

The Debs Foundation Newsletter

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



SPRING, 1992

GEORGE DAITSMAN

A Passion For Social Justice

Also a friend of the Debs Foundation, his tribute should include. One of the first dinner tickets ordered for our 1991 banquet was for George Daitsman, a ticket which went unused, for George died October 12, 1991, at age 66, apparently of heart problems which had plagued him for years. He had been a regular at our award banquets and fall business meetings. George was one of those "progressives" who find the Debs award banquets to be motivational, often educational, and a statement that there are causes worth the struggle and people making things happen for good in this society.

Daitsman had for the past 19 years been education director for the Allied Industrial Workers of America, AFL-CIO. During World War II, he was an infantryman in Europe. At the height of the McCarthy era, while student teaching in East Harlem, he and his wife, Rose, were arrested in connection with a demonstration against the H-Bomb and jailed on misdemeanor charges. This resulted in the revocation of his teaching license, but it did not keep him out of teaching. He was local education director and union newspaper editor for the UAW local at the Linden, New Jersey GM plant, and taught labor education classes at Rutgers University. By 1959, he was in labor education at Ohio State University, two years later, education director for the Brewery Workers Union in Cincinnati, and from 1969 to 1972, director of the Teamsters Institute in Miami. He joined the AIW staff as education director in 1972. George had planned to retire at the end of the year, and had just been elected president of the Wisconsin Labor History Society, a group he helped found a decade ago.



George Daitsman is remembered as a gentle man with a life-long passion for social justice. I do not know what his singing voice was like, but Solidarity Forever was more than lyrics on a printed page to him, the message was imprinted in his life.



Singing "Solidarity Forever" at the 1989 award banquet.
George is not relying on the printed words.

The Award Banquet Had Variety

It could be said that each year's award banquet has some things the same, some different. There is sameness in attendance, around 300 guests, in format and in the many regulars who rarely miss a banquet. There is also rich variety in the special events of the day and in the personalities of the different honorees and presentation or keynote speakers. The contributions of John Sayles and Studs Terkel made the 1991 banquet no exception to what our guests have come to expect. There was excellent attendance at the afternoon screening of *Matewan*, and those present appreciated the opportunity for informal exchange and discussion with Sayles afterwards. We learned a great deal about what motivates this movie maker, and how he does his work. We also learned the regrettable fact that *Matewan* has not broken even moneywise. We react with "why not," but do not have to be told that although this movie may be especially entertaining and enriching to us, for the general public it does not have enough sex, gore, and superstars.

We would much prefer to see 500 guests at our banquet, but those present really seemed to enjoy this one. We used name tags to assist mixing and greeting during the social hour and at tables. Don't you hate to ask the name of the person sitting next to you when you really need him or her to spell it! Studs Terkel is a

Continued on page 5

SPRING
BUSINESS
MEETING
May 2, 1:00 p.m.

Financial Status

The foundation operated in the black financially again in 1991, although we did not end the year with as large a bank balance as we had entered it. This is some accomplishment in times when so many organizations are in the red. We did not manage to contribute to the endowment fund, but all earned income was allowed to accumulate. The endowment fund balance beginning 1991 was \$239,248, and was \$254,276 at years end, indicating that investment income for the year was \$15,028, which was down from \$19,673 a year earlier. Everyone knows that 1991 was not a good year for investors. Our thanks to Julie Moll, UAW, who provides accounting for this fund. Sound management of a fund which could provide the base for paying the salary of a full time curator-tour guide would dictate that no more than one-half the income be drawn off annually. What do you think, are we half-way there?

For many years of operation the foundation found it necessary to draw some money from the fund in order to pay part of operating expenses. This has been avoided since 1987. Increased dues payments have been a factor, but the greatest improvement in income status has been in the broadened base of union support which has come in the form of subscriptions in the "greetings" section of our dinner program.

