



THE REPORTER

Spring Issue

Illinois Labor History Society

March 2018

430 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60605

www.IllinoisLaborHistory.org

MAY DAY 2018

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Square **Page 3**

SAVE THE DATE

Labor Day at the Florence
Hotel in Pullman **Page 12**

MEMPHIS 2018

by Keith Richardson,
ILHS Board Member
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HONORING NINA VAN ZANDT SPIES

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NINA VAN ZANDT SPIES

ILHS is proud to announce the commission of a headstone to honor
Nina Van Zandt Spies at Forest Home Cemetery.

Photo Courtesy of: <http://www.prison-proxy-marriage-society.org/>



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FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Larry Spivack



Dear ILHS members and friends:

It would be fair to say the ILHS is much about memory, but not in the passive sense. We engage the stimulation of our individual and collective memories in order to promote action. We stimulate memory through the preservation of monuments and historical sites, by the creation and participation in commemorative events and the promotion of resources and human activities designed to tell stories of important events primarily related to labor history, which can be arguably called the connective tissue of human endeavors.

One endeavor your ILHS is working toward is the funding and placement of a new headstone in Forest Home Cemetery just yards from the martyrs. Nina Van Zandt Spies, the widow of Haymarket Martyr, August Spies. Her story is exceptional and is one of those that once again reminds us why the Haymarket Affair (no pun intended) is remarkable as a human interest story as much as a story about social change and world history. It is simply amazing to me that after more than one hundred thirty years since the Haymarket Affair most people don't know this story that should make any top ten list of important events in American history.

Please go to our Facebook page to find out about Van Zandt Spies and contribute to our GoFundMe campaign to help get Nina settled in at Forest Home. There will be a commemorative event later this year dedicating the marker.

While on the topic of markers the ILHS continues to build a campaign to promote an historical descriptive marker or perhaps even a statue at Lucy Parsons Park on Chicago's Northwest side, 4712 W. Belmont. While the

park is named, there is nothing on site to explain who Lucy is. The city of Chicago is nearly void of statues and markers promoting important women and their contributions and Lucy should really be a household name in Chicago. Alderman Reboyas has been slow to respond to our requests for assistance. Please feel free to call him!

Finally, if my memory serves me well, I would be remiss if I didn't remind all of you to join the ILHS and the Chicago Federation of Labor at Haymarket Square at DesPlaines and Randolph for this year's May Day event at 2:30 pm for our annual celebration. The Filipino Labor Federation, KMU, which means the May First Movement, will be our guests and dedicate this year's plaque. With the statue having been relocated back to its home and structurally improved we look forward to presenting plaques each and every year as we celebrate International Labor Day with its roots in Chicago. How many of your friends, family and neighbors don't know that May Day is truly an American Holiday?

Solidarity and Happy May Day everyone!

Larry Spivack

Larry Spivack



MAY DAY @ HAYMARKET SQUARE

**TUESDAY
MAY**

1ST

2018

2:30 PM

**AT RANDOLPH &
DES PLAINES**

This Year's Plaque Sponsor is
**KILUSANG MAYO UNO, OR MAY FIRST
LABOR MOVEMENT (KMU)**



Our guest speaker this year is
Raymond Palatino, a Filipino activist
and youth leader. He represents the
Kabataan (Youth) Party in the 14th
Congress of the Philippines.

