

The Debs Foundation Newsletter

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



SPRING, 2005

Another Departure: Remembering Hilton Hanna

The last issue of the newsletter announced the deaths of two foundation charter members: Howard Hamilton and Edward Spann. Now we regret to report the death in January of Hilton Hanna. Death came just short of his 98th birthday. Not surprisingly, in recent years Hilton was not physically able to maintain his record level of active participation in foundation activities. For decades he attended every business meeting and every banquet. Always evidencing a high level of involvement, he insisted on a say in decision-making, and his positions were usually accepted as valid and constructive.

Hilton was not a charter member, but came on board shortly thereafter when Patrick Gorman became the foundation's first president. As Gorman's assistant, Hilton served as Gorman's personal representative to the foundation. For years the Lillian Hanna Memorial Scholarships were jointly underwritten by the Hanna family and the foundation. These scholarships were designated for worthy college students at Indiana State University. Targeted for low-income and minority students, they were seen as a valuable contribution to the foundation's educational mission.

In 1985, along with Tilford Dudley, Hilton was honored with the foundation's Theodore Debs Distinguished Service award. The duo of Hanna and Dudley were the first recipients of the service award.

Hilton Hanna died January 30, 2005, and a memorial service was held in the United Methodist Church in Tuskegee, Alabama. He is survived by his wife of 32 years, Harriet, and daughters Betty, Mary K, and Anna Otis, and stepson William A. Brown, Jr. The family suggests that those who wish to express special appreciation for Hilton's life may make contributions in his name to the Eugene V. Debs Foundation. It would not be too late to send condolences. Harriet's address is 1210 Bibb St., Tuskegee, Alabama 36088.

See Photos
on Page Four.

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**SPRING
BUSINESS
MEETING
MAY 7, 2005
1:00 P.M.
DEBS HOME**

Observations on the 2004 Banquet

Since the 2004 banquet came right after the disastrous November elections, circumstances were right for the event to be a real downer. After all, we were a bunch of liberals, progressives, and trade unionists who could find a lot to lament and regret, wonder whom to blame, be fearful of the next four years, etc. But this is not the nature of Debsians. They are much like Eugene Debs, who remained optimistic and carried on the fight for social justice while suffering the defeats of lost elections, jail time, and destructive dissension among the ranks of the Left. Debs allowed himself to show disappointment only briefly, then set about the business of carrying on and doing better next time. The goal was still there, a better life for all humankind.

The tone of the 2004 banquet was decidedly upbeat. While the election was a serious defeat, it was not the landslide victory of historic proportions which the press described. Just a few hundred votes in a few key states would have produced a defeat for Bush. We were reminded that national elections are important, but not to the exclusion of state and local elections. Grass roots organizing, so important in the work sphere, is crucial also in politics. The crowd was in a fighting mood. Educate, agitate, organize! These themes were expressed in vivid terms by presentation speaker Mike Sullivan and award recipient Bruce Raynor and drew almost as much applause as a bunch of Republicans give the President. Raynor was specific. A New York hotel worker belongs to a union, works a 40-hour week, earns around \$18,000 per year, and has fringe benefits of health insurance, vacation pay, and retirement benefits. A similar hotel worker in Indianapolis has no union representation, works less than 30 hours per week, earns less than \$9,000 per year,

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BENEFITTING FROM THE 2004 ELECTIONS

The unbelievable 2004 elections seem to have had positive consequences for the Debs Foundation. There were more orders for books and memorabilia, and more requests for permission to print. There also was increased support for the foundation in dues payments and donations.

These payments are an important part of our annual income, essential if we are to operate in the black. For a couple of years, income from membership has hovered around \$6,000. This year we can report a healthy increase. Most of our income from members for a given year comes in between December of the previous year through February. This year, by March 1, a total of \$7,240 has been paid in.

Of course, the big picture is always important. Increase in income has to be weighted against increases in operating costs, as increases in utilities and a cost-of-living increase for the Museum Director. We fortunately have other sources of income: profits from banquet ticket sales and from listings in the greetings section of the dinner program. These other sources of income fluctuate more from year to year than do membership dues and contributions, so it is important that the upward trend in membership payments continue.

2004 Banquet continued from page 1

and has no benefits. Get sick, then no pay and no health insurance. No paid vacation and no retirement. Unfortunately, the latter example is common for workers in the hospitality industries across America. Where is social and economic justice for these men and women?

UNITE HERE is committed to changing this by bringing the advantages of union representation to these workers. Having already taken on and won against the gaming and hospitality industries in Las Vegas, San Francisco, and Atlantic City, now they intend to “put boots on the ground”—or work shoes on the pavement—in key cities in the South, Midwest, and West.

