

The Debs Foundation Newsletter

PO BOX 9454 ■ TERRE HAUTE INDIANA 47808-9454

Fall 2026

United Auto Workers President Shawn Fain to Receive 2026 Eugene V. Debs Award



With his deep belief in the capacity of workers to unite, fight, win and build a better world, Brother Shawn Fain is a fitting honoree of the annual Eugene V. Debs Award.

in a more militant and bold direction as witnessed by the creative "Stand-up Strike" for new contracts against the "Big Three" auto companies. Simultaneously taking on the big three for the first time in UAW history, the strike results overcame years of concessions, extracted major pay increases, restored cost of living adjustments and eliminated the unjust and divisive tiered pay structures.

Brother Fain has instituted serious organizing efforts of non-union auto plants, resulting in the breakthrough win and first contract at the 4000-worker VW factory in Tennessee.

Brother Fain began work as an electrician at his Kokomo Indiana hometown Chrysler casting plant in 1994. Following in the footsteps of three UAW member grandparents, he has been a proud UAW member for over 30 years.

As a local union activist, he served on various union committees and became Plant Shop Chairman. He opposed the 2007 contract due to its establishment of tiers and severe pay cuts. In 2012 he became a UAW International Representative.

In 2022 Shawn Fain ran for president, heading up the "UAW Members United" slate on a program of ending corruption, contract concessions and multitiered pay structures. In the first direct election in UAW history, the members spoke. Shawn Fain became president in March 2023.

Since becoming president, Shawn Fain has led the union

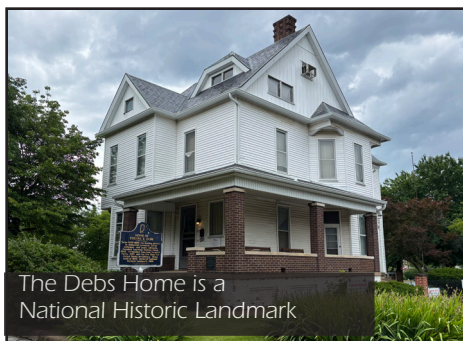
In order to build working class solidarity and power, Brother Fain has encouraged other unions to have their contracts expire on May Day 2028, been firm in upholding the UAW's early position calling for a ceasefire in Gaza and been unafraid to challenge elected representatives to stand with workers rather than billionaires.

2026 Annual Eugene V. Debs Award Banquet

Saturday, November 21st
6:00 PM

Terre Haute Convention Center
800 Wabash Avenue

Ticket and program greeting forms in this issue
More info at debsfoundation.org



The Debs Home is a
National Historic Landmark

EUGENE V. DEBS FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

Fall 2026

Published by
The Eugene V. Debs Foundation
Box 9454
Terre Haute, IN 47808

www.debsfoundation.org
info@debsfoundation.org

FOUNDATION OFFICERS

Mark Dimondstein, President
Dave Rathke, Executive Vice-President
Lisa Phillips, Secretary
Benjamin Kite, Treasurer

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Noel Beasley
Wes Bishop
Dave Bozell
Jaz Brisack
Mike Burrows
Kirsten Campbell
Ian Carey
Dennis A. Cheshier
Tracy Wayne Cook
Brad Countermine
J. B. Daniel
Mat Davis
Mark Dimondstein
Allison Duerk
Anne D'Orazio
Nizar Ezroua
Rosemary Feurer
Stephanie Fortado
Carlos Ginard
Kaisa Goodman
Mark Haworth
Robert Hughes
Timothy Kelley
Kim Kelly
Benjamin Kite
Arieh Lebowitz
Ralph Leck
Sarah Joy Liles
Gail Malmgreen
John S. Morahn
Michelle Morahn
William Morris
Katie Morrison
Lisa Phillips
James Priester
David J. Rathke
Jeanne Rewa
Don Scheiber
Randy Schmidt
Dennis Vetrovec

The Debs Foundation Newsletter is published twice yearly for distribution to supporters 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 supporters, a donation form is provided elsewhere in this issue.