Dues payments for 1992 are about on schedule. To date, the number of individual payments is up slightly over a year ago, although the dollar amount is down a bit. Recently a donation of \$1,500 came in from the Reunion of Old Timers (thanks to Jack Sheinkman's efforts) which should make possible some pay-in to the endowment fund this year. We clearly are moving in the right direction financially, thanks to you and your organizations. Any way to accelerate the pace?

Debs' China On Display



The Debs' dining room furniture donated several years ago now is complemented with the fine Haviland porcelain which belonged to Kate and Eugene Debs. The set had been passed on to Rhoden Calder, a grand nephew of the Debs. Recently Mrs. Laoma Calder, widow of the late Dr. Rhoden Calder, donated the nearly complete set, much of which now fills the china closet just as when the Debs

DEBS FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

Spring 1992

Published by

The Eugene V. Debs Foundation

Box 843

Terre Haute, IN 47808

Foundation Officers:

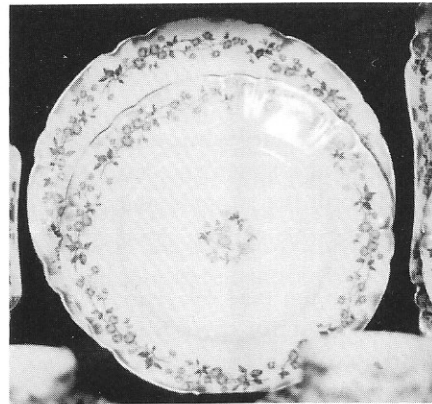
Jack Sheinkman, *President*

Noel Beasley, *Executive Vice President*

Charles King, *Secretary*

Woodrow Creason, *Treasurer*

The *Debs Foundation Newsletter* will be 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.



resided at 451 N. 8th Street in Terre Haute.

The twelve place setting of Haviland porcelain is in mint condition, in a pattern with pink roses, green leaves and gold trim, very subtle in its every detail. It is not known how the Debs came to own it, although it is of proper vintage to have been a wedding gift. Kate's family was solid middle class and could have afforded such a gift. Perhaps suggestive of origin is that Eugene's younger brother, Theodore, and his wife had a comparable set of china, and Debs' father was known to have done some importing from Europe for sale in the family store.

With the addition of these items the dining room of the Debs home is closer to the identical furnishings and appearance as when the Debs lived. Laoma Calder now resides near Corpus Christi, Texas. When donating these items she observed that she is certain that Dr. Calder would have approved of the lovely china going back to the Debs home. And we are deeply grateful for the gift of items the historic value of which is priceless.



*I'd rather vote for what I want and not get it, than to
vote for what I don't want, and get it.*

Eugene Debs

Planning For Special Events

In recent years we have played on several themes which were keyed to significant events in the life of Eugene Debs or the foundation. 1987 was the 25th anniversary of the foundation, and 1990 was the 100th anniversary of the building of the Debs home. Highly significant events in the life of Debs will be coming up for 100th anniversaries in the next two years, for it was in 1893 that Debs founded the American Railway Union, and in 1894 that the ARU became involved in the Pullman strike. These events were milestones and in many ways turning points in Debs' career, and had significant impact on American society and its institutions.

This page of the spring *Newsletter*

usually carries an essay on Debs 100 years ago. The year 1892 was in many ways a transitional year in Debs' life, with events and decisions which culminated in the founding of the ARU a year later. So this year we wish to alert you, stimulate interest, and solicit input to planning for programs to broaden public awareness and discussion of the events of 1893 and 1894. The day of the award banquet provides an opportunity for educational or commemorative programs, but there are limits to the kinds of programs which can be fitted in on that one day of the year, and we are concerned that any such programs should add to rather than detract from the significance of the award banquet. So in the past as well as on these upcoming occasions it is worthwhile to schedule programs at other times during the year, open to foundation members and the public.

