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# My Ideal

by Eugene V. Debs

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My ideal is a thinker in overalls.

He is one of higher manhood, of the moral courage to face the world and fight for his rights. In doing this he may lose the respect of his neighbors, but he will retain his own respect and will go ahead fighting in the greatest struggle of the world — a struggle to emancipate the working class from the final form of servitude.

Whittier, the Quaker poet, once said that any great cause is bitterly opposed in its incipient stages. This has always been an established fact. It is easy for a person to be a nobody and drift along with the flow of the tide. But it takes a bit of courage to step out and join the despised minority. In fifty years we have developed the greatest economic and political organization the world has ever known.

The workers are marching toward the sunrise with the glow of the light of the coming day on their faces. I am certain that the time is near when we will have a social and industrial democracy. But united force is absolutely essential. When you workers realize that your interests are identical you will unite under one industrial and political flag and go forward and nothing will step between you and the absolute emancipation of the working class.

Poverty that exists in the country today is the outgrowth of the industrial system under which we live. Every system outlives its usefulness. We know that day by day, nourished by the misery and vitalized by the aspirations of the working class, the area of activity of the Socialist movement widens, it grows in strength and increases its mental and moral grasp, and when the final hour of capitalism and wage slavery strikes, the Socialist movement, the greatest in all history — great enough to embrace the human race, will crown the class struggles of the centuries with victory and proclaim freedom to all mankind.

*Edited by Tim Davenport*

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