

Let the Teachers Tell the Story

Federal Child Labor Law Is Held Invalid

Supreme Court Declares It Is Invasion of Local Powers of States

Four Justices Join in Dissenting Opinion

Interstate Commerce Act Intended to Regulate Production, Majority Says

Highest Court Nullifies Child Labor Statute

Chief Justice Delivers the Decision Holding Law Unconstitutional in Encroaching on Powers of the States

Penalty of Excise Tax Is Attacked

Congress Exceeded Authority; No Dissenting Opinion Filed



Peyton Hopkins

COLLECTOR RECORDS 1938

Peyton Hopkins



Let the Teachers Tell the Story

(AND OTHER SONGS FOR THE EDUCATION FAMILY)

Let the teachers tell the story
For the children and the world,
The striving of the workers and the poor,
The fight for peace and justice,
And who the struggle's for.
Let the teachers tell the story
For the children and the world.

SIDE ONE

LET THE TEACHERS TELL THE STORY
CAFETERIA BLUES
SCHOOL SECRETARY
SHE WALTZES HER BROOM
NORMAN

SIDE TWO

THE TEACHERS' STRIKE (tune by Charlie King)
STAND UP FOR YOUR UNION
BILLY'S FRIENDLY FARM
LORD, HELP US START OUR OWN SCHOOL
HEAVENLY HIGH SCHOOL (tune by Joe Glazer)

The Illinois Education Association (IEA-NEA) represents over 60,000 educational employees in the state of Illinois. As the largest, strongest, most democratic union in Illinois and in the United States, IEA-NEA's overall commitment to the struggle of labor, ethnic groups, women, and minorities is unquestioned. This commitment is demonstrated by IEA-NEA's resolutions in support of these struggles and by its internal constitutional structure which guarantees union democracy and minority representation. This has made IEA-NEA one of the few labor organizations consistently led by women and minorities.

Whether it be in its support of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (Campbell Soup Boycott) or support for the rights of unionists in South Africa, IEA-NEA is at the forefront of progressive politics in the U.S. by reflecting the voice of its members. Currently, NEA is carrying out a campaign to encourage an increased study of U.S. labor history in school classrooms.

David Rathke
IEA UniServ Director
Region 5

REFLECTIONS ON THE SOUND OF SOCIAL CHANGE

I learned to play the guitar and sing folk songs back in the early sixties. I liked the pop sound of the Kingston Trio and the Smooth harmonies and rhythms of Peter, Paul, and Mary. I was an eighteen-year-old white male, college-bound student, living in Chicago, and these groups stirred something in me that I didn't understand fully, but that I knew I liked. Then I heard Bob Dylan for the first time. I soon realized that all these musicians had been influenced by Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Leadbelly, and many other folk singers. Later I made the connection between folk music, the blues, bluegrass, and my favorite: the songs of the labor movement.

Within the labor movement there is a whole history of labor music. Union songs tell the stories of battles won and inspire people to action.

Social movements are fueled by their songs. When I remember the Civil Rights Movement I recall people marching and singing together. They often made up new words to old familiar melodies. This is the same technique used in many labor songs. The hymn "Bye and Bye" was rewritten as "Pie in the Sky" by labor troubador Joe Hill. "Glory Halleluia" became "John Brown's Body", an abolitionist hymn sung during the Civil War, and later, "Solidarity Forever", sung during the intense labor organizing campaigns of the first part of this century.

All too often history education suffers from a fatal flaw. It emphasizes presidents, dates, and battles but neglects to tell the story of the progress of the mass of people who used the trade union movement to advance their concerns for social justice. I believe that teachers have the responsibility to give students a more complete understanding of history. We can do that by helping our students learn about the history of the American labor movement.

There are volumes of books available to the teacher who wants to embark on this course. I have found Labor's Untold Story by Richard Boyer and Herbert Morais, Labor Wars by Sidney Lens, and Strike! by Jeremy Brecher very helpful. But beyond the history I would like to suggest that teachers consider using labor music as the hook to get students interested in this important topic. Such study is appropriate to many disciplines.

Who can tell "labor's untold story" better than teachers can? We have the responsibility to tell the story of past labor struggles and to analyze and interpret the struggles of today. Not the least of these is our own.

For almost 140 years, the NEA has advocated positions of importance for educators and education. Although not always considered a "union", our organization has long advocated increased wages and improved working conditions for teachers and educational employees. In the past thirty years, the onset of collective bargaining in the public sector has put teachers at the forefront of the modern labor movement. As our society shifted from "blue collar" to "white collar" to "no collar" predominance, NEA became the largest labor organization in the United States.

It is fitting that Peyton Hopkins, a contemporary song writer with long experience in the labor movement, turn his attention to the teacher movement and memorialize our struggles for pay equity, decent working conditions and quality education in song. With his help we have yet another opportunity to "let the teachers tell the story". Now we must seize the opportunity for ourselves, our students, and our society.

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