

The Debs Foundation Newsletter

P.O. BOX 843, TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA 47808-0843



SPRING, 2004

REMEMBERING JACK SHEINKMAN

By Noel Beasley

In my Chicago office, on a bookcase shelf at eye level across from my desk, is a picture of four great labor leaders, all of them now gone. But never to be forgotten by me. The photograph is of Murray Finley, Charles Sallee and Marion Groce standing in front of one of the images of Eugene V. Debs portrayed in the Laska murals on the attic ceiling of the Debs Home in Terre Haute, Indiana. The three men are smiling and about to burst into laughter and I remember why they are smiling. Because I was there the day the photo was taken. Murray Finley, at the time International President of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers (ACTWU) and also President of the Debs Foundation, had just remarked to Marion and Charlie that Jack Sheinkman looked a lot like Debs.

Charles Sallee and Marion Groce were tough, shrewd, hard-living unionists who together taught me whatever I know about the craft, science and art of collective bargaining. They both were from Kentucky and veterans of World War II who came out of their factories in the 1940s to become important leaders in

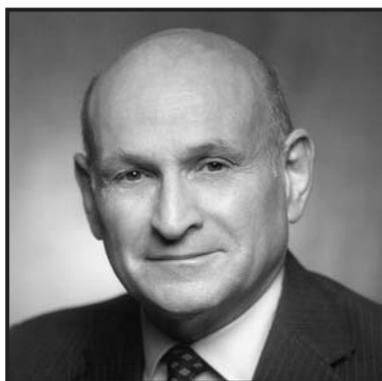


PHOTO BY PACH BROS., N.Y.

JACK SHEINKMAN
Foundation President
1987-2002

their union, the Textile Workers Union of America (TWUA). When the TWUA merged with the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America to become ACTWU, they began their work with Murray and Jack. Murray made his own path to importance as a labor leader who fought for civil rights and against the Viet Nam war at a time when neither was a popular stance in the trade union movement.

I like the picture because I admired everyone in it and I also thought that

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The 2003 Banquet One for the Records, and for Uplifting the Spirit

Last fall's award banquet honoring Molly Ivins drew more comments than usual, not surprising given what a gala it was; a sell-out attendance breaker, and a hall packed with like-minded progressives (some of whom had never dreamed, much less experienced, the excitement such a gathering can generate). The previous record for a Debs Foundation award banquet had been 1979, Pete Seeger the awardee. In 2003, a total of 730 guests packed the banquet hall, and it is unlikely that anyone went away disappointed. Expectations were high for those who had come from throughout the Midwest, but mainly from Western and Central Indiana, excited to meet and hear her and to purchase her books. For many, this was their first Debs Foundation banquet, and part of the magic of the evening was the sense of unity and common destiny shared by a diverse crowd of Molly Ivins (and Eugene Debs) fans. The diversity extended from our usual "Debsians" from organized labor and from various professions to include numerous ISU administrators, faculty, and students (many from the ISU Women's Studies Program), and a much larger contingent of women and men who were excited to be in the crowd honoring their favorite syndicated columnist, political analyst, and social critic.

Molly Ivins did not disappoint. She was a gracious honoree, herself proud to have a connection to Debsian principles going back to the old Texas judge who had been her mentor and who had been a state Socialist Party leader for one or more of Debs' runs for the Presidency. Molly is best known for having the scoop on George Bush. She did take some choice shots at Bush-Cheney and company, but she didn't dwell on that topic. Her critique of the contemporary political condition included

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SPRING
BUSINESS
MEETING
MAY 15,
2004
1:00 P.M.

MOVING ON UP (Figuratively)

The Debs Foundation has never had its own office. Phone calls and mail handling have been done in the office of the Secretary. For years that was the faculty office of Robert Constantine, who as Professor of History was officed in Stalker Hall, ISU, on the ground floor. Then when the present secretary, Charles King, took over in 1985, we moved “up,” to the 2nd floor of Holmstedt Hall, Department of Sociology.

