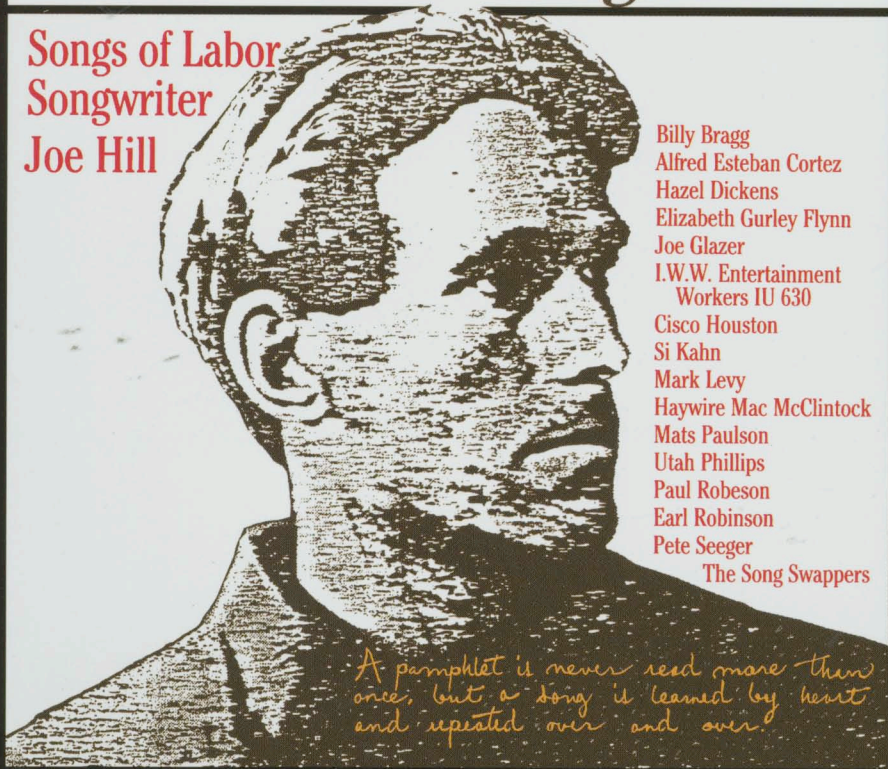


Don't Mourn—Organize!

Songs of Labor
Songwriter
Joe Hill



Billy Bragg
Alfred Esteban Cortez
Hazel Dickens
Elizabeth Gurley Flynn
Joe Glazer
I.W.W. Entertainment
Workers IU 630
Cisco Houston
Si Kahn
Mark Levy
Haywire Mac McClintock
Mats Paulson
Utah Phillips
Paul Robeson
Earl Robinson
Pete Seeger
The Song Swappers

A pamphlet is never read more than once, but a song is learned by heart and repeated over and over.



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DON'T MOURN — ORGANIZE!

Songs of Labor Songwriter Joe Hill

1. **Joe Hill** 8:26
(Phil Ochs) Billy Bragg
2. **Joe Hill's Last Will** 3:15
(Joe Hill) Utah Phillips
3. **Joe Hill's Ashes** 3:22
(Mark Levy) Mark Levy
4. **The Preacher and the Slave** 3:39
(Joe Hill) "Haywire Mac" McClintock
5. **Joe Hill** 2:57
(Alfred Hayes and Earl Robinson) Paul Robeson
6. **Paper Heart** 2:21
(Si Kahn and Charlotte Brody) Si Kahn
7. **Casey Jones—The Union Scab** 2:58 (Joe Hill)
Pete Seeger and the Song Swappers
8. **Mr. Block** 3:00
(Joe Hill) Mats Paulson
9. **Joe Hill Listens to the Praying** 7:20
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11. **Joe Hill** 2:33
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13. **Narrative** 1:06
Elizabeth Gurley Flynn
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(Joe Hill, arranged and adapted with original material
by Hazel Dickens) Hazel Dickens
15. **There Is Power in a Union** 3:16
(Joe Hill) Entertainment Workers IU 630, I.W.W.)

Additional notes enclosed.



