture would be more harmonious.) Debs and Jaurès were socialists *because* of their bourgeois ideals, *because* of the values of their youth, a love of individual liberty and democracy. In their view, socialism would protect, complement, and extend these values.

For this reason, even as Debs and Jaurès assumed the leadership of the socialist movements in their respective countries, their political philosophy sat rather uneasily with the guardians of socialist orthodoxy. Their views were regarded with suspicion. Jaurès, it was

-- and still is -- argued, was not a true socialist, but rather a bourgeois reformist, masquerading in Marxist garb.⁷³ As for Debs, Berger and others depicted him as a kind of slow learner, unable to grasp the complexities of socialist doctrine.⁷⁴ To varying degrees, the claim has been put forward that Debs's and Jaurès's popularity derived from what they did -- their involvement in Pullman and Carmaux -- from what they were -- their kindness and charisma -- and from what they suffered -- their martyrdom in World War I -- but not from what they said.

Debs and Jaurès were indeed great men, and this undoubtedly boosted their political careers. Anecdotes abound of their kindness, compassion, and generosity. Debs was known to literally give people the shirt off his back. He often arrived home minus his hat, his coat, and his money -- having encountered some less fortunate soul along the way. Debs and Jaurès were also extraordinarily talented individuals. Both were among the best orators of their day, able to speak for hours at a time, without so much as resorting to note cards, let alone prepared texts. Both moved and magnetized audiences with their fiery rhetoric and poetic imagery, with their soul-wrenching sensitivity to the sufferings of the downtrodden and their ability to invoke the promise and greatness of their nation.

Jaurès was particularly blessed, possessing one of the great intellects of his day. While pursuing a full-time political career, he found time to produce two doctoral theses, the first socialist history of the French Revolution, and a lengthy, meticulously researched proposal to reform the French military. His collected works would fill some 80-90 volumes of 400 pages each.⁷⁵ Apparently, this was not enough to keep him busy: Jaurès also founded and edited the newspaper, *L'Humanité*. Jaurès's feats of mind are legendary. To cite but one well-known example, in July 1914, after a meeting in Lyon, his train to Paris was delayed. At a stop in Dijon, he went to a local party headquarters to telephone in the next day's article. He had not yet written the article, but proceeded to dictate it over the phone. When he had finished, he told the stenographer: "Pay close attention, this article is very important. You must not change a word. I will reread it to you."⁷⁶ He then "reread" an article of some 500 words which he had never written in the first place!

For all their flash and charisma, Debs and Jaurès were not merely orators and starry-eyed intellectuals; they had proven themselves on the industrial battlefield. Both men were boosted in

⁷³ Koën, *op. cit.*; Léo Hamon, *Socialisme et pluralités*, (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1976), ch. 7; Barthélémy Montagnon, *Jean Jaurès: L'Homme, l'Humaniste, le Révisionniste*, (Paris: Club Jean Jaurès, 1964).

⁷⁴ To a certain degree, this seems to be the opinion of Salvatore.

⁷⁵ Gallo, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19.

⁷⁶ Louis Lévy, Introduction to *Jean Jaurès: Anthologie*, (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1983), pp. 50-51.

the eyes of workers by their heroic involvement in the Pullman and Carmaux strikes. Debs and Jaurès had gone to bat for the workingman: opposing the alliance of capital and the political authorities, putting their careers -- indeed, their lives -- on the line, and in the case of Debs, spending six months in jail.

Debs's and Jaurès's tragic final years have reinforced their standing in the decades since their passing. Both figures were martyred as a result of opposition to World War I. Jaurès was assassinated on the eve of the War; Debs was imprisoned for speaking out against US entry into the War. Both realized that the conflict would be as horrible as it was senseless -- a lesson the vast majority of their compatriots would not learn until it was too late. Thus, they were not only heroic, but prescient.

Debs's and Jaurès's martyrdom in the name of pacifist principles has lent them an almost saintly quality. What is more, in a perverse kind of way, the timing of Jaurès's assassination and Debs's imprisonment has also enhanced their image. Of Jaurès's murder, Kolakowski writes, "He was shot dead by a nationalist fanatic in a Paris café on 31 July 1914, the last day of the nineteenth century."⁷⁷ As socialists whose ideals were rooted in such nineteenth-century liberal concepts as individual liberty, democracy, and in the case of Jaurès, unilinear progress, Debs and Jaurès would have been ill-equipped to explain the senseless horrors of the twentieth century. Martyrdom foreclosed this challenge. Jaurès was never forced to implement his claim that the workers of Europe could compel their governments to settle their differences through peaceful arbitration, and neither he nor Debs had to pit their pacifist principles against the menace of Nazi Germany. They were also spared challenges to their domestic views. Neither man had to defend his strategy of peaceful democratic change against the Bolshevik alternative on the left or the fascist threat on the right. Jaurès had long departed and Debs was in jail, cut off from the outside world, when Lenin split socialist movements everywhere with his 21 points. The rise of fascism and suicide of many European democracies also occurred after Debs and Jaurès had left the scene.

Beyond a doubt, personal magnetism, charisma, kindness, intelligence, and the whims of history all helped Debs and Jaurès emerge as the leaders of their respective socialist movements and have contributed to their enduring popularity. But one cannot ignore the power of their message. Salvatore writes:

... his fellow citizens did not support Debs primarily due to his eloquent oratory. He was a powerful public speaker, but he was no manipulative "outside agitator." His appeal stemmed from the fact that his words addressed the very

⁷⁷ Kolakowski, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

real experience of countless Americans as they encountered industrial capitalism.⁷⁸

The same can be said of Jaurès. As late converts to socialism, imbued with the mainstream values of their upbringing, Debs and Jaurès did not simply pick their socialist vision wholly formed, like a ripe fruit on a tree. Rather, they revamped socialist doctrine to fit their own experiences and ideals. As a result, their vision spoke to the experiences and ideals of millions of Americans and Frenchmen. It was the message that made Debs and Jaurès so popular, the message of citizen socialism, and it is to this message that we now turn.

⁷⁸ Salvatore, *op. cit.*, p. xii.

The Ideology of Citizen Socialism

Citizenship is a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community. All who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed.... Social class, on the other hand, is a system of inequality.... It is therefore reasonable to expect that the impact of citizenship on social class should take the form of a conflict between opposing principles.

- T. H. Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class*¹

Debs and Jaurès grafted socialist doctrine onto the ideals, concerns, and symbols of their early years. The result was a peculiar hybrid, which will be called "citizen socialism." While there is considerable overlap between citizen socialism and democratic socialism of a more orthodox bent, the former differs from the latter in two important ways: 1) the socialist vision is constructed out of late-eighteenth-century bourgeois symbols associated with the status of citizenship: individual rights, republican government, and the revolution of 1776/89; 2) when in conflict with socialist doctrine, this trypic of bourgeois values and symbols usually prevails. Debs's and Jaurès's socialist conceptions bear these two features, but it does not follow that their political outlooks are identical. Debs and Jaurès were independent, free-thinking individuals. Although they shared many common values and concerns, important differences persisted between the two men. This is most apparent in their visions of history.

This section provides a brief overview of the political philosophy of Debs and Jaurès. It roots their socialist conceptions in the values and symbols of their mainstream upbringings: individual rights, republicanism, and the spirit and heritage of 1776/89. It argues that, for Debs and Jaurès, these values associated with the status of citizenship were prior to socialism, not only temporally, but intellectually and politically. It also shows that, for all the contextual, biographical, and even ideological parallels between Debs and Jaurès, on some issues, they simply did not agree. Even within citizen socialism, one finds a diversity of thought.

Socialism and the Individual

The United States and France were among the first nations to enshrine a list of individual rights beyond the pale of governmental authority. The Bill of Rights and the Declaration of the Rights of Man

¹ T. H. Marshall, "Citizenship and Social Class," in *Class, Citizenship, and Social Development: Essays by T. H. Marshall*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), p. 92.

and of Citizen were the direct outgrowth of the revolutions of 1776 and 1789 and a prized component of the national political heritage. Raised with a healthy respect for these rights, Debs and Jaurès retained a reverence for individual liberty even as they moved from reformism to socialism. The ideal of individual liberty, which so many critics used to attack socialism, became, in the hands of Debs and Jaurès, the basis for a radical critique of capitalism and alternative socialist vision.

As Salvatore relates, the notion of "manhood" lies at the heart of Debs's individualistic conception.² Manhood is a sort of shorthand for a variety of virtues associated with the early-American ideal of a republic of independent citizen producers. "Manly" attributes include: the ability to earn a wage capable of supporting a wife and children; high moral conduct; active political participation; fulfillment of one's duty as citizen; honor, keeping one's word; a strong sense of community. The image conjured up is of a community of artisans or skilled workers -- proud of their craft, hard-working, upright, and responsible.

Debs's evolving interpretation of manhood demonstrates how a particular ideal can be turned in either a conservative or radical direction. Initially, Debs placed far more emphasis on the worker's role in upholding manhood than on the employer's. The Brotherhood's motto, "Benevolence, Sobriety, and Industry," and its strict rules of conduct reflected a sense that individuals were too easily inclined toward "unmanly" behavior.³ The Brotherhood sought to counteract these impulses. As we have seen, Debs believed that if the workers behaved as men, then employers would give them their due, and there would be no need for strikes.

Needless to say, this outlook did not survive Pullman. As Debs came to realize that manhood required more than good behavior by the workers, his preoccupation shifted from obligations to rights, from assuring the manly behavior of workers to protecting the manhood of these very same workers against their employers. The defense of manhood became the rallying cry for Debs's critique of capitalism. In an oft-repeated remark, Debs asserts that the capitalist labor market reduces "men" to hands":

When the capitalist requires the use of your hands, does he call for men? Why, certainly not. He doesn't want men, he only wants hands.⁴

Workers under capitalism are stripped of their manhood. They are treated as instruments of production, not as heads of families and

² Salvatore, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-25, 171.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁴ Debs: *His Life*, *op. cit.*, p. 434.

citizens. In "Unionism and Socialism," Debs describes in dramatic terms the many degrading features of capitalism, its negation of all of the virtues associated with manhood. Unlike the independent artisans of the past, who were for the most part self-employed, workers today must humbly beg employers for a job:

... the workingman, before he can do a tap of work, before he can earn a dime to feed himself, his wife or his child, must first consult the tool-owning capitalist; or, rather, his labor-buying superintendent. Very meekly, therefore, and not without fear in his heart and trembling in his knees, he enters the office and offers his labor power in exchange for a wage that represents but a part, usually a small part, of what his labor produces.

His offer may be accepted or rejected.

Not infrequently, the "boss" has been annoyed by so many job-hunters that he has become irritable and gruffly turns the applicant away.⁵

Even if a worker manages to secure a job, however, the conditions of employment are anything but manly. Wage laborers check their independence and self-respect at the door:

But admitting that he finds employment, during working hours he is virtually the property of his master.

The bell or the whistle claims him on the stroke of the hour. He is subject to the master's shop regulations and these, of course, are established solely to conserve the master's interests. He works, first of all, for his master, who extracts the surplus value from his labor, but for which he would not be allowed to work at all. He has little or no voice in determining any of the conditions of his employment.⁶

As bad as things are in the factory, they can get worse. Workers can be fired and reduced to a position of desperation, unable to support their families, without notice and for no good reason:

Suddenly, without warning, the shop closes down, or he is discharged and his wage, small at best, is cut off. He has to live, the rent must be paid, the wife and children must have clothing and food, fuel must be provided, and yet he has no job, no wages and no prospect for getting any.⁷

⁵ Schlesinger, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

Poorly paid, ordered about like a servant while on the job, and under continuous threat of unemployment and hunger, such a worker, Debs concludes, is neither a citizen nor a man:

Is a worker in that position free?

