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# **“Let Them Come; I Fear No Man,” Debs Tells Indiana Governor: Gov. McCray Admits He Counseled American Legion Affront to Debs and Urged He Be Taught a Lesson — Law and Order Hypocrites Expose Hand.**

by Frederic Heath

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Unsigned article attributed to editor Frederic Heath.

The American Legion recently held a meeting at Indianapolis, Ind., their national headquarters. The Governor of the state, Warren T. McCray, attended this meeting at which the commander of the department of Indiana declared in a very excited manner that when the Legion of the state held its forthcoming convention at Terre Haute, the members would march to the residence of Eugene V. Debs and there shout “Traitor” and otherwise teach him a lesson for his “treason.” Gov. McCray endorsed and encouraged this program of threat and violence. Let this fact be placed on record for future reference. We shall have occasion to use it hereafter.

In connection with the foregoing interesting “law and order” program, the following communications are self-explanatory:

Terre Haute, Ind, Jan. 16, 1922.

Hon. Warren T. McCray, Governor,  
Indianapolis, Ind.

Sir:

My attention has been called to the report of a meeting of the American Legion in a recent issue of an Indianapolis paper of statewide circulation at which you are reported as having made the following statement:

“I am sorry, extremely sorry, that the arch-traitor of our country should live in the state of Indiana. I believe he will be taught a lesson by the American Legion.”

You will oblige me by advising if you are correctly quoted in this statement, and if so, it would seem to follow that you must also denounce the President of the United States in the same terms for releasing an arch-traitor from prison and inviting him to the White House.

But this is aside from the present purpose. A committee representing the miners and other workingmen of this city and vicinity have just called on me to ask you if you as Governor of the state, sworn to uphold its laws and preserve order, endorse and intend to back up the program of threat and violence against the “arch-traitor” in question, incited by your remarks, and announced in the same report of the same meeting?

Very respectfully,

Eugene V. Debs.

To this letter the Governor replied as follows:

Indianapolis, Ind., Jan. 17, 1922.

Mr. Eugene V. Debs,  
Terre Haute, Ind.

My dear Sir:

In reply to your favor of Jan. 16 [1922], I wish to say that in my brief remarks at a recent meeting of the George Dewey Post, American Legion, I did not speak from notes. What I had to say at that time was entirely extemporaneous and, therefore, I am not sure of the language quoted in the paper which you repeat, but in the main it was what I said.

As my authority for the statement I refer to the fact that you were tried and convicted in the federal court and served 3 years of the sentence imposed.

Very truly yours,

Warren T. McCray,  
Governor of Indiana.

It will be observed that the Governor’s answer is somewhat evasive, but he does not deny having ap-

proved and encouraged the march of the legionnaires on the home of Eugene V. Debs.

On the day following the publication of the Legion's program a citizen of Indiana sent the following letter to the Governor and also to each of the Indianapolis papers, *in not one of which it was given space.*

Indianapolis, Jan. 12, 1922.

Governor Warren T. McCray,  
State House, Indianapolis.

Sir:

In The Star of this city of this date you are quoted as saying to the American Legion concerning Eugene V. Debs: "I am sorry, extremely sorry, that the one arch-traitor of our country should live in the state of Indiana. I believe that he will be taught a lesson by the American Legion, however."

A little while ago the American Civil Liberties Union presented to the American Legion officials a list of 50 cases of flagrant, open, undenied acts of violence by legionnaires. This list was only a sample of hundreds of cases all over the United States varying all the way from threats to murder. In view of this lawless record and in view of recent threats of violence, your speech is a direct incitement to mob violence and inspiration to crime. *Not only so; it is also an advance declaration of executive sympathy for the acts of the mob in "teaching Debs a lesson."*

After your incitement speech a Legion official declared that at their next meeting in Terre Haute they would march by the "traitor's home." Will you march with that mob to the Debs home shouting "traitor"? Will you?

Now Debs has many friends in Terre Haute and in the mines thereabouts, and all over the state, and in all the states. Shall Debs' friends also gather at Terre Haute for that occasion? Doubtless many will.

Should the legionnaires carry out their threat of violence we expect to see you stand up like a "patriot," cheer them on, and shoulder the responsibility for the criminal act. Will you do it? And if there are reprisals, will you expose your head? Or do you expect to cast a firebrand into a mob-magazine, sniffle about "law and order," and escape the consequences? It is you, and such as you, that are the "traitors" to constitutional government, wreckers of law processes, and the builders of class hatred upon the ruins of liberty.

### **Wants to Kill Debs.**

Not much more need be added here in the way of comment. It is sufficient for the present to place the "Law and Order" hypocrites in high places on record.

A few days ago *The Knickerbocker* of Albany, NY, the organ *par excellence* of the profiteering criminals and corruptionists, published a vicious personal attack on Debs. One of its readers at once conceived it to be his patriotic duty upon reading this malicious and inciting tirade to "kill Eugene V. Debs" and he at once declared that he was leaving for Terre Haute for that purpose, and wrote a letter to the *New York Call* to that effect. To date he has not yet appeared, but it is not the fault of *The Knickerbocker* and the cowardly profiteering organs of that ilk that some lunatic does not commit such a crime. And these are the gentry who are everlastingly preaching "law and order" to the working class.

As to the intended march upon his home by the legionnaires, Eugene V. Debs has this to say: "Let them come! I have not the slightest objection. It will be an illuminating exhibition. Were I so inclined I could easily muster an army of a few thousand to make their reception an interesting one. But I shall do nothing of the kind. Were I to call upon my friends at all it would be to see to it that the marchers were unmolested. I do not object to being called a 'traitor' under certain circumstances for I certainly am a 'traitor' to the powers and personalities of Wall Street that are looting this nation, corrupting its government, debauching its politics, and robbing and starving the people, including the boys who went overseas at their command to 'save civilization,' for which many are now facing starvation as a reward.

"Some of these latter boys have called to ask me if I needed protection against threatened assault, volunteering their services, which I thankfully declined. I need no protection. I fear no man and no mob. All my life I have walked among men, men of all kinds and in all places, unarmed and unafraid. I am inclined to think the legionnaires will change their minds about marching to my home but whether they do or not they will find the road clear and they may stand there and shout 'traitor' to their hearts' content. It is to be hoped that Governor McCray will not fail to take his proper place at the head of the marchers."

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

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