

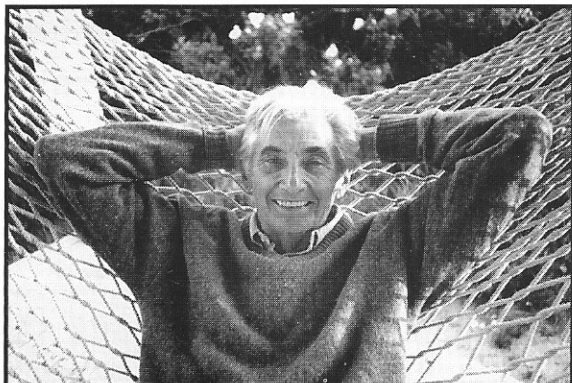
# The Debs Foundation Newsletter

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



FALL, 1998

## Howard Zinn: Advocate For Social Justice



DEBS AWARD RECIPIENT, 1998

Historian, playwright, social activist. It takes all these adjectives to describe the life and work of Howard Zinn. His *A People's History of the United States* has impacted the way social historians write and teach American history, having itself demonstrated and having inspired others to scholarly research, writing and teaching which has brought a new element into many a Columbus Day celebration, and a new angle in history classes, on the real people who built America. Far too much of history has focused on and glorified the lives of a few extremely rich and powerful men, the business tycoons such as Vanderbilt, Morgan, Carnegie and Rockefeller. But what would they have been able to achieve without government support and without the sweat, the brawn and yes, the skills of millions of laborers--men, women and children--who toiled long hours, long weeks, in order to provide for their families. Zinn tells the "rest of the story," but not exactly selecting the persons and incidents Paul Harvey reveals. Zinn writes about the conditions and experiences of the various powerless and exploited

groups.

Zinn is professor *emeritus* at Boston University, and remains as active as ever. He continues to write, speak and engage in activist causes as when he recently was arrested in Everett, Massachusetts for demonstrating in support of Salvadoran women workers at a curtain factory.

Howard Zinn's activist bent showed itself early. It has been said that it is a very educative experience when a participant in a protest demonstration feels a policeman's club come down on his or her head or shoulders. Zinn recalls such an educative experience when as a kid of seventeen living in Brooklyn slums he was invited by young communists to a demonstration at Times Square. The consequent head bashing he received brought home to young Zinn the message that the state is not neutral, but on the side of the rich and

*continued on page 4*

**SEE BACK PAGE  
FOR  
INDIVIDUAL GREETINGS  
IN DINNER PROGRAM**

## Banquet Day Specials

### PANEL DISCUSSION AT 3:30 P.M. TEACHING THE PEOPLE'S HISTORY

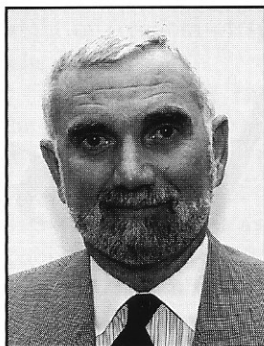
Banquet guests will have good reason to arrive in Terre Haute early enough in the day to attend the special program scheduled for 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. in Holmstead Hall room 115 (see diagram, p. 3). Howard Zinn will be joined by a panel of individuals who teach American history at high school and college levels and have direct experience with changes already made and still needed in the content of American history, changes in directions which Zinn's work has inspired. The public is invited to this panel discussion-open forum, which will conclude conveniently in time for the banquet social hour in Tirey Hall just a block away.

### ED CLARK, Presentation Speaker

The presentation speaker for this year's award banquet is Ed Clark, like Zinn, a Boston area resident but also with mid-west roots in that his undergraduate work was at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Illinois. Clark has written extensively on trade, economic, political and labor issues for a number of United States and European publications. He presently is the Executive Vice President of U.N.I.T.E. and Manager of its New England Regional Joint Board. Most of his life has been spent working in the United States and European Labor movements. In the late 1960s and early 1970s he served as an organizer and business agent for

*continued on page 4*

Noel Beasley has been Executive Secretary of the Debs Foundation since 1983, and now the foundation directors have decided to honor his fifteen years of exemplary leadership by awarding him the Theodore Debs Distinguished Service award, which is given occasionally to individuals whose leadership and service have made major contributions to the life of the foundation. Noel also is a Trustee of the Theodore Debs Endowment Fund. The service award was presented to Noel in 1996 to Pete and Kathleen Cul



Beasley is International Vice President and Manager of the Midwest Regional Board of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (U.N.I.T.E., AFL-CIO, CLC). Before being elected into his current union leadership positions, Beasley was a shop steward and member of ACTWU Local 1818 in Lafayette, Indiana (Schwab Safe Company). He also holds positions in a number of U.N.I.T.E. organizations, and is an active board member of the Guatemalan Labor Education Project, which has been deeply involved in the question of labor rights and the growth of the maquiladoras in Guatemala.