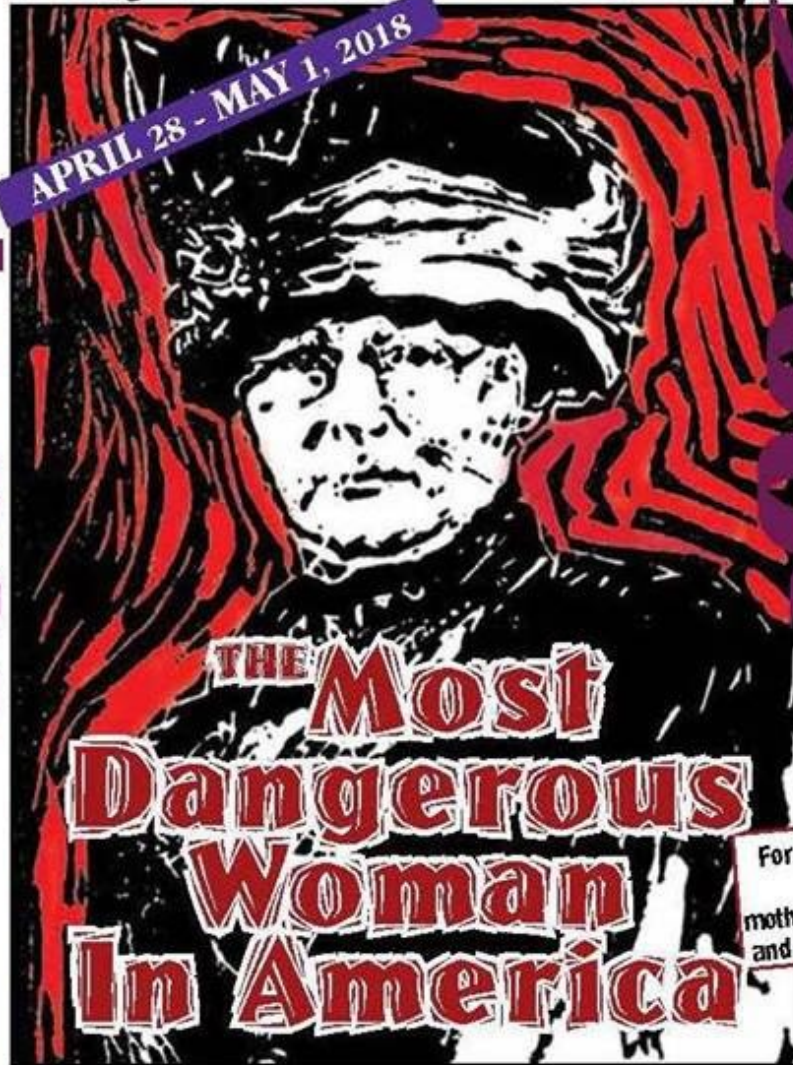


**SPONSORED BY ILLINOIS LABOR
HISTORY SOCIETY AND THE CHICAGO
FEDERATION OF LABOR**



Mother Jones MAY DAY Birthday Party

APRIL 28 - MAY 1, 2018



For more information go to www.motherjonesmuseum.org and click on Events tab.

**Connect and celebrate
 MAY DAY & MOTHER JONES--
 the grandmother of
 all working class agitators--
 with others around the world.**

Irish American Heritage Center

4626 N Knox Ave, Chicago, IL
 contact motherjoneslives@gmail.com 815-754-4750

May 1, 6-9 pm

Co-Sponsored by West Virginia Mine Wars Museum, wvminewars.com and Watts Museum, wattsmuseum.wvu.edu



Follow ILHS on twitter @ILLaborHistory #ILLaborHistory



MARCH 2018 PULLMAN TOUR

President Larry Spivack lead a walking tour of Pullman on Saturday, March 10, 2018 for the University of Illinois Chicago School of Public Health.



The Mother Jones Museum events committee in Mt. Olive Illinois, announced United Mine Workers of America President Cecil Roberts will be laying wreaths at the graves of the Irish born labor agitator Mother Jones, former UMWA Secretary Treasurer John Banovic and Sam Yurkovitch, an immigrant coal miner who enlisted in WWI and died at the second battle of the Argonne in 1918. Mother Jones rests in Union Miners' Cemetery in Mt. Olive IL. The event, April 28 at 11AM, is to celebrate May 1, Mother Jones's selected birthday. This is the only union owned cemetery in the USA.

DATE Saturday,
April 28, 2018

TIME 11:00 am

PLACE Union Miners Cemetery
Mt Olive, IL 62069

See: www.youtube.com/watch?v=OvtUyGi9-I

Brother Roberts will move to the Mother Jones Museum. He is well known for his fiery and inspirational speeches. Music, additional speeches, tours of the museum and other events are planned.

The Mother Jones Museum is part of the city of Mt. Olive. Donations may be sent to: Mother Jones Museum, Mt. Olive City Hall, 215 E Main St, Mt Olive, IL 62069. Checks will be made out to the city with the note/tagline stating it is for the 2018 May Day event. Donations are tax deductible.