Eugene Debs was a pioneer advocate of industry-wide unions as the mechanism for bringing the advantages of union representation to the less skilled “non-craft” workers. In Debs’ day those kinds of workers were largely in transportation and mining, but today the largest numbers of powerless and exploited workers are in the sectors of retail trade and the hospitality industry. When the Walmarts and Targets are organized as well as the hotel, restaurant, and gaming industries, a new day will be dawning for the working class of America, just as Debs had envisioned.

Those who attended the 2004 banquet were inspired with feelings of optimism and determination that the dream will be fulfilled. There are qualitative as well as quantitative, objective as well as subjective dimensions to the evaluation of a banquet’s success. How did the 2004 banquet honoring Bruce Raynor stack up against earlier ones? No use to try to judge. It was a great experience. Plans are under way for the 2005 banquet. Until next year, the last one is the best.

CK

DEBS FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER SPRING 2005

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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.

FIXING SOCIAL SECURITY

Without a question, changes have to be made in Social Security. For the Bush administration the problem is severe: a broken system, looming crisis, train wreck heading right at the nation’s young people, bankrupt, broke! Others see it as a problem fixable with some well-planned tweaking. A possible tweak would be to remove or raise the cap on earnings subject to the social security tax. It is estimated that an increase of 1.89 percent in the current payroll tax would provide sufficient funds for the 75 year projection period. Doubling that increase would support social security indefinitely.

Is it a certain wreck, or a basically sound system which needs adjustments? Decide for yourself. Here are a few helpful facts you should know.

2003—Social Security benefit payments equaled \$471 billion (4.3 percent of gross domestic product, or GDP)
\$1,531 billion trust fund balance for Social Security

2004—3.3 workers per retiree

2018—Cash flow losses begin, but scheduled Social Security benefits continue

2042—Social Security income reduced to 73 percent of scheduled benefits

2050—2 workers per retiree

2078—Social Security income reduced to 69 percent of scheduled benefits (equals 6.6 percent of GDP)

—Source: Social Security Administration

How Will They Know? Or Beware the Textbook Purgers

A well-known saying is that those who ignore history are certain to repeat its mistakes. Knowing history is no guarantee of positive outcomes but is a necessary first step. The preservational and educational missions of the Debs Foundation are intended to promote knowledge and understanding of the historical period known as the Progressive Era. The key historical figures, what they struggled for, what they accomplished, and ways in which they fell short of their goals, all these an informed citizen should know.

The Debs Foundation's educational mission is directed in several ways. There are, for example, our website (eugenevdebs.com), the *Newsletter*, and the annual award banquet. Important also is the service we render to the publications industry when we provide—at no special fees—copies of the images to illustrate their magazines and books, both scholarly books and textbooks for middle school through college levels. We are pleased to have provided to four or five various authors in recent months photographs of Eugene Debs or such images as campaign posters to be used in textbooks. These are for textbooks which provide a balanced account of the Progressive years in U.S. history.

In this we are encouraged, but at the same time feel a sense of uncertainty that the young people of America will actually have access to these textbooks. There are well-organized and highly motivated interest groups who intend to prevent it. These are the thought police of the radical right who intend to purge textbooks of “alien” ideologies and to see that K-12 education teaches capitalism, free market economics, and patriotism. To them, given their dogmatic one-sidedness, the Progressives such as Eugene Debs should only be mentioned as fallacies of a given historical period.

These groups are not to be underestimated. They are highly

motivated, and their tactics are battle-tested. They fight on several levels. At the local level, the focus is on the school board. Of course, their letters to the editor of local newspapers can speak of alarm at the ungodly, liberal-communist conspiracy which has corrupted modern education. But it is also effective to organize quietly and get a candidate or two elected to the local school board. They know that most voters are poorly informed regarding the candidates for school board positions. But the radical right groups know which are their candidates, and that the persistent noise coming from only one or two board members can influence which available texts in science and social science will be on the approved list that individual teachers or departments may select from.

