

THEY'VE MOVED MY JOB TO GEORGIA Or Was It Tennessee?



Peyton Hopkins

They've Moved My Job To Georgia

SIDE ONE

- Minimum Wage (2:07)
- * They've Moved My Job To Georgia (1:18)
- Down Too Long (3:23)
- * The World's Unwilling Poor (3:20)
- Together We've Got Pride (2:11)

SIDE TWO

- * Unlucky Kentucky Coal Miner's Blues (3:41)
- * We Signed Up Billy Beaumont (2:06)
- Stand Up For Your Union While You Can (2:18)
- John McLaughlin (2:30)
- Silence Ain't Always So Golden (2:15)

- * Harmonica accompaniment by Lee Roth

THEY'VE MOVED MY JOB TO GEORGIA

They've moved my job to Georgia now,
(or was it Tennessee?)
Somewhere without a union
and with taxes almost free.
Where there's a "right to work" law
and abundant poverty.
But what about the right to work for me?

They're taking lots of jobs away
and lots to other lands
Where peasants work for peanuts
and there's lots of willing hands
I wonder what they're thinking
all these run-aways I see.
I've got to say that ain't the way
to keep our country free.

To take away our jobs and homes
and our prosperity
Is asking for a weaker land --
that's how it seems to me.
We built this country from the ground
with opportunity.
But they've moved my job to Georgia now,
or was it Tennessee?

They keep on automating things --
machines replacing men.
But when they get all finished
who will buy their products then?
I don't suppose a body knows
but far as I can see,
At all the stores I used to shop
ain't seen no damn machines replacing me.

This album is made from a portion of a taped live concert. The concert took place in St. Louis, Mo. Proceeds from the concert were used to send local citizens to Washington, D.C. for Solidarity Day.

All songs composed and copyrighted by James Peyton Hopkins

Jacket design by Barbara O'Toole

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Hopkins' portrait by Jim Templeton

Engineering by Paul Stamler

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'Here lies the son of an autoworker
a preacher, a minstrel to labor
a chaser of dreams'

These lines may one day be carved on the headstone at the grave of James Peyton Hopkins, who is very much alive, singing and chasing, still.

His style is that of his famous predecessors — Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger and Joe Hill. Perhaps the only difference is Hopkins' use of the left hand for strumming a guitar.

Hopkins' songs speak simply, directly about working people he is so fond of — who he is part of. In one titled "Minimum Wage" he writes:

*"Working my job in this smoky old factory
is like being neighbors to hell.
The heat from the furnace is melting my muscles
and, God I could gag from the smell."*

Later, the worker-narrator speaks of his boss before delivering the song's punch line:

*"His boy is at Harvard, his daughter's a debutante
though I ain't too sure what that means,
My sons finished high school, sought work for a year,
then found them a job as Marines.
Now it's sinning to envy,
and wronger to covet,
but that ain't the cause for my rage.
It's just that the bastard complains and complains
that he has to pay minimum wage."*

Peyton Hopkins' father was born in the hills of Kentucky, but his labor education came in Detroit where he worked for the Ford Motor Co.

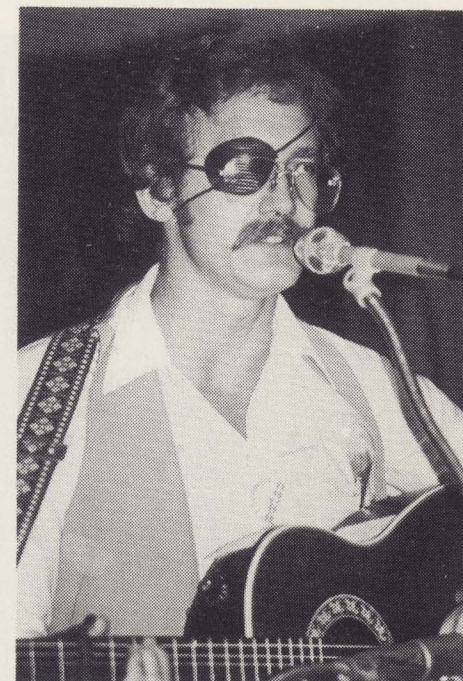
The elder Hopkins was later a sit-down striker as autoworkers made their stand at Ford in 1937, after the sit-downs at General Motors and Chrysler had resulted in representation victories for the United Auto Workers.

After scraping enough money to buy a farm, Hopkins' family moved to Prague, Oklahoma. Farming wasn't so profitable then and the family went broke. Soon after, his father began wildcatting on an oil rig. Peyton remembers his father would "come in and cuss the foreman every night." Two years later, Hopkins' father was working at Douglas Aircraft until the "big lay-off." From there it was the "end of the trail."

After losing his Douglas Aircraft job, Peyton's father opened a bar in Owasso, Oklahoma. Owasso translated from Cherokee means "End of the Trail of Tears." For the Hopkins family, it meant just that. For if it didn't make them rich, it provided them with a decent living for several years.

The elder Hopkins never forgot his labor roots, according to his son. When "right to work (for less)" became an issue in the state Peyton recalls, "Non-Union people would come into the bar and be talking about how wonderful a right to work law would be. My father told them to get out of the bar."

Hopkins, who is 36, has been playing the guitar for 10 years. His music is as much an expression of his sense of injustice, as is his work with the poor and working people. His songs like "Together We've Got Pride" celebrate workers.



Peyton Hopkins

*"We keep the wheels of America turning
We do our jobs and feed our families
Pay our taxes and our dues
We're the backbone of the country
And we're proud our collar's blue."*

Peyton Hopkins is a true believer. He is an idealist who talks pragmatically about what can be done. But he never stops dreaming. "The stated ideals of the union have much in common with the church. They both believe there is a better way of life. Each thinks we ought not to be selfish. Regardless of race or age, we have certain entitlements as human beings."

If those ideals are sometimes lost, Hopkins believes that ultimately working people will one day stand with their brothers. "Our society has sought to turn working class people against the poor instead of the rich. People are not going to buy that anymore. That was proven by Solidarity Day. I think it is time to recapture a spirit of militant unionism in this country, like in Joe Hill's time."

At his execution in 1915 Joe Hill exhorted, "Don't mourn, organize!" These words are taken literally by union organizers ever since. "Movements are always charged by their songs," says Hopkins. "The common man's art is always song."

If you notice a certain sacredness about living in Peyton Hopkins, you are hearing things right. He has a peculiar contract with life because he has been so close to the other side. There was a time when Peyton Hopkins was nearly dead. "I should have died," he said of the explosion that tore off half his face and blinded him in one eye. "I was in a coma for three weeks and even the neuro-surgeon was amazed. I was dead at one point on the operating table. I guess I think about things more on that level. I felt like Lazarus felt. I now feel grateful to be alive."

He has spread that gratitude around — through his song, his words, and his warmth. "I would like to help people live happy and meaningful lives and have a good time in the process," Hopkins said, smiling.

Condensed from an article by Steve Williams in the St. Louis Labor Tribune.

"Hopkins' music won't lull you to sleep. His lyrics are militant in argument and defiant in attitude. These songs have a social and educational function in addition to their entertainment quality."

Marcus J Albrecht

"Each one of his songs is a speech."

Ernest Calloway



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