For further information, contact Joann Condellone jcondellone@gmail.com or phone at 618 659-8759



DO YOU KNOW YOUR LABOR HISTORY?

[HTTPS://LABORHISTORYIN2.PODBEAN.COM/](https://laborhistoryin2.podbean.com/)

April 2, 1909

When you go shopping, do you remember to look for the union label? Today in Labor History, April 2, the year was 1909. The American Federation of Labor launched its "Union Label" department. The goal of the new department was to promote goods and services made by union labor. Union labels, today often referred to as union bugs, have a long history. All the way back in the 1400s some European trade craft guilds used visual symbols to represent their work. In the United States the union label became more prevalent after the Civil War. The AFL sought to promote the use of such labels to build solidarity among the labor movement. It was also a way to promote the quality of union goods and services to the public. Thirty years after the label department was launched, AFL President Andrew Green explained the importance of the effort. He said that a union label was "emblematic of a high standard of living, of tolerable conditions of employment, of those conditions surrounding working men and women which makes for a higher and better standard of living." In 1975 the International Ladies Garment Workers Union launched their "Look for the Union Label" campaign. Television ads and a catchy jingle helped promote the cause. Today the AFL Label Department publishes lists of companies boycotted for not using union labor. They also produce a bimonthly newsletter called the "Label Letter," which features information about modern day union labels. All of these efforts seek to raise consumer awareness about the labor that goes into the items and services we purchase every day. It helps shoppers make informed decisions about how they spend their money.

May 4, 1886

Today in Labor History, May 4, the year was 1886. It was one of the most significant days in US labor history. In Chicago a mass meeting was called for that night in the city's haymarket. The purpose of the meeting was to protest the police who had killed and injured strikers and at McCormick Reaper the day before. The organizers were also part of the movement for the eight hour day. The rally was much smaller than expected. Rain began to fall. The last speaker was concluding when a large force of 200 police arrived with a demand that the meeting disperse. Someone, unknown to this day, then threw a dynamite bomb into the ranks of the advancing police. In their confusion, the police began firing their weapons in the dark. The police killed at least four in the crowd and wounded many more. A total of seven police men were killed, most felled likely by their own gunfire. In the aftermath of the event, unions were raided all across the country. The Eight-Hour Movement was effectively derailed. Eight men were put on trial in Chicago. Some were not even present at the time the bomb was thrown. They were put on trial for their ideas. Four of the men, Albert Parsons, August Spies, George Engel, and Adolph Fischer were sentenced to death by hanging. A fifth man, Louis Lingg died under mysterious circumstances in prison. The remaining three went to prison, and were eventually pardoned by Illinois Governor Altgeld in 1893. Before he was hung, August Spies declared, "The day will come when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you strangle today." His words proved true. The Haymarket Martyrs inspired and continue to inspire labor activists throughout the world.

June 1, 2001

Would you be willing to risk your job to stand up for the rights you believe in? For postal worker

Henry Gerber, the answer to that question was a resounding yes. Today in Labor History, June 1, the year was 2001. On that day Gerber's home was designated as a Chicago Landmark in recognition of his early leadership in the fight for homosexual rights. Henry was born in Bavaria, Germany in 1892. He immigrated to the Chicago in 1913. He served in the US Army in Germany for three years during World War I. While in Germany he was impressed with the push for homosexual-rights taking place in that country after the war. Returning to Chicago, Henry went to work as a postal worker. He also founded the Society for Human Rights. It is considered the first formal homosexual-rights organization in the United States. The organization distributed a publication "Friendship and Freedom." Yet due to repression, only two issues were ever produced. The publication's outspoken stance on homosexual rights led the police to arrest Henry and the other founders of the society. The police confiscated his papers as evidence. The men stayed in jail for three days. Gerber would face three separate trials relating to his work for homosexual rights. Although he was never convicted, his defense drained his finances. Then he lost his job for alleged "conduct unbecoming a postal worker." The Society was effectively crushed. Gerber rejoined the Army, working as an editor and proofreader for Army publications for nearly two decades. It was not until 1998 that President Bill Clinton signed Executive Order 13087. That order extended protection from discrimination based on sexual orientation to US Postal Service workers.