The history of the ARU and the episode of the Pullman strike are of such complexity and wide ranging import on American society as to require special treatment and considerable planning. An *Ad Hoc* committee has been formed to undertake planning for these occasions. If you have suggestions for particular topics, or special format — articles, lectures, seminars, workshops, movies, whatever — you should direct your written comments to the foundation secretary or to any other of the executive officers.

New Hall of Fame Inductees

On December 13, 1991, two new honorees were inducted into the Labor Hall of Fame, Washington, D.C. — labor leader Phillip Murray and Woman's Bureau pioneer Mary Anderson. This brings to 14 the number of individuals elevated to this high honorific stature, Eugene V. Debs among them. Labor Secretary Lynn Martin, one of the main speakers, hailed all the honorees as "great people who have served us so well in the past," and declared that the "members of the Labor Hall of Fame had a profound influence on our country. Their stories should be told, their achievements commemorated. And we at the Labor Department are proud and happy to be able to help make that possible."

Chairman W.J. Usery, Jr., of the Friends of the Department of Labor and host for the event, noted that the Labor Hall of Fame enables thousands of visitors to the exhibit to "learn of those greats, both men and women, who have contributed so much to America and what we are today." Richard Conn, Executive Director of FDL, has commented to this writer that thousands continue to avail themselves of the opportunity to visit the Hall of Fame exhibits, and many express special interest in Debs, that such a person existed in our history, and surprise that Debs was thusly honored, given the political climate in Washington.

1991 FINANCIAL STATEMENT Eugene V. Debs Foundation

Expenditures

<i>The Progressive</i>	\$ 275.00
Con-Way Central Express	108.09
ISU Foundation (Wes Jackson)	300.00
ISU Foundation (Hanna Scholarships)	1200.00
Tim King (photography & clerical)	72.00
Charles King (supplies, repair items)	254.00
Terre Haute Postmaster	797.14
Public Service Indiana	1774.51
Indiana Gas	1231.79
American-Indiana Water	418.66
GTE North	795.65
Illiana Pest Control	250.00
City of Terre Haute (sewage)	269.82
Jewett Printing	5468.87
ISU Audio Visual Center	59.00
ISU Division of Printing	209.20
Eldred Company	205.00
Holland Motor Express	47.97
ISU Hulman Center	792.00
Meier Johan Wengler	303.95
Central Express	58.26
Indiana Dept. of Revenue	50.71
Laughrey Brothers Roofing	57.52
Moving Picture Operators #373	12.75
Tribune Star Publishing Co.	372.50
ADT Security	186.00
Secretary of State	10.00
ISU TV Service	12.75
Markle Insurance Agency	1042.00
Sears (mower)	178.49
Ronnie Stephenoff (Spann Award)	1000.00

Cinecom (<i>Matewan</i> rental)	320.00
Esmacel Samaliazad (projectionist)	17.50
Azar's Catering Svc.	3885.00
ISU Library (Debs Collection)	1000.00
Heinl's Flowers	50.00
Esperanza Inc (Sayles travel)	600.00
John Sayles (lodging & auto rent)	117.64
Merchants Natl Bank (safety box)	18.00
Thiemann Office Supplies	14.00
Certificate of Deposit	4000.00
Total Expenditures	\$27,835.83

Income

Certificate of Deposit	4289.10
Spann Family	1000.00
Markle Insurance	178.49
Membership Dues	5615.00
Award Dinner tickets	7010.00
Program Advertizing	7000.00
Sales at Debs Home	802.46
Contributions	2020.00
Total Income	\$27,915.05
Expenditure-Income Difference	\$79.22
Balance January 1, 1991	\$6,481.78
Balance January 1, 1992	\$6,561.00
Savings Account	\$987.31

Neglected Issues This Election Year

Political rhetoric does not allow for the substantive treatment of major social problems. This year we are hearing a lot about certain types of crime, education, health care, so-called middle class life styles and so on, but other fundamental causes of the problems facing this nation and the world are hardly mentioned. Three of them, which actually are interrelated, are much more fundamental than what the politicians are talking about.

