
Daugherty Acts on Debs Monday: Gene Returns to Cell from Capital Without Guards: Leaves Washignton After Secret Conference with Attorney General on Case — Trial Judge Also Called: Prisoner Came and Left in Silence.

by Paul Hanna

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WASHINGTON (Federated Press).— Without guard or escort, Eugene V. Debs, prophet of the working class, whom Woodrow Wilson threw into prison as a menace to mankind, left his cell in the Atlanta penitentiary a few days ago, came to Washington for a conference with Attorney General Daugherty, and thereafter returned alone to his prison cell.

The great Socialist leader came and went from Washington as silently as a ghost. He had given his word to speak to none but officials of the Department of Justice, who had asked him for such a promise. And none of the thousands in Washington who would have acclaimed him even dreamed he had walked in their midst until the Attorney General today announced that Debs had come and gone again.

Mum on Conference.

“I could not go to see Debs, so Debs came to see me,” Daugherty told the reporters today. “I wanted his own answer to certain questions and Debs gave them. No well disposed person will tempt him to break the agreement not to speak of what was said or done in our conference.”

The Attorney General did not state when Debs was in Washington. The impression first spread that Warden Zerbst of the Atlanta penitentiary had brought

the Socialist leader her with him over last Saturday and Sunday [March 19-20, 1921], but Daugherty makes the flat statement that Debs came absolutely alone and that he was back in his prison cell before the press statement was issued here today.

Believe Freedom Near.

Friends and enemies here of the famous prisoner are convinced that he will be freed within a few days. His sensational round trip from Atlanta to Washington is regarded as being in part a move by the administration to show the public that Eugene V. Debs is a man of spotless personal honor, no less than of unflinching devotion to his political principles. The administration has learned how to share in the drama of Debs, and to set off the villain’s role played by a prominent Democrat.

Trial Judge Comes.

It is stated tonight that another silent visitor to Washington during the past week was Judge Westenhaver, Ohio, who sentenced Debs to prison for 10 years. He, too, was pledged to silence, but his part in the next great act in the Debs drama is said to have been fixed and agreed to with the Attorney General.

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