DATE	Sunday, April 29, 2018
TIME	1:00 to 5:00 pm
PLACE	Howard Mohr Community Center 7640 Jackson Boulevard Forest Park, IL 60130
ADMISSION	\$15.00 per person, tickets available at https://www.eventbrite.com/e/may-day-tickets-43498707806?aff=efbevent

In 1886 during a peaceful rally in support of workers striking for an eight-hour day and in reaction to the killing of several workers the previous day by the police. An unknown person threw a bomb at police as they acted to disperse the public meeting. The police panicked, and in the darkness, many shot at their own men. Eventually, seven policemen died, only one directly accountable to the bomb. Four workers were also killed.

Eight men, representing a cross-section of the labor movement were selected to be tried. On August 20, 1886, the jury reported its verdict of guilty with the death penalty by hanging for seven of the Haymarket Eight, and 15 years of hard labor for Oscar Neebe. The national and worldwide pressure did finally force the Governor to change the sentences of Samuel Fielden and Michael Schwab to imprisonment for life. Although 5 of the 8 were still to be hung the next day, on the morning of November 10, Louis Lingg was found in his cell, his head half blown away by a dynamite cap.

Forest Park Illinois is proud to be the final resting place for seven of the eight Haymarket Martyrs. Radicals still choose to be buried alongside the Haymarket Martyrs, referred to as Radical Row, including Lucy Parsons, Emma Goldman, and Ben Reitman. The Haymarket Martyrs Monument became a National Historic Landmark in 1997,

To celebrate our historical connection to International May Day, the Historical Society of Forest Park will present a Sunday afternoon of food, history, music, and fun at Howard Mohr Community Center. Tickets include a buffet of German food with vegan options. Musical performances by Jon Langford and Al Scorch.

Both the Howard Mohr Community Center and the Haymarket Martyrs Monument are a short walk from the Forest Park CTA blue line stop. A shuttle bus will be available between the community center and monument.

The following organizations and business will have tables during the event

Illinois Labor History Society
Centuries and Sleuths Bookstore
Girls Rock Chicago!
League of Women Voters Oak Park-River Forest
Beer Sponsored by Revolution Brewery

MEMPHIS 50 YEARS LATER

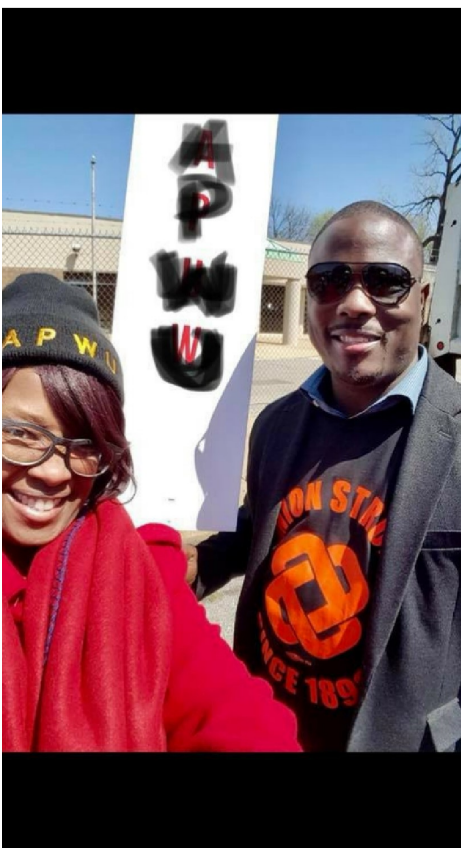


**by Keith Richardson,
President of APWU
Chicago Area Local
0001 and ILHS Board
Member**

I had the pleasure of attending the MLK50th anniversary of the death of Dr. Martin Luther King. It was very inspiring to me to see people from all walks of life young and old, black, brown, and white gathering to celebrate an individual whose ultimate sacrifice brought together so many. It's ironic that the times we're living in, the age of Black Lives Matter, MeToo, gender biasness in the workplace, constant misuse of police powers mainly against people of color and what have you. Makes you wonder how far we've come and how far we have to go. I ask myself what would Dr. King have to say about our nation today if he was still alive? How would he react? What questions would he have and how would folks respond? Makes you wonder. All of the speakers and performers were great!

