



Jacques Rojot (1941-2020)

Jacques Rojot held degrees in law and management in France and a doctorate in management from the University of California at Los Angeles. After serving as a professor of law and economics at the University of Rennes he moved to Paris I, Panthéon-Sabonne, and later to Paris II, Panthéon-Assas. In 1991, he created the *Revue de Gestion des Ressources Humaines* (Review of Human Resource Management) and directed first the *Centre Interdisciplinaire de Formation à la Fonction Personnel* and then the *Laboratoire de Recherche en Sciences de Gestion*. He was the author singly and in concert of numerous books and over 150 articles, in French and English, on organizational theory, human resource management, and negotiation. Among his many honors was the award by the French government of the Legion of Honor and the Order of Academic Palmes. Professor Rojot was much sought after as a visiting professor and lecturer worldwide and served as a consultant to numerous disciplinary bodies, the OECD, the European Union, and the French government. He was a frequent contributor to the *Comparative Labor Law & Policy Journal*.

JACQUES ROJOT

The long illness which eventually took Jacques from us in the early hours of 16 April 2020 has robbed the academy of a major figure in the fields of industrial relations, law, and organisational theory. Modest, unassuming, kindly and always with a smile playing at the corner of his lips, his esteemed presence has been appreciated over half a century of research, teaching, and academic leadership. All of us who have known, worked alongside, and shared so many experiences with Jacques around the world, are feeling the deep impact of his loss.

For my own part, it is more than 40 years since my first encounters with Jacques. In those early days of our friendship he used to claim that I was the only person who ever cited his book on *International Collective Bargaining* – although by that time he had already shifted the focus of his attention towards organisational theory and what in those days was described as “industrial relations”. Indeed, it was Jacques who was largely instrumental in developing the “industrial relations” side of the *International Journal of Comparative Labour Law and Industrial Relations* after I took on the role of its founding Editor-in-Chief in 1985.

Our friendship became particularly close during the early years of the 1980s. There were regular opportunities to invite Jacques to Leicester (where I was then located) for residential postgraduate seminars funded through the European Commission. Later – when he launched the new *Revue de Gestion des Ressources Humaines*, which he edited from 1991 – Jacques joined the annual meetings of journal editors which I organised with Marco Biagi, and which were eventually to develop into the *International Association of Labour Law Journals*.

It was also Jacques who lured me to Paris to inflict the pain of my rudimentary French-language presentations upon unsuspecting students at the University of Paris. This initially involved travelling to Paris for weekly lectures at the Sorbonne – involving an early morning flight, a leisurely lunch in one of the favourite local haunts frequented by Jacques, my 4-hour lecture session, and then a frantic RER dash to Orly for the last flight back to London. Later, when Jacques took on the directorship of courses at Paris 2, the routine became much less frenetic – three or four nights at a time, providing the chance to sample some of the best of Parisian cuisine, followed by long and earnest discussions deep into the night. And what great culinary times we had together – whether eating in style at Le Grand Véfour, enjoying simpler pleasures at the Bouillon Racine or Lilane (just around the corner from Jacques’ home in Rue Lacépède), or heading out to a popular Alsacien restaurant for a feast of choucroute.

To this Englishman’s eyes, Jacques epitomised my idea of the archetypal French academic. Gently spoken, with the charm that only a French speaker can bring to the English language. Quietly thoughtful, with the capacity to turn a laser-like intellect upon the most complex of propositions and deliver an evaluation of devastating clarity and perceptiveness. An intellectual stalwart of the Légion d’Honneur, fiercely patriotic and proud of his Gallic heritage. And, perhaps above all else, a Parisian through and through, whose happiest hunting grounds were to be found in the *cinquième* (the Latin Quarter) – the frenetic market stalls of Place Monge, the tranquillity of the Jardin des Plantes, the vibrancy of Rue Mouffetard, or the solemn grandeur of the Place du Panthéon.

And how could I forget the gathering of friends, one early autumn evening, on a Bateau Mouche to celebrate Jacques’ wedding with Evelyne? Or, on a smaller, more

intimate, scale, the welcoming of myself and my wife into the company of his brother and closest friends for their annual “fête des lampes”? Or the presence of Jacques and Evelyne for my own wedding at Osborne House, the private house built by Queen Victoria on the Isle of Wight – described by Jacques as “My sort of wedding, where somebody puts a glass of champagne in your hand at midday and there is never an empty glass right up until midnight”!