Is he a citizen?

A man?

No! He is simply a wage-slave, a job-holder, while it lasts, here today and gone tomorrow.⁸

As long as capitalist wage relations prevail, Debs argues, individual liberty is but an illusion:

No man is free in any just sense who has to rely upon the arbitrary will of another for the opportunity to work. Such a man works, and therefore, lives, by permission, and this is the economic relation of the working class to the capitalist class in the present system.⁹

The restoration of manhood lies at the heart of Debs's political agenda. In an 1889 editorial, he defines the purpose of unionism in a rather different way from his early Brotherhood days. Unions, he argues, seek to assure the social prerequisites of manhood:

... fair pay for honest work, and fair treatment at the hands of their employers. With fair pay they [workers] can rear their families in respectability, to lives of usefulness and honor. With fair treatment they can maintain their independence and maintain the dignity of American citizenship.¹⁰

In the wake of Pullman, however, Debs abandoned the hope of using unions to strike a compromise with employers that would safeguard manhood. Unions, he realized, are too weak to achieve this purpose. They are unable to protect the dignity of labor, and the unchecked forces of corporate capitalism are running roughshod over manhood. Socialism, in Debs's view, offers the only way of reversing this process:

... Social Democracy has one central pivotal purpose, the amelioration of social conditions and the emancipation of the victims of a vast brood of wrongs, all of which converge and consolidate in the one great and overmastering wrong of robbing them under the forms of law of the fruits of their toil, and thereby reducing them to a condition where men dispose of their manhood and women of their chastity

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Social Democratic Herald*, 8 September 1900, p. 2.

¹⁰ Salvatore, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

for the means of continuing lives that are a ceaseless horror.¹¹

Debs's socialist vision focuses on the bread-and-butter concerns that are essential to manhood: a decent wage, security of employment, leisure, etc. Issues of Marxist economic theory, such as alienation and the division of labor, are less important. Debs's socialist society is populated with men, not proletarians. It is about inalienable rights, not the alienation of labor:

The factories and mills and mines, the railroads and telegraph and telephone, and all other means of production and distribution will be transferred to the people in their collective capacity, industry will be operated cooperatively, and every human being will have the "inalienable right" to work and to enjoy the fruit of his labor. The hours of labor will be reduced according to the progress of invention. Rent, interest and profit will be no more.... Economic equality will have triumphed, labor will stand forth emancipated, and the sons and daughters of men will glorify the triumphs of Social Democracy.¹²

While the concept of manhood constitutes a core element in Debs's critique of corporate capitalism, Debs is also quite concerned about individual liberty defined in more conventional terms. From Pullman, he drew the lesson that vast concentrations of wealth place basic rights in jeopardy: the right to strike or form unions exists only on paper; the courts are the defenders of the rich, rather than of justice; corporations can violate laws with impunity, while workers and their leaders go to jail on ludicrous charges; the federal government stands ready to ransack offices and open correspondence if the needs of capital so dictate. This is the message of Debs's Speech at the Battery D in Chicago, pronounced upon his release from Woodstock Jail. In this speech, Debs paints a grim portrait of the state of American liberties. Drawing upon the most purple prose and searing irony, he declares:

As Americans, we have boasted of our liberties and continue to boast of them. They were once the nation's glory, and, if some have vanished, it may be well to remember that a remnant still remains. Out of prison, beyond the limits of Russian injunctions, out of reach of a deputy marshal's club, above the throttling clutch of corporations and the enslaving power of plutocracy, out of range of the government's machine guns and knowing the location of judicial traps and deadfalls, Americans may still indulge in the exaltation of liberty, though pursued

¹¹ *Social Democratic Herald*, 8 October 1898, p. 2.

¹² Emphasis added. *Social Democratic Herald*, 8 September 1900, p. 2.

through every land and avenue of life by the baying hounds of usurped and unconstitutional power, glad if when night lets down her sable curtains, they are out of prison, though still the wage-slaves of a plutocracy which, were it in the celestial city, would wreck every avenue leading up to the throne of the Infinite by stealing the gold with which they are paved, and debauch Heaven's supreme court to obtain a decision that the command "thou shalt not steal" is unconstitutional.¹³

This wholesale corruption of liberty, Debs maintains, is the inevitable byproduct of the concentration of wealth under capitalism. Urging "American lovers of liberty" to "rescue their constitutional liberties from the grasp of monopoly and its mercenary hirelings," Debs proposes the use of the ballot to "sweep away trusts, syndicates, corporations, monopolies, and every other abnormal development of the money power designed to abridge the liberties of workingmen and enslave them."¹⁴ The obvious conclusion -- which Debs does not state at this point, but would embrace upon his official conversion to socialism -- is that liberty will be secure only with the elimination of capitalism.

For Debs, then, socialism derives from individualism in a two-fold sense. In the economic sphere, capitalism is reducing "men" to "hands." Socialism, on the other hand, will resurrect manhood by providing every worker with security of employment, a family wage, a pleasant working environment, and time for leisure, self-betterment, and the proper exercise of the duties of citizenship. In the political realm, the concentration of economic power under capitalism is corrupting the government and the judiciary and threatening basic human rights. Socialism will eliminate this threat by allowing the means of production to be operated for the benefit of the people, rather than an elite stratum.

For Jaurès, like Debs, socialism derives from a concern for the individual. However, Jaurès's conception is less defensive, less restorative than Debs's. Individualism, in his view, does not require a negation of existing trends. On the contrary, one need only continue the development of liberty that was launched by the bourgeoisie in 1789. Socialism entails extending bourgeois conceptions of rights and liberty to their logical conclusion: "Against the incomplete application of justice and human rights under the bourgeois democratic revolution, socialism opposes the full and decisive interpretation of the Rights of Man."¹⁵ Socialism represents "individualism logical and completed" -- not just civil and political rights, but intellectual and

¹³ Schlesinger, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 19.

¹⁵ *Petite République*, 7 September 1901, in Lévy, *op. cit.*, p. 206.

socioeconomic rights.¹⁶ Declares Jaurès, "It is only socialism which will give full meaning to the Declaration of the Rights of Man and which will realize all human rights."¹⁷

Jaurès argues that, in both its outcome and its implementation, socialism will be in full harmony with individual liberty. In its outcome, socialism represents an extension of individual rights beyond those of 1789. Jaurès construes freedom in a positive sense. Freedom for him means not only freedom from oppression according to the minimalist liberal conception, but freedom from all impediments to self-realization:

... to proclaim that a person is free is to make the commitment to make it possible to exercise this right, by the growth of thought, by the spreading of knowledge, by all the real, social guarantees that a human being must have to be in fact what he is in theory: a free person.¹⁸

Without such a commitment, Jaurès insists, echoing Debs, constitutional proclamations of liberty remain a dead letter:

... individuals are not truly free if the State is not powerful enough to furnish them with the material support for their development. Pure and simple liberty is nothing more than an abstraction for the individual who has fallen beneath a certain standard of living; beneath a certain minimum means of existence, for the individual devoured by ignorance, misery, unpreparedness, and sickness, liberty is but the false name for the worst form of oppression.¹⁹

Concretely, Jaurès calls for two kinds of reforms: educational and social. Ever-faithful to the ideals of the Enlightenment -- and, no doubt, to the roots of his own success -- Jaurès places great emphasis on education. A champion of the separation of Church and State, he terms the Church's predominant role in education a "negation of human rights." Religious instruction, he argues, encourages the "abdication of intelligence" by pupils.²⁰ It force-feeds students dogma, thereby promoting subservient, unquestioning acceptance of authority. It thus violates the student's right to learn.

But the threat posed by religious instruction is graver still. For Jaurès, the intellectual emancipation of the working class is a fundamental pre-condition for its social emancipation: "In order to

¹⁶ Félicien Challaye, *Jaurès*, (Paris: Mellottée, 1938), p. 202.

¹⁷ *Petite République*, 7 September 1901, in Lévy, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

¹⁸ Rappoport, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

¹⁹ Parliamentary speech, 1910, in Rappoport, *op. cit.*, pp. 246-47.

²⁰ Challaye, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-05.

prepare the emancipation of the producer, one must first emancipate man by education, the citizen by the practice of liberty."²¹ Because religious instruction is antithetical to intellectual development, it constitutes an obstacle to the liberation of the working class. In a variant on Marx's "opium of the proletariat" remark Jaurès declares that the creation of universal secular education has "interrupted the old lullaby which cradled human misery."²²

Jaurès frequently depicts education as a kind of bridge between political freedom and social freedom. Without education workers cannot understand their plight and the means of changing it. With it, they can use their political rights to secure economic rights. Along with political freedom, education is the lever with which the French proletariat will move the social world:

... you [parliamentarians] have passed educational laws. That being the case, how could you think that, to the political emancipation of the workers would not be added social emancipation, when you yourselves decreed and prepared their intellectual emancipation?²³

Universal secular education, he predicts, will act as a catalyst for the extension of political democracy into the social sphere:

... by the inherent ardor of the principle of logic, by the demands of the masses awakened by the idea of rights and hope, political democracy tends to expand into social democracy, and the horizon becomes every day more vast before the human spirit in motion.²⁴

The extension of social rights takes several forms, according to Jaurès. In the short term, within the capitalist system, the Socialist party pursues various social reforms to mitigate the evils of capitalism and improve the lot of the disadvantaged: minimum wage, eight-hour day, unemployment insurance, retirement pensions, etc. The ultimate goal, however, remains the socialization of the means of production. This final transformation will complete the expansion of individual rights and opportunities begun in 1789: "Universal education, universal suffrage, universal property, here is, if I may say, the true postulate of the human individual."²⁵

The phrase "universal property" is significant, for in sharp contrast to socialist theory, Jaurès calls for the maintenance of private property under socialism! Indeed, in a long exchange with a

²¹ Rappoport, *op. cit.*, p. 424.

²² Parliamentary speech, 11 November 1893, in Lévy, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

²⁴ Rappoport, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

²⁵ *Revue de Paris*, 1 December 1898, in Jaurès, *Oeuvres*, *op. cit.*, vol. 6, p. 88.

conservative critic, Bernard Lavergne, he argues that socialism, not capitalism, offers the best guarantee of private property.²⁶ It is capitalism that is the enemy of private property, according to Jaurès. Millions of farmers, artisans, shopkeepers, and small entrepreneurs are losing their businesses under the onslaught of competition from giant rivals. Soon, the process of economic concentration under capitalism will spawn a few immense property-owners, on the one hand, and a vast ocean of dispossessed proletarians, on the other.

Socialism, by contrast, will revitalize private property. It will maintain the beneficial aspects of private property, the spur to hard work and pride in one's achievements, while eliminating exploitation. Following the socialization of property, the state will place all houses, land, and capital at the disposal of any citizen who can make use of them. In return, the state will collect a far smaller fee than is paid to capitalist owners under current practice. For example, a tenant will be able to buy his home in a few years for the same amount that he now pays in rent. The state will apply the user-fees toward various social programs and to purchase equipment for agriculture and industry. Thus, those who work the land or in the factories will retain the full fruits of their labor.