I was honored to have been able to March with some many folks from various labor organizations from around the country as well from the leadership of my own union the American Postal Workers Union.

Pictured below are pictures Keith took while in Memphis.



Donate today! Login on to illinoislaborhistory.org





Gravestone for Nina Van Zandt Spies



Show your support by going to this link

[gf.me/u/hsj7uc](https://www.gofundme.com/u/hsj7uc)

Nina Van Zandt Spies was the widow of Haymarket Martyr, August Spies. She was educated at Vassar College and fell in love with August Spies during the Haymarket trial. She helped August Spies write his autobiography and was disinherited by her wealthy aunt because of Nina Spies' politics. Since her death in 1936, her burial

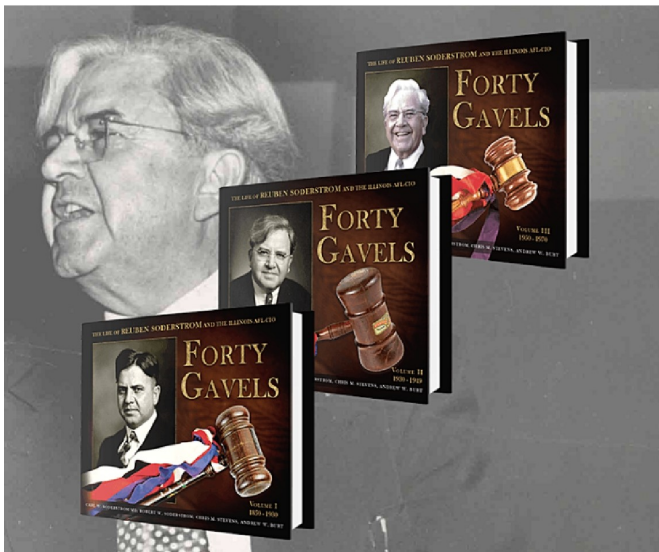
site was never marked. In the midst of updating the booklet, *The Day Will Come*, author Mark Rogovin discovered the precise location of her grave. ILHS is working with the cemetery to place a marker for her. We are raising funds, and will plan an event to unveil the new gravestone as soon as it is finished being made.

FOURTY GAVELS

THE LIFE OF RUBEN SODERSTROM AND THE ILLINOIS AFL-CIO

By Carl Soderstrom, MD, Robert Soderstrom, Andres Burt, and Chris Stevens

Forty Gavels is the groundbreaking, three-volume biography of the American Labor Movement's legendary leader, Reuben G. Soderstrom. As President of the Illinois State Federation of Labor and the Illinois AFL-CIO from 1930 to 1970--receiving a gavel for every year of his leadership--Soderstrom led one of the nation's largest labor organizations through the most challenging, exciting, and impactful events of the twentieth century. From the horrors and sacrifice of the Great Depression and World War II to the triumphs of post-war recovery, the great merger of the AFL-CIO and on to the struggles and successes of the Civil Rights Movement, Soderstrom was there, forging a legacy as organized labor's most prolific voice. Adopting a year-by-year study of these years, this three-volume biography follows him to violent front-line strikes, rowdy union meetings in Chicago, and policy summits at the White House, making Forty Gavels one of the most in-depth studies of the American Labor Movement ever made.



20% Discount with Union Membership

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Order at <http://www.fortygavels.com/>

Do you have an event coming up?

EMAIL US AT ILABORHISTORYS@GMAIL.COM TO GET IT ON OUR CALENDER OF EVENTS!



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PULLMAN NATIONAL MONUMENT LABOR DAY 2018

Monday September 3, 2018

Save the Date

JOIN US FOR A FAMILY FUN DAY CELEBRATING LABOR DAY IN PULLMAN.

