

Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society
November 16, 2003

Prelude *Bread and Roses*
women's chorus

Welcome - Ken Skog, President

Chalice Lighting - Ruth Calden
from *Packing House Daughter* by Cheri Register
tales of the 1959 meat packers' strike in Albert Lea, Minnesota

Silent Meditation

Hymn 318 - *We Would Be One*
accompanist, Aileen Nettleton

Children's Story - *The Hard-Times Jar* - by Ethel Footman Smothers
Doleta Chapru, introduction; Paula Pachciarz, reader

Song *Shalom Havayreem* children go downstairs

Joys and Concerns

Justice in the Workplace

Introduction - Doleta Chapru

Song *Joe Hill* text by Alfred Hayes, music by Earl Robinson
Joe Hill was a labor activist executed in Utah, November 19, 1915.

Panel

Al Nettleton, Susan Hagstrom, Bob Durkin, Jack Jallings, Rick Ruecking

Congregation stories of collective and individual labor action.

Offering

Introduction of Guests and Visitors
Prairie Announcements

Responsive Reading, Page 567 *To Be of Use* by Marge Piercy
led by Warren Hagstrom

Joe Hill

I dreamed I saw Joe Hill last night
Alive as you and me;
Says I, "But Joe, you're ten years dead."
"I never died," says he.
"I never died," says he.

"In Salt Lake, Joe, by God," says I
Him standing by my bed.
"They framed you on a murder charge."
Says Joe, "But I ain't dead,"
Says Joe, "But I ain't dead."

"The copper bosses killed you, Joe,
They shot you, Joe," says I.
"Takes more than guns to kill a man,"
Says Joe, "I didn't die."
Says Joe, "I didn't die."

And standing there as big as life,
And smiling with his eyes,
Joe says, "What they forgot to kill
Went on to organize,
Went on to organize.

"Joe Hill ain't dead," he says to me,
"Joe Hill ain't never died,
Where workingmen are out on strike
Joe Hill is at their side,
Joe Hill is at their side."

"From San Diego up to Main
In every mine and mill,
Where workers strike and organize,"
Says he, "You find Joe Hill,"
Says he, "You find Joe Hill."

I dreamed I saw Joe Hill last night
Alive as you and me.
Says I, "But Joe, you're ten years dead."
"I never died," says he,
"I never died," says he.

Announcements

Acoustics. We are considering ways to deaden the sound and achieve better acoustics in this room. Quilts hung on the back wall are only temporary. If you notice any improvement as a result, please let Larry Nahlik or a Board member know.

Thanksgiving Basket. There is a signup at the greeting table to bring items for a Thanksgiving basket for a family at Allied Drive. Please write your name next to an item and bring it next Sunday (November 23rd). See or call Barb Park if you have questions.

Volunteers Needed. The Membership Committee has a clipboard with signup sheets for volunteers to make coffee, wash dishes, and greet friends and visitors. Coffee is very important to Prairie on Sunday, and so are visitors. Can you help?

The Religious Education program also needs volunteers every Sunday to bring snacks, transport our babysitters, help the teachers, purchase materials, make phone calls, etc. Please see Anne Urbanski after the service if you can support this vital program.

Calendar

Today, Sunday, November 16. Deadline for our *Prairie Fire* newsletter. Please call 661-0776 or e-mail prairieu@execpc.com.

Wednesday, November 19, 6:30 p.m. Spanish Speakers Potluck at Prairie, Info: Rosemary Dorney 238-4382.

Thursday, November 20, 7:00 p.m. Choir rehearsal for the First Unitarian Society (FUS) join Thanksgiving service at FUS. Interested singers are welcome to join rehearsal at FUS.

Next Sunday, November 23, 10:00 a.m. "Death by Legislation."

Wednesday, Nov. 26, 7:30 p.m. Joint Thanksgiving service at FUS.

Heroes in the Workforce
Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society
Sunday, November 16

Interview with Jack Jallings

Because there is a lot of injustice there is a need for unions. In my interview with Jack Jallings, he gave me a primer on workplace conflict in our society.

Under a capitalist system, the ownership of property and resources is primary. It is in the owners' interest to want to keep all their property. However, the production that comes from those resources comes from an investment of labor. It is in the workers interests to share in the gross product. As the owners do not want to part with any of it, the workers must fight to extract a share. In doing so, there is no love lost between factions.

Capitalists do not find it in their interest to share power or nurture social progress. That comes from the people, but the people need resources and time to build civic institutions and enable civil society. Like property, power is something that those who have don't want to share.

Jack was radicalized when he took a factory job to enable his education -- at Harvard Business School. While employed there, he came to recognize inherent conflicts between management and the workers. In the years that followed, labor and the organization of labor was their chosen lot. Jack served as a member organizer with the United Electrical Workers by virtue of working in a phonograph record factory. Most of the issues relate to pay, overtime work, benefits. Issues of dignity, such as toilet breaks, leave, vacation and others follow once the workers are fully organized. He sought to open union membership to racial minorities and women.

The Jallings did not give me any specific instances, but rather described a period in their lives where workplace injustice was met with resistance and resistance met with conflict. Jack lost many jobs -- 8 in one year - because the reputation which he and Betty shared as radicals and rabble-rousers. The common fear of losing one's job is one fear that Jack and Betty learned to overcome.

There also exists physical conflict between the competing issues. Workers were beaten by police or goons and at times the police sent out to stop the

workers and organizers were themselves beaten. Jack was physically threatened outside his home one night. That he understood, but when one man threatened Betty and the children Jack told him that if ANYTHING happened to one of them, this man would be shot. And because he wouldn't give him warning, the man better be prepared to watch over his shoulder until his end. In this case the counter-threat was effective, Betty tells me she is nearing 80 years of age.

Their telephone was tapped by the FBI and Jack, at least, was followed by a man collecting information on him. Jack stopped and asked the man to share coffee with him. He learned that the man did not like his job, his feet hurt, but he needed to keep it until he retired because he didn't think he could otherwise be employed. In another encounter, Jack met a management minion who, also from Harvard, confessed to being both well-paid and afraid of losing his job. I reiterate, the fear of losing their jobs was surmounted by those that risked to do so.

Years later, Jack and Betty filed a Freedom of Information request and had returned to them documentation revealing the most mundane aspects of their lives; i.e., "the Jallings went to the movies" or a meeting or called so and so. It's no surprise to us that nothing un-American was unearthed through these efforts. What is un-American is that they were watched at all.

In later years, Jack rabble-roused employees at the State Historical Society while Betty helped organize at MATC.

Finally, we discussed when labor news becomes newsworthy. Today only disaster stories make the news. The everyday losses that workers suffer (black lung, asbestosis, etc.) only becomes public when it is made newsworthy. But the newsworthiness of all labor news arises only with the development of the union. Without the union to call a clarion bell, the mass of people suffer in silence.

Molly Ivans writes that George Bush really thinks he has earned everything he has.