There are so many wonderful things for which I shall remember Jacques. The ever open door to his home, there to be warmly wined and dined in the grand manner. The fascinating collection of military artefacts and beautiful lacquered boxes adorning his apartment. His enthusiasm for sampling little-known wines from far and wide – although I never did convince him that the various wines from English vineyards to which he was subjected in recent years really passed the test of the Gallic palate. And, even more recently, the opening of my eyes to the beauties of Lebanon – Baalbek and the Beqaa Valley – through the opportunities which he gave me to teach my annual classes in Beirut.

From Washington to Tokyo, and in so many places between, we have shared ideas, traded opinions, and joined in contributing to that most privileged gift of the academic – the education and the teaching of the thinkers of tomorrow. For it is in that endeavour that the legacy of Jacques Rojot will live on.

-Alan C. Neal

ABOUT JACQUES

What a loss. Most sensibly and immediately for Evelyne, but then too for Jacques’ wide circle of collaborators, colleagues, former students, and friends; for the readers of this *Journal* to which he had long given wise counsel; and for me. I’d known Jacques since I first became engaged with the comparative dimension of labor law three decades ago and we grew closer over time. In recent years my wife and I made it a rule to stop in Paris every June to dine with Jacques and Evelyne: at first in restaurants, the selection of which was the subject of much discussion, and later at their home on r. Lacépède. We anticipated these annual reunions eagerly: for the company, the conversation, the wine – about which Jacques had a sophisticated nose (he introduced me to *Quincy*, only now becoming fashionable, which he said his grandfather used to bring home by the barrel) – and for Jacques’ efforts as a *cuisinier*. And what conversation it was! Jacques ranged deeply and widely – into art, history, sociology, literature (we shared a mutual disbelief on how the young had come completely to ignore Anatole France), economics, and, always, *la politique*.

Jacques’ curiosity was insatiable. When he left the hospital after his prior extended stay he inquired of me immediately of any books that had been published whilst he was incapacitated and which he should not miss. I drew Jacques’ attention to Robert Gordon’s *The Rise and Fall of American Growth*. “Gordon?” he said. “Oh, the pessimistic liberal.” For the past three years Jacques had been pressing me to read Niklas Luhmann. I tried, but found him impenetrable. When I told Jacques so he rejoined, “But you have read him in English?” I had. “No wonder. The translation is unintelligible. You must read him in German.” Whereupon Evelyne gave me cover by explaining, “Jacques is spending more time with Luhmann than with me.”

Though Jacques’ critical instincts were sharp, his *métier* was irony. An area of his academic interest was negotiation. He had written a book on it, with Alvin Goldman,

and taught the subject including a course at the University of Illinois College of Law, to enthusiastic student reception. When I mentioned a book on “interest-based bargaining” written one who’d been long involved in Harvard’s annual program on negotiation, Jacques’ reaction was wry: “To the Harvard crowd all negotiations are ‘win-win’.” Obviously, to Jacques, some bargains are not.

Though critical, Jacques was never cynical. A cynic yields to hopelessness and so to helplessness: to abjure efforts at reform by seeking solace in the inevitability of failure. Jacques was nothing if not clear-headed; he well understood the power of social, economic, and political headwinds. Even so, history is too rich in change to dissuade him from thinking that some things could not be changed, and for the better, and that one should not shrink from striving for it.

All this, alas, has now been lost, which I lament even as I recall the companionship of Jacques and Evelyne, whose love was a joy vicariously to share; to Jacques’ great generosity of spirit, his learning, his ready wit, and his infectious relishing of life, and especially its ironies. When Alan Neal set about to assemble an international group electronically to celebrate Jacques’ life, from different time zones, and I was told by our IT staff that it was quite impossible for me to participate by video because their work rules forbade them to start here at so early an hour, I could *see* the twinkle in Jacques’ eyes.

-Matthew Finkin

REFLECTIONS ON JACQUES ROJOT

I met Jacques Rojot in the late nineteen eighties at the meetings of IIRA. We had time in our conversations there to share our experiences as foreign graduate students in the USA at different campuses. Later, I participated in several international research groups, and we often had a chance to meet for meals. I always appreciated his kindness. In the early nineties, Jacques had the great idea to develop a course at Paris1-Sorbonne, where he was teaching at the time, in comparative industrial relations. It is so difficult to know well industrial relations in different nations because of the interconnections that exist with historical, legal, economic, sociological characteristics. In this course, professors of different countries covered their own nation in an international prospective.

