

A Personal Word (January 5, 1907)

To the many comrades and others who have written and have expected to hear from me there is due a few words of personal explanation. During the past few months, beginning with the death of my mother,¹ afflictions of all kinds have come to our family. Only a few days ago my father was laid to rest,² the third death in rapid succession, besides the illness of other members, myself included — an affection of the throat and an attack of sciatica,³ due to exposure, tending to incapacitate me for a considerable time from following my usual duties. The result has been the accumulation of heaps of letters, papers, and other documents, the interruption of correspondence, and the neglect of many other urgent matters for which the indulgence of comrades and friends is requested.

During the past year or more my work, especially in the field, has been carried forward under great difficulties, and very much of it has been wholly unsatisfactory to myself, and probably equally so to others. This word of explanation is all I have to offer along this line.

I wish to thank, in behalf of all our family, the many comrades, friends, and sympathizers, some of whom are strangers to us in name, for their beautiful letters filled with the touching tokens of their sympathy in our bereavement. When death enters the home and takes from us those dear to us, there is no comfort equal to a loyal comrade's sympathy and love.

I am now endeavoring to clear up the accumulation, get things in their usual order, and resume my work.

These are pregnant times and we all have work to do and must do it with all our strength and ability. The cause we serve is entitled to our first and last consideration. All other things are secondary.

Eugene V. Debs.

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¹ Marguerite Marie Bettrich Debs (1828-1906) died on April 29.

² Jean Daniel Debs (1820-1906) died on November 27 and was buried shortly thereafter at Highland Lawn Cemetery in Terre Haute.

³ Chronic pain in the lower back and legs, generally caused by compression of vertebrae impinging on the sciatic nerve.