Joe Hill (1879-1915) was a labor organizer and songwriter for the Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.). His songs describe labor struggles with strikebreaking ("Casey Jones—The Union Scab"), the plight of the homeless and unemployed ("The Tramp"), the economic base of prostitution ("The White Slave"), and Salvation Army soup kitchens ("The Preacher and the Slave"). His execution for murder in Utah on 19 November 1915 raised Joe Hill to powerful symbolic status within the labor movement, and many songs and poems were subsequently written about him ("Joe Hill," "Joe Hill's Ashes," "Joe Hill Listens to the Praying") by other songwriters and authors. Both as a songwriter and as the subject of songs, Joe Hill continues to be an important figure in United States labor history.

Designed by Daphne Shuttleworth
Produced by Elaine Taylor
Technical Direction by Mickey Hart



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Smithsonian/Folkways SF 40026

INTRODUCTION

Notes by Lori Elaine Taylor, Assistant Archivist, Office of Folklife Programs, Smithsonian Institution

When asked "Did you know Joe Hill?" Mac McClintock replied "Yeah, I knew him well—as well as anybody could be said to know him." When you have listened to this record, you will know Joe Hill—or at least what he has become. Getting to know him is a step in acknowledging our cultural forebears. For many performers—including some of those appearing on this album—learning and perpetuating stories and songs of Joe Hill is a rite of passage.

Who was Joe Hill? The songs, poetry, and spoken word begins to tell you—describing his life, his death, even the disposition of his ashes. As the first song describes, Joe Hill was a Swedish immigrant (born Joel Hagglund, known later as Joseph Hillstrom) who came to the United States in 1901 at the age of 19, worked a variety of jobs across North America and in Hawaii, then joined the Industrial Workers of the World. The I.W.W.—whose members were called Wobblies—a radical new movement committed to the formation of a unified worldwide workers' organization: One Big Union. Joe Hill often signed his letters "Yours for the OBU." He wrote songs reflecting I.W.W. culture and ideology, entertaining his Fellow Workers (as Wobblies addressed one another) while educating them about the evils of strike-breaking ("Casey Jones—The Union Scab"), prostitution ("The White Slave"), and Salvation Army soup kitchens ("The Preacher and the Slave"). He usually wrote songs at the piano, which he called "rattling the music box," but he also played the violin, accordion, and guitar. In a letter to the editor of *Solidarity*, from the Salt Lake County Jail, Joe Hill told why he wrote songs as organizing tools:

"A pamphlet, no matter how good, is never read more than once, but a song is learned by heart and repeated over and over; and I maintain that if a person can put a few cold, common sense facts into a song, and dress them up in a cloak of humor to take the dryness off of them, he will succeed in reaching a great number of workers who are too unintelligent or too indifferent to read a pamphlet or an editorial on economic science.

"There is one thing that is necessary in order to hold the old members and to get the would-be members interested in the class struggle and that is entertainment" (29 November 1914).

Utah authorities arrested Joe Hill in 1914 for the murder of grocery store owner John Morrison and his son Arling. He was tried and convicted on less than con-

vincing evidence. His supporters considered the charges a class-oriented conspiracy to quiet an instrument of the growing union. The case had already attracted widespread publicity while Joe Hill waited in jail for the justice he expected, but after he was executed 19 November 1915 it attained a powerful symbolic status within the labor movement. Thirty thousand mourners wearing crimson and singing songs of battle attended his funeral. The day after Joe Hill's death, one journalist wondered whether his martyrdom might not "make Hillstrom dead much more dangerous to social stability than he was when alive" (*New York Times*, 20 November 1915). The point was insightful. The I.W.W. certainly used the indignity of Joe Hill's death to rally members. Now, after 75 years the name Joe Hill is not known as widely as his influence is felt. Joe Hill is a model and an inspiration for those who still work to organize through music.

The day before his execution, Joe Hill wrote to Wobly leader Big Bill Haywood, "Don't waste any time mourning—organize!" Tradition has shortened his request to "Don't Mourn—Organize!" It is, though, precisely through the rituals of mourning and commemoration that singers, speakers, and artists have organized their audiences. Performers participate in a dynamic musical and political tradition by perpetuating Joe Hill's ideals and following his example. The songs, the images, the legends and memories of Joe Hill—and other songwriters within this tradition—are used to forge a sense of community.

