

Eugene V. Debs: In a Just Society, Every Day Would Be Labor Day

On Labor Day, there's perhaps no one better to read than Eugene V. Debs. Here's his 1903 Labor Day message, never before republished, in which he declares, "The struggle in which we are now engaged will end only when every day is Labor Day."



Socialist Eugene Debs addresses a crowd at a meeting in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1925. (George Rinhart / Corbis via Getty Images)

The first Monday in September has by statutory enactment and general consent been set apart as Labor Day in the United States; and its celebration this year will be more general than ever before.

It is a day not only for rest and recreation, but for counsel and meditation. It affords an excellent opportunity to take a backward look, examine the present situation, take an inventory of resources and prepare for the greater work yet to be done before Labor Day can be celebrated by the hosts of freedom.

Labor Day must be regarded not as a privilege to be thankful for, but as a right to be enjoyed.

We never hear of Capital Day, not because Capital has no day, but because every day

is Capital Day.

The struggle in which we are now engaged will end only when every day is Labor Day.

Upon every hand we see the signs of preparation.

The working class are mustering their mighty forces for political and economic conquest.

While the capitalists are capitalizing, the industrial conditions are revolutionizing, the working class are organizing, the Socialist sentiment is crystallizing and in due time the cooperative commonwealth will be materializing.

The liberation of the toilers of earth from the bonds of wage slavery is a mission worthy of the great international movement historically commissioned to render that inestimable service to humanity.

Courage is needed and intelligence, and both will be furnished in abundance by the working class itself.

Organization, based upon the mutual economic interests of the working class, is the demand of the day.

All workers, men, women and children, of all races and countries are included in the call to action.

The only line that is drawn is between the working class and their exploiters and that must be drawn straight and reach around the globe.

Workingmen, this is the day for you to realize that your interests are the same, that divided you are helpless, that united you can and will conquer the earth!

United political action will place the working class in control of government, and the abolition of capitalism will inevitably follow.

To work for wages, no matter how high, or how short the workday, is to acknowledge a master and be at his mercy.

The full-grown workingman of the future will be free with his fellow workers to employ themselves, be their own masters and enjoy all the fruit of their labors.

Let every intelligent workingman resolve this day to do his share to abolish the wage system and emancipate the sons and daughters of toil.

The Socialist Party is the party of the working class, the party that stands for economic equality and industrial freedom, the party of progress and civilization.

This is the day to hold aloft its banner and proclaim its principles.

The struggle is as righteous as 'ever prompted men to do and dare on field of battle.

A few men are great now because the great mass are small.

Socialism means the exaltation of the whole and not the aggrandizement of individuals.

It is the greatest movement in all history.

It is the challenge of the twentieth century to the tyranny and oppression of the ages.

The ultimate triumph is inevitable.

The future is for socialism and humanity.