Now, with changing space demands, such as the felt need in academia for more computer rooms, conference rooms, etc., there is a space crunch which makes it difficult to allocate office space for a retired professor. Fortunately, the ISU Administration recognizes the value of a Debs Foundation presence on campus, agreeing with us that the ISU-Debs Foundation connection continues to be a mutually beneficial relationship. Thus, by June 1, 2004, the Debs Foundation Office really moves “on up,” to the 9th Floor of the School of Education Building (one of the twin towers just north of the Debs Home). Specifics are still to be worked out. Obviously, our P.O. Box Number will remain the same, and hopefully we will even keep the same office phone number. ISU doesn’t have to do this, so we say thanks a million!

More Critical Essays and Vignettes

This issue of the newsletter continues the practice of including essays and short pieces on current issues and events which hopefully are presented in the “Debsian” tradition of a social critique in the progressive-critical vein. Hopefully, these will contribute to an informed, critical awareness of what is going on, and an expanded awareness of what is necessary for a more open participatory society.

2003 Banquet continued from page 1

indictments of all members of “the best Congress money can buy.” But Molly Ivins is always upbeat. We the people can change Washington!

The remarks of Michael Sullivan, as keynote speaker and Foundation President, were pertinent for the occasion as well as relevant for the crisis of our times. Protest singer Anne Feeney was in excellent form. There doubtless were many women guests who had never broken bread with labor unionists (who clean up nicely), and had never thrilled to the mass singing of “Union Maid” and “Solidarity Forever.”

One person mailed comments that sum up the occasion well:

One week ago tonight, we had the opportunity to be a part of the Annual Debs Banquet—and what a night it was! The enthusiasm and the energy of the crowd was spectacular.

Molly Ivins was all we had hoped for and more. Anne Feeney is a star in her own right.

Congratulations on a wonderful event and THANK YOU for all your hard work in making it happen.

Sincerely,
Signed

If you missed this banquet, you missed a great one. *The last one is always the best, until next year!* CDK

DEBS FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2004

Published by

The Eugene V. Debs Foundation

Box 843

Terre Haute, IN 47808

Website: www.eugenevdebs.com

Foundation Officers:

Michael Sullivan, *President*

Noel Beasley, *Executive Vice President*

Charles King, *Secretary*

Woodrow Creason, *Treasurer*

The *Debs Foundation Newsletter* is published twice yearly for distribution to members and friends of the Foundation. The Eugene V. Debs Foundation is a non-profit, private organization which maintains the home of Eugene and Kate Debs as a museum and shrine to labor, and carries on educational and informational programs which aim to honor and promote the goals for which Debs struggled: industrial unionism, social justice, and peace. For those wishing to become members, an application form is provided elsewhere in this issue.

REGARDING MEMBER COMMENTS

In recent months we have had two negative comments from members which stand out. One asked to be removed from our membership list, the reason being our silence or lack of activism regarding the major crisis in the world today (a reference was made to the Iraqi war). A response to that criticism appeared in the Fall 2003 *Newsletter* (“Not That Kind of an Organization”). That article pointed out that we are required by law to be nonpartisan, which of course does not restrict our ability to critique policies and actions related to contemporary social and political life, as the Fall 2003 *Newsletter* demonstrated.

More recently one member objected strongly to our attempts at increasing awareness of critical social issues, this in particular with the inclusion in the December 2003 mailing of information on the detrimental effects on women and on over-population of the Reagan-Bush and current Bush policies of withholding the U.S. contribution of \$34 million annually to the United Nations Fund for Population Activities. It is intended that the reproduction in this *Newsletter* of the Secretary’s letter of response to that member—member not identified, of course—will stimulate your thinking on the mission of the Debs Foundation. *What would Debs do* were he alive today? *What can the foundation do* to express Debs’ work in terms of *contemporary relevance*, and to pursue these goals within the *constraints* of the legal requirement of nonpartisanship.