Senator Bernie Sanders Recipient of 2025 Debs Foundation Award

In a fitting tribute to his decades of principled efforts to uplift the working class and the 99%, Senator Bernie Sanders received the 2025 Eugene Debs Award to a packed house of over 750, where he called Debs one of the extraordinary figures in American history. Text and video footage of Senator Sanders' speech are available on our website. Board member Tim Kelly shares more later in this issue.



Protect our history! Donate to the Building Fund

2026 marks 100 years since Debs' passing. In his honor, the Debs Foundation has started a building fund campaign for restorations of his house museum, which is in need of significant repairs to its foundation and electrical system. If the working class doesn't protect our history, no one else will!

Visit www.debsfoundation.org to donate.

Message from new Debs Foundation President Mark Dimondstein

Greetings Brothers, Sisters, Comrades and Friends,

It's an honor becoming the new president of the Eugene Debs Foundation, following the good work of Noel Beasley of Workers United. Having been elected by the Foundation Board last November, this is my first chance to briefly introduce myself through our Newsletter.

In 1983 I became a proud postal worker in Greensboro NC, working nights and weekends sorting mail. I was represented by the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) and my first union job made a huge positive difference for my young family (a union activist spouse and three daughters.)

Having grown up in a progressive and anti-fascist household, I quickly become a union activist, serving as a shop steward, elected local president for six terms and field organizer for the national union. After a deeply concessionary national union contract, it was time for serious change. I was elected national president in 2013 on a program of member empowerment, worker solidarity and fightback. I served four terms over the last 12 years representing 200,000 postal workers and recently retired as union president. I led the APWU in relying on the members to win solid union contracts and build strong community alliances to defend and expand public Postal Services. We beat back Wall Street-driven postal privatization schemes and were one of a handful of national

unions to support the Sanders presidential campaigns. The APWU was a founder of the National Labor Network for Ceasefire in response to the U.S. government-supported genocide in Gaza.

Over the years, I was a key organizer of NC Labor Against the War, helped establish a local Jobs with Justice chapter and was involved in the effort to build a U.S. Labor Party. I have been a consistent voice on the AFL-CIO Executive Council on the need for independence from the corporate-dominated Democratic Party as well as warning of rising fascism and the need for militant working class resistance.

To help guide and inspire me, for decades I have a Debs quote on my wall: "You have got to Unite in the same labor union and in the same political party and strike and vote together, and the hour you do that the world is yours."

Eugene Debs played a historic role promoting militant and industrial unionism, independent worker-based political parties, organizing the unorganized and opposition to unjust imperialist war. These are all part of the needed path forward in these challenging times of rising fascism, increased imperialist military actions, terror directed against the immigrant section of the working class, increasing voter suppression and the capitalist created affordability crisis for workers as the military, prison, hitech and medical industrial complexes are endlessly enriched.

2026 is the 100th Anniversary of



the death of Eugene V. Debs. With significant and growing numbers of working people, especially youth, open to a socialist future as opposed to capitalist exploitation and degradation, the legacy of Eugene Debs helps us "build a new world from the ashes of the old" (Solidarity Forever). This is a good time to spread the word, encourage your local unions and social justice organizations, co-workers, friends, neighbors and family to visit the Foundation's website, sign up for the Foundation's email list, consider donations for needed renovations to the Debs House/Museum, and visit the Museum.

In the spirit of Eugene Debs, (and the courageous and generous people of Minneapolis) I look forward to working together in the continuing struggle for justice. There is no question that if Brother Debs was alive today he would be on the frontlines defending and expanding our democratic rights and claiming our streets – no kings, no ICE thugs, no more blood for oil, and unity of all working people in resistance to the billionaire oligarchs – and to build the brighter future of workers' power!