Singers often repeat stories about Joe Hill to provide a framework for their own performances. These stories are spread through songs and narratives, circulated by means of live performances, or films and recordings, or books and articles. Whatever the medium, these works educate the listener and convey the performers' respect and affection for their heroes; a spirit of solidarity is engendered among those who participate, sharing knowledge and singing together.

The songwriters who followed Joe Hill are links on a chain of political music, as Pete Seeger wrote in his autobiography (*The Incomplete Folksinger*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972): Woody Guthrie wrote "Joe Hillstrom"; Bob Dylan wrote "Song for Woody"; Phil Ochs wrote "Bound for Glory" (about Woody Guthrie) and "Joe Hill" (to the traditional tune Woody Guthrie borrowed for his "Tom Joad"); and Billy Bragg wrote "Phil Ochs" (based on a song about Joe Hill). Songs and stories by performers about their heroes continue to link musical and political traditions among musicians including those above, Pete Seeger, Si Kahn, Hazel Dickens, Utah Phillips, and many others.

Joe Hill alone does not bring together the artists assembled in this collection. Any

strong image—an engaging life story such as Joe Hill's or a moving event like his death by firing squad—can be the occasion for people with similar concerns to share ideas expressed in song, theater, or works of art. The lives of the songwriters and performers represented here are intertwined not just in musical influences but in social, musical and other activities. These artists travel in and out of common concerns for workers' rights, love of music, and oftentimes stories and songs of Joe Hill.

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*Songs not printed here are available in *The Little Red Songbook* from the Industrial Workers of the World, 3435 North Sheffield, Room 202, Chicago, Illinois 60657.*

1. "Joe Hill" (Phil Ochs/©1966 Barricade Music, ASCAP)
Billy Bragg guitar and vocals
Wiggy slide guitar
Chris Thompson 5-string banjo
Recorded 11 December 1989 at Cathouse Studios, London.
Engineered by Step Parikian
Produced by Grant Showbiz

Phil Ochs believed in music as a political weapon. The political importance of music is certainly implied by the attention government has paid him and other musicians. Phil Ochs was a talented and prolific songwriter, and he appears as a performer on several Folkways records. Phil Ochs recorded "Joe Hill" for his *Tape from California* (A&M SP 4148)—and Ramblin' Jack Elliott played guitar on the song. It was first published, as were many of his works, in *Broadside* magazine (No. 76, November 1966: 5). Ten of the original 22 verses are printed with music in the latest edition of *The Little Red Songbook*.

Billy Bragg exemplifies the convergence of political music influences. He learned Joe Hill's "There Is Power in a Union" from Utah Phillips' *We Have Fed You All*

a Thousand Years (Philo 1076) and wrote his own song of the same title. He learned the Robinson/Hayes song "Joe Hill" from a recording of Paul Robeson then contemporized the song by writing "Phil Ochs" Bragg and Pete Seeger recently recorded an updated version of revolutionary anthem "The Internationale." He has worked with Si Kahn and Hazel Dickens—most recently performing with Dickens for the United Mine Workers of America during the Pittston coal miners' strike in November 1989. Billy Bragg sings 21 verses here.

2. "Joe Hill's Last Will" (Joe Hill) Utah Phillips narration
Recorded 1976 at the Festival of American Folklife, Working Americans Program, Smithsonian Institution.
Digitally remastered by Air Show, Springfield, Virginia.

Bruce "Utah" Phillips is from Utah, where he was the State Archivist until he found he no longer had a job after he ran for the Senate in 1968 as the Peace and Freedom Party candidate, endorsed by Eugene McCarthy and supported by the National Democratic Party over the official Democratic candidate. He continues his political activity, particularly through labor organizing and singing for the I.W.W.