March 3, 2004

Dear _____:

Debs was all for freedom of expression, and your comments of December 11, 2003 are taken as in that tradition. However, I am writing to suggest that the mission of the foundation is not clear-cut or written in stone, especially as regards its educational mission. That mission is not simply to provide a forum for discussion and scholarly debate on the contribution to history of Debs as labor leader, Socialist Party leader, and humanitarian. The sterility of that fixed-in-time perspective can lead to near absence of any contemporary relevance for what we undertake.

My sociological expertise is in the areas of Industrial Sociology and Labor-Management Relations, and in Population. This background gives me a particular

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Critical Essays

A City Skyline: A Statement of Values

The skyline of a city—what dominates the view—tells a lot about values. The spires of great cathedrals, which reach toward the skies, speak of the central role religion played in people’s lives. These edifices were built in city center, often just off the central square. These architectural wonders built during the late Middle Ages inspired the best efforts of architects, stone masons, sculptors, metal and woodworkers (all the guilds). This was a period when religion dominated society. It provided the inspiration and the funding for all the crafts to ply their trade and hone their skills.

At a later point in history, the great town halls became the structural and artistic statements of the centrality of civic society. A bit later still, the awesome architectural and artistic feats which were the great train stations expressed the importance of rail transportation for the movement of persons and commerce across the country. The great rail stations of Cincinnati, St. Louis, Chicago, and of course, Grand Central in New York attested to the “Hub Status” of these great cities in a nation which moved on wheels (rail).

Eugene Debs fitted into this period of the emerging importance of the railroad

industry. His struggles for the cause of a new breed of industrial worker—railroaders—followed the course of the societal changes which inspired the rise of the railroad brotherhoods, and union halls or labor temples became a feature of the built environment of the city.

The industrial revolution brought the smokestack to dominance in the city skyline. The construction of smokestacks spawned a special breed of craftsman (chimney builders). A city with lots of smokestacks in its skyline was an industrial city where thousands of hard-working men and women could expect to find good-paying jobs, where they not only could make a good living, but also where they with their own hands could produce things.

What structures dominate the skylines of the cities you know? What catches the eye? Is it the shining towers of concrete and steel that bespeak the supremacy of commerce, banking, etc.? Or is it the massive, unsightly but immensely functional domed stadiums for the professional sports? The churches and civic buildings can hardly be seen when dwarfed by the enormous athletic arenas and their adjacent parking garages. That is some statement of values. In Central and

South America it is the soccer stadium, while in the U.S. it is football, baseball, and basketball. Fans can be very religious about their sport and congregate mainly the day of week that in the “good old days” was the day for worship.

Definitely gone from the cityscape are the great fortresses (except as tourist attractions). Where are the labor temples of yesteryear? The opera houses and theaters, the great train stations and libraries, as well as the great religious edifices? In their place are the edifices where masses are drawn by the entertainment industry to thrill to the crowd spirit of the sports arena or the shopping mall. What are the values which unite? What is the social glue which holds society together? If it is not in the city center, how about in the suburbs? Ah, there are the great suburban shopping malls, and there live -- in splendid isolation from the city -- the “middle class” Americans who supposedly determine the outcome of presidential elections!

CDK

2003 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Eugene V. Debs Foundation -- Woodrow Creason, Treasurer

Expenditures:	\$58,065.07	Charles King (for cash box expenses)	1147.09
Lough Bros.....	\$ 167.59	Cinergy	1796.53
Association of Indiana Museums	35.00	Vectren	1519.00
Springhill Heating	250.00	High Ground Digital	1440.00
Internal Revenue Service	2896.00	AT&T	335.09
Indiana Dept. of Revenue	419.62	Curator	15,100.00
Banks Service Charges	122.17	Cher Minnette (refund one ticket).....	30.00
Secretary of State	20.00	Ann Feeney	835.00
Human Right 2004 Sponsor	200.00	Heinl’s Flower Shop	62.25
U.S. Postal Service	550.00	Hulman Center	1110.00
City of Terre Haute	62.40	Tribune Star	562.00
City Controller	10.00	Holiday Inn	173.00
Social Security & Medicare	3984.00	Meierjohn Wengler	250.00
Cash Box	129.67	Azar’s Catering Services	13,886.67
F A Debs (ISU Agency Account)	1000.00	Five Star Travel.....	20.00
Terminex	271.00	Post Office Box fee	38.00
Dell	1328.00	Kasameyer Glass	187.76
Computer	900.00	Total Cost \$	58,137.16
Apple House	26.96	Income	
ADT Security System	173.25	Program Greetings	\$ 16,000.00
Inweld Corporation	24.50	Dues	10,000.00
Safeco Insurance	1111.00	Tickets	12,800.00
Mike Newkirk	40.00	Contributions.....	21,245.95
All Star Sanitation.....	85.00	Total Income \$	60,045.95
Ketner & Sons	360.83	Total Income	\$ 60,045.95
Computer Softwear	199.98	Total Expenditures	\$ 58,137.16
Indiana American Water Co.....	270.75	Balance	\$...1,908.79
Jewett Printing	5006.10		