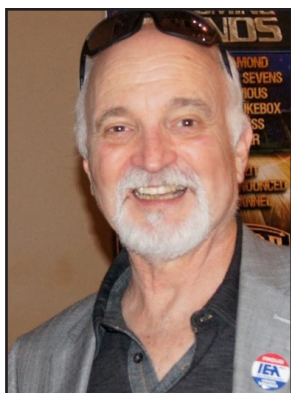
Debs Museum Appears on PBS News Hour

Well-known and respected journalist Judy Woodruff visited the Eugene V. Debs Home and Museum this summer for her News Hour series “Crossroads: America at 250.” Woodruff, senior correspondent and former anchor of PBS News Hour, visited with historian Beverly Gage on a Gilded Age road trip from Chicago to Terre Haute. Our museum director Allison Duerk did us proud promoting both the historical and current significance of Eugene Debs. The News Hour segment is linked on our website.

Museum Director Duerk with Alexandria Ocasio Cortez. Congresswoman AOC visited the Debs Museum when she spoke at the 2025 Awards Dinner with recipient Senator Bernie Sanders.



From Executive Vice President Dave Rathke



“I see the dawn of a better day for humanity.”

This year, 2026 marks the 100th anniversary of the death of Eugene Victor Debs. Debs was being treated at Lindlahr Sanitarium in Elmhurst, Illinois for cardiovascular problems that developed during his imprisonment for opposition to World War I. Debs’ friend, Pulitzer prize-winning poet and biographer Carl Sandburg lived only few blocks from the Sanitarium and the two frequently spent time together. Walking home from Sandburg’s in mid-October, Debs suffered a stroke and fell into a coma, dying October 20, 1926.

The first words of Zohran Mamdani’s victory speech in November 2025 were “As Eugene Debs said, ‘I see the dawn of a better day for humanity.’” Debs’ life speaks to us of the long-term struggle necessary to achieve that “better day.” A founder of the American Railway Union and the Industrial Workers of World, Debs didn’t live to see workers’ right to organize legalized a decade after his death. The five-time Socialist Party candidate for President didn’t live to see whole sections of the Party platform enacted into the New Deal of the 1930s. Yet if Debs and his comrades had not begun these fights there would have been no struggle to pass on to those who took them to completion. No Walter Reuther who as a boy visited Debs in prison, no Bernie Sanders who counted Debs as his greatest political hero, no Mamdani.

The Debs Foundation is beginning a major Building Fundraising Drive to preserve the Debs Home and Museum in Terre Haute as a sacred trust and symbol of the long-term struggle necessary to achieve that “better day for humanity.” I ask that you make a contribution to help us start that effort and commemorate the 100th anniversary of Eugene V Debs’ Death.

Calling all Unions, Locals and Allied Organizations: Pass resolutions commemorating the life and work of Eugene V. Debs!

Remembering the Life and Work of **Eugene V. Debs** on the 100th Anniversary of his Death



Scan this QR code for sample resolution text and edit as desired.

Organize to pass a resolution with your group at an upcoming meeting or convention — use this to share Debs' story with your community. Education builds power!

Did your resolution pass? We want to hear about it. Write to us and include a copy: info@debsfoundation.org.



Keep the Debs Legacy Alive!

Pass the **Debs Centennial Resolution** to remember Peoples' History and support the work of the **Eugene V. Debs Foundation**.

From Board Member Tim Kelley

Observations from the Events of October 25, 2025

What an amazing Saturday night in Terre Haute! Those lucky enough to obtain tickets to the sold-out event were thrilled to hear the acceptance speech of America's champion of democratic socialism, Senator Bernie Sanders. Adding to this special evening, Bernie was presented with the award by Member of Congress, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. In his remarks, Bernie described how the ruling class, in Debs' time, were terrified of Eugene Victor Debs, and that the elites of today are just as terrified of those same ideas. The program concluded with more than 700 voices singing Solidarity Forever.