On the World Population Problem

Bertrand Russell, writing in 1951 on the subject of world problems, expressed his view of the importance of population growth thusly:

"I am inclined to think that the most important of Western values is the habit of a low birth-rate. If this can be spread throughout the world, the rest of what is good in Western life can also be spread. There can be not only prosperity, but peace. But if the West continues to monopolize the benefits of low birth-rate(s), war, pestilence, and famine must continue, and our brief emergence from those ancient evils must be swallowed in a new flood of ignorance, destitution and war."

Expressing similar views in 1973, when he was United States Ambassador to the United Nations, George Bush wrote:

"Success in the population field, under United Nations leadership, may... determine whether we can resolve successfully the other great questions of peace, prosperity and individual rights that face the world."

One could hope that George Bush would continue to understand the consequences of rapid population growth. Regrettably, President Bush seems to have forgotten these ideas, for he has continued the Reagan Administration policy of defunding the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, and has accepted the doctrine that free market economics can cure any country's apparent population problem. The implicit assumption is that more people, anywhere in the world, are good for

business, especially American business, because more consumers are the result. Not recognized in this pro-growth mentality is that a more immediate consequence of rampant population growth in developing countries is not more buyers of American goods, but an expanded pool of cheap labor which can be exploited to produce, not for local consumption, where buying power is too low, but for markets in North America and Western Europe. We Americans — politicians, planners, CEO's, voters, you and I — need to recognize the impossibility that, with the removal of trade barriers, the people of most of the world will have the incomes to afford this highly materialistic lifestyle. Their religion doesn't condone it, their environment won't take it, their space is too limited and as a matter of fact, most have adjusted to lifestyles involving reliance on public transportation, multi-family dwellings units and with interests centered on family, friends and community.

More and more people in the world may bring jobs, jobs, jobs, but mainly for workers in the developing world where hopes for economic betterment center on the production of something for sale in the North American and West European consumer markets, which takes us to the related problem of competition.

On Competition

This topic is discussed today mainly in the context that America can compete with anybody in the world, always with the proviso, "given a level playing field." Everybody is saying that we have the best, most productive workers in the world. The politicians love to say it, and may in a perverse

way love to hear the Japanese say the opposite; it gives them the opportunity for a few ingratiating one-liners. But this is not unlike declaring ourselves world champions in football or basketball, when as a matter of fact the competition is not of that sort. This is not the Redskins and the Bills going at it — on a level playing field, by agreed upon rules — to decide a new world champion.

Political rhetoric conveys largely one view of the layout of the level playing field which will allow American workers to compete successfully, Dan Quayle's Council on Competitiveness provides the logical development of this strategy for leveling the field and providing shared rules, this when it works to impede enforcement of environmental regulations and occupational safety rules, all for the stated goal of saving American jobs by making American industry more competitive. Obviously, when American business competes with South Korean or Chinese industries, the former is at a competitive disadvantage because these other societies are at a stage where workplace safety and environmental protection are given very low priority.

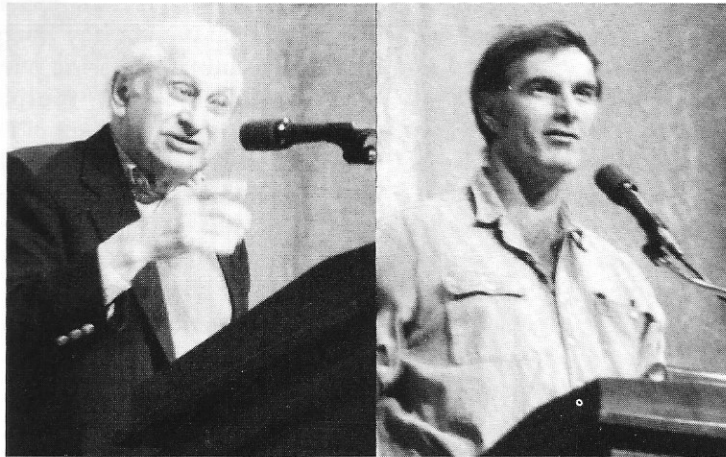
A more thoughtful view, which grabs few headlines, is that we need to level the playing field in other ways, not by deteriorating the quality of work life for the American worker, but by improving the quality of life for all the people of the world. The quality of life in developing countries can be enhanced by the reduction of poverty, protecting the environment and making work places safe. But this is where the world population problem is a major obstacle. Over 90 percent of the world's population growth is occurring in developing nations, where the rate of population growth ensures an increasingly abundant supply of laborers who can expect for their work nothing more than bare subsistence.