Must “Family Values” Mean No Choices for Women?

Every Friday morning, Stirling Scuggs receives a fax that the sender, an organization called C-FAM, may or may not have intended for him to receive. C-FAM is the Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute, based in New York near the United Nations, a behind-the-scenes anti-abortion group that has established itself as one of the most vociferous factions in the U.S. culture wars. Scuggs, as director of the Information and External Relations Division of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), must watch out for disinformation being disseminated through the United States and abroad by a network of shadowy anti-choice organizations of which C-FAM is one. What he sees coming in today is a doozie.

The newly arrived fax alleges that the UN Population fund was complicit in the forced sterilization of poor, indigenous women in Peru during the presidency of Alberto Fujimori. The allegation comes from another group in the network, called the Population Research Institute (PRI), which is based in the horse-country town of Front Royal, Virginia. This assertion, says Scuggs, is “total fiction.” C-FAM, he says, is passing along PRI’s charges as part of an orchestrated campaign to discredit the UN in general and UNFPA in particular. He points out that PRI has included no substantiation for these charges. ...The “Friday Fax of Misinformation,” as Scuggs ruefully calls it, is circulated to a network of other, like-minded, groups that will in turn do their best to provoke the rage of fellow anti-abortionists all over the world. It also goes to certain members of the U.S. Congress and selected members of the media who can be counted on to promote the group’s anti-choice agenda.

That agenda, says the UN’s Scuggs, is not simply to oppose abortion. Rather, the anti-abortion rhetoric is a kind of code for something more pervasive. “These groups are not just anti-abortion, they are anti-women, and oppose population policies and programs in general,” says Scuggs... Behind their innocuous-sounding names and claims to represent “pro-life” interests, C-FAM and its network of like-minded groups—others include the Pro-Life Action League, American Life League, Campaign Life Coalition, Concerned Women for America, and National Right to Life Committee—have lobbied heavily against women’s rights to make their own decisions about having or not having children. C-FAM was established ostensibly to monitor UN activities in the population and reproductive health fields. But according to investigations carried out by other groups, including Catholics for a Free Choice, what C-FAM really does is orchestrate misinformation campaigns against the UN system, disrupt meetings, and brand all specialized agencies and NGO’s engaged in reproductive health and family planning initiatives in developing countries as “anti-family.”

C-FAM’S president, Austin Ruse, is one of a growing number of figures who are apparently bent on undermining all aid to developing countries by organizations that even mention the words “family planning,” “reproductive health,” “women’s rights,” or “free, informed choice.” He has reportedly told supporters that reproductive health is just a “cover-up for abortionists” and that efforts to achieve reproductive health and establish rights for poor women is a “feminist conspiracy” to “destroy the family.”

Excerpted from: “Ladies You Have No Choice,” by William Bramhall. Published in *World Watch*, Vol. 17:2, March/April 2004

Bad Example of Human Sacrifice

When Ronald Reagan and the first wave of reactionary Republicans swept into Washington, they had a motto: “Starve the beast.” By that, they meant reduce the size of the federal government in almost every area—except the Pentagon and corporate welfare, of course.