Earlier in the day, a large crowd toured the Debs Home during the open house. It was so uplifting to see so many people express excitement that they were in the home of Gene and Kate Debs. The guest book was signed by people from all across the country, with many more pins added to the visitors map located in the foyer of the Debs Museum.

The open house was followed by the traditional ceremony at the Debs gravesite. Red carnations were placed on the graves of Gene and Kate, as well as those of other family members. A tour of the final resting places

of other Debs and Baur family members was led by Micki and John Morahan, who offered biographical sketches of the remarkable lives of other members of the family. My remarks detailed Debs' speaking tours of 1925, including a speech to thousands at the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles.

An afternoon panel discussion: **Class War and How We Fight Back**, was presented at Cunningham Memorial Library, with approximately 150 people in attendance. The panel included Sara Nelson, International President of the Association of Flight Attendants, and 2024 Debs award recipient; Dr. Lisa Phillips, ISU professor of history, who also serves as the Secretary of the Debs Foundation; and Mark Dimonstein, President of the American Postal Workers Union, and newly installed President of the Debs Foundation. The discussion addressed the war on the working class, the challenges we face, and strategies for responding to this assault and for creating a better world. The Library's Special Collections also offered visitors with Debs and the Senate, a display of artifacts from the Debs Collection.

It was truly an unforgettable day!

[Article edited for space]

Still Relevant for Today – Some Notable Quotes from Eugene Debs:

"Solidarity is not a matter of sentiment but a fact, cold and impassive as the granite foundations of a skyscraper. If the basic elements, identity of interest, clarity of vision, honesty of intent, and oneness of purpose or any of these is lacking, all sentimental pleas for solidarity, and all other efforts to achieve it will be barren of results. (*A Plea for Solidarity*, March 1914.)

Your Honor, years ago I recognized my kinship with all living beings... I said then, and I say now, that while there is a lower class, I am in it, and while there is a criminal element I am of it, and while there is a soul in prison, I am not free. (*Speech at trial, Cleveland, Ohio, Sept. 1918*)

"When I rise it will be with the ranks, and not from the ranks. (*Statement to the Federal Court, September 1918.*)

"The Republican and Democratic parties, or, to be more exact, the Republican-Democratic party, represent the capitalist class in the class struggle. They are the political wings of the capitalist system and such differences as arise between them relate to spoils and not to principles." (*The Socialist Party and the Working Class*, 1904.)

"Wherever capitalism appears, in pursuit of its mission of exploitation, there will Socialism, fertilized by misery, watered by tears, and vitalized by agitation, be also found, unfurling its class-struggle banner and proclaiming its mission of emancipation" (*The American Movement*, 1898)

"As long as this great army of workers is scattered among so many craft unions, it will be impossible for them to unite and act in harmony together. Craft unionism is the negation of solidarity." (*Class Unionism*". Eugene V. Debs' speech in South Chicago, November 24, 1905)

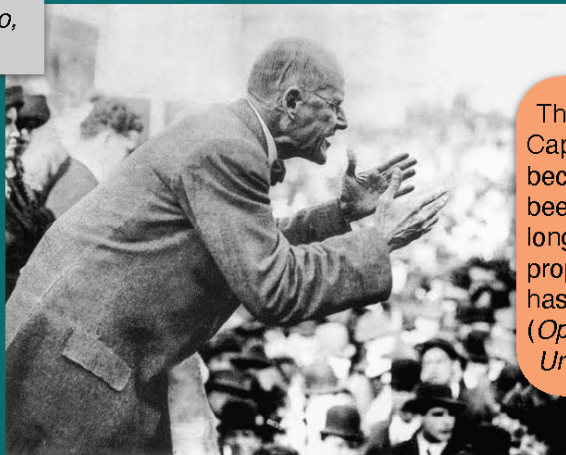
Too long have the workers of the world waited for some Moses to lead them out of bondage... I would not lead you out if I could; for if you could be led out, you could be led back again. I would have you make up your minds there is nothing that you cannot do for yourselves. (*Industrial Unionism*, December 10, 1905)