American workers deserve more than bare subsistence, and they can compete, but within limits. The necessary level playing field and rules of the game involve the competitors lifestyles, or standards of living. There are limits to the lifestyle we can maintain if we have to compete —

Continued on page 6

REMINDER:
Are Your 1992 Dues Paid?
***We Need Your
Financial Support***

Awards Banquet continued...



Terkel makes a point...../.....Sayles responds.

thoughtful, keen observer of social life, and he communicates in such a disarming yet trenchant manner. A star in his own right, and a former Debs award recipient, Terkel was right on target with his comments on John Sayles' ability to probe the essence of human relationships, to expose social injustice, and to perceive and reveal the richness of joy

and pain in the lives of ordinary people not unlike you and me.

Our annual award banquet is an opportunity for a bit of fellowship and communion with like minded persons, and also an opportunity to make a public statement on relevant social issues. Plans for the 1992 banquet will be made public after the Spring business meeting May 2.

Foundation Awards

The foundation awards two **Lillian E. Hanna Memorial Scholarships** annually in the amount of \$600. These awards are funded by contributions from the foundation and from the family of the late Lillian E. Hanna. Eligibility is limited to students enrolled at Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana, including incoming freshmen thru graduate students. Competition for the award is based on merit (scholarship) and financial need. Persons interested in applying should write or call the foundation for more information. The application deadline is April 1.

The **Bryant Spann Memorial Prize in literature** is a \$1000 cash award given annually for outstanding literature, published or unpublished, in the liberal-critical vein, which is deemed to shed special insight on some facet of social life and social institutions. The award is funded through a trust provided by the family of the late Bryant Spann. Inquiries and rules of submission should be addressed to the Bryant Spann Memorial Prize Committee, Department of History, Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana 47809. The submission deadline is April 30.

Membership Dues: The Eugene V. Debs Foundation

NAME _____
STREET _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

_____ Student Member - \$ 5.00	_____ Sustaining Member - \$100.00
_____ Regular Member - \$10.00	_____ Life Members - \$250.00
_____ Supporting Member - \$25.00	_____ Other _____

Enclose remittance. Make checks payable to the Debs Foundation.

The Debs Foundation
P.O. Box 843
Terre Haute, IN 47808

Your dues and contributions are tax deductible. The Foundation owns and maintains the Debs Home and offers several educational and cultural programs. We are a voluntary organization with no paid staff.

William H. Leslie Letters

Agreement is being formulated for a substantial addition to the Debs Collection in Cunningham Memorial Library, Indiana State University. William Leslie was secretary-treasurer of a textile firm in Norwich, Connecticut. He and his wife, Anna, were prominent socialists and they made financial contributions to Debs during and after his Atlanta imprisonment. Leslie's collected letters include correspondence with a number of prominent figures of his period, including Debs: Eugene, Katherine and Theodore.

Bonnie Leslie Fowler, granddaughter of William and Anna Leslie, is in possession of these valuable documents and has decided to donate the entire collection to the foundation. Ms. Fowler expressed the sentiment that, although collectors offered money for parts of the collection, she does not want it separated. "I am sure my Grandfather would be honored to have his memorabilia donated to the Debs Foundation to be enjoyed by researchers, historians and comrades," she wrote.