In recent years, these thought police have also recognized the importance of action at the state level. It is here that decisions are made as to which textbooks will be approved and thus appear on the state's lists for local consideration. They need not fight the battle in school board by school board, or even every state. Textbook publishing is for profit, big profits. Textbook sales in the largest states can make or break the financial success of any given textbook. So all the textbook purgers have to do is focus on a couple of the most populous states—like Texas and Florida or California (and just a few others). Members of the state's textbook committee are usually appointed by the governor, so the focus is on conservative governors. Of course, they don't ignore any state, but all they have to accomplish is to get their activists on state selection committees in a few large enough that their combined school-age populations represent, say 20-30% of the market. The result is a homogenized, bland interpretation of history in order to avoid controversy. The process is deliberately designed to discourage critical thought and tends to advance a biased, one-

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2004 FINANCIAL STATEMENT Eugene V. Debs Foundation -- Woodrow Creason, Treasurer

Expenditures:

Postal Service	\$ 400.00
Heinl's Flowers	58.95
Mr. Emblem (T-Shirts)	5080.00
Safe Deposit Box	15.00
Association of Indiana Museums	35.00
Terminex	349.00
ISU Library Rare Book	2000.00
Amalgamated Bank (Endowment Fund)	2000.00
Moore Photograph.....	40.00
Charles King (cash box expenditures)	648.75
Springhill Heating (furnace, service call)	1950.00
Internal Revenue Service (SSI & Medicare).....	3886.80
Hopkins Fulfillment (Books)	709.66
Sodexo Inc. & Affiliates (Catering Svc.)	3217.25
Jewett Printing	4485.40
ISU Controller (Agency Account)	200.00
ADT	186.00
Ann Feeney	770.00
Indiana Department of Revenue	1103.92
Safeco Insurance	1131.00
Quality Seamless Gutter	375.00
Days Inn	67.50
Meier Johan Wengler, Inc.	260.00
Verizon	680.05
Cinergy	1339.46

Vectren	1787.96
Indiana American Water, Inc.	186.39
American Telephone & Telegraph	76.20
High Ground Digital	1919.00
City of Terre Haute	57.99
Heritage Ballroom, ISU	688.00
Museum Director	15,576.60
Banking Svc. Charges	120.30
Total Expenditures \$	51,400.18

Income

Dinner Program Greetings	\$ 19,000.00
Dinner Tickets	7,500.00
Member Dues	12,440.00
Contributions.....	11,110.00
Memorabilia Sales.....	1,250.07
Total Revenue	\$ 51,300.07
Balance Dec. 31, 2003	5,639.39
Cash Total for 2004	56,939.39
Less Expenses	51,400.18
Balance Dec. 31, 2004	5,539.21

Banquet Photos Past and Last
THE 2004 BANQUET



Bruce Raynor's Rousing Acceptance Speech



Raynor and Mike Sullivan with Award



Anne Feeney Sings and Leads Songs of Protest

HILTON HANNA AND THE 1994 BANQUET



Hilton Hanna Speaking at the Unveiling of the Patrick Gorman Plaque



Hilton Standing with Debs Award Recipient Richard Trumka

The Under-The-Radar Class-War Budget

Paul Krugman writing in the *New York Times* (Feb. 11, '05) described how the Bush budget proposal includes provisions that would cut food stamps for about 300,000 people and others that would deny child care assistance to about 300,000 children in low-income working families.

The budget would really shower largesse on millionaires, even while it punishes the needy. For example, the administration will proceed with the phaseout of two little know tax provisions that limit deductions and exemptions for high-income households. Krugman points out that more than half of the benefits from this backdoor tax cut would go to people with incomes of more than one million dollars, and 97 percent would go to people with incomes exceeding \$200,000. It costs a lot more to give a millionaire this break than to put food on a low-income family's table. Those with annual income over \$1 million would get an average tax cut of more than \$19,000.

I haven't heard the outcry from the liberal-biased press about this. It is no news, simply under the radar.

C.K.

Bush's HIV/AIDS War

President Bush announced in his State of the Union Address in January, 2003 a \$15 billion, five year initiative to fight HIV/AIDS in Africa and the Caribbean. An impressive pledge and an extraordinary sum of money! He then appointed Randall Tobias Chief Administrator. Tobias is a former head of Eli Lilly and company, the Indianapolis based pharmaceutical company which he ran from 1993 until 1998, a company which made no aids-fighting drug. Tobias had no experience working with HIV/AIDS, but is known as a major Republican Party donor. One can wonder if one of his strongest recommendations was the \$2.65 million Tobias and Eli Lilly donated to Republican Party candidates in the 2000 and 2002 elections.

Perhaps it should not be surprising what his performance has shown. Instead of ensuring that the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)—a government run program costing a lot of tax dollars—operates practically and efficiently, evidence suggests that under Tobias' administration PEPFAR has mainly been protecting U.S. corporate pharmaceutical interests, while helping to export a far-right evangelical health agenda to the world's poorest nations.