"You have got to unite in the same labor union and in the same political party and strike and vote together, and the hour you do that, the world is yours." (From "Debs: His life, writings and Speeches, 1908)

The issue is Socialism versus Capitalism. I am for Socialism because I am for humanity. We have been cursed with the reign of gold long enough. Money constitutes no proper basis of civilization. The time has come to regenerate society..." (*Open letter to the American Railway Union*, 1897.)

What can Labor do for itself? The answer is not difficult. Labor can organize, it can unify; it can consolidate its forces. This done, it can demand and command."

"I am not a capitalist soldier; I am a proletarian revolutionist. I do not belong to the regular army of the plutocracy, but to the irregular army of the people. I refuse to obey any command to fight from the ruling class, but I will not wait to be commanded to fight for the working class." (*From the Appeal to Reason*, 1908.



From Treasurer Benjamin Kite



Below you will find the 2025 financial report. We had a decent year financially and a solid fundraising Awards Dinner. On this 100th Commemoration year of the death of Eugene Debs, we encourage everyone to help with fundraising, as we have substantial prospective costs to building repairs.

Support the Eugene V. Debs Foundation

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

___ \$10 Student

___ \$25 Regular Contribution

___ \$50 Supporting Contribution

___ \$100 Sustaining Contribution

___ \$250 Lifetime contribution

___ Other amount

Donate at www.debsfoundation.org. Recurring monthly option available.

If donating by check, make payable to:

Eugene V. Debs Foundation

PO Box 9454

Terre Haute, IN 47808

The Eugene V. Debs Foundation is a 501 (c)3 not-for-profit educational organization. Your contributions are tax-deductible. The Foundation owns and maintains the Eugene V. Debs Home and Museum and offers educations and cultural programs.

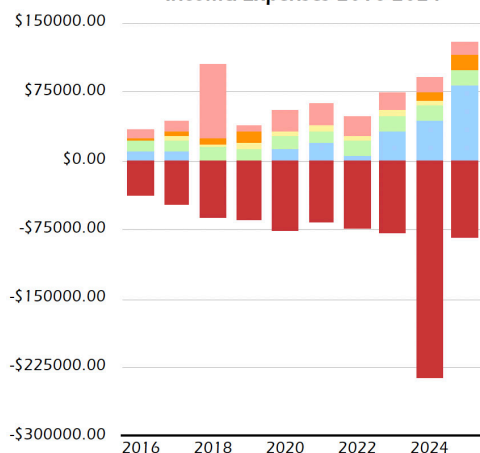
Your Continued Support Makes it Possible!

Financial Statement 2025

10-Year Profit/Loss Comparison

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Dues, Donations and Support	\$ 8848.20	\$ 11834.00	\$ 80388.48	\$ 7521.53	\$ 25180.16	\$ 24171.21	\$ 21022.00	\$ 18132.71	\$ 16732.00	\$ 13676.30
Banquet Income	\$ 1216.00	\$ 6228.00	\$ 7709.70	\$ 12581.37	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 1507.00	\$ 1043.76	\$ 9951.00	\$ 16350.34
Memorabilia Income	\$ 1442.00	\$ 3211.00	\$ 2112.13	\$ 6287.77	\$ 4582.06	\$ 5102.79	\$ 3067.00	\$ 6133.47	\$ 4581.00	\$ 868.00
Investment Income	\$ 12612.00	\$ 13280.00	\$ 14261.24	\$ 13249.47	\$ 13032.70	\$ 12612.00	\$ 17962.00	\$ 16635.76	\$ 16142.86	\$ 16165.29
Capital Gains (Realized)	\$ 9176.00	\$ 9347.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 13425.82	\$ 19920.17	\$ 4875.58	\$ 31593.00	\$ 44318.43	\$ 81945.71
Total Revenue	\$ 32421.00	\$ 54526.00	\$ 104471.55	\$ 41499.06	\$ 56220.74	\$ 61806.17	\$ 48438.00	\$ 73545.92	\$ 91725.60	\$ 129005.95
Expenses	\$ (37865.00)	\$ (46056.00)	\$ (61652.10)	\$ (63344.07)	\$ (74991.84)	\$ (66959.82)	\$ (74419.00)	\$ (78702.53)	\$ (235845.07)	\$ (82440.90)
Net Income (Loss)	\$ (5444.00)	\$ 8470.00	\$ 42819.45	\$ (21845.01)	\$ (18771.10)	\$ (5153.65)	\$ (25981.00)	\$ (5156.61)	\$ (144119.47)	\$ 46565.05

