
Eugene V. Debs: **Lecture Season of 1899-1900**

by L. W. Rogers

Manager for Eugene V. Debs

With the last days of June [1899] Mr. Debs closed his first season as a public lecturer and finished a most auspicious beginning in the work that is to engage his time and talents during the latter period of his life. It was brilliant with successes well won and it is with a keen appreciation of the pleasure in store for the hundreds of thousands who are to listen to his rare eloquence in the months to follow that I issue the announcement for the coming season, when he will continue his work for industrial emancipation with a new lecture under the title "Looking Forward." In this new lecture Mr. Debs is at his best and rises to his full intellectual height in such an arraignment of the atrocities of white slavery as has not been heard since plutocracy reared its threatening front against the liberties of the people. In strong contrast to this terrible indictment his moving eloquence, picturing the time to be when simple justice shall reign, is certain to stir the masses of the people to an unconquerable longing for a better civilization.

Every great movement produces a great leader. This is as true today as when Martin Luther arose as champion of free thought and when our enslaved blacks found a voice in the matchless eloquence of Wendell Phillips.

The season just closed merely inaugurates the great work to which Mr. Debs is devoting his life. But this beginning plainly indicates the achievements to follow. He lectured in the principal cities and many of the lesser centers in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Michigan, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Tennessee, Alabama, and Texas, always to immense and deeply moved audiences when the weather or some unavoidable circumstance did not suspend the even tenor of the tour. A notable thing in his work is the great conscience awakening he is causing in middle class circles. Business and professional men, the rich no less than the poor, are attending his lectures and becoming fast friends of the cause he champions. No better evidence that labor is not alone interested is needed than that a number of

Chatauqua¹ and literary societies have secured him for lectures and that he has appeared before such aristocratic and exclusive organizations as the Nineteenth Century Club of New York City, pleading the toilers' cause before the millionaires themselves.

The result of his work cannot, of course, be even guessed. Its first visible effects are a renewed activity and general strengthening of labor organizations, an awakening of interest in the power-holding classes, and a broader and more tolerant spirit on the part of all toward the whole emancipation movement. Mr. Debs is unquestionably the only living man who can call out to a lecture on this subject an immense audience representing every class and commercial interest in the republic. Laborers and merchants, mechanics and manufacturers, editors, preachers, poets, philosophers, teachers, politicians, men and women from every walk in life from the mendicant to the millionaire, mingle in his audiences and listen to the great truths he proclaims.

The growth of interest in this work is manifest in the increasing demand for his services from all parts of the country. A large number of applications are already on file for the coming season and the remaining dates will be speedily disposed of. Beginning with September, eight months will be divided among the various states. At the end of that time Mr. Debs goes abroad to fill engagements in England and Australia and study economic conditions in foreign lands. The great movement in which he is a factor has become international, and the United States no more remains to itself than one of our cities or states can hold aloof from the others. The forward march in a worldwide movement to a better civilization has begun.

Those who desire to secure Mr. Debs for a lecture before he goes abroad should make immediate application. Where organizations are concerned, and correspondence waits more or less upon infrequent meetings, many weeks are often required for making arrangements, and after that much time is needed for proper preparation. Such lectures should never have less than two full months between the closing of the date and the filling of the engagement. The farther ahead the announcement is made to the public the greater is the degree of general interest and the better the final results.

Various plans for making engagements have been devised so that arrangements can be adapted to almost any locality and circumstances, and thus practically all who earnestly desire a lecture by Mr. Debs will find it

in their power to secure him. Of course he cannot lecture every day in the week nor every week in the month, but the limited time available during the period above mentioned will be disposed of as rapidly as applications are received.

Thanking the many earnest men and women who have given me valuable information and assistance during the past season, and awaiting the further pleasure of the public, I am, very truly,

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Manager for Eugene V. Debs.

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¹ Chatauqua Societies were local adult education societies during the late 19th and early 20th centuries which sponsored lectures, concerts, and artistic expositions. The name derives from the Chatauqua Lake Sunday School Assembly, launched in New York in 1874, which served as a model for the movement.