George Bush, Dick Cheney, and their cronies have set out on their own privatization mission with a vengeance that Reagan himself could only have dreamed of. And they are not content to defund the federal government; they want to defund state governments, as well, “Starve fifty beasts” seems to be the new motto. “I hope a state goes bankrupt,” Republican strategist Grover Norquist told *The New York Times* recently, “We need a state to be a **bad example** so that the others will start to make the serious decisions they need to get out of this mess.”

But almost every state has already made “serious decisions” that have inflicted pain. States are laying off workers, cutting funds for education, raising tuition by double digits, closing parks, and pinching on health care for the poor and the disabled.

These human sacrifices are worth it for the Republicans, though. Less government means less regulation, which means more profit.

The entire concept that we, as a community, have certain obligations to each other for food, shelter, health care, education, environmental, preservation, and occupational safety is suspect in their eyes, as is the contention that democratic government is necessary to ensure those obligations.

Excerpted from *The Progressive*, June, 2003, Editor’s Note, Matt Rothschild.

Kurt Vonnegut, the 1981 Debs Award Recipient speaks his mind (forthrightly as usual).

Q: What’s your take on George Bush?

Kurt Vonnegut: We have a President who knows absolutely no history, and he is surrounded by men who pay no attention to history. They imagine that they are great politicians inventing something new. In fact, it’s really quite old stuff: tyranny. But they imagine they’re being creative.

Q: In 1946, Hermann Goering said at Nuremberg, “Of course, the people don’t want war... But, after all, it is the leaders of the country who determine the policy, and it is always a simple matter to drag the people along, whether it is a democracy, or a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament, or a communist dictatorship.” Does it work the same way in the United States?

Vonnegut: Of course it does. Bush wouldn’t know what I’m talking about because he isn’t responsive to history, but now we’ve had our Reichstag Fire. After the First World War, Germany was trying to build a democracy. Then when the Reichstag, the legislature, was burned down in 1933, this was seen as such an emergency that human rights had to be suspended. The attack on the World Trade Towers has allowed Bush and his gang to do anything.

Vonnegut’s interview was reported in *The Progressive*, June, 2003.

Consumption Levels

How Much Is Necessary, or Feasible?

If the choice is between being part of the consumer society or being among the 2.8 billion people who barely survive on less than \$2 per day, the answer is easy... But consumption among the world’s wealthy elites, and increasingly among the middle class, has in recent decades gone well beyond satiating needs or even fulfilling dreams to become an end in its own right. The unbounded pursuit of consumption has a heavy cost that is now growing at least as fast as consumption itself. Consumption today absorbs vast quantities of resources, many of which are now being used far beyond sustainable levels ...Consumption is in part a societal challenge that will require effective use of government regulations and fiscal policy to achieve the common good. But more so than most issues, changes in consumption practices will require millions of individual decisions that can only begin at the grassroots... In the long run, it will become apparent that achieving generally accepted goals—meeting basic human needs, improving human health, and supporting a natural world that can sustain us—will require that we control consumption rather than allow consumption to control us.

SOURCE: Excerpted from the preface of *State of the World 2004*, Worldwatch Institute.

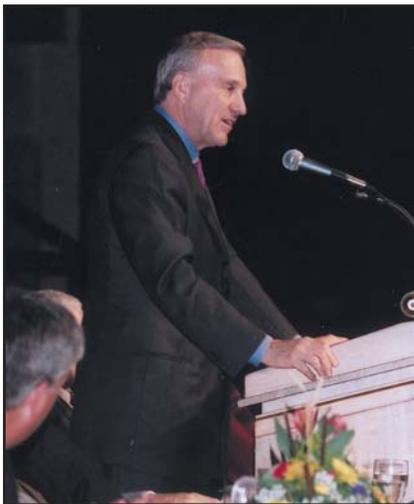
A Photo Essay: REMEMBRANCES OF BANQUET 2003



Birds Eye View of Section of Banquet Guests



Ann Feeney brought spirit and feeling to a spirited event.



Michael Sullivan's
Keynote/Presentation Speech



Molly Ivins acknowledges applause upon receiving the plaque



She held us spellbound, laughing or
applauding for 45 minutes.