Some experts actually feel that the Bush initiative is doing more harm than good. Tobias has argued that condoms don't

work and that life-saving generic drugs aren't as safe as brand-name ones. In his 2005 budget Bush proposed reducing support for Global Fund—the world's most important mechanism for financing the treatment of AIDS (a public-private partnership)—from \$547 million to \$200 million. Under Tobias' leadership PEPFAR is allowed to distribute condoms only to certain high risk categories such as gay men and prostitutes. For the general population abstinence is strongly promoted, requiring that a minimum of 33 percent of U.S. prevention money must be devoted to abstinence-only programs. How this must please far-right evangelicals, especially since analysis indicates that between 50 and 80 percent of prevention monies have gone to abstinence programs.

American drug companies also have plenty to cheer about. Only drugs that have been pre-approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration are distributed with PEPFAR money, and so far only brand-name drugs from American companies have qualified. Those certified by the appropriate World Health Organization agency are excluded. The main difference between the brand-name drugs and the generics is price, approximately three times higher for brand-name drugs.

The practices of the Bush Administration in the HIV/AIDS fight are better known internationally than in the U.S. Come on, liberal press, inform the American people!

C.K.

Facts for this essay drawn mainly from "No Experience Necessary: A Profile of Bush's AIDS Czar." by Nina Siegal, *The Progressive*, Nov., 2004.

HOW WILL THEY KNOW? *Continued from page 3*

sided view of science and history.

We would not contend that Liberals have always been completely unbiased and consistent in encouraging critical evaluation of our own theories and interpretations. But how can critical thought be encouraged if an entire body of evidence—consisting of the grand legacy of the formative years of our early industrial society called the Progressive Era—is kept out of the textbooks our children will be reading! How will they be guided to think critically and responsibly about how the values of social justice, human rights, and peace are to be achieved in the present society and world if they do not read about how past generations struggled with these issues? The legacy of Eugene Debs can be a vital ink in that educational process. We must be alert to what we can do to make it so.

C.K.

NOTE: Please check here if this is a:

RENEWAL

NEW MEMBERSHIP

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Email Address:

Membership Dues: The Eugene V. Debs Foundation

NAME _____

STREET _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

_____ \$ 5.00 Student Member _____ \$100.00 Sustaining Member

_____ \$10.00 Regular Member _____ \$250.00 Life Members

_____ \$25.00 Supporting Member _____ Other

Enclose remittance. Make checks payable to the Debs Foundation.

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We are a not-for-profit organization, so your dues and contributions are tax deductible. The Foundation owns and maintains the Debs Home and offers several educational and cultural programs.

A Different Space War: Running Out of Rural Land

A both touching and comical scene in the movie *Fiddler on the Roof*—a great movie depicting the family and social life in a traditional peasant Jewish village when the Soviet revolution sweeps away all that is traditional and secure for the sake of the greater good of revolutionary goals through the collectivization of agriculture—is when, as they are learning where their forced migrations will lead, Tevye learns that his good friend is immigrating to New York, and Tevye is destined for Chicago. Tevye exclaims: “Good, we’ll be neighbors!” Good for a laugh because at that time—not long after W.W.I.—a thousand miles of open land separated New York and Chicago, and travel between was virtually prohibited both in cost and time, except for the privileged few.

Less than one hundred years later, how much has changed! The U.S. population has increased more than five-fold and most of that growth has occurred in large cities. Greater New York sprawls all the way from North of Boston to North Carolina. Chicago sprawl extends from North of Milwaukee to Indiana and Michigan cities clustered along Lake Michigan. Recently the urban growth has become more dispersed, and the “mega-city” sprawl is gobbling up rural farm, ranch and woodlands and open spaces in the south, southwest,

mountain and west coast.

This land is *our land*. It belongs to all of us, from sea to shining sea, and it needs to remain as a most essential part of that legacy we as a society pass on to succeeding generations. We can no longer leave it to the developers, financiers, and other interests which reap enormous short-term economic gain from the urban sprawl, and don’t forget the system of multi-lane expressways, beltways, and toll roads over which people and commerce move—often at a crawl—from one mega city to another.

Sadly, in too many places in America today, the quality of life has been degraded by decades of ill-planned development. You have probably seen it in your community: vast networks of overlapping highways and roads but no sidewalks for our children to walk on; shopping malls and industrial parts replacing scenic farms, meadows, and parks; traffic jams and long commutes to work stealing valuable time from our families and shattering our nerves. Some people call it

sprawl. Others call it unplanned growth. But no matter what you call it, one thing is clear—*somebody’s got to stop it*. The cause needs a lot of somebodies just like you.

C.K.

The Magnitude of the Problem

- FACT: In the year 2030, there will be 75 million more Americans—and we are running out of open space.
- FACT: Each day, America loses more than 8,700 acres of rural land to subdivisions, highways, industrial parks, and shopping malls.
- FACT: American farmland is disappearing at the rate of two acres every minute

Source: Trust for Public Land

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