# DEBS FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

**Fall, 1998**

Published by

## The Eugene V. Debs Foundation

**Box 843**

**Terre Haute, IN 47808**

Foundation Officers:

Jack Sheinkman, *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.

**Herkules-Haus**  
Berlin, Herkules-Brücke

BERLIN W10, den .....

Telegramm-Adresse:  
Herkuleshaus Herkulesbrücke Berlin

January 3.

Dear Mrs. Debs:

I want to send my love and holiday greetings to Theodore and you, and my assurance of how often I think of you. I've been abroad now since last February, and I shall stay abroad till next summer, but I hope that some day I shall be near Terre Haute again, and that I may call on you.

I've just been in Russia for a couple of weeks. How they reverence Gene's name there! He is for them one of the very few great Americans. There seems to me to be a little too much bureaucracy there, but perhaps that will pass, and certainly the government is marvelously stable, certainly they really are, despite all the opposition <sup>of England and</sup> ~~of England and America~~, solidly marching on with their great experiment.

My love!

Sincerely yours,

Sincerely yours,  
Sinclair Lewis

**CLASS OF SERVICE**  
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 This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless the character is signified by a symbol in the check or in the address.

# WESTERN UNION

Form

SYMBOLS	
NUM	Day Letter
NOT	Night Message
NL	Night Letter
LOC	Deferred
EXT	Cable Letter
WAY	Week End Letter

NEWCOMB CARLTON, PRESIDENT

J. C. WILLEVER, FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

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The filing time as shown in the date line on full-rate telegrams and day letters, and the time of receipt at destination as shown on all messages, is STANDARD TIME.

**Received at 19-21 North Seventh St., Terre Haute, Indiana**

242C G 28 NL

WASHINGTON DC OCT 20 1926

MRS EUGENE V DEBS

TERREHAUTE IND

WE SEND YOU OUR DEAREST LOVE OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHY AND OUR VISION OF  
 GENE AS ONE WHO SHALL STAND OUT FOREVER HEROIC INCORRUPTIBLE LOVABLE  
 AND INSPIRING

GRACE AND SINCLAIR LEWIS

506P

The correspondence reproduced here, the telegram from Washington, D.C. sent on the day of Debs' death and the letter sent a year or more later from Berlin, was preserved in a Kate Debs scrapbook of news clippings and correspondence related to Eugene's death. This scrapbook was donated to the Debs Foundation by Peter Sargent, of Portland, Oregon. Mr. Sargent's mother was a niece of Kate Debs, and it was through this family's generosity that now the parlor of the Debs Home is furnished with original furniture from Kate and Eugene.

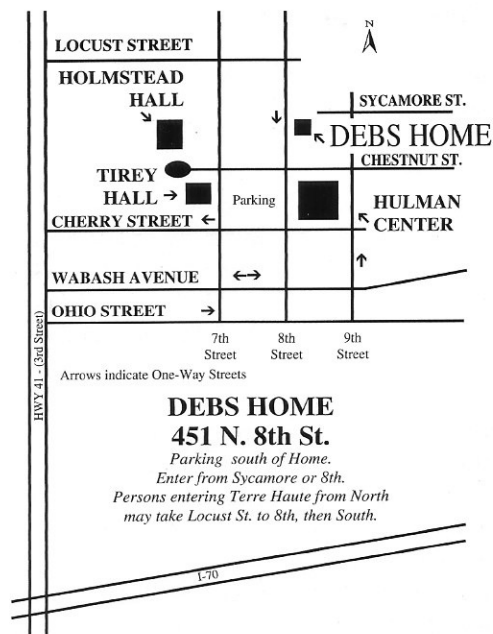
You will note that Sinclair Lewis used strong adjectives in describing his estimation of Gene Debs--heroic, incorruptible, lovable and inspiring. His observations on Russia are interesting not only for his comment on the esteem in which Gene Debs was held there, but also for his almost prophetic observation on "a little too much bureaucracy there."

