
Towards the Rising Sun

by Eugene V. Debs

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The earth is in travail; the race is suffering from the pangs of parturition. A world-wide, humanity embracing revolution is on the calendar — in red letters — of the 20th Century. The impending social crisis is the most portentous that ever issued from the womb of time.

Historical epochs mark the growth of man, the progress of events, the rise and sweep of civilization.

Prophets and philosophers, catching the spirit of coming events, force and proclaim them; and as they approach, poets and pamphleteers, orators and agitators, dramatists and musicians, animated by the new spirit, acclaim the glad tidings of the sunrise of the morrow.

These are the heralds of the dawn; the torchbearers of progress, the evangels of advancing civilization.

Living, they are hated and reviled, crucified and damned.

Dead, they live again and forever.

Freedom is the universal shibboleth of the present age.

And as the cry for freedom surges from the soul and leaps from the lips of Labor, a thousand and million proletarians, in all the zones that girdle the globe, lift their bowed bodies from the dust, and join in the swelling anthem of the Social Revolution.

In all nations — civilized, semi-civilized,

barbarian, and savage — the leaven is at work; and beyond all boundary lines, a silent, invisible, irresistible power is reaching out and marshalling them all in orderly array within the luminous orbit of universal alliance.

The 19th Century evolved the physical forces to overthrow wage slavery and laid the material foundation, wide as the world, for a new social order. The 20th Century, completing the work, will rear the social superstructure — the royal temple of humanity disenthralled.

Freedom in its true sense is yet unknown to man. It cannot abide where slavery exists. Its spirit is essentially universal. It is radiant as the sunshine and refreshing as the shower — the very life-breath of civilization.

In the soil of ignorance, superstition thrives, but freedom fails. It is not for the few. The “Four Hundred” cannot, with all their millions of stolen dollars, buy a breath of it. They are, indeed, the veriest of slaves. The canker is at their souls and the dry rot at their bodies.

Kings and Kaisers will never know the real joy of freedom. They and their subjects are chained together, and not God himself can free them without freeing their subjects.

That is the law — the moral law — and no political machine, nor other device of the masters, can ever repeal it.

Freedom is no more for the master than for the slaves — no more for the capitalist than for the wage worker.

O freedom, we thank thee from the fullness of grateful hearts. Thou art pure and incorruptible. Thou lookest down with pity and compassion upon the children of toil, bent with their burdens and weary with oppression. Thou biddest them to join hands and hearts, shake off their cruel fetters, and rise to the realms of peace and joy. We thank thee, above all, for thy supreme sense of justice in withholding thy favors from masters and rulers, and rejecting with righteous scorn all special pleas for thy boon, rebuking thus the soulless few who would, to free themselves, see all their brethren perish in slavery. We hear thy cheering voice and understand thy revolutionary mission — thou art to us the noblest of ideals; and when trials and vexations multiply and clouds hang low, we find in thee unceasing solace and unfailing strength and inspiration. We know that when the hour strikes for thy reception; know that when class robs class no more; when humanity, slaveless and masterless, rises to its dignity, then wilt thou come to earth to abide with the children of men in the reign of freedom from evermore!

The greatest cause in all this world today — the cause whose lofty ideals fire the souls of millions of workingmen and workingwomen with the revolutionary passion, is *International Socialism*. This grand historic movement has no parallel in history. It is the first conscious movement of the workers of the world to unite for the overthrow of their oppressors; the

first deliberate resolution to achieve their own emancipation.

The emancipation of labor is essential to the freedom of humanity.

The struggle for freedom is the history of the race; the fruit of the struggle is the development of man.

The jungle and the wilderness have in large extent been cleared away, but the animal struggle for existence rages fiercely as of old, and savage nature still runs riot in the breast of man.

The earth is not yet fit for human habitation; but the long dark night is passing, and humanity is moving grandly towards the sunrise.

The civilization of Greece, Egypt, Persia, Babylon, Rome, Assyria, and other nations, and the royal robbers and the privileged parasites that ruled over them, had their day and passed away with the wretched slaves who built the pyramids and the obelisks along the track of the early centuries of the race. The feudal nations of medieval Europe, whose lords and nobles inherited all, especially their parasitic disdain and brutal contempt for outraged slaves, have followed in the wake of their predecessors, and nothing remains but the memory of their bloody reign — the midnight horrors of history.

All, all of these nations and dynasties, and all the broods of titled vampires that had their gory beaks in the heart of honest toil, have turned back to dust and now fertilize the highway of the ages, but the working class survives; slowly yet surely developing the power to fulfill its mission of emancipation.

The working class may be robbed, trampled upon, crushed, broken, sabered, imprisoned, shot full of wounds, “poor dumb

mouth” to bear mute witness to the crimes it has suffered, but its majestic march continues toward the sunrise.

All the kings and courts, all the armies and navies, and the retainers and the mercenaries of the ruling class can not turn backward the revolutionary movement of the working class of the world.

The very defeats it encounters eliminates weakness, promotes solidarity, and insures ultimate triumph.

The working class is still on all fours, worked ridden, whipped and stabled, to serve the convenience of its master.

But this working behemoth is coming gradually into consciousness of his latent power. He has but to shake himself to make the earth tremble. He is the potential ruler of the universe.

Through all the countless years that are gone, this giant groped in darkness while swarms of insects ravaged his flesh and rioted in his misery.

The 20th Century will see him emerge from the black night of ignorance and stand erect in the glory of his power and the joy of his triumph.

Wage servitude in the capitalist system is the last phase of Labor’s slavery. This system, like those that preceded it, must go the way of all things. Society changes ceaselessly, reproducing itself in forms adapted to material progress and the logic of events.

The master and slave, the lord and serf of past ages, are gone, and the capitalist and wage workers of our day must follow them.

The evolution of industry is at once destroying and recreating the social world; and no injunctions issued by any capitalist court can lie against the operation of its resistless forces.

The development of machinery necessitates the concentration of capital, and this in turn crushes out the middle class and compels the revolutionary organization of the working class.

The class struggle against the class-ruled society is as wide as the domain of capitalism, and as deep-rooted as the exploitation of the working class.

Labor and capital are locked in an international conflict that rocks the earth.

Economic freedom will elevate humanity to a higher plane than it has ever known.

Wealth and leisure for all!! That is now possible for the first time in the history of the race. And that will be but the material foundation of the new Social Order — the beginning of the Coming man.

Who shall tell the intellectual unfolding, the spiritual development, and the moral exaltation of the generation to follow?

Come let us onward — *Toward the Sunrise*.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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