Jaurès makes a number of provisions to prevent the reemergence of capitalist exploitation under socialism. If property is not used -- for example, if a home is not lived in -- it can be taken away. If property is sold, the price must be the same as that paid to the state originally (plus an allowance for whatever improvements were made). Finally, if a property-owner wishes to hire workers, this is possible -- with an eye to agriculture, Jaurès realized that peasants would need help at harvest time -- but again, exploitation will not be permitted. The wage paid to the temporary laborers will be mandated by the state and set at a level equal to the full value of the labor, that is, the amount which the worker could expect to earn if he operated the machinery or tilled the soil himself. In sum, Jaurès declares, "French socialism will apply itself with particular energy to protect, in collectivist society, individual energies, individual initiatives, individual savings, individual rights, and... individual property insofar as it is legitimate and essential."²⁷

We see, then, that Jaurès's socialist vision is a profoundly individualistic one. The state will place the means of production at the disposal of all individuals, not just a fortunate few, extending the horizon of opportunity to the great majority who have been effectively excluded up until this point. Socialism stands for the realization of every individual's economic rights:

²⁶ Jaurès, *Oeuvres, op. cit.*, vol. 3, pp. 157-224.

²⁷ *Dépêche de Toulouse*, 25 September 1893, in Jaurès, *Oeuvres, op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 161.

We believe... that the means of production and wealth accumulated by humanity should be at the disposal of all human activity and should liberate it [human activity]. In our view, every man... *has a right* to all the means of development that humanity has created. A person who comes into the world is not completely feeble and and naked, exposed to all forms of oppression and exploitation. *Such a person is invested with a right* and can demand, for his full development, the free usage of the means of labor accumulated by human effort.²⁸

Jaurès's depiction of property relations under capitalism and socialism underpins his conviction that the transition from the one to the other can be made peacefully and without violating anybody's rights. In its implementation, as in its consequences, Jaurès argues, socialism is in full harmony with individual liberty. The argument rests on the claim that all classes, not just workers, are unhappy under capitalism.²⁹ Peasants barely subsist on their small, heavily indebted plots, and artisans lack the capital to compete with larger producers. Capitalism is destroying these classes, Jaurès argues, but socialism will save them. In contrast to the claims of both the liberal and Marxist economists, Jaurès maintains that the so-called "dying" classes need not die. By making land and capital available at an affordable price to all who are willing to work, socialism will enable these pre-industrial classes to continue their way of life. Socialist property relations will protect, not eliminate, these groups.

Like the peasants and artisans, the bourgeoisie is unhappy under capitalism, according to Jaurès, and will fare far better under socialism. The concentration of industry is driving small employers into the ground. The same process is operating in commerce and distribution. Small shopkeepers are being run out of business by newly established, giant department stores, such as *Au Bon Marché*. "Successful" businessmen are scarcely better off than those who go bankrupt. They labor in constant fear of having their prices undercut by rivals and are overwhelmed with guilt for the cruelties which competition obliges them to impose on their workers.³⁰ Surely, Jaurès maintains, everyone would be glad to foresake this infernal competition for a "new world, with neither master nor serf, in which all men, possessing equal rights and security, could develop their faculties calmly and enjoy the profound and fraternal joys which our tormented, neurotic society does not know."³¹ With socialism offering all of the benefits of private property minus the exploitative aspects, the unhappy capitalist will not only accept the new era, but welcome

²⁸ Emphases added. *Petite République*, 7 September 1901, in Jaurès, *Oeuvres*, *op. cit.*, vol. 6, p. 354.

²⁹ Jaurès, *Oeuvres*, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, pp. 17-25.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

it: "Our current society is bad for everyone; and for everyone, even for the privileged, the social revolution will be a deliverance."³²

No doubt, there is an element of electioneering in Jaurès's concern for France's peasants and petty bourgeoisie. His own electoral district was predominantly rural, and more important, for the French Socialist party to attain a majority, it could not ignore the largest social groups in France. Jaurès's sensitivity to the peasants and petty bourgeoisie stemmed from more than narrow electoral calculations, however. His socialist vision is grounded in concern for the individual, not ideological dogma. Socialism, for him, is a means of emancipating individuals: politically, intellectually, and economically. If private property and the perpetuation of "dying classes" help achieve this goal, then this is more important than considerations of socialist orthodoxy.

In a similar spirit, both Debs and Jaurès often found themselves involved in causes on behalf of individual liberty which their more orthodox colleagues disdained, or even opposed. Debs was far more progressive than most socialists on matters of both sexual and racial discrimination.³³ Although he did occasionally mouth the vulgar Marxian position that discrimination is a byproduct of capitalism and therefore cannot be eliminated without eradicating the root cause, this was the exception rather than the rule.³⁴ Debs was an active and outspoken suffragette who, after meeting Susan B. Anthony, paid tribute to her "splendid womanhood."³⁵ He also took strong stances against racial discrimination, even when these positions were unpopular among the rank-and-file -- denouncing racially motivated opposition to immigration, calling for the organization of black workers, and frequently refusing to speak before segregated southern audiences.³⁶

While none of these positions can be described as anti-socialist, they reflect a greater preoccupation with individual liberty than a narrow reading of socialist theory requires. They also reflect a refusal to pander to popular prejudice out of tactical considerations. For Debs, the defense of individual rights is far more important than, say, the desire to win southern white workers and farmers over to the Social Democratic party.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Irving Howe, *Socialism and America*, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985), pp. 17-22.

³⁴ For the vulgar Debsian position with respect to blacks and the progressive position with respect to women, see Ronald Radosh Ed., *Debs*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1971), pp. 60-65. For the vulgar position on sexual discrimination, see "Unionism and Socialism," 1904, in Schlesinger, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-23.

³⁵ The phrase is interesting because it suggests that Debs does not consider the characteristics associated with manhood to be a monopoly of the male sex. By "manhood," he seems to mean "humanhood" rather than "malehood." *Labor and Freedom: The Voice and Pen of Eugene V. Debs*, (St. Louis: Phil Wagner, 1916), p. 31.

³⁶ Salvatore, *op. cit.*, pp. 225-28.

Many of the same observations apply to Jaurès's behavior, most notably his intervention on behalf of Dreyfus. Jules Guesde spoke for the vast majority of French socialists -- at least initially -- in condemning Jaurès's move. Few socialists felt any sympathy for a Jewish son of a bourgeois merchant who had enlisted voluntarily in the army. In another context, Dreyfus might well have been shooting down strikers. More important, Guesde and others argued, the Dreyfus Affair was irrelevant to socialist concerns. It was an internal battle among bourgeois parties and the bourgeois military establishment. For Jaurès, however, the Dreyfus Affair was not about bourgeois politics; it was about individual rights:

... if Dreyfus was condemned illegally and if... he is innocent, he is no longer either an officer or a bourgeois: he is stripped ... of all class character; he is but humanity itself, in the highest degree of misery and despair imaginable.³⁷

The Socialist party, as the upholder of individual liberty, bears a moral obligation to intervene:

... the day when a crime is committed against a man; the day when a crime is committed at the hands of the bourgeoisie, but the proletariat could have intervened to stop this crime, the bourgeoisie is no longer solely responsible, it is the proletariat itself; the proletariat, in not stopping the hand of the executioner ready to strike, becomes the accomplice to the executioner...³⁸

Defending liberty, Jaurès maintains, is entirely compatible with socialist values:

Certainly, we can listen to the cry of our pity without contradicting our principles or being deficient in the class struggle; we can maintain human feelings while engaging in the revolutionary combat; we are not obliged, in order to remain within socialism, to flee from humanity.³⁹

Debs and Jaurès were attracted to socialist doctrine to a large extent because it seemed to offer the most effective safeguard of human liberty and the best prospects for individual development. Their socialist conceptions reflect this preoccupation with the individual. As Debs's positions against racism and sexism and Jaurès's involvement in the Dreyfus Affair indicate, their attachment to human liberty is by no means limited to the dictates of socialist theory narrowly construed. Indeed, in the case of Jaurès, fundamental

³⁷ Introduction to *Les Preuves*, 1898, in Lévy, *op. cit.*, p. 252.

³⁸ Debate with Jules Guesde on "Les deux méthodes," 1900, in *Ibid.*, p. 254.

³⁹ Introduction to *Les Preuves*, 1898, in *Ibid.*, p. 253.

socialist tenets about private property take a backseat to concern for individual freedom.

Socialism and the Republic

Like the individual, the Republic occupies a prominent place in Debs's and Jaurès's socialist outlooks. We have seen that the existence of a republic in the US and France had a decisive impact on both men's tactics for reaching socialism, leading them to favor peaceful democratic over revolutionary means. It also shaped their socialist visions. For Debs and Jaurès, socialism is virtually a corollary of republicanism.

Within Debs's socialist conception, the Republic plays a role quite similar to that of manhood. The Republic, like manhood is threatened by capitalism and can only be saved by socialism. Debs delineates two kinds of threats to the Republic. The first is the out-and-out corruption of the political system by monied interests -- a constant refrain in the post-Pullman period:

The man who has money is the master of the world, and in his presence the people debase themselves. The concentration of money in a few has developed the money power in this country, and this money power now dominates every department of our government. Even our supreme court has been tainted and polluted by its influence.

It is the power of money that rules the country. They who have it are the rulers of the country.

The wealth of the country is concentrated in the hands of the few, and the few dictate the destinies of the republic.⁴⁰

The forces of corporate capitalism are erecting vast concentrations of wealth, which corrupt the Republic. The political problem has economic roots and requires a solution of the same order -- socialism. Socialism offers the antidote to capitalist corruption. It is no coincidence that the American Socialist party is called the Social Democratic party for, in Debs's mind, the central purpose of socialism is to redeem the Republic. Debs's characterization of the Social Democratic party is very revealing in this respect:

It is an organization designed to rescue the republic from the chosen few who have despoiled it and restore it to the common people. This organization proposes to supplant the present commercial competitive system.⁴¹

⁴⁰ *Social Democratic Herald*, 29 October 1898, p. 4.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

In short, socialism is a means to a political end, rather than an end in itself. The economic follows from the political, not *vice versa*. Nor is this the only such statement. One of Debs's favorite sayings, "Government ownership of railroads is better than railroad ownership of government," reflects a similar outlook.⁴² The choice is between political corruption under capitalism and a healthy polity under socialism. The political and the economic are inseparable.

According to Debs, the forces of corporate capitalism are posing a further threat to the Republic through the destruction of manhood. Debs's argument rests on the assumption that the characteristics of manhood -- independence, security, leisure, responsibility -- are essential to the exercise of the duties of citizenship. By reducing men to a state of extreme weakness and vulnerability, capitalism is preventing workers from behaving as citizens, thereby undermining the functioning of the Republic. For this reason, democracy requires the elimination of capitalism: "a political republic and an economic despotism are incompatible and in ceaseless conflict and both must become one or the other."⁴³

Socialism is not always depicted in instrumental terms, however. In addition to reviving the Republic, socialism has a more positive connotation

-- the extension of equality beyond the political realm, to the economic. Again, though, Debs's socialist vision is filtered through republican lenses. In this case, socialism is not a means of defending the Republic, but of extending, of realizing the Republic:

What is meant by "Social Democracy?" The term "social," as applied to "democracy," means a society of democrats, the members of which believe in the equal right of all to manage and control it.⁴⁴

This non-instrumental depiction of socialism should be taken with a grain of salt, however. By and large, the idea of making democracy the organizing principle for everyday life remains an occasional and peripheral component of Debs's outlook. In most instances, Debs anticipates that the organization of production will remain essentially unchanged under socialism:

The conduct of industry [under socialism] will be entrusted to men who are technically familiar with its processes, precisely as it is now entrusted to managers by the stockholders of a corporation; in short, the whole industry will represent a giant corporation in which all

⁴² *Social Democratic Herald*, 12 November 1898, p. 1.