He recorded this narrative as a participant in the 1976 Working Americans Program of the Smithsonian Institution's Festival of American Folklife. The sounds of the audience, passers-by, and even airplanes become part of the listeners' sound experience. In the narrative itself, Phillips introduces the audience not just to Joe Hill and his will but to labor history. Stories and anecdotes are part of the typical framing of a song through which the singer connects audience, song, and subject.

3. "Joe Hill's Ashes" (Mark Levy/©1989 Mark A. Levy, ASCAP)
Mark Levy guitar and vocals
Recorded by Jon Tyler, 6 February 1990 at The Leonard Carmichael Auditorium, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.
Digitally mastered by Air Show, Springfield, Virginia.

On 1 May 1916 Joe Hill's ashes were sent to the wind by Wobblies across the United States and in several other countries. The ashes had been divided and put into envelopes with his "Last Will" on one side: "My body? Oh! If I could choose, I would to ashes it reduce. . ." The envelopes were sent to I.W.W. locals and to every continent. But several envelopes slipped through the distribution system—tucked away in songbooks or confiscated by government officials. Stories of envelopes found and released in private ceremonies circulate among Wobblies and others, but the story of at least one envelope of Joe Hill's ashes has been well documented and has become rather well known. The envelope was first confiscated when a mail handler

feared its "subversive nature." Eventually the envelope was sent to the National Archives' records of the Post Office Department.

When the story of the lost envelope spread, the I.W.W. requested that the ashes be returned to the union. They were, though the envelope remains in the Archives. Utah Phillips and Fellow Worker Fred Lee accepted the ashes for the union. Mark Levy learned of the story from Jimmy Kelly, a letter carrier from Santa Cruz, California, and an organizer of the Western Workers Labor Heritage Festival, where Levy first performed this song in 1989.

Let's sing of Joseph Hillstrom, better known as old Joe Hill,
Murdered by a firing squad, shot but never killed.

His will said that his ashes be strewn across the land
So flowers that refuse to die will rise up strong and stand.

We sing his songs to fan the flames
And talk about him much.
The ashes of this rebel voice
Are still too hot to touch.

Joe's corpse lay in Chicago where thirty thousand marched.
They flew the Wobly banner—high above the throng it arched.
The workers sang and cheered his name, they did not eulogize.
They honored Joe Hill's last request:
Don't mourn, organize.

And the union took Joe's body, which then they did then cremate,
His ashes stuffed in envelopes and mailed to every state.
Except, of course, to Utah, for Joe had clearly said,
"Don't leave me here in Utah; there I wouldn't be caught dead."

Then someone in the mailroom discovered what was up.
The postmaster was summoned the mailing to disrupt.
An envelope tore open in the cancelling machine.
'Twas just Joe's way of saying automata is obscene.

With patriotic fervor the postmaster was seized.
He treated that poor envelope as if it was diseased.
He said, "I won't deliver such subversive mail."
So for a while Joe had to wait in some dead letter file.

At long last the Post Office sent Joe's ashes to D.C.,
To the Archives like an artifact of ancient history.
The Wobblies in Chicago asked that he be sent home.
They wouldn't see him catalogued down in that catacomb.

So Joe's back with the Wobblies, and thus concludes my tale.
But if there is a moral, I might say, "Don't trust the mail."
We'll build that One Big Union before

Joe's ash gets cold.
And we'll bring to birth a new world from the ashes of the old.

4. "The Preacher and the Slave"

(words: Joe Hill, music: J. P. Webster/1911)
Harry K. McClintock vocals
Interview by Sam Eskin
Recorded 3 February 1951 in San Pedro, California.
From *Haywire Mac* (Folkways FD 5272), originally released 1972.

Known also as "Pie in the Sky" and "The Long-haired Preacher Song," this was the first of twenty-five of Joe Hill's songs and poems to appear between 1911 and 1916 in the I.W.W.'s Little Red Songbook (*I.W.W.: songs to fan the flames of discontent*, a collection of songs popular among Wobblies and in a format small enough to fit in a pocket). The phrase "pie in the sky," which he popularized, is perhaps his greatest contribution to our common language.