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Grandson of labor leader and 40 year president of the AFL-CIO, Reuben Soderstorm

CHRIS STEVENS

Reporter for The Labor Paper

MIKE MATEJKA

Labor scholar and Legislative Affairs Director for the Great Plains Laborers District Council

Sat, May 6 | 2 PM

**PEORIA
RIVERFRONT MUSEUM**

Panel Discussion: History of Labor in Illinois

Sun, May 6 | 2 pm

Peoria Riverfront Museum

Giant Screen Theater

222 SW Washington St, Peoria, IL 61602

Illinois was an important contributor to the Labor Movement. Learn about the key events in Illinois' history that led to safer working conditions for all, and the growth of the labor unions. Reception with coffee and light refreshments to follow.

Panelists Include:

Dr. Carl Soderstorm - grandson of labor leader and 40 year president of the AFL-CIO, Reuben Soderstorm

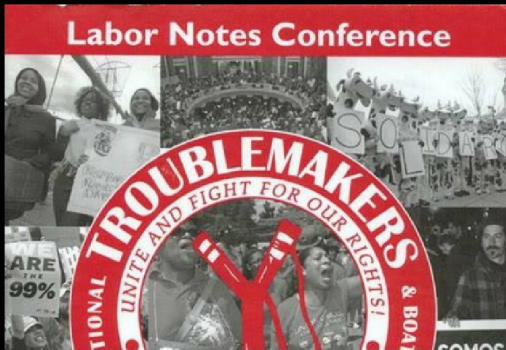
Chris Stevens - reporter for The Labor Paper

Mike Matejka - labor scholar and Legislative Affairs Director for the Great Plains Laborers District Council

Free for members & with general admission.

More info also available at the Museum or by phone: 309.686.7000.

At this year's Labor Notes Conference from Thursday, April 5th to Monday, April 9th, ILHS was proud to lead 3 labor history tours and have a book table at the conference.



Pictured below: (Top Left) Our resident Lucy Parsons, Alma Washington, spoke at the Haymarket Martyr's Memorial. (Bottom Left) Our book table at the convention. (Top Right) Julia Berkowitz led the Women's Labor Tour on Friday. (Bottom Right) A group shot of the international delegation at the Haymarket Martyrs' Monument from the Monday tour.



FILM REVIEW

AMERICAN SOCIALIST: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF EUGENE V. DEBS, DIRECT BY YALE STROM, 2018.

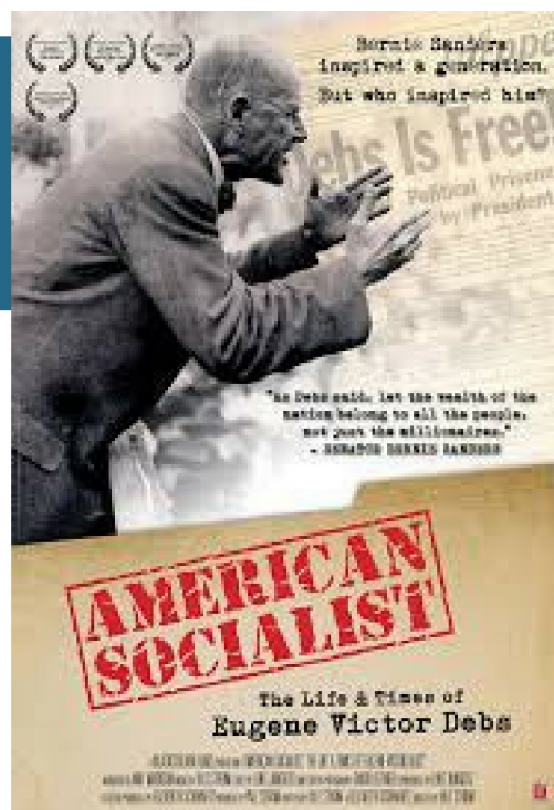
Reviewed by Tom Suhrbur, Illinois Education Association Retired

This independent film was recently screened at the Gene Siskel Film Center of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. A film of Eugene V. Debs is not only long overdue but it is extremely timely given Bernie Sander's 2016 presidential campaign, the concentration of wealth and power in the U.S. and an increasing interest in socialism. Membership in the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) has dramatically increased since 2016.

The film is long overdue. It is an excellent (and sorely needed) documentary of the life of Eugene Debs. Hopefully, it will spark more discussion on socialism and democratic ideals in the U.S. It does a good job of chronicling the life of Debs. It includes great photos and film clips of Debs and others.