⁴³ *Social Democratic Herald*, 26 July 1902, p. 1.

⁴⁴ *Social Democratic Herald*, 8 October 1898, p. 2.

citizens are stockholders, and the state will represent a board of directors acting for the whole people.⁴⁵

Debs's main preoccupations -- the bread-and-butter problems of workers (financial impoverishment, insecurity, etc.) and the well-being of the Republic -- can be resolved through essentially redistributive measures. They do not require changes in the organization of production. If the state controls the means of production, then corporations will no longer be able to undermine democracy and workers can be treated with the dignity and generosity that is essential to their manhood. This is what socialism is about for Debs; alienation and other issues of Marxist economic theory are secondary. The result is a somewhat narrow vision of socialism, emphasizing the fulfillment of the citizen through economic security and a well-functioning democracy, but largely ignoring fulfillment in the workplace.

The priority of republican concerns over Marxist economic doctrine is evident in other areas of Debs's thought as well. Debs was prominent within the anti-monopoly movement, even though he believed that industrial concentration is an inevitable consequence of capitalist development. Many socialists in Debs's day regarded the concentration of industry as a positive development, paving the way for the eventual socialization of production. For Debs, however, the growth of trusts, cartels, and monopolies constitutes an unmitigated evil since the resulting concentration of economic power corrupts the Republic and leads to the subjugation of the individual.

Like Debs, Jaurès was led to socialism by republicanism. This is true both intellectually and biographically. In the introduction to a collection of his parliamentary speeches, published in 1904, Jaurès writes: "I have always been a republican and always been a socialist: it has always been the social Republic, the Republic of organized and sovereign labor that has been my ideal."⁴⁶ As we have seen, factually, this statement is not wholly true. However, it captures the process of Jaurès's intellectual evolution very well. Jaurès began his political career as a republican with vague sympathies toward the disadvantaged classes. As he became radicalized, his republican ideals were enlarged and extended to the point of becoming synonymous with socialism itself.

In Jaurès's mind, the Republic offers a model or blueprint for socialism. The political Republic signifies that all citizens enjoy the same rights and status in the political sphere. All can vote, organize, or run for office. No one possesses greater rights than anyone else. Socialism seeks to extend this equality of status to the economic sphere: "socialism is to the highest degree a party of democracy,

⁴⁵ John Tussey Ed., *Eugene V. Debs Speaks*, (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970), p. 167.

⁴⁶ Rappoport, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

because it wants to organize the sovereignty of all in the economic order like the political order."⁴⁷

Like Debs, Jaurès finds the treatment of workers unbefitting their status as citizens. In a celebrated 1893 parliamentary speech pronounced against the reactionary Dupuy government, Jaurès declares:

Yes, by universal suffrage, by national sovereignty, which finds its definitive and logical expression in the Republic, you [parliamentarians] have made all citizens, including workers, into an assembly of kings. Laws and government emanate from them, from their sovereign will; they revoke, they change their representatives, legislators and cabinet ministers; but, at the same time that the worker is sovereign in the political sphere, he is reduced to a sort of serfdom in the economic sphere.⁴⁸

The citizen's many political rights and privileges find no counterpart within the economic realm. In the factory, Jaurès observes, 1789 has not yet arrived:

Yes, at the same time that he can chase ministers from power, he himself can be chased from the workplace without any guarantee or future.... At any time, this king of the political order can be thrown into the street... And, whereas, within the political realm, workers no longer have to pay a civil list of several millions to the sovereigns whom you have dethroned, they are obliged to pay from their labor a civil list of several billions to the idle oligarchs who are the sovereigns of the nation's labor.⁴⁹

Unlike Debs, however, Jaurès does not view this contradiction between the political and economic status of the citizen as posing a mortal threat to the former. He merely finds it illogical and argues that socialism, not bourgeois individualism, is the true heir to the republican ideal:

It is because socialism appears as the only movement capable of resolving this fundamental contradiction of present society, it is because socialism proclaims that the political Republic must lead to the social Republic, it is because socialism wants the Republic to be affirmed in the workplace as it is affirmed here [in parliament], it is because socialism wants the nation to be sovereign in the economic realm in order to break the privileges of idle

⁴⁷ Conclusion to *Histoire Socialiste de la Révolution française*, in Lévy, *op. cit.*, pp. 212-13.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 208-09.

capitalism, just as the nation is sovereign in the political realm, it is for these reasons that socialism can be traced to the republican movement.⁵⁰

Jaurès uses the terms "republican" and "socialist" interchangeably. He states, for example, that "there is in France an immense socialist party which is called, quite simply, the republican party."⁵¹ Jaurès also often filters socialist economic ideas through republican political lenses. An 1895 article describes the Radical party as favoring private property, while seeking to control it through a variety of measures: taxes, social legislation, antitrust policy, etc. Jaurès finds this halfway stance on private property untenable, a point he makes through analogy to the political realm:

Thus, for radicalism, capital is a legitimate king whom they do not wish to dethrone, but to keep under foot. A bizarre and transitory conception which is the equivalent in the economic sphere of the constitutional monarchy in the political sphere.⁵²

Interestingly, the intellectual parentage between republicanism and socialism can operate in either direction. Just as socialism is defined in republican terms, a political regime can be defined in economic terms. Despotism, for instance, is described as "the most monstrous of inequalities, since there are millions of men who can do nothing while one can do anything."⁵³ In other words, despotism is evil because it violates socialist principles as applied to politics -- it rests on an inequitable distribution of political power.

Jaurès's socialist vision is part of a broader republican outlook. Socialism results from a *deepening* of the Republic, that is, from adding economic, educational, and social equality to political equality. But Jaurès also seeks to *widen* the Republic, to bring a democratic organizational structure to institutions other than the polity. In Jaurès's mind, social and political institutions are not good or bad *per se*; they are good or bad depending on whether or not they are democratic. Such reasoning underpins his political strategy.⁵⁴ Because the French state is democratic, Jaurès argues, it is not inherently the enemy of the working class and the tool of the bourgeoisie:

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

⁵¹ *Dépêche de Toulouse*, 22 October 1890, in Jaurès, *Oeuvres*, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 45.

⁵² *Revue Socialiste*, March 1895, in Jaurès, *Oeuvres*, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 298.

⁵³ Goldberg, *op. cit.*, p. 317.

⁵⁴ Jaurès, *L'Armée nouvelle*, *op. cit.*, ch. 10; "Conférence sur les Deux Méthodes" (Debate with Jules Guesde on socialist tactics), Lille, October 1900, in Jaurès, *Oeuvres*, *op. cit.*, vol. 6, pp. 189-208.

... the democratic State of today is not a homogeneous bloc composed of a single metal; it is not a monstrous and impenetrable idol... which uniformly oppresses the generations until the hour when the oppressed suddenly rise up and reverse it with a single blow.⁵⁵

On the contrary, Jaurès maintains, in a democratic polity, all classes are fairly represented: "In point of fact, the State does not express one class, it expresses the relation among the classes, that is, their relative strengths."⁵⁶ Consequently, workers should not shun the state as a class enemy, nor should they seek to destroy or overturn it. Rather, they should pursue reforms within the political system, taking advantage of the opportunities made available by democracy.

Passive acceptance of the Republic is not enough, however. As the chosen path to socialism, Jaurès argues, the Republic must be protected. Socialism is the light at the end of the republican tunnel -- a tunnel which must be kept open:

When the mineworker, who plunges his pick in the coal and detaches it block by block, realizes suddenly that the tunnel is weakened, that the supports are bending and that the ceiling is sagging, he puts down his pick momentarily and shores up the supports. Would one say that he has stopped his march and that he has abandoned the vigorous offensive? No, on the contrary, he has assured the continuance and progress of his work.⁵⁷

Workers must defend the Republic and all that it stands for, even if this requires allying themselves with democratic bourgeois elements. When the Republic is in danger, as during the Dreyfus Affair, republican loyalties take precedence over class loyalties:

Ah yes! Today's society is divided into capitalists and proletarians; but, at the same time, its is menaced by the counter-offensive of all of the forces of the past, the counter-offensive of feudal barbarity, of an all-powerful Church, and it is the duty of socialists, when republican liberty is at stake, when freedom of conscience is menaced, when old prejudices seem to be reemerging to resuscitate racial hatred and the atrocious religious quarrels of centuries gone by, it is the duty of the socialist proletariat to march with the bourgeois fractions who do not want to move backwards.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Jaurès, *L'Armée nouvelle*, *op. cit.*, p. 359.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 357-58.

⁵⁷ *Petite République*, 17 October 1901, in Jaurès, *Oeuvres*, *op. cit.*, vol. 6, p. 273.

⁵⁸ "Les Deux Méthodes," in *Ibid.*, p. 195.

While such an argument remains within the spirit of democratic socialism as professed by many figures, on other occasions, Jaurès's devotion to the republican ideal leads to singularly unsocialist conclusions. Most strikingly, in *L'Armée nouvelle*, a lengthy proposal for reforming the French military, Jaurès depicts the French military in virtually the same terms as the French polity. Like the state, the army is not good or bad by definition. The problem is that it is undemocratic. Like the state, the army has often served the upper classes in their battles with the workers, but this does not mean that the military is somehow intrinsically predisposed toward the repression of the working class. Historically, the trouble has been that the army has remained cut off from the nation -- staffed by career officers from elite backgrounds and dominated by a narrow caste spirit.

The solution, Jaurès argues, lies in democratizing the army. Officers should be elected and recruitment extended to all social groups, so that the military leadership will more faithfully represent the composition of the nation. Workers should not hesitate to become officers. Just as a democratic state invites worker participation, so, too, does a democratic military. Indeed, Jaurès makes many of the same arguments in both cases: 1) the state or the army is not a mere bourgeois tool; democracy makes proletarian influence possible; 2) in the short term, participation will reduce the use of the state or the military against the working class, even if it cannot eliminate this regrettable practice altogether; 3) in the long term, working class participation helps change the spirit and outlook of the institution by introducing new elements and ideas; it helps prepare the way for socialism.

