American history: socialist ideas of eugene debs

History

None of the American labor movement activists was so widely known as Eugene Debs. Moreover, no one has done so much to promote class struggle and the socialist transformation of society, as he did.

His articles appeared in a number of radical newspapers and magazines such as Common Sense, which had almost half a million ridership. He continually agitated for consolidation of the working class in a struggle. Debs speeches were permeated with a few basic motifs - a huge wall separating the class of exploiters from the working masses, groveling of all authorities of the capitalist state (especially of the courts) in front the ruling class, justifiability of the workers' struggle against exploitation and oppression, need to unite to get rid of capitalism and creation of a society governed directly by working people.

Since the mid-1890's he had been organizing steadily the socialist movement. In 1901 he helped to form the Socialist Party, which appeared as a result of a merger of three small socialist organizations. However, he so deeply hated factional disputes that subsequently withdrew from the internal struggle in the Socialist Party. Debs had never been a key figure in internal debates and institutional affairs in the party. His hobby-horse has always been the agitation of the working class and the party knew no better public speaker.

Between 1900 and 1920 Debs was nominated for the Presidency five times as the Socialist Party candidate. And for the first time in 12 years, the party had certain electoral growth. In 1908, Debs went to his campaign tour the by train called Red Special, appearing in front of tens of thousands of workers. In the campaign of 1912, Debs brought the party its maximum success gathering about one million votes. While many leaders of the

socialists considered elections as an end in itself, Debs used such campaigns to promote the ideas of socialism.