
Silent Souls in the Ranks

by Eugene V. Debs

Published in *The Western Comrade* [Los Angeles], vol. 2, no. 12 (April 1915), pg. 22.

There are many great hearts, splendid spirits, heroic souls in the Socialist movement. One has but to think of these to find solace in the sorest trial.

The names of most of these are barely known. They suffer in silence and almost with joy for the cause. Their names are never in print. They do not seek office; they give, but do not receive applause.

They give but little and yet they give much, for they give their all. They know only how to give and do for the cause. They think of nothing else and least of all of themselves.

These are Socialists and of these is the Socialist movement.

These silent comrades never dispute about anything, but their hand can be seen in everything. They make no noise, although they are constantly at work doing the things that others argue about and split hairs over. It is because of this nameless and fameless host that the Socialist movement is fire-proof, bullet-proof, and lightning-proof. Nothing can greatly injure it, or more than momentarily halt its march to victory.

My hat is off to these comrades of the rank and file who seek nothing of the movement but the chance to serve it with all their hearts. When I think of them my heart leaps; hope is renewed, confidence strengthened, and doubt vanishes.

The other day two of the comrades, brothers, crossed a mountain in snowshoes, a distance of 25 miles, to attend a meeting in Idaho. Still another comrade walked 40 miles across a higher range to attend the same meeting.

Think of that!

Those who usually talk about making sacrifices for the cause know not the meaning of sacrifice.

They who really make sacrifices never talk about them.

Leaders may and often do disrupt a movement, but never make one. The rank and file create always, but never destroy.

The men and women, the boys and girls who are building up the Socialist movement and putting their hearts and souls into it, are the greatest people in the world. They are making it possible for future generations “to rise on their dead selves a stepping stones” to the kingdom of light and love.

Edited by Tim Davenport

1000 Flowers Publishing, Corvallis, OR · June 2013 · Non-commercial reproduction permitted.