
After 5 Years, Debs Completes Canton Address: Noted Socialist Comes Back to Canton With Praise for City: Says World Was Never More Unsafe For Democracy Than Now.

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CANTON.— Eugene V. Debs started a speech in Canton 5 years ago.

He finished that speech here Wednesday night [Oct. 31, 1923] before an audience of 1500 persons. For the utterances in the start of the speech 5 years ago Debs was convicted and sent to federal prison. He said then that sometime he was coming back to Canton and finish the speech.

“I was not for the war. I did not want war. But I was in it,” Debs said, speaking of his experience here. “I was conscripted. I was taken by the selective draft. And I am still waiting for my bonus. Woodrow Wilson was unanimously elected President of the United States for keeping us out of war. I was given 10 years in the Atlanta prison for trying to do the same thing.

“In Wall Street they didn’t go to war. These patriots all had flat feet, or cold feet. Sixty thousand of our young men were slaughtered on the field of battle, and 625,000 were maimed.”

In speaking of present day conditions in Europe, he said:

“The world was never more unsafe for democracy. Civilization was never before so shocked and outraged as by the last war. This is one reason why I am opposed to capitalism and favor a change.

“The whole world is preparing for the next war. This war will be fought in the air. Experts are working now in the many laboratories throughout the coun-

try, preparing liquid fire and powerful explosives which will be used. Even the savages spared women and children. The next war will not. Explosives will be dropped from the air, and men, women, and helpless children will be annihilated wholesale. And this is what you vote for when you vote the Democratic or Republican ticket.

“It has been a great pleasure to me to get back to Canton again,” Debs said. “I have a real personal interest in the city. My speech did not ‘take’ the last time I was here. By my efforts alone it would never have gone beyond Canton. Yet the fact that I was put into Atlanta caused that speech to be broadcast to the entire world. They felt that I had to be arrested. I was tried and convicted. And the speech I did not finish was broadcast into 12 different languages.

“I could not have done that,” Debs continued. “They did me a tremendous favor. Why should I bear them ill will for being of such interest to me?”

The first part of Debs’ speech was given over to a brief history of the outgrowth of Socialism. He assailed Rockefeller bitterly, as the product of a system with which he did not agree. He called on the Socialists to organize and take matters into their own hands at election time. He explained how nothing could be done without organization, no matter how much others might sympathize with the move.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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