<b>ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET</b> <b>TERRE HAUTE</b> <b>November 7</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>1998</b></span> <b>Honoring</b> <b>Howard Zinn</b>	
<b>SCHEDULE OF EVENTS</b> <b>Afternoon</b> 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.: Open House at Debs Home 3:30 p.m. Panel: Teaching The People's History, HH115  <b>Evening</b> 6:00 p.m.: Social Hour and Reception (cash bar), Heritage Ballroom 7:00 p.m.: Banquet Honoring Howard Zinn	
The fall business meeting will be Sunday, November 8, at 9:00 a.m. at the Debs Home	

*Parking is free in lot shared by Hulman Center and Tirey Hall (in which Heritage Ballroom is located). Enter Tirey by south stairs.*

## SEND INDIVIDUAL GREETINGS

**See Back Page**



### NOTE

We offer a choice of entrees. Please indicate your choice of prime rib or fish **when you order tickets and indicate also at the door.**

## Dinner Ticket Order

(\$25 per ticket)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ X \$25 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 number of tickets      amount enclosed

Prime Rib Dinner(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Fish Dinner(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Tickets must be paid in advance.  
 Please check one of the following options.

☐ Hold tickets at the door, in the name of \_\_\_\_\_  
 (actually the preferred way)

☐ Mail my tickets to the following address:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to the Debs Foundation.  
 Mail to the Debs Foundation, Box 843, Terre Haute, IN 47808.  
 Inquiries may be directed to Charles King, 812-237-3443.

powerful. The exercise of the right of freedom of speech comes often at a dear price for radicals.

Zinn served in the U.S. Air Force, European Theatre, from 1943 to 1945. He earned the B.A. degree (1951) from New York University, and the M.A. (1952) and Ph.D. (1958) from Columbia University. He taught at Spelman College, Atlanta, Georgia from 1956 to 1963, and at Boston University 1964-1988. He has published fifteen books, the most influential of which has been *A People's History of the United States* (Harper and Row, 1980). He has lectured at over 200 colleges and universities in the United States and abroad, has three plays, and numerous essays, also translations into other languages, and awards.

Zinn says that "a lot of history teaching has changed. Not enough. But just enough to frighten the keepers of the old." This means that thousands of school kids are getting a picture of Columbus and the period of conquest, expansion and the search for gold as having been great for the Europeans, but devastating for native peoples and the environment.

Zinn was quoted in *Progressive* (July, 1997) on the subject of "left" values. "The Declaration of Independence--the idea that everybody has an equal right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness--to me is a remarkable statement of left values...When I think of left values I think of socialism -- not in the Soviet sense...but socialism in the sense of Eugene Debs and Mother Jones and Emma Goldman...it's the idea that everyone has a fundamental right to the good things of life...It doesn't mean perfect equality, we can't possibly achieve that. I notice that your sweater is better than mine. But we both have a sweater, which is something."

Certainly Zinn has demonstrated a lifelong commitment to "Debsian" principles of social justice and world peace, and is a worthy recipient of the 1998 Eugene V. Debs award. Hope you can join us for this celebration.

the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. In the mid 1970s he served as a full-time Industrial Officer with the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs, headquartered in London. A.S.T.M.S. was Europe's largest white collar union. Clark has also worked in government as a Mediator and as the Assistant Commissioner for the Massachusetts Department of Labor and Industries during Michael Dukakus' first term as Governor.

With experience in progressive causes from his student activist days in the civil rights and peace movements to his leadership in the labor movement, Ed Clark has a wide range of knowledge and experience to draw on for his address to a group of Debsians.

## **Dinner Program Greetings**

The foundation's souvenir dinner program has a greetings section where large organizations pay to send greetings and congratulations to the award recipient and the foundation. These large listings are too expensive for individuals. It is our feeling that individual participation is important, for the greetings section is both revenue enhancing and an indication of support for what the banquets and award ceremonies accomplish in providing public recognition for those who struggle for certain causes and ideals.

Individuals and small groups are invited to send greetings and congratulations to be included in the dinner program. For a listing of your name (one or two persons), send \$20. For a listing by name including your personal greeting not to exceed 20 word, send \$30. If not attending the banquet, indicate this in order that a copy of the souvenir program can be mailed. This order must be received by October 30. Make checks payable to the Debs Foundation and mail to P.O. Box 843, Terre Haute, IN 47808.

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### **EUGENE V. DEBS FOUNDATION**

P.O. Box 843

Terre Haute, Indiana 47808-0843

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