Debs was a humanist; he believed that socialism was the vehicle to create a democratic and just society. Though he had read Marxist literature, he spoke of socialism in terms of American political and religious traditions. He was extremely likeable and generous almost to a fault. Even his critics respected him as a person. He never wavered in his faith that history was on the side of socialism. As with any political philosophy, socialism means different things to different people. For Debs, capitalism created economic inequality. It concentrated wealth and power in the hands of the few; socialism meant economic and social justices. For Debs, socialism was the natural outcome of American democratic traditions. He remained optimistic that socialism would triumph in the end.

The film does not adequately cover the Pullman Strike in which Cleveland Administration used the federal court troops to break the strike and destroy the American Railroad Union. Debs broke with the Democratic Party and became a socialist while incarcerated in a Woodstock county jail for refusing to call off



the strike. It was a turning point in his life. The film makes a very interesting point that there was considerable support for socialism in rural Texas, Kansas and elsewhere - now bulwarks of Trumpism. The film does not explore why socialism has lost its appeal in rural America. If the political left is going to prosper today, it needs to develop a message that resonates in rural America. The film is not intended to be a political analysis of American socialism. It did not answer the question of why socialism failed to remain a powerful political movement after W.W. I. Government oppression on behalf of corporate interests contributed to that decline; the role of ethnic, racial and religious diversity in undermining class solidarity as well as the cultural divisions between urban and rural America certainly played a role. We need to discuss this question if a progressive left agenda is going to survive and thrive.

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and join the growing list of 2018 supporters to help keep labor history alive!

- | | | |
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FREE hands-on learning event with our local building construction trades!

Sun, May 6 | 1-4 pm



Sponsored by The Better Built® Network and our Peoria area building and construction trades.



Free hands-on family friendly outdoor learning event!

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Sun, May 6, 1-4 pm

Washington Street in front of the Peoria Riverfront Museum

222 SW Washington St, Peoria, IL 61602

Celebrate Illinois hands-on with Central Illinois building and construction trades experts and apprentices! This special family friendly event encourages visitors of all ages to try bricklaying, bending sheet metal - even driving heavy machinery and more!

Among the many activities, visitors will be able to try out a jackhammer, survey equipment, virtual reality goggles, and other tools of the trade, as well as using materials - hammer, bend, and form sheet metal into various shapes, lay bricks and more!

Operating Engineers Local 649 will be hosting a Mobile Training Unit with special heavy equipment experience where visitors can learn to operate actual contraction equipment and talk to current Operating Engineer Apprentices.

Examine projects that have been fabricated by our members over the years and talk with experts.

Trades represented

Plasterers & Cement Masons

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Laborers

Painters

Bricklayers

Sheet Metal

Electricians

Plumbers & Pipefitters

Sponsored by The Better Built® Network and our Peoria area building and construction trades



Illinois Labor History Society

Membership Form



Renew your membership in the Illinois Labor History Society. The **Standard ILHS membership** (\$30 annually) includes: quarterly "Reporter" newsletter, invitations to special events throughout the year and email updates about ILHS activities and programs. Your **Silver ILHS membership** includes: standard membership, an exclusive ILHS Magnet and an exclusive ILHS car decal. Your **Gold ILHS membership** includes: standard and silver membership packages plus a book of your choice from the bookstore.

To join as an individual or to affiliate your local union, complete this form and send it with a check to our office, or renew online at www.illinoislaborhistory.org.

To support ILHS, I want to:

_____ Renew my membership Standard Silver Gold (please check one)

_____ Become an individual standard member (\$30 annually)

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Return this Form To:

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#ILHLives

Our Mission Statement

It shall be the Purpose of the Illinois Labor History Society to encourage the preservation and study of labor history materials of the Illinois Region, and to arouse public interest in the profound significance of the past to the present.



ILLINOIS LABOR HISTORY SOCIETY
430 S MICHIGAN AVE
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CHICAGO, IL 60605

Or Current Resident

The day will come when our silence will be more powerful than the voice you are throttling today."
August Spies, 1855-1887