The program lasted five years. When I was in Paris for this course, he kindly invited me to dinner at his apartment. Nearby, in the Latin Quarter, Jacques showed me the Arènes de Lutèce, one of only two Roman structures, a hidden place that many visitors in Paris probably miss. Jacques was very interested in historical buildings. Of course, when he was in Rome we went for walks in the ancient city, and we could not fail to notice that we both lived near Roman amphitheaters, another thing we shared.

Working on other projects, we often had time to meet for lunch or dinner, and, truly French, he enjoyed the cuisine of different places, and when possible, he enjoyed a glass of Calvados (a region where he had a special link).

He was also interested in military history, and in his apartment, there was an old, uncommon, large print of a small group of soldiers, around 1850, preparing in the morning for the attack (entitled *Le matin, avant l’attaque*). Incredible! I had the same one in my apartment. I felt immediately at home. Jacques told me laughing that

sometimes in the morning when leaving for a heavy day of work, he gained courage looking at the print. Now sometimes I try to do the same, and it reminds me of him.

-Prof. Claudio Pellegrini

REMEMBERING JACQUES

The name Jacques Rojot first came to my attention when Roger Blanpain encouraged me to become acquainted with this delightful, English speaking French labor law scholar. That opportunity arrived when I joined a dozen European law teachers attending a conference Roger organized in Fontainebleau. English was the working language for our sessions. Nevertheless, when we sat down for dinner the first night, the attendees arranged themselves in groups conversing either in French or German. Jacques, whom I had just met, having been told that I am monolingual, kindly sat opposite me. Soon we discovered mutual friends and were comparing our respective approaches to preparing steak au poivre—one of the few more exotic (for me) recipes I had recently tackled.

In the next few years we collaborated on a few projects for the National Academy of Arbitrators' International Studies Committee in which he co-authored papers describing the French approach to various aspects of workplace dispute-resolution. Around 1998, at an annual meeting held in San Francisco, the Academy used one these projects to present a panel discussion among several of the authors including Jacques.

Ellie and I had planned a short afternoon walk in the Muir Woods after the conference ended and invited Jacques to join us. I misread the map and we ended up hiking, instead, on bluffs overlooking the Pacific Ocean where we found pre-WW I defense bunkers.

In 1991, Jacques and I had each written a book on the bargaining process and as we sat enjoying the ocean breeze and spectacular views we commiserated over our mutual disappointments endeavoring to write for a commercial audience. I had only recently discovered Jacques' book and was intrigued by the fact that we took similar approaches; approaches that differed significantly from the undertakings of other works in the field. We recognized that our hopes for commercial success failed, at least in part, because we were too analytical in our approach. We also discovered we each had decided to prepare a new book concentrating on supplementing classroom presentation of the topic including adding an examination of the problems of cross-cultural negotiations. It took little time to realize that a joint effort between a Frenchman and an American made good sense and that effort was finally published in 2003.

Working on our co-authored book gave us an opportunity to visit Jacques and Evelyne in Paris for a memorable week. While at their Paris apartment, I asked Jacques about a Colt Frontier Six-shooter displayed in a case. He explained that he was named after a great uncle who carried it while living in untamed Colorado in the early 1900s. A few years after our week in Paris, Ellie and I had the honor of being the first friends to host Jacques and Evelyne when they visited Colorado shortly after they were quietly married. During that stay we talked about, but sadly never got to take, a future journey to southeastern Colorado to try to find records of Uncle Jacques' days in the American frontier.

-Alvin Goldman

JACQUES ROJOT: A VERY PERSONAL REMINISCENCE

Jacques was the incorporation of multi-disciplinary scholarship. Based on solid education in law and economics he succeeded to integrate labor law, organization theory, industrial relations and human resources in his academic work. This gave him not only an outstanding position in France but also in the international scholarly community. However, this reminiscence is not focusing on his admirable achievements as highly respected scholar, on his many publications, on his success as academic teacher or on his influential activities as consultant to the OECD, to the European Union (EU) and to the French Ministry of Higher Education. I rather would like to write about Jacques as a very special, unforgettable friend.