The curative powers of the Republic are not limited to the institutional sphere. Just as any institution, even the army, becomes good if it is democratized, so, too, does any policy. In *L'Armée nouvelle*, Jaurès traces the origins of war to "all-too-incomplete [state of] democracy."⁵⁹ Jaurès does not seek to eliminate the nation-state. On the contrary, he views nations as organic units, which are "fundamental, essential" to any kind of "higher and superior creation."⁶⁰ He dismisses Marx's claim that the workers have no fatherland as "sarcasm" and "polemic," "the vice of a vigorous spirit," and insists that the proletariat has a duty to defend the nation against foreign invasion.⁶¹ In Jaurès's mind, the underlying cause of war is not the existence of nations, but the weakness of democracy. Even in a formally democratic country, like France, he asserts, the declaration of war remains outside popular control:

⁵⁹ Jaurès, *L'Armée nouvelle*, *op. cit.*, p. 376.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 364.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

They [critics of socialism] forget... that even in democratic countries, war can be unleashed without the consent of the people, without the people's knowledge, against its will! They forget that, in the mystery enveloping diplomacy, foreign policy all too often escapes the control of nations, that an imprudent act, an act of conceit, an imbecile provocation, or the villainous greed of certain financial groups can suddenly unleash conflict, that a minority, a small clique, a systematic and infatuated man can still engage the nation, create the irreparable, and that war and peace still operate outside the law of democracy.⁶²

The key to preventing war, Jaurès argues, is to democratize foreign policy, to remove the declaration of war from scheming politicians and place it in the hands of the people. Jaurès proposes that, in the event of a conflict between nations, the proletariat of both countries insist that their respective governments submit to the arbitration of the International. In this way, wars will not be declared behind the people's backs. If either government refuses and seeks to invade the other, then the proletariat of the aggressor nation must topple its government through a revolutionary general strike. In the end, democratic control of foreign policy will lead to peaceful relations among independent states and the rule of law in international relations. A democratic foreign policy will be a peaceful foreign policy, and all nations will flourish:

To snatch the nation away from the wheeler-dealers, militarist castes, and financial gangs, to foster the indefinite development of democracy and peace in all nations, this not only serves the International and the universal proletariat, this serves the nation itself. Henceforth, International and nation are linked. It is in the International that the independence of nations finds its highest guarantee; it is in independent nations that the International has its most powerful and noble organs. One could almost say: a little internationalism moves one away from the fatherland; a lot of internationalism brings one back. A little patriotism moves one away from the International; a lot of patriotism brings one back.⁶³

For both Debs and Jaurès, socialism derives from and complements republicanism. Debs sees socialism largely as a means of rescuing the Republic from the depredations of corporate capitalism. Although he occasionally gives play to the idea of creating democracy on the shopfloor, his outlook on socialism is primarily instrumental. Jaurès's socialist conception relates to the Republic in both ideological and instrumental terms. Ideologically, he depicts socialism as the full

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 377.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 381.

realization of the republican ideal, the extension of equality and rights beyond the political, to all areas of social interaction. Instrumentally, Jaurès views the republican principle of organization as a kind of King Midas, turning any institution or policy that it touches into gold.

Finally, it should be noted that, although Debs's and Jaurès's conceptions of the relationship between the individual and socialism and between the Republic and socialism have been treated in separate sections in this analysis, the two notions overlap. In the case of Debs, individual liberty and security -- manhood -- constitute the central precondition for a well-functioning republic. Socialism will save the Republic by saving manhood (and by breaking up corruption-inducing concentrations of wealth). Jaurès, for his part, defines republicanism as an extension of individual liberty and opportunity beyond the purely political, to the educational and economic realms. Thus, for both men, individualism and republicanism are linked, not only to socialism, but to each other.

Socialism and the Revolution

Neither Debs nor Jaurès can be described as revolutionaries in the conventional sense of the word. Both men oppose violent struggle and advocate a peaceful, democratic transition to socialism. On the other hand, the revolutions of 1776 and 1789 loom large in their respective socialist visions. For both Debs and Jaurès, socialism is the true heir to the spirit of 1776/1789. Socialism and revolution are linked in a two-fold sense: 1) socialists today are in a position much like that of the revolutionaries on the eve of 1776 or 1789; 2) socialism will protect and develop the specific gains made in these revolutions.

Debs and Jaurès see themselves as in a position analogous to that of their revolutionary forebears. Debs draws frequent comparisons between the socialists of his day and America's founding fathers. Indeed, the opening sentence of the Socialist party platform harkens back to the Declaration of Independence: "The Social Democratic Party of America declares that life, liberty and happiness for every man, woman and child are conditioned upon equal political and economic rights."⁶⁴ Like the framing fathers, socialists stand ready to make a revolution in the name of democracy and human liberty:

To inaugurate genuine democracy we must democratize industry as our fathers democratized politics a century and a half ago. This will result in the co-operative commonwealth, in which organized society will operate all

⁶⁴ *Social Democratic Herald*, 21 January 1899, p. 3.

industry in the interest of the people. The Declaration of Independence will then have become a realized fact.⁶⁵

Like their revolutionary predecessors, socialists today are characterized as outlaws by the authorities. Persecuted under unjust laws, they are in fact heroes, ready to die for their cause. In this sense, America's founding fathers constitute an exception, according to Debs, because they triumphed and rose to glory during their lifetimes. More often, recognition is obtained only posthumously:

When great changes occur in history, when great principles are involved, as a rule the majority are wrong. The minority are right. In every age there have been a few heroic souls who have been in advance of their time, who have been misunderstood, maligned, persecuted, sometimes put to death. Long after their martyrdom monuments were erected to them and garlands were woven for their graves.⁶⁶

These martyrs do not die in vain, according to Debs. On the contrary, they are an essential agent of human progress, opening the eyes of the ignorant majority and preparing the way for a better society:

It is a fact that it has always been unpopular to attack the existing order of things, but thank God in every age there have been men who had the courage of their convictions, men who have been true to themselves, men who stood erect and braved all the storms of persecution, and were it not for those men we would never have emerged from savagery and barbarism.⁶⁷

Beyond a doubt, the inspiration for this vision of history is the figure whom Debs often describes as the "supreme revolutionist," Jesus Christ.⁶⁸ Debs's gaunt physical stature, his defense of the poor and downtrodden, and his suffering at the hands of the authorities in the Pullman strike led many admirers to identify him with Christ.⁶⁹ It was not a comparison that Debs disdained. In a speech accepting the Socialist party's nomination for President in 1908, he depicts historical martyrs in Christ-like terms: "mankind have always crowned their oppressors, and they have as uniformly crucified their saviors, and this has been true all along the highway of the

⁶⁵ *Social Democratic Herald*, 19 May 1900, p. 1.

⁶⁶ Speech at the Federal Court in Cleveland, 1918, in *Speeches of Eugene V. Debs*, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-67.

⁶⁷ *Social Democratic Herald*, 29 October 1898, p. 4.

⁶⁸ *Labor and Freedom*, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-29.

⁶⁹ Salvatore, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

centuries."⁷⁰ He then places himself squarely in this tradition of misunderstood martyrs:

I don't hate the workingman because he has turned against me. I know the poor fellow is too ignorant to understand his self-interest, and I know that as a rule the workingman is the friend of his enemy and the enemy of his friend.⁷¹

Typically, though, Debs identifies himself and his movement with less heavenly figures. His most frequent comparison is to the abolitionists, especially Wendell Phillips:

Wendell Phillips was the grandest combination of brain and heart that the American continent has ever produced. People said in his time that abolition was infamous, and they say now that socialism is infamous, but he proved to be right and so shall we.⁷²

The comparisons to the martyred Christ, to the founding fathers, and to the abolitionists place socialism very much within the American mainstream. Socialism is the heir to these age-old revolutionary traditions. It is also heir to the tradition of manhood, of standing up for what is right, even when those around are too frightened or ignorant to do so:

It takes a real man and a real woman to be a Socialist. When great principles have been involved in history the majority were always wrong and the minority have invariably been right, and in the majority of events the minority have become the majority, and so it will be with the Socialist movement.⁷³

Jaurès, like Debs, is marked by his country's revolutionary history. He was, after all, the author of one of the most important works on the French Revolution. Not surprisingly, therefore, Jaurès evokes a number of comparisons between the socialists of his day and the earlier French revolutionaries. Like the bourgeoisie in 1789, he asserts, the proletariat is exploited by the current socioeconomic system:

Just as the feudal road was encumbered and interrupted at almost every step by tolls, the road of life, for the proletariat, is interrupted by feudal dues of all order which

⁷⁰ *Debs: His Life, op. cit.*, p. 476.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² Speech delivered at Worcester, MA, 26 October 1898, in *Social Democratic Herald*, 12 November 1898, p. 4.

⁷³ Again, note that the virtues associated with manhood are not confined to the male sex. *Social Democratic Herald*, 7 June 1902, p. 3.

are imposed by capital. The proletariat can neither work, nor nourish itself, nor dress, nor find shelter without paying some kind of ransom to the capitalist and proprietary class.⁷⁴

The proletariat of today and the bourgeoisie of yesterday share more than the common experience of exploitation; they also share a mission, a world-historical role. Like its revolutionary predecessor, the proletariat of today is the bearer of the new social order. Just as the bourgeoisie in 1789 toppled feudalism and replaced it with democracy and capitalism, Jaurès believes that the proletariat will soon bring down capitalist class rule and replace it with socialism. This revolutionary transformation need not take the form of a naked class struggle, however. In 1789, the progressive bourgeoisie enlisted the support of the proletariat against the feudal regime. Jaurès hopes that another cross-class alliance will be possible in the battle against capitalism -- this time between the proletariat and the "laboring bourgeoisie," the petty bourgeois elements who are being crushed by concentrated capitalism: "Just as, in 1789, the people and the bourgeoisie found themselves united in order to abolish noble privileges and feudal abuses... [today] the people and the laboring bourgeoisie must unite to abolish capitalist privileges and abuses."⁷⁵

Like the bourgeoisie in 1789, the proletariat is a world-historical actor whose struggle transcends the national level. As with the democratic revolution in 1789, the impending socialist revolution may be centered in France, but it will reach out to oppressed peoples of all nations:

Just as the revolutionaries [in 1789] were combatting monarchical and feudal tyranny, even in France, and just as they appealed to the oppressed around the world for support against this tyranny, we, against powerful capitalist tyranny, in France and outside of France, we appeal, through our international organization, to the exploited around the world.⁷⁶

Thus, for both Debs and Jaurès, socialism is the spiritual heir to their nations' proud revolutionary traditions. American socialists, like the framing fathers or the abolitionists, stand ready to take on the established order in the name of what is right. Even though socialism remains a misunderstood movement, despised by the very people whom it seeks to help, Debs retains full faith in its ultimate triumph. Many brave men may suffer martyrdom in the short term, but justice will prevail.

⁷⁴ Jaurès, *Oeuvres*, *op. cit.*, vol. 6, p. 348.

⁷⁵ *Dépêche de Toulouse*, 17 March 1889, in Jaurès, *Oeuvres*, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 25.

⁷⁶ Speech in Marseille, 25 May 1893, in Jaurès, *Oeuvres*, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 145.

Jaurès also sees the triumph of socialism as inevitable. Socialism is a world-historical force, like democracy and capitalism a century earlier. As in 1789, the revolution may be centered around France, but it transcends national boundaries. In 1789, the bourgeoisie had its day, replacing the old system and inaugurating a new one. Now, it is the proletariat's turn. Still, Jaurès harbors the hope that the alliance between the proletariat and progressive elements of the bourgeoisie will be rekindled, permitting a peaceful transition to socialism.

The relationship between socialists and earlier revolutionaries goes beyond a commonality of spirit, according to Debs and Jaurès. Socialism is not merely an echo of the revolutions of 1776 and 1789. It also protects and extends the specific achievements of these revolutions.

Debs views socialism chiefly as a means of safeguarding the heritage of 1776, most notably individual liberty and the Republic. This precious legacy of the revolution is threatened by the forces of corporate capitalism. The industrial revolution is at odds with the revolution of 1776:

A century and a quarter ago the revolution settled the question of political equality in the United States, But since then an industrial revolution has taken place and political equality exists in name only, while the great mass struggle in economic servitude.⁷⁷

Individual liberty and democracy are being trampled by corporate capitalism. America's proud political heritage is in jeopardy. Socialism, Debs maintains, is needed to restore the gains of the revolution. By eradicating capitalist exploitation, socialism will make political equality and individual liberty a reality:

Political equality under the present system is simply a myth. The wage-worker whose employment is controlled by his industrial master, and who in that relation, is at the mercy of his master, since he depends upon his arbitrary will for the opportunity to labor and support his family, is not on terms of political equality with his master. Political equality is rooted in economic freedom, and only when the means of production shall have become the common property of all, as they have been produced by all, are used by all and are necessary to all, only then will political equality prevail and all men and women enjoy equal rights and equal opportunities.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ *Social Democratic Herald*, 8 September 1900, pp. 1-2.