Haywire Mac McClintock (1882-1957) worked and travelled throughout Africa, Asia, Europe, the Pacific, and North America. He told stories of his association with Joe Hill: they organized in Portland, Oregon, in 1910; lived in a shack on the beach in Hilo, Hawaii, during the winter of 1910/11; then met again in Utah where McClintock worked and eventually married before he moved on. McClintock fought actively in the 1913 strike in Tucker, Utah, after which workers claimed in a *Solidarity* (an I.W.W. newspaper) editorial that Utah Wobblies were being jailed on flimsy charges—two weeks before Joe Hill was arrested 13 January 1914. McClintock wrote stories for magazines and eventually became a radio and recording personality with his own show in San Francisco.

Sam Eskin gathered a large archive of music and narrative using his own singing as a collecting tool. From the Eskin interviews with Mac McClintock, folklorist Archie Green edited the Folkways record *Haywire Mac*, including narratives such as this one in which McClintock claims to have been the first person to sing "The Preacher and the Slave" in public, during the I.W.W. free speech fights.

5. "Joe Hill" (words: Alfred Hayes, music: Earl Robinson/© 1938 MCA Music, ASCAP)
Paul Robeson vocals
Alan Booth piano
From *Freedom Songs* (Topic Records Top 62), originally released 1961.

When Earl Robinson and Paul Robeson came together to rehearse Robinson's "Ballad for Americans" in 1939, Robeson told him, "I know one of your songs." He had learned "Joe Hill" in the Workers' Theatre in England fewer than three years after it was written.

From his professional concert debut in 1925, Paul Robeson introduced international audiences to spirituals and other non-commercial American songs.

Among his standards was "Joe Hill," and his was the version that touched a wide, popular audience.

Because of this song in particular, the story of Joe Hill has continued to touch a large audience. Robeson himself was influenced by the story. A boyhood friend ended his eulogy of Robeson by paraphrasing a line which the singer used to close his rendition of "Joe Hill": "Don't mourn for me, but live for freedom's cause." The words Joe Hill wrote filtered through oral and written tradition as a call to battle, as here for civil rights. *Freedom Songs*, released in 1961, came out after Robeson's career had peaked and when his image had been damaged by blacklisting in the 1950s. He lived abroad that year, in England and on the continent. Despite failing health, his reputation was strong enough to support this release after something of a resurgence in his popularity in the late 1950s, partially because of publication of his popular book *Here I Stand* in 1958. Recently a comprehensive biography, *Paul Robeson*, was published (Martin B. Duberman. New York: Knopf, 1988).

I dreamed I saw Joe Hill last night,
Alive as you or me.
Says I, "But, Joe, you're ten years dead."
"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."

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

And standing there as big as life,
And smiling with his eyes,
Joe says, "What they could never kill
Went on to organize."

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

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

6. "Paper Heart" (Si Kahn and Charlotte Brody with text by David MacIntosh/© 1990 Joe Hill Music, ASCAP)
Si Kahn guitar and vocals
Recorded by Marc Johnson, 3 February 1990 live in concert in Charleston, South Carolina.
Produced by Laura Parenteau, Edmund Robinson, Bart Saylor, and Charleston Folk.

"Paper Heart" recalls the paper target pinned on Joe Hill's chest when he was executed by a firing squad. It was written in 1976 for *200rpm*, a musical history of the United States from the grassroots up. The musical was performed by the Play Group in Knoxville, Tennessee and later by the Labor Theatre in New York and others. The song does not refer to Joe

Hill by name, though its original title was "Joe Hill," but tells the listener, "I guess you know his name."

For Si Kahn, Joe Hill epitomizes the integrated role of union organizer, songwriter and singer—Kahn's music publishing company, Joe Hill Music, is a constant reminder of his model. Following Joe Hill's example, Kahn uses music as an integral part of his organizing activities, in civil rights and currently with Grassroots Leadership, always seeking to empower the outsider, the working person, and the poor. He has also written a popular book, *Organizing: A Guide for Grassroots Leaders* (McGraw-Hill, 1982).