I first met Jacques in Japan at a world congress of the International Industrial Relations Association (IIRA) which later on has been renamed into International Labor and Employment Relations Association (ILERA). There, in Kyoto, our common friend Roger Blanpain brought us together. The two of us were part of an inseparable group around Blanpain together with Marco Biagi, Janice Bellace, Alan Neal, Csilla Kollonay-Lehocky, and Tiziano Treu. Over the years we engaged in many joint ventures and attended numerous seminars either organized by Roger Blanpain in Leuven or Brussels, by Marco Biagi in Bologna and Modena, by Alan Neal in Leicester and Warwick, or by Tiziano Treu in Rome. We all were quite aware of the fact that labor law is only one dimension to understand the dynamics of the world of work and in particular of industrial relations, but that it has to be embedded in theories and empirical knowledge provided by other disciplines as social sciences, economics and human resources. However, while we approached the topic more or less as laypersons in these fields, Jacques was the professional to give us orientation. He never did this with an attitude of superiority but always shared his profound expertise with us in an extremely kind and modest way.

Kindness and consideration towards others definitely were significant traits of Jacques' character. However, he also could be very stubborn when his daily routine was in danger to be disturbed. Once we met with some other colleagues in Amsterdam to discuss for a few days a joint project. In order to make optimal use of the available time I suggested to start our deliberations at 8 a.m. This for Jacques was a declaration of war. He insisted that we do not start before 10 a.m, otherwise he might return to Paris. Of course, he won the battle.

Jacques introduced me to the prestigious INSEAD business school in Fontainebleau where he was engaged for quite a long time. He not only opened me the door to participate in the most interesting activities there, but he also showed me his office. The whole room, the desk, the floor and the chairs were covered with mountains of books and papers, barely a possibility to sit somewhere. This, he explained, was the environment he needed to work. And as I could see on many occasions later on he loved this kind of mess. It was for him a source of creativity. When Jacques was Professor at the Sorbonne in Paris, I had the privilege to several times teach some of his courses there. It was not only a great pleasure to cooperate with him at this prestigious university and to exchange ideas with his students. As always when we were together in Paris it was a special experience to enjoy his and his wife's, outstanding hospitality in their lovely home close to the Jardin des Plantes.

They both, he and his wife Evelyne, taught me and also my wife Monique, who sometimes joined me, the delights of the French cuisine. "Gigot d'agneau", a marvelous lamb dish, became my favorite over the years. And I look forward to next time when Evelyne will prepare it for me.

It was not only the splendid French cuisine by which Jacque and Evelyne impressed my wife and me. Jacques also introduced me to a group of friends with whom he met every Saturday night in a Bistro. These were wonderful people, most of them in non-academic professions, all true Parisiens. It was a very interesting group by whom I learned quite a bit about life in Paris. And it showed me that Jacques not only was a great scholar but a down-to-earth person, deeply embedded in his local environment.

When Jacques visited us in Frankfurt and we took him to a sort of local folkloristic restaurant where people sit closely together at long benches, it was amazing, how Jacques quickly established contact with those who were around him: another proof of his down-to-earth attitude.

Talking about Frankfurt and Germany, it should be mentioned that Jacques was extremely interested in the German pattern of workers' participation, my favorite object of research. We had numerous discussions on this very topic. His interest in workers' participation led to something by which I was extremely pleased and for which I am very grateful. When in 2005 at the occasion of my 65th birthday my pupils and a group of friends offered me a multilingual *liber amicorum*, Jacques wrote therein a splendid article on "Les modes de gestion participative. La participation vue du management". There he discussed different types of participative management and presented a common theoretical framework for all of them. I appreciate this contribution as a wonderful gesture of friendship.

As much as we were in agreement on the need and the advantages of workers' participation, as much apart were our political perspectives. There we were more or less on different planets which led to many intensive discussions. But these discussions always took place with mutual respect of our respective perspectives. They, of course, did not affect in any way our close friendship.

In the last decade of his life Jacques' interest more and more shifted to the philosophical and sociological foundations of the society. This brought him particularly to German authors like Juergen Habermas, Gunther Teubner and especially Niklas Luhmann. He was fascinated by Luhmann's system theory. In order to be able to read these authors in the original language, he even made an effort to study the German language. When he died he was in midst of writing a book on Niklas Luhmann, a project which unfortunately could not be accomplished.

These few lines of reminiscence may explain how much I miss Jacques not only as a colleague and great scholar but as a long standing and always very reliable friend. He was a wonderful human being. My sincere condolences are with Evelyne.

-Manfred Weiss