Autographing copies of *Bushwhacked*. Many bought more than one copy.

The Ghost of Nixon Haunting Public Broadcasting

Common Cause has noted that today's fight over public broadcasting bears an eerie resemblance to the past. Both the Bush administration and some members of Congress are supporting actions that would threaten the long-term funding and editorial independence of public broadcasting.

Public broadcasting came under similar fire when former President Nixon, at the same time when he and his aids were planning and covering up Watergate, plotted to gain control over both the Corporation of Public Broadcasting (CPB) and the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), and in this way eliminate what they saw as liberal public affairs broadcasting on public television.

This revisit of history reveals that the Bushites are taking a page in this instance from Richard Nixon, not this time from the "Great Ronald Reagan." Just as Nixon, the current opponents of PBS in Congress wish to eliminate or severely reduce funds for public broadcasting. President Bush is proposing funding it for one year instead of two. He has filled two vacancies on the CPB board with big Republican donors who think the board should have an active role in determining program content, and congressional opponents of public broadcasting could give CPB the right to intervene in content.

There clearly are forces in society that which to control what we hear, see, and know. They wish to "protect" the people from a liberal bias, and in so doing would deny us the access to information which is the basis for responsible participation in our democratic society. If you are of the opinion that PBS is an important component of a free press, let your Congressional representatives know how you feel.

CDK

A Nation at War, With God's Approval

(An Open Letter to an Atlanta Mega-Church Pastor, also a T.V. Minister, Author, etc.)

Dear Reverend:

Your sermon on "A Nation at War" was to me disappointing and downright disturbing. You dismissed any personal responsibility for that message of war: "It's all right here in the Bible. God is in favor of (supports) war." There was obvious personal choice in the largely Old Testament passages you cited, although you did include Paul's advice on how to survive in the despotic Roman Empire.

You quoted Old Testament passages instructing the Israelites to engage in not a mere occupation, but a cruel extermination of all peoples living in the land God intended for the Israelites. I would not infer from these accounts an image of Jehovah God as a war god supportive of modern warfare, whether allegedly pre-emptive, for a regime change, or any other cause. For one consideration, a modern war, where the opposing sides are in any way equally matched, would leave the land devastated and uninhabitable for tens of thousands of years. What kind of god would favor that level of devastation?

You might have considered using the proof-text method to extend your pro-war arguments by quoting Christ's instructions to his disciples, telling them to be "wise as serpents." President Bush is being that wise when he chooses to deal prudently with the Afghanistan provincial war lords, allowing them to continue oppressing women, and even re-starting the highly profitable heroin production and trafficking. He is being equally pragmatic (wise) when virtually all vestiges of the Saddam Hussein regime are removed; one remaining, the old regime's ban on free trade unions (not good for business).

Christ's instructions to his disciples didn't stop with the reference to the wisdom of serpents. He went on to say they should be harmless as doves. That dovish statement from Christ would have been an interesting addendum to your war sermon. You could have, but didn't, note further that Christ's statement that "he who lives by the sword shall die by the sword" is a clearly anti-war, anti-violence declaration.

When I read the Old Testament, I am shocked at how little value was placed on human life when some national goal was at stake. But I am even more impressed by the image of God, especially in the books of the Prophets, as a God concerned with social justice: looking after widows and orphans, critical of the rules and the rich, etc.

The same week I saw and heard your bible-waving sermon as you described Jehovah, the God of war, I saw on T.V. news a call to arms in the name of Allah by an Islamic cleric in Baghdad. He quoted the Koran and waved a three-foot sword. Both images are frightening: a bible-thumping spokesman for Jehovah, and a sword-waving spokesman for Allah. Both clerics could be more representative of their god if they called for peace and reconciliation, for a worldwide struggle against hunger, disease, and the inhumanity of person against person.

A most serious crisis facing the world today is the spread of hunger and sickness at the same time a few are accumulating great wealth and power. The policies of President Bush have the effect of encouraging that increasing gap between rich and poor. To preach

Kurt Vonnegut, the 1981 Debs Award Recipient speaks his mind (forthrightly as usual).