⁷⁸ *Social Democratic Herald*, 26 July 1902, p. 1.

Socialism will also redeem the Republic. Under capitalism, Debs argues, government has been perverted by the employers' need for a coercive agent to keep the proletariat in place. Once capitalism is destroyed, however, government will be able to serve the interests of the people. Political considerations again lie at the heart of Debs's economic doctrine:

The platform of the Social Democratic party declares in favor of the collective ownership of all the means of production and distribution: namely, the land, mines, mills, factories, and productive machinery, for the purpose of operating industry in the interest of the whole people.

This involves a complete change in the organic structure of government.

The present government is based upon private property and is essentially coercive, the vital function being to protect the interests of the owning and ruling class, and to keep their victims in subjugation.

When productive capital becomes common property, government will be purely administrative, and will cease to be unjust and oppressive.⁷⁹

Like Debs, Jaurès is preoccupied with the concrete legacy of the revolution. However, his vision is less defensive. Socialism is not about saving a revolutionary heritage under fire; it is about extending this heritage beyond the narrow interpretation which it has received to date. Jaurès sees the French Revolution as having sown the seeds for the development of socialism: "socialism grew out of the French Revolution under the combined action of two forces: the force of the ideal of rights; the force of the action of the emerging proletariat."⁸⁰

On a material level, the revolution consolidated capitalism, setting the stage for the creation of a large, alienated proletariat. On an ideological level, the revolution proclaimed a number of proto-socialist principles. In an 1890 article, Jaurès declares: "the French Revolution, in everything that it did, in everything that it thought, was manifestly socialist."⁸¹ The creation of the Republic was tantamount to the socialization of political power:

What did the Convention do in proclaiming the Republic? It transferred to the entire nation the political property of France, which a single family was seeking to reserve to itself indefinitely under the pretext that it had long ago created it. Apply these maxims to the economic order, and you have absolute socialism.⁸²

⁷⁹ Emphasis added. *Social Democratic Herald*, 26 July 1902, p. 1.

⁸⁰ Rappoport, *op. cit.*, p. 425.

⁸¹ *Dépêche de Toulouse*, in Jaurès, *Oeuvres*, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 45.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 46.

A similar process occurred within the educational system. In making education available on the basis of merit, rather than wealth, the revolution in effect socialized the educational system. What was formerly a private privilege became the property of the entire nation. Concludes Jaurès: "The system of education decreed by the revolution was, therefore, in itself and in its immediate consequences, the boldest form of socialism which had ever been dreamed of."⁸³

The socialization of French society was by no means limited to areas that suited the interests of the rising bourgeoisie. Jaurès points out that the Convention had the beginnings of a social program. Article 11 of the Constitution of 1793 commits the state to provide the means of subsistence to all citizens, either through employment or public aid.⁸⁴ The revolution also made significant inroads into property rights. Article 9 of the Constitution of 1793 subordinates the enjoyment of property to the security, liberty, existence, and property of others, and Jaurès notes that the Convention did not hesitate to fix prices or requisition grain.⁸⁵ Nor were these the only restrictions on private property. The Convention abolished the practice of primogeniture and placed tight limits placed upon the willing of property. Only one-tenth of of a man's wealth could be willed as he pleased. The rest was to be divided equally among his wife and children.⁸⁶

For Jaurès, then, the French Revolution contains all of the principles and precedents which form the basis for socialism. French socialists are seeking to complete the work begun in 1789, to take the revolution to its logical conclusion. Like seeds planted long ago and carefully nurtured over the years, the ideals of the revolution -- the rights of man, republicanism, universal education, and the subordination of private property to the common good -- have begun to blossom, bearing a socialist fruit. According to Jaurès, conservative elements within French society are seeking to limit this natural development of the ideals of 1789:

To all those who, out of interest or pride, defended the *ancien régime* and served the counter-revolution, have been added, from generation to generation, all those who wish to limit the Revolution itself and to stop it at the very point where their egoism has settled, all of those who, having constituted interests in the new society, would like to consolidate it [the new society] by immobilizing it.⁸⁷

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*; Jaurès, *Oeuvres, op. cit.*, vol. 6, pp. 403-04.

⁸⁶ Jaurès, *Oeuvres, op. cit.*, vol. 6, pp. 392-93.

⁸⁷ Rappoport, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

It is socialism, not conservatism, which is true to the past, according to Jaurès, because socialism seeks to continue the development of the ideals of the past into the present and future: "we are the ones who are faithful to... the past, just as it is in going toward the sea that the river is faithful to its source."⁸⁸ Socialism, not conservatism, has grasped the living spirit of the ideals of yesteryear: "we are the ones who are the true heirs to the home of our forebears; we have taken the flame, you [conservatives] have kept nothing but the ashes."⁸⁹

The heritage of the revolution forms the basis for Jaurès's contention, contra Marx, that the workers do indeed have a fatherland.⁹⁰ The gains of the revolution have given French workers a stake in their country's independence. Writing of 1792, Jaurès notes that the fruits of revolution and national independence are inseparable: "The fatherland is in danger: the fatherland, that is the French revolution; and this common fatherland of all revolutionaries, all citizens have the duty to defend it..."⁹¹ The same holds true today. France may not be a workers' paradise, but republican government and the Rights of Man represent real achievements. Drawing upon the Jacobin tradition, Jaurès maintains that a German invasion cannot be regarded with indifference by the French working class because it would take away these precious gains: "Of what use is it to chase away tyrants, nobles and priests, if despots from outside [the country] can... bring them back, and again tighten the chests which had only just begun to breathe?"⁹²

Debs does not share Jaurès's conviction that the revolutionary heritage attaches the working class to the nation. In contrast to Jaurès, he opposes proletarian participation in any war, no matter what the circumstances. On the other hand, Debs's vision of history, like Jaurès's, is colored by reverence for the revolutionary legacy, and this reverence leads both men away from the Marxian dialectic. Interestingly, however, although both men break with orthodoxy, they do not do so in the same way. Despite a common attachment to the revolution and despite a similar unfolding of working class history in the US and France, Debs's and Jaurès's historical visions are virtual polar opposites.

Jaurès's view of history is characterized by two broad features: optimism and unilinearity. While accepting the claim that history is driven by material forces, Jaurès insists that it is also moving forward according to an ideal:

⁸⁸ Parliamentary speech, January 1910, in Lévy, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-74.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

⁹⁰ Jaurès, *L'Armée nouvelle*, *op. cit.*, pp. 359-62.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 362.

It is humanity which, across economic forms which are less and less repulsive to its idea of itself, is realizing itself. And there is in history, not only a necessary evolution, but an intelligible direction and a guiding ideal.⁹³

History, in Jaurès's mind, is an unbroken series of improvements. History is not only moving toward an inevitable destination; it is getting steadily better along the way. As Kolakowski notes, this vision is quite different from a strict dialectical interpretation, such as that of Guesde: "Jaurès believed in the steady upward progress of humanity, supported by an increasing accumulation of spiritual and social values, and not in a descent into the abyss, to be followed by a sudden, apocalyptic renaissance."⁹⁴

Jaurès's reading of the French Revolution is a central factor behind this optimistic vision of history. Just as the revolution attaches French workers to the nation, it attaches Jaurès to French history. In Jaurès's mind, the past is both meaningful and good. The gains of the revolution -- democracy, liberty, solidarity -- marked a genuine step forward in human history. When socialism comes, it will build upon these gains, not negate them. The past is to be preserved and extended into the future.

In the introduction to his *Histoire Socialiste de la Révolution française*, Jaurès asserts that, although the revolution favored the bourgeoisie in its initial outcome, it paved the way for the ascent to the socialist heavens: "The French Revolution indirectly prepared the triumph of the proletariat. It realized the two essential preconditions of socialism: democracy and capitalism."⁹⁵ Capitalism has led to the growth of the proletariat; democracy will provide the means for its ultimate triumph. As we have seen, Jaurès also describes a third contribution of the revolution -- the ideal of rights. This ideal provides the guiding spirit for the evolution toward socialism.

Jaurès's periodization of French history since the revolution depicts the proletariat as more extensive, more class conscious, and more influential in each successive era.⁹⁶ Initially, from 1789 to 1848, the bourgeoisie reigned supreme. The proletariat was a small, subordinate group, lacking any kind of class consciousness or sense of an alternative society. The leading utopian socialists of this era -- Saint-Simon and Proudhon -- were limited by their "capitalist" and "petty bourgeois" outlooks.

⁹³ Debate with Paul Lafargue on Materialism and Idealism in History, December 1894, in Jaurès, *Oeuvres, op. cit.*, vol. 6, p.18.

⁹⁴ Kolakowski, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

⁹⁵ Jean Jaurès, *Histoire Socialiste de la Révolution française*, vol. 1 - *La Constituante*, (Paris: Editions de la Librairie de L'Humanité, 1922), p. 19.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-23.

The June Days massacre of 1848, Jaurès claims, marked the beginning of the class struggle. The repression of the worker revolution by the bourgeoisie taught the proletariat that salvation would come only through its own efforts. Class consciousness developed rapidly, and independent socialist thought blossomed (Blanquists, Marxists, etc). The 1871 uprising, like that of 1848, was initiated by the bourgeoisie, but this time, the working class assumed the leadership. Whereas in 1848, the proletariat gained only token representation in government in the form of the factory worker Albert, in 1871, it actually exercised power for this first time in history.

Since 1871, Jaurès argues, the socialist movement has become "fundamentally united" and now stands ready to transform society. French society is being prepared for socialism on two levels. Organizationally, Jaurès claims, "socialism is proceeding methodically with the total organization of the working class, the moral conquest of a reassured peasantry, the rallying of the intellectual bourgeoisie, which has become disenchanted with bourgeois power, and the complete takeover of power, so as to create new forms of property and Ideals."⁹⁷ Intellectually, Jaurès relates, socialism is pervading all areas of human thought. It has become what Gramsci would later term "hegemonic":

It [socialism] is more and more a living unity that is multiplying its holds on life. It is from socialism now that all the great human forces -- work, philosophy, science, art, and even religion -- understood as the taking into possession of the universe by humanity, await their regeneration and development.⁹⁸

Socialism represents the culmination of over a century of progress. The ideals, institutions, and economic forces set in motion in 1789 have developed steadily, setting the stage for socialism. Individual liberty has spread from the political realm, to the educational, and is beginning to enter the economic. The Republic has been consolidated and offers both an ideal and a vehicle for the peaceful transition to socialism. Capitalism has created a proletariat, which now stands ready to assume control of society. No break with the past is needed, Jaurès argues, because the past was good and because the past has prepared the way for the future.

Like Jaurès, Debs greatly values the heritage of his nation's revolution, and it forms the central component of his historical outlook. However, his vision is far more pessimistic and defensive than Jaurès's. For all the many parallels between Debs and Jaurès --

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 22-23.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

contextual, biographical, and ideological -- sometimes, they simply do not agree.

