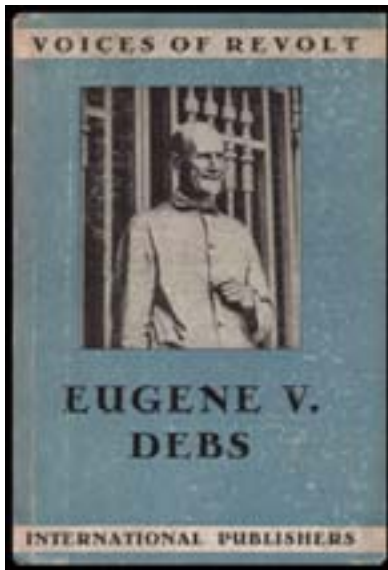

The Wall Street Explosion

by Eugene V. Debs

Third weekly article from prison, published as “Debs Sees Plot to Involve Radicals” in the *New York Call*, v. 13, no. 269 (Sept. 25, 1920), pg. 1.

Being in prison is not without its advantages. Had I made a speech in New York the night before that Wall Street explosion there would have been a clear case against me. As it is, I have a perfect alibi.

I was charged with responsibility for the as-



sassination of McKinley, for the blowing up of the Times Building in Los Angeles, and numerous other crimes and catastrophes.

A man who questions the vested rights of the ruling class or opposes the established order of

things is naturally capable of any crime.

When McKinley was shot all the preachers in Portsmouth, Ohio, where I was billed to speak, united in a public proclamation of my guilt and had the Mayor forbid me to enter the city. At Warren, Ohio, 2 or 3 days later, a lawyer harangued a crowd on the courthouse square, inciting them to lynch me.

The Wall Street explosion must be proved the result of a plot and fastened upon some red conspirator. Mr. Palmer, the red expert, and his army of trained spies should have no

difficulty in apprehending the culprit and convicting him of his crime. In the meantime, there will be a harvest of fat pickings for a fresh American Legion of sleuths, sneaks, spotters, and spies, as choice a lot as ever infested the land of the Tsar.

There is but one thing the trouble with the American people and that one thing can be expressed in one word — exploitation. It is that one thing both Harding and Cox studiously avoid.

With them it is anything to keep the people's eyes on the jugglers whirling balls while the coal trust, the beef trust, et al., are going through their pockets.

Exploitation, that's what I mean; the conventional term for robbery. The exploitation of man by man, of nation by nation, enriching fabulously the favored few and impoverishing and degrading the toiling and producing masses.

The idle few have the power to rob and enslave the industrial many. Millionaires and tramps are alike the product of exploitation.

Less than 2 percent of our people privately own our natural resources and our industrial machinery. In virtue of which they have the power to rule the nation and rob the people. That is the stupendous fact for the American people to realize, but Cox and Harding never hint at it, because they are the candidates of, and get their campaign funds from, that exploiting 2 percent.

As long as the industrial machinery that feeds

and clothes and shelters the people is the private property of the 2 percent minority of exploiting capitalists, the people will be poor, life will be wretched struggle for existence, the divine in human nature will never be realized, and this world will still be nearer to the jungles than to any real civilization.

The Socialist Party says put an end to private ownership of social necessities.

The end of private ownership means the end of exploitation, and the end of exploitation means the end of war and the beginning of worldwide peace.

War is the monumental crime, the unspeakable horror of history.

Trade wars must be backed by machine guns and submarines. The war of blood follows the war for trade. Put an end to it all by replacing capitalism with Socialism, and industrial despotism with industrial democracy, wherein the people, the whole people, shall own and control their common means of life, produce all things for their common use and enjoyment, and not for gorging parasites, and then, exploitation having ceased, competition for trade being ended, the incentive to war vanishes and for the first time in history the race is at peace and God's bow of promise arches the world.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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