Q: What's your take on George Bush?

Kurt Vonnegut: We have a President who knows absolutely no history, and he is surrounded by men who pay no attention to history. They imagine that they are great politicians inventing something new. In fact, it's really quite old stuff: tyranny. But they imagine they're being creative.

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SOURCE: Excerpted from the preface of *State of the World 2004*, Worldwatch Institute.

Sheinkman continued from page 1

Jack looked like Debs, and liked to tease him about it. In some ways, the murals, photos and mementos of Debs' life in the Terre Haute home will always remind me of Jack as much as they do of Debs.

Jack molded his life after Debs, his boyhood hero. He told me with enthusiasm about making soapbox speeches in New York City's Union Square as a boy who was a proud member of the Young Socialists League. Jack's long years on the road, traveling the country and the world on behalf of workers rights, reflected Debs' words—"My bags were always packed." In particular Jack's passionate critique of the U.S. government's role in Central America and his willingness to place himself at considerable personal and political risk to save the lives of thousands of workers struggling for freedom in sweat shops around the globe were his living tribute to the life of Debs.

In the years Jack served as the President of the Debs Foundation, its prestige and presence in the trade union and progressive movements grew in direct proportion to his personal commitment to the maintenance of the Debs Home as a museum and the expanding prominence of the annual presentation of the Debs Award. Jack's credentials in the progressive movement were impeccable and his leadership guaranteed the continuous support of the Foundation by his colleagues and admirers.

Jack led his union and the Foundation through difficult times of ferocious assaults on the industrial base of the country through trade policies designed by transnational corporations and executed by self-serving politicians nonchalant about the fate of everyone but themselves. Our country reversed direction at full throttle as reactionaries who disguised themselves as centrists drove the vehicles of state power straight at the heart and soul of the working class. Jack never wavered in his desire to fight against this counterrevolution, this attempt to dismember the accomplishments of the New Deal, to batter the democratic structures that the soldiers of World War II had fought to defend.

Like Charlie, Marion and Murray, Jack also was a veteran and a product of the post war mid-century industrial

boom. I remember once, at a GEB meeting of ACTWU, a discussion between Murray and Jack about the importance of the GI Bill, without which neither of them could have completed formal educations and become lawyers and then utilized those skills for the benefit of the workers they led.

Jack understood our current crises well. The erosion of public education, the collapse of the health care delivery system, the assaults on retirement income by the ventriloquist rogues of Wall Street and their dummies in the White House — these are the effects of the forces he analyzed and struggled against his entire life, guided in great part by his image of the abiding legacy of the life of Gene Debs. In a similar way, we can be strengthened and empowered by the substance of the life of Jack Sheinkman, a man of intense moral integrity with the discipline and will to put it on the line whenever and wherever the line was drawn. The question, for Jack, never was "Which side am I on?" It was always "How can OUR side prevail and triumph."

He was a man surrounded by volcanoes and capable of becoming one himself, often without warning and sometimes to his own surprise and chagrin. The intense pressure was fueled by his determination to excel.

I'll close back at Union Square, where young Jack made his first of many fiery speeches. A number of years ago, when my children were young and visited New York City for the first time, we went to the ACTWU headquarters, then located on Union Square, by the subway. Moran and Lara knew and liked Jack. As we exited the subway station, they were stunned to see a statue of him across the Square, especially because he was wearing only a sheet and carrying a staff. To most of the world, of course, that is a statue of Gandhi but in our family it will always be one of a number of things that will keep the life of Jack Sheinkman forever with us.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Jack Sheinkman died January 29, 2004.

Political Campaign Signs

Slogans You May or May Not See

A presidential candidate's political campaign is usually a free-for-all when it comes to posters. The slogans on these usually are welcome sights to the particular candidate, but some the candidate hopes will not be captured by the press cameras. Below are a few slogans you might or might not see this year. You might speculate which of these could be plants by campaign managers because they identify their candidate positively, and which just might be plants from the opposing camp (dirty tricks).

