

I Would Consider the Nomination a Command:
Interview with the Cherryvale Daily Republican
(October 5, 1905)

Hon. Eugene V. Debs, the great Socialist orator, twice a presidential candidate, who speaks at the opera house tonight, was seen in his room at the Axtell today by a Republican reporter and asked if he would consent to make a third race for the presidency if his party tendered him the nomination.

Mr. Debs replied:

Yes, I would consider such request to be a command and would obey the mandate of the great Socialist Party.

When asked in what state the Socialist Party had the greatest strength, Mr. Debs said:

In the East, in Massachusetts; in the West, Wisconsin, because they are industrial centers and the conditions make socialists. Another reason for the numerical strength in those states is that they have a large population of foreigners who are socialists before their arrival in this country.

In your opinion, who will be the candidates of the next presidential campaign?

That is hard to say but it now appears that on the Republican ticket it will be either Foraker,¹ Shaw,² Taft,³ or Fairbanks.⁴ I would not be surprised to see Bryan lead the Democrats.

What will be the paramount issue?

There will be really three — trusts, tariff revision, and railroad rate legislation. The third is the most vital this country has had to deal with since the adoption of the Constitution.

How long will it be before the Socialist Party will be strong enough to elect a president?

It is possible that it will happen in four years but it may not happen for forty years. The Democratic Party is disintegrating, and the Republican Party is getting those Democrats who are successful capitalists. The real Democrats are going into the Socialist Party.

What corporation is the greatest menace to the public today?

I don't regard them as menaces — I regard them as promises, for this reason: The sooner they dispossess the people, the sooner the people will dispossess them. the more evil they commit, the sooner the end, and they pave the way for a new and better order.

What do you think of Roosevelt's fight on the trusts?

It has done no good. There is absolutely no remedy for the trust evil except collective ownership.

Mr. Debs is a gentleman pleasant to meet, a deep thinker, earnest talker, and is devoting his life to the cause of socialism.

He arrived on the noon train and immediately retired to his room asking that he be not disturbed until six o'clock, but when the Republican reporter asked for an interview he kindly assented and although just awakened from a sound sleep was a moment later talking earnestly of the cause always uppermost in his mind, forgetful of his fatigue.

He is the recognized leader of the Socialist Part in the United States and the people of Cherryvale are fortunate in having an opportunity to hear him tonight.

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¹ Joseph B. Foraker (1846-1917) was a United States senator from Ohio and former governor of that state.

² Leslie M. Shaw (1848-1932) was a former governor of Iowa who served as Secretary of the Treasury under the Theodore Roosevelt administration.

³ William Howard Taft (1857-1930) was Secretary of War under Theodore Roosevelt. He was the nominee of the Republican Party and was elected the 27th President of the United States in 1908.

⁴ Charles W. Fairbanks (1852-1918) was the sitting vice-president under Theodore Roosevelt and a former US senator from Indiana.