Recorded songs often do not reflect the communal nature of music. Music sung in a group, whether at a union hall, in a church, or in a concert, brings an audience together with a feeling of solidarity, of collective power. In this live performance, Si Kahn taught his audience the song and then invited them to sing along—giving them the story of Joe Hill in a form they can easily carry with them and repeat, as Joe Hill wrote, over and over.

There's a long, long line of people
Trying to keep from crying
There's always someone dying
But today's just not the same
There's a man shot dead in Utah
With a paper heart pinned on him
Framed up without pardon
I guess you know his name

You say you saw him out last night
But I hear him every day
In the voices of the people
In the songs they sing and play
They framed him up and they shot him down
This whole wide world's his burying ground
But the songs of the working people
Are his marking stone

If heaven is One Big Union
I know that's where I'll find him
Playing cards with Big Bill Haywood
Telling jokes with Mother Jones
Casey Jones and long-haired preachers
Mr. Block and Scissor Bill
"Sent to hell a-flying"
By songs no one can kill

7. "Casey Jones—The Union Scab" (words: Joe Hill, music: Eddie Walter Newton/1912)
Pete Seeger banjo and vocals
The Song Swappers vocals (Mary Travers, Zoe Collimore, Dave Sear, Nancy Kurtz, Debbie Hand, and others)
From *Talking Union* (Folkways FH 5285), originally released 1955.

Workers used the songs in the Little Red Songbook as organizing tools: by using popular tunes, I.W.W. songwriters could be sure Fellow Workers were familiar with the new union songs. Often a particular group of workers would request that a song be written, and the songwriter would oblige. Joe Hill wrote, by request and on his own, several songs for specific fights: "Where the Fraser River Flows," for construction workers in

British Columbia, "It's a Long Way Down to the Soupline," contrasting the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco with the depressed conditions existing outside the fair, and "Casey Jones—the Union Scab," written for strikers on the Harriman and Illinois Central Railroad system, which includes the Southern Pacific. In this parody, Joe Hill changed the popular Casey Jones from a hero to a scab, and the parody itself has remained at least as popular as the original.

Pete Seeger has been actively spreading songs of labor and social protest for over fifty years, lending his support by performing, recording, speaking, and serving on committees. In the fall of 1941, Seeger was a member of the Almanac Singers with Lee Hays, Millard Lampell, and Woody Guthrie, when Elizabeth Gurley Flynn brought to them a case containing a few of Joe Hill's private papers, making tangible the link between the organizing and songwriting of the Wobblies and that of the Almanacs.

The Song Swappers performed with Pete Seeger on four Folkways albums. Many of the Song Swappers attended high school together and formed a group under the direction of Bob DeCormier. One of the Song Swappers, Mary Travers was later a member of Peter, Paul and Mary.

8. "Mr. Block" (words: Joe Hill, music: "It Looks to Me Like a Big Time Tonight"/1913)

Mats Paulson guitar and vocals
Recorded 1 October 1968 at Europa Film Studio.
Produced by Gunnar Bergstrom
From *Songs and Letters of Joe Hill* (Sonet SLP 20), originally released in Sweden 1968.

"Mr. Block," a comic strip character created by Ernest Hebe, first appeared in the I.W.W.'s *Industrial Worker* on 7 November 1912 as a weekly strip, deriding the values that blocked working class emancipation. On 13 January 1913, Joe Hill's song appeared in place of the strip, recounting several episodes from previous strips. An opening line like "Please give me your attention" or "Fellow Workers pay attention to what I'm going to mention" ("Where the Fraser River Flows"), could be used in street singing to demand attention as the singer began.

Mats Paulson was not the first to sing Joe Hill's songs in Sweden, but Paulson was the first to record them in the original English versions. He learned the songs from Joe Glazer's *Songs of Joe Hill* (Folkways 2039). He tells the story: "In 1972 a tall American stood outside my door. 'Are you Mats Paulson? I'm Joe Glazer.' I couldn't believe it! Joe Glazer! It was Joe Glazer, my Joe Hill song teacher." Glazer had learned of Paulson from *Songs and Letters of Joe Hill*. When Glazer went through Sweden on a tour with the United States Information Agency, they visited the house in Gävle where Hill had grown up. In 1968, when Paulson released the record, Joe Hill was

well known throughout the country. Paulson sang extensively for the Swedish labor party and also travelled with an exhibit on Hill. During this time he sang the songs for his wife's 90 year old grandfather, who told Paulson he had worked in the U.S. for forty years (on the Southern Pacific railroad, like Casey Jones) and he had met Joseph Hillstrom. Mats Paulson is a painter and songwriter who has released 16 records, most of his own songs and poetry. One of his songs, "A Summerwind and an Open Window," was performed on Broadway in 1989.