At a carefully orchestrated (for "security" reasons) Bush rally: "Cuban-Americans Support Bush," "Big Oil for Bush," "Martians —or Mars Lake—Support Bush, He Will Liberate Us, "Develop" Our Natural Resources, and Bring Us Democratic Capitalism," "Israel for Bush," "Believe the Bible, Support Bush." Which of these would the "liberal press be sure to capture?"

At a free-for-all Democratic Party rally, you might see the following: "Tree Huggers for Kerry," "France Supports Kerry," "Lesbians and Gays Support Kerry," "Please Increase Our Taxes," "Vote Kerry for National Security," "Vote Kerry to Save Our Jobs." Which of these would the press cameras focus on?

Who Wants a Flip-Flopper for President!

What was the Bush Administration response when Israel assassinated the leader of Palestinian Hamas? Cheney said that the guy was a bloody terrorist who masterminded the slaughter of hundreds of Israelis. Condi Rice said about the same, but later said the President is "deeply troubled." Then Bush says that he is "troubled," but doesn't stop before adding that Israel has the right to defend itself. The result: as usual is flip-flop, and the U.S. and Israel against the world.

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on those themes would be prophetic, albeit not popular. Your super-patriotic, pro-war sermon was easy to give, knowing how receptive a majority of your listeners would be. Popular, but not prophetic! Truly prophetic preaching today must proclaim the evils of the alignment of government with the rich and powerful. And, as in Old Testament days, it would make many people of power and privilege very angry.

In a democracy it is the responsibility of every citizen, religious believer or not, to search for ways to promote a society and a world of freedom and social justice. That responsible citizenship requires each of us to try to elect right-thinking officials who are obligated to no special interest groups. We must continually examine official actions in terms of consequences and outcomes: Why this policy? Who benefits? Who is harmed? Is it a proper allocation of resources? And, as Christians, we must ask what would be consistent with the teachings and life of Christ.

Sincerely,
Signed CDK

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perspective on how Debs might be approaching his humanitarian goals today. I subscribe to the view, supported by a body of evidence, that a dollar spent on family planning does more for women's rights and for genuine economic development than does a dollar spent on so-called (World Bank type) economic development programs. I think it likely that were Debs alive today, he would be abreast of these trends, and he would see the vital role which over-population plays both in retarding economic betterment and also in hindering the achievement of social justice for women and children.

The response to the inclusion in the last mailing of information on UNFPA included a few surprises. There was your strongly negative one. One member asked for more information. One asked for instructions on how to make contributions and commented that he already had lined up five contributors and hoped to recruit several more. Four members included contributions to UNFPA in with their dues payments, which placed us in the unexpected position of forwarding a payment of \$43 to Friends of UNFPA. So, you are a minority of one as regards any expressed negative reactions received.

Many experts are of the opinion that, worldwide impact considered, the U.S. withholding of its contribution to UNFPA is detrimental in magnitude to what Bush is doing in this country by his stacking of the courts, or his environmental and energy policies. Information on this issue had been included in a membership mailing last summer, and because of its continued importance I wanted to include something in the Fall/Winter mailing, and had to choose between the half page form—which I took as an addendum to the earlier mailed two pages of

information—and a longer informational message which was too bulky for the envelopes. Mailing just the form made it appear less informational and more like a solicitation than was intended.

The labor movement has, I believe, had two main reasons for not having become involved on the issue of family planning. Mainly, it has wished to avoid offending the sizeable religious block within the unions who are arch conservatives on the issue of birth control. A second reason for neglect of this issues is the lack of a union leadership which is sufficiently informed on the subject to be able to perform an educational role among the rank and file. The result has been a disservice to the many women in unions, and also to the women of the world who are deprived of the most basic of human rights, namely, adequate access to health care, and access to services which give them some control over the extent to which they will be defined by society as little more than baby factories. Debs likely would have been in the thick of this debate!

We do see ourselves as sticking to the mission of the foundation's charter. It is a mission statement which is partly educational as regards the relevance of the Progressivism of Debs to the present world situation.

Sincerely,
Signed
Foundation Secretary

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