Like Jaurès, Debs glories in the achievements of the Revolution. The founding of the Republic was a great moment in the nation's history, a golden age of liberty:

It was then that crowns, sceptres, thrones and the divine right of kings to rule sunk together and man expanded to glorious liberty and sovereignty. It was then that the genius of Liberty, speaking to all men in the commanding voice of Eternal Truth, bade them assert their heaven-decreed prerogatives and emancipate themselves from bondage. It was a proclamation countersigned by the Infinite -- and man stood forth the coronated sovereign of the world, free as the tides that flow, free as the winds that blow, and on that primal morning when creation was complete, the morning starts and the sound of God in anthem chorus, sang the song of Liberty.⁹⁹

Debs employs an almost Edenesque language. God created a paradise of democracy and liberty in 1776. Tragically, however, man succumbed to temptation, in the form of capitalism, leading to the Fall. Capitalism has corrupted the Republic and is responsible for "stealing the jewel of liberty from the crown of manhood."¹⁰⁰ In Debs's mind, this political regression is paralleled by an economic regression. In the economic sphere, as in the political, life was much better 100 years ago. Debs depicts a golden era of republican citizen-producers:

A century ago work was done by hand very largely, or with simple primitive tools. How to make a living was an easy question. The boy learned a trade, served his apprenticeship, and the skill inherent in the trade secured steady employment for him at fair wages, by virtue of which he could provide for his family, educate his children and discharge the duties of citizenship.¹⁰¹

Employers and employees were on equal footing. They treated each other with respect and settled their disputes in an honorable, manly fashion: "the employer and the employe [sic] sat side by side, and if anything went wrong the employe went up to the employer's house and talked it over with him, and the trouble was settled."¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Speech at the Battery D in Chicago, 1895, in Schlesinger, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁰¹ Acceptance Speech upon Nomination for the Presidency by the Social Democratic party, *Social Democratic Herald*, 6 October 1900, pp. 1-2.

¹⁰² Speech at Worcester, MA, 26 October 1898, *Social Democratic Herald*, 12 November 1898, p.

The introduction of machinery upset this happy equilibrium, tilting the balance of power in favor of the employers. The increasingly capital-intensive character of production has fostered the exploitation of labor in two ways. First, it has meant that workers can no longer afford their own tools:

Fifty years ago... tools were simple and every man could own the means of production. Now the primitive implements of industry have been superseded by costly and ponderous machines which only corporations or a combination of corporations can afford to purchase.¹⁰³

Because they can no longer operate the means of production independently, laborers are now completely dependent on employers for the opportunity to work. The only alternative to exploitative wage labor is unemployment. The high cost of machinery, Debs maintains, acts as a functional equivalent for slavery:

In the last century millions of workers were exploited of the fruit of their labor under the institution of chattel slavery. Work being done by hand, ownership of the slave was a condition necessary to his exploitation.... It is no longer necessary to own the body of the workingman in order to appropriate the fruit of his labor; it is only necessary to own the tool with which he works, and without which he is helpless. This tool in its modern form is a vast machine which the worker cannot afford to buy, and against which he cannot compete with his bare hands, and in the very nature of the situation he is at the mercy of the owner of the machine, his employment is precarious, and his very life is suspended by a slender thread.¹⁰⁴

Machinery has strengthened the employer's hand in a second sense, according to Debs. By removing the skill and physical effort from many job tasks, machines make it possible for anyone to perform them -- in effect, extending and homogenizing the labor market. Employers are no longer dependent on skilled, adult, male labor. Unskilled workers, women, and children can do the job just as well and can be paid much lower wages. As a result, the family wage has become a thing of the past. In short, machinery has not only made it *possible* for women and children to work in the factories; it has made it *necessary* for them to do so:

Fifty years ago a workingman could support his family decently and educate his children. A little later, the wife

¹⁰³ *Social Democratic Herald*, 29 October 1898, p. 4.

¹⁰⁴ *Social Democratic Herald*, 8 September 1900, p. 2.

was compelled to go to work, and now the children are forced to contribute to the support of the family.¹⁰⁵

The combination of capitalism and machinery has been catastrophic for the working class. The country as a whole produces far more than before, but workers retain a much smaller portion of what they make. As a result, poverty is rampant, families are degraded, and children are deprived of their youth. The situation is aggravated by the problem of underconsumption, which Debs also attributes to the introduction of machinery:

The machine... does not provide a market for what it produces, and for many years we have produced not more than we can use, but more than we can sell, for the great body of the workers can only buy a small share of what they produce and the capitalist class cannot absorb the surplus.¹⁰⁶

Insufficient demand has led to widespread unemployment. The tramp, like the millionaire, is the inevitable byproduct of the combination of capitalism and machinery. Debs insists repeatedly that fifty years ago, America had neither tramps nor masses of unemployed. In addition, as we have seen, he believes that American workers were not only wealthier and more secure, but freer. Along with poverty, capitalism has brought repression and political corruption.

In Debs's mind, socialism offers a means of undoing the damage of the past century, both political and economic. It is not so much a step forward as a return to an earlier golden age prior to the introduction of machines:

The mission of machinery has been perverted. There was a time when the workmen owned their tools and prospered, *and it is this condition that must come again*, when men will own the machines collectively and operate them for human use instead of for private profit...¹⁰⁷

Socialism is little more than a wealthier version of the early Republic. Debs seeks to reap the gains of modern machinery without the social and political fallout that has attended capitalist mechanization. The task of socialism is essentially restorative: to restore the Republic, to restore liberty and manhood, and to restore economic security and the family wage.

Debs's and Jaurès's high regard for their respective nations' revolutionary traditions leads both men to unorthodox historical

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Social Democratic Herald*, 1 September 1902, p. 1.

¹⁰⁷ Emphasis added. *Social Democratic Herald*, 21 January 1899, p. 3.

interpretations. Because they value the achievements of the revolution, they do not accept the Marxian premise of a radical negation of the past. Jaurès seeks to extend the forces and ideals unleashed by the revolution, Debs to restore them. Neither man sees the course of history as dialectical. Socialism is the culmination of a unilinear and progressive development if one believes Jaurès, of a circular evolution according Debs.

Although both men break with the dialectic, their historical interpretations are anything but identical. Indeed, Debs and Jaurès disagree on virtually every point. Whereas Jaurès is content with the developments of the past century, Debs is horrified. Where Jaurès depicts capitalism as helping to realize the potential within the French Revolution, Debs views it as posing a mortal threat to the legacy of the American Revolution. While Jaurès sees socialism as emerging from current trends, Debs seeks to negate these trends and return to an earlier golden era.

The differences between Debs's and Jaurès's historical outlooks cannot be explained by objective circumstances. As we have seen, the specific legacy of the revolution was similar in both countries, as were the broad features of working class history. If anything, one might argue that Jaurès should have been the more pessimistic figure, since democracy and liberty had been stamped out on several occasions in France during the nineteenth century. However, ideas are not merely the vector sum of the forces operating in an individual's intellectual environment. In this case, divergent subjective perceptions, rather than common objective circumstances, shaped Debs's and Jaurès's respective interpretations.

Of course, this is not the only point of disagreement between Debs and Jaurès. Jaurès's Jacobin reflex finds no counterpart in Debs. It is also clear that Jaurès was a much richer thinker than Debs. Jaurès was an intellectual, a brilliant intellectual, who applied his great mind to the nuances of liberal and socialist doctrine. Debs, on the other hand, was more of an organizer and rebel-rouser. In contrast to Jaurès, he tended to rely on a few simple, common-sense ideas and stock phrases and anecdotes.

Still, with all of these qualifications, one cannot help but be struck by the fundamental similarities between the two men's ideologies. Debs and Jaurès never converted to socialism; they converted socialism into the ideals of their bourgeois backgrounds, the ideals associated with the status of citizenship: individualism, republicanism, and the spirit of 1776/89. These ideals were not simply throw-away lines for the consumption of the crowd; they were central to Debs's and Jaurès's socialist visions. They lent a structure, an integrity to these visions. Debs's and Jaurès's brand of socialism was not socialist theory poorly learned; it was socialism with a

different starting point and emphasis. In this respect, Debs and Jaurès were quite consistent: they were citizens first and socialists second. In most instances, they were able to harmonize the two sets of principles (and thereby avoid ruffling the feathers of their socialist comrades). However, on those occasions when conflict was unavoidable, it was socialist doctrine which had to yield.

Epilogue: American Exceptionalism Revisited

The comparison of Eugene Debs and Jean Jaurès presents a thrice-told tale of parallels between American and French socialism. Contextually, the working classes of both nations stood in a similar position on the eve of the First World War. A weak and poorly organized minority in a predominantly rural country, French and American workers could not rely on the bread-and-butter trade unionism that was emerging in Britain and Germany to protect themselves against the onslaught of industrial capitalism. The weapon they possessed was political, not organizational: the ballot in the only two industrial nations elected by universal manhood suffrage. If the French and American Socialist parties' performances to date had been disappointing, the tools for a peaceful, democratic transition to socialism were in place, and Debs and Jaurès felt confident that the workers would soon realize the full promise of democracy.

Biographically, the lives of the leaders of the American and French socialist movements bear a number of similarities, both anecdotal and of theoretical significance. Most important, Debs and Jaurès emerged from mainstream social and political backgrounds. But for Pullman and Carmaux, they might have remained the ambitious "blue-eyed boys of destiny" who considered themselves fortunate to have married Katherine Metzger and Louise Bois. Instead, "baptized in Socialism in the roar of conflict," they moved toward socialism.¹ However, at this point, they did not simply forget their origins. The values of their upbringings carried over to their socialist visions.

The result was, therefore, a third parallel -- the ideology of citizen socialism. Debs's and Jaurès's political philosophy was not socialist theory poorly learned. Rather, it was socialism infused with the ideals of their bourgeois backgrounds, the ideals associated with the status of citizenship in the US and France for over a century: individual liberty, republicanism, and the spirit and heritage of 1776/89. Socialism offered a means of defending or extending these values, not of supplanting them. Indeed, whenever socialist orthodoxy and the ideals of bourgeois citizenship conflicted, Debs and Jaurès opted for the latter. Citizen socialism set Debs and Jaurès apart from a De Leon or a Guesde. It rooted Marxism in the values of the nation, making socialism accessible, attractive, and most of all, relevant to the experience of the average American or Frenchman. As appealing as Debs's and Jaurès's personalities may have been, one cannot ignore the importance of their ideas in explaining their tremendous popularity.

The tale of American and French socialism did not end in 1914, however. Temporarily suspending our knowledge of the subsequent

¹ Eugene Debs, *Social Democratic Herald*, 12 April 1901, p. 1.

course of events has helped us examine the pre-war period in a new -- and it is hoped interesting -- light, but these events cannot be ignored. How do we reconcile the emphasis on the three-fold parallels between Debs and Jaurès -- contextual, biographical, and ideological -- with the divergent evolution of American and French socialism in the middle- and late-twentieth century? What are the implications of the events surrounding Debs's and Jaurès's lives for American exceptionalism?

One hypothesis, a sort of minimalist view of Debs and Jaurès, is that their story is irrelevant to American exceptionalism. Two individuals do not a movement make, Louis Hartz would argue. Debs and Jaurès offer some interesting biographical coincidences -- perhaps they merit a historical footnote -- but nothing more. The fundamental reality remains that French socialism became something while American socialism did not. Debs may have been like Jaurès, but the US was not like France. This is why Debs's party never took off.

In response, however, one must note that the parallels between Debs and Jaurès are not merely biographical, but contextual and ideological. This essay is more than the story of two men. If the failure of American socialism were pre-ordained due to the absence of a feudal past or some transcendent characteristic of American workers, such as "job consciousness," then it becomes difficult to understand why the American socialist movement at the turn-of-the-century stood in a position quite similar to the French. Why had the two movements not yet diverged?

A second problem with the Hartzian interpretation is that it requires attributing Debs's popularity solely to personal charisma, since his ideology is claimed to have been meaningless for American workers. As Salvatore argues, however, this is a rather unconvincing interpretation of Debs. Debs's socialist conception drew heavily upon American sources and spoke to the everyday experiences of the American workingman confronting corporate capitalism. Like Jaurès, he struck a chord. The Hartzian suggestion that the two most popular leaders of the American and French socialist movements at the turn of the century just happened to articulate a political vision rooted in indigenous values and that this vision had nothing to do with their popularity stretches the limits of credulity. Debs and Jaurès were revered for their views, not in spite of them.