9. "Joe Hill Listens to the Praying"

(Kenneth Patchen/© 1935 International Publishers)

Joe Glazer narration
Recorded by Jon Tyler, 29 January 1990 at Radio Smithsonian Studios.
Digitally mastered by Air Show, Springfield, Virginia.

After Kenneth Patchen worked in a steel mill, in a rubber factory, as a migrant field worker, and as a janitor, he began to publish his poetry in left-wing periodicals. "Joe Hill Listens to the Praying" first appeared in *The New Masses* (20 November 1934: 8-9) for the 19th anniversary of Joe Hill's death. The next year it was published in *Proletarian Literature in the United States: An Anthology* (New York: International Publishers, 1935: 179-80); a fragment of Alfred Hayes' poem "I Dreamed I Saw Joe Hill Again" also appeared in this anthology in an article on "The Wobly in American Literature" (Alan Calmer, 340-45). The Patchen piece was more avant-garde compared to the traditional rhyme and verse of the Hayes piece, but both poems reached only a limited audience—until the summer of 1936 when Earl Robinson composed music for Alfred Hayes' poem and the song "Joe Hill" was born, claiming "I never died said he" while keeping Joe Hill's name alive. Patchen's poem invokes the power the events and personalities mentioned here had for the 1930s. Patchen asserts solidarity with the I.W.W. and other rebels in American history by saying, WE are the real patriots.

Patchen received a Guggenheim Fellowship for his first book of verse in 1936. In the 1950s Beats embraced him and his innovation of reading poetry with jazz accompaniment, but he remained determinedly independent. He won great critical praise, and the simple passion of his picture poems is timeless. He recorded four records for Folkway. In his home state of Ohio, enthusiasts hold an annual Kenneth Patchen Festival.

Many singers, Mats Paulson among them, learned Joe Hill's songs from Joe Glazer's *Songs of Joe Hill* (Folkways 2039). Glazer has been active in the folk revival and trade union music movements since the 1950s. He is currently chairman of The Labor Heritage Foundation, an organization which seeks to raise awareness of workers' culture.

10. "The Tramp" (words: Joe Hill, music: George Frederick Root/1913)

Cisco Houston guitar and vocals
From *Cisco Houston Sings Songs of the Open Road* (Folkways FW 2480), originally released 1960.
Part of the mission of the Industrial Workers of the World was to organize those unskilled workers whom larger unions considered outside their scope. Many Wobblies migrated seasonally; some stayed in "jungles" near the railroads. These workers were sometimes referred to as "tramps," but today we would probably just call them homeless. This struggle has not ended, so the song continues to have relevance to current issues.

Cisco Houston spent a lot of time traveling himself, not tramping but singing. When Cisco was twenty-one years old he met twenty-seven year old Woody Guthrie. They sang and travelled together across the country and later joined the Merchant Marines during World War II. Cisco performed on Broadway, television, radio, and in bit parts in Hollywood Westerns. After he died in 1961, young songwriters included him in the pantheon of folksong revival heroes. In "Song for Woody" Bob Dylan wrote: "Here's to Cisco, and Sonny, and Leadbelly, too," referring also to Sonny Terry and Huddie Ledbetter. Tom Paxton and Peter LaFarge each wrote songs specifically about Cisco, just as Alfred Hayes, Woody Guthrie, Phil Ochs, and Si Kahn all wrote about Joe Hill. Cisco Houston had 6 albums of his own on Folkways and appeared on several others.

If you all will shut your trap,
I will tell you 'bout a chap.
Who was broke and up against it, too, for fair;
He was not the kind that shirk,
He was