

I Would Share the Prison Cell With You:
Letter to Moses Harman
(July 20, 1905)

Terre Haute, Ind.

Mr. Moses Harman
[Chicago]

My Dear Old Comrade:—

Having just returned from the West, I find your note awaiting me, the contents of which I have read with mingled regret and indignation. The outrages upon you never cease.¹ The heartless hypocrisy that connects your persecution with public morals is disgusting beyond expression. It does you little good to say, as thousands do, that they are with you, and yet it is surely some solace to you to realize that the heart of the humane and intelligent community is with you, and that the sacrifices you are called on to make are not in vain, but are certain to bear the best of fruit for generations to come. The only obloquy that attaches to your sentence is that which makes infamous the court that sentenced you. I would gladly, were it possible, share the prison cell with you, or relieve you of half the term of your sentence.

The double number you refer to never came. I am sorry to have missed you in Chicago.

I need not try to sustain you. All I can say is that you have had additional honors come to you, and your whole life bears testimony that you are marked for the special favors of the fates, and nothing is more certain than that you will be lovingly remembered after the last of your persecutors rots in a forgotten grave.

[Eugene V. Debs]

ⁱ In July 1905 Moses Harman (1830-1910), the 74-year old publisher and editor of the long-running magazine *Lucifer*, was sentenced to one year in prison by Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis for having introduced his rationalist magazine into the US mail. The publication, which sold sex education books in an era when such things were forbidden, was held to violate laws against the distribution of obscene matter through the postal system. Harman had previously served three jail terms on similar charges.