A second approach to the question of American exceptionalism would be to concede that the case of Debs and Jaurès is indeed fatal to Hartz's interpretation and to shift the locus of explanation from ideological to structural factors. For example, it has been argued that American socialism never took root because the American state is uniquely unsuited for effecting radical change.² The American state is

² Cohen and Rogers, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-6; Victoria Hattam, *Unions and Politics: The Courts and American Labor, 1806-1896*, Doctoral Dissertation, Political Science Department, MIT, 1987.

highly inertial, with its federal structure of government and system of checks and balances. An alternative movement must, therefore, organize and apply pressure at a range of points -- a slow and costly strategy. Historically, even when successful, the legislative initiatives of labor have tended to be struck down by a conservative, independent judiciary. Consequently, over the years, American workers came to realize that few gains were to be made through political action and retreated to a union-based strategy. Perhaps, in Debs's time, this lesson had not yet been learned by all workers, hence his respectable electoral showings. However, it was only a matter of time.

The advantage of this argument, in contrast to Hartz's claim, is that it can account for the brief rise of American socialism as well as its subsequent decline. Political action was a strategy that was tried by the American labor movement, hence socialism's rise in the early twentieth century, but then abandoned when it proved unsuccessful. The structural claim also does not have to try to argue that Debs's ideology had nothing to do with his popularity. American workers may have responded quite well to Debs's political vision. Unfortunately for American socialism, they were unable to act upon this vision.

Despite these advantages, the state structural argument also appears flawed. On a theoretical level, it is hard to see how an inertial political system would lead workers not to vote for Socialist candidates. Except in situations in which the vote is monitored, the cost of voting Socialist is negligible, so even if one believes that the state is relatively resilient, why wouldn't a worker cast a vote for change? Surely, the alternative, a Republican or Democratic government, is far worse.

The state-structural interpretation is also questionable on empirical grounds. Debs was led to socialism precisely because the role of the government proved so critical at Pullman. Time and again, from Pullman, to the Palmer Raids, to the Wagner Act, to Taft-Hartley, to the Reagan Revolution, government policy has had a decisive impact on the structure of industrial relations and the opportunities for workers. Debs knew that government matters, and generations of workers have learned the same lesson. It would take an act of unmatched cynicism to believe that, with the stakes so high, it is not worth voting for Socialist candidates on the off chance that they might do some good.

Finally, if we accept the state-structural claim that the responsiveness of the system offers the primary criterion for determining whether it is worth pursuing political action, then the French Socialist party should have been dead in the water, like its American counterpart. We have seen that, in the age of Debs and Jaurès at least, the French state was every bit as unresponsive -- every bit as hostile -- to the working class as the American state. Like their

American counterparts, the SFIO and the CGT were unable to shake any fruit from the political tree. And yet, French socialism did not disappear.

An alternative structural explanation of American exceptionalism is suggested by the comparison made earlier in this essay between the electoral performances of the Socialist parties in France, the US, Britain, and Germany. The underlying premise is that a single-round single-member-district electoral system makes it very difficult for new political parties to become established. The new party can gain representation only by winning a plurality, and it is unlikely that voters will be willing to risk their ballot on such a dubious prospect. Consequently, in the first half of the twentieth century, as Socialist parties were struggling to become established, the American and British movements operated under a serious handicap as compared to the German and French.³

Proportional representation in Germany removed the temptation to vote for a non-Socialist party out of tactical considerations. The French two-round majoritarian system, while somewhat more complex, produced essentially the same effect. In the first round, as in Germany, Frenchmen could vote their consciences without regard for strategic considerations. In the second round, the parties on the left generally agreed to support the candidate who had scored the highest in the first round, with the result that the Socialist share of deputies roughly approximated its share of the vote. Thus, given a modest electoral showing and the ability to strike alliances with other parties, this system did not penalize new parties.

The electoral terrain in Britain and the US was far less hospitable to new political movements than the French or the German. The British Labour party was able to overcome this handicap, but the process took decades. At the turn of the century, Labour was faring scarcely better than the American Socialist party. Furthermore, the British Labour party rested on a much more solid working class foundation than its American counterpart. The commercialization of agriculture in Britain had largely eliminated pre-industrial classes, leaving a class configuration in which workers constituted a majority. In addition, the proletariat was a well-organized majority, highly unionized and class conscious. Even with all of these advantages, gaining a foothold in the political system was a long and uncertain process for Labour. The American party, the argument might go, lacking all of these supports within civil society, was unable to overcome the high threshold to political institutionalization imposed by the system of single-member districts.

³ The electoral systems of France and Germany have changed several times during this century. The following analysis applies to the Empire and Weimar periods in Germany and to the Third Republic in France.

The French Socialist party, which was also weakly rooted in civil society, might have suffered a similar fate had it operated under the same electoral system. After all, France retained a large, conservative rural population until well after the Second World War. Communist-Socialist divisions compounded this demographic difficulty, to which were added a series of blunders by Socialist leaders, especially in the postwar period. The nadir of French socialism was reached in the 1969 presidential election, when the party's candidate, Gaston Defferre, totalled just five percent of the vote -- less than Eugene Debs in 1912! Nonetheless, the French electoral system allowed the socialists to weather their divisions, errors, and demographic handicaps. Electoral fortunes waxed and waned, but the party was never threatened with extinction, since there was no strategic imperative compelling all of the parties on the left to merge into one. The SFIO could flounder for 25 years until Mitterrand revived its fortunes. Under the American or British electoral system, this might not have been the case.

An explanation of American exceptionalism based on electoral mechanisms could probably not stand up on its own. Single-member districts may have made life more difficult for American Socialists than for French Socialists, but this handicap was overcome in other countries (most notably, England). Further argumentation is needed. One possibility, the existence of a large agricultural population, might help to explain the early weakness of French and American socialism. However, America industrialized rapidly during the first half of the twentieth century, with a concomitant reduction in the rural population, and yet the fortunes of the Socialist party did not turn around.

More likely, something along the lines of Mike Davis's argument would be needed to complement the structural-electoral claim.⁴ Davis sees the American labor movement as having missed a series of historic opportunities to institutionalize its political influence. The causes of this failure include ethnic and religious divisions, strategic errors, and the Cold War. Each missed opportunity reshaped and narrowed the opportunities available at the next critical juncture: "each generational defeat of the American labour movement disarmed it in some vital respect before the challenges and battles of the following period."⁵ One can see how such an argument might fit with the electoral claim. In the US, unlike France, the opportunities to crack the two-party system have been few and far between. Single-member electoral districts make the system extremely resistant to change. As a result, each error or stroke of bad fortune has taken on

⁴ Mike Davis, "Why the US Working Class is Different," *New Left Review*, No. 123, September-October 1980; "The Barren Marriage of American Labour and the Democratic Party," *New Left Review*, No. 124, November-December 1980.

⁵ Davis, "Why the US is Different," *op. cit.*, p. 7.

historic dimensions. American socialism was not afforded the luxury of waiting 25 years for a Mitterrand.

We see, then, that the Debs-Jaurès comparison provides a fair amount of theoretical mileage with respect to the American exceptionalism debate. It offers strong grounds for questioning ideological arguments emphasizing the "foreignness" and lack of appeal of socialism for the American worker, since Debs was able to depict socialism in indigenous terms and this vision elicited a fairly strong popular response. Structural arguments emphasizing the inertial character of the American state also seem suspect. The rewards from political action in France were no greater than in America, and yet French socialism continued to grow. The ultimate resolution of the American exceptionalism debate remains outside the scope of this essay, but the Debs-Jaurès comparison suggests that we look to other factors for the answer -- perhaps to the electoral system or to a series of critical conjunctures along the lines proposed by Davis.

One final and somewhat depressing hypothesis bears mentioning -- that the US is not so exceptional, even today. Having crossed the Rubicon of American exceptionalism as applied to Debs's and Jaurès's era, why stop in 1914? While there can be no denying that the Socialist party of France has fared infinitely better than its American counterpart, one cannot help being struck by the enduring similarities between the French and American working classes.

In both countries, the working class has remained a neglected figure, Socialist party or no Socialist party. Traditionally, France and the US have ranked at or near the bottom of advanced industrial democracies in terms of worker rights, benefits, and financial status. A well-publicized 1974 OECD study rated France as having the least equitable distribution of wealth among all member countries.⁶

The parallels between the American and French working classes are organizational as well as financial. In both countries, the level of unionization has always been quite low. What is more, American and French unions have fared particularly badly -- in comparative perspective as well as in absolute terms -- during the 1980's. Nonetheless, this does not mean that American and French workers are quiescent.⁷ On the contrary, strike figures indicate a high degree of militance and dissatisfaction in both countries. Perhaps because of the weakness of organized labor, workers in France and the US have tended to express their discontent through wildcat strikes, factory occupations, and sporadic, uncoordinated protest.

⁶ Le Monde, *L'Élection présidentielle*, Dossiers et Documents, 1981.

⁷ Hattam, *op. cit.*, ch. 1.

One could conceivably argue that, for the average blue-collar worker in France or the US, the failure of the corporatist or social democratic model is far more important than the existence or non-existence of a strong Socialist party. The key factor underpinning the many problems of American and French workers, the argument might go, has been a common absence from both countries of a close link between the labor movement and the governing political parties. In the US, organized labor has always been relegated to a marginal status, even within the Democratic party's New Deal coalition. In France, the largest union, the CGT, has forged very tight links with the Communist party, but that party has never exercised much political influence. The Socialists have had a far greater impact on government policy, but their relations with the CGT and even with the most ideologically proximate union, the CFDT, have been lukewarm at best. Lest it be forgotten, austerity and the rollback of the unions in the 1980's have taken place under the Mitterrand presidency.

From the perspective of the failure of social democracy, the lives of Debs and Jaurès take on new meaning. These men could be viewed as incarnating the best hopes for social democracy in their respective countries. At a critical moment in history, when the political and industrial branches of the labor movement were beginning to emerge, Debs and Jaurès might have steered these nascent forces in a social democratic direction. Both men retained a healthy respect and cordial relations with the unions while rising to the leadership of the Socialist party. If anyone possessed the stature and leadership to bring party and union together, it was Debs and Jaurès. In addition, both put forward the kind of open ideology, rooted in indigenous traditions and democratic values, that might have generated cross-class appeal and provided a common ground for eventual compromise with conservative opponents. However, whether because of the absence of a business interlocutor, government repression, union antipathy, and/or the untimely disappearance of Debs and Jaurès, the social democratic potential within Debs' and Jaurès's vision remained untapped. In both France and the US, political action and industrial action went their separate ways.

Even stopping short of so dramatic a conclusion, one cannot avoid a sense of tragedy in considering the plight of Debs and Jaurès and all that they stood for. Not only were both men largely frustrated in their life's work of social and political activism and not only did they suffer such sad and untimely ends, but the movements which they bequeathed and the ideas in which they believed have continued to flounder. As we have seen, the parallels between the American and French labor movements have persisted beyond the turn of the century. True, France has a Socialist president and Jaurès has been given his spot in the *Panthéon*, but in 1988 as in 1914, in Mitterrand's France as in Reagan's America, the average worker -- for whom Debs

and Jaurès sacrificed their careers, their families, and ultimately, their lives -- remains the forgotten man.

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