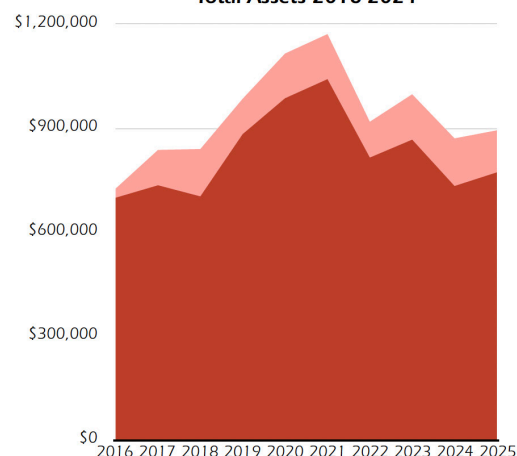
Income/Expenses 2016-2024



Total Assets 2016-2024

Year	Endowment	Total
2016	\$ 699,399.00	\$ 725,775.00
2017	\$ 735,333.00	\$ 837,433.05
2018	\$ 703,254.00	\$ 839,993.91
2019	\$ 883,156.05	\$ 985,256.05
2020	\$ 986,614.00	\$ 1,115,716.15
2021	\$ 1,041,624.38	\$ 1,171,802.00
2022	\$ 815,277.62	\$ 918,689.00
2023	\$ 867,008.50	\$ 998,033.00
2024	\$ 733,202.39	\$ 870,720.00
2025	\$ 772,693.35	\$ 894,019.00

Total Assets 2016-2024





PO Box 9454
Terre Haute, IN 47808-9454

Non Profit Org
US Postage
PAID
Indianapolis, IN
Permit # 593

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



DON'T PITCH YOUR
NEWSLETTER! PASS IT ON.

Award Banquet Tickets

Saturday, November 21, 2026 6:00 pm

Please indicate the number of banquet tickets:

- ☐ _____ Single tickets: \$85.00
Number
- ☐ _____ Student price tickets: \$50.00
Number
- ☐ _____ Table of Ten: \$800.00
Number

Please indicate your dining preference and how many: Chicken _____ Vegan _____

Tickets can be purchased online at:
www.debsfoundation.org
or by mailing ticket order form:

Name: _____
Total Amount Enclosed: _____

Make checks payable to:
Eugene V. Debs Foundation
PO Box 9454
Terre Haute, IN 47808

Purchase an Award Banquet Program Greeting to Support Your Museum

- ☐ **Gold-Level Support** \$5000
- ☐ **Silver-Level Support** \$2500
- ☐ **Full-Page Greeting** \$1000
- ☐ **Half-Page Greeting** \$500
- ☐ **Quarter-Page Greeting** \$250
- ☐ **Eighth-Page Greeting** \$125

Please email your greeting design in PDF format **no later than November 7th** to:
banquet-information@debsfoundation.org

Please pay on website or make checks payable to the Eugene V. Debs Foundation and mail to:

Eugene V. Debs Foundation
P.O. Box 9454
Terre Haute, IN 47808