The Debs Collection is housed in the Rare Books and Special Collections area of Cunningham library, a facility which has special provisions for humidity and temperature control and which makes materials available under proper security to the public for research purposes. The Collection was written up in the special issue on Labor Archives and Collections of *Labor History*, Vol. 31:1-2 (Winter-Spring 1990).

A later article will describe these documents and what they reveal about relations between the Leslie's and Debs. It is personally rewarding to come in contact with individuals such as Bonnie Leslie Fowler and Laoma Calder who value historic preservation over the opportunity for financial gain.

The Debs Home Museum is

open

Wednesday-Sunday,

1:00 to 4:30 p.m.

or by appointment.

Election Year Issues continued....

and competition is unavoidable — with masses where life is lived near the level of bare subsistence. This is essentially what Bertrand Russell and the early George Bush were saying. The message is that the creation of a level playing field for competition involves lifestyles or standards of living, and for this nation to re-assume its world leadership role in the area of population and family planning would begin the tilt to a level playing field.

On Lifestyles

On national television recently a high school girl lamented that "there is no motivation to study hard, it appears that we cannot hope to live as well as our parents." A poor excuse for ignorance and indolence, in my estimation, but it is one expression of the concern widely shared regarding the deteriorating living standards of the middle class. The politicians offer various quick fixes — token tax cuts, cutting welfare and so on. What they should be saying is that this was a lifestyle which was paid for with borrowed money, justified as defense spending, and it incurred enormous other indebtedness, e.g., energy depletion, the filling of waste dumps, and a callous disregard for increasing inequality both within American society and between nations.

The bills are coming due. Tell the American people that. This highly valued material standard of living pushed personal as well as national indebtedness beyond limits, so if we consume more intelligently, household spending will not upsurge with a tax cut. Building better cars will mean that they stay on the road longer and are replaced by new ones less frequently. Remind the American people that we, as less than five percent of the world's population, produce 25 percent of the pollution which is causing depletion of the ozone layer. The fundamental change in lifestyle which is necessary is going to result in less consumption, thus fewer jobs in production. The result is a greater need for shared responsibility, yes, higher taxes, for providing a social safety net for those adversely effected by social change.

There is so much educating to be done, so much the

public needs to know! The public needs to know what is destroying the ozone, depleting natural resources. They need to be impressed that the world population currently is growing at a rate which will double its size in just 40 years, with most of that growth occurring in Africa, Asia and South America.

One result of a slower rate of population growth will be more people too old to work compared to those economically active (age 20-64). In 1900, there were in the United States 12 persons age 20-64 for every one over age 65, whereas in 1990, there were only 4.5 to 1. Be reminded of the disastrous consequences of a life style which ignores the natural environment, workplace safety, and human relationships. On second thought, you may not want to dwell on these things. It is well known what the voters do to the bearer of bad news.



A Policy Hatched in Rome

Much of the credit for the Reagan Administration's population policy has gone to ultra-conservatives Orin Hatch and Jessie Helms. A news article in the February 24, 1992 *Time* suggests that credits for that policy have to be shared with the Vatican. William Wilson, U.S. Ambassador to the Vatican, described how the Reagan administration altered its foreign aid program, the vehicle for implementation of population policy, to comply with the church's teachings on birth control. Wilson explained:

"American policy was changed as a result of the Vatican's not agreeing with our policy. American aid programs around the world did not meet the criteria the Vatican had for family planning. AID [the Agency for International Development] sent various people from [the Department of] State to Rome, and I'd accompany them to meet the president of the Pontifical Council for the Family, and in long discussions they finally got the message. But it was a struggle. They finally selected different programs and abandoned others as a result of this intervention."

EUGENE V. DEBS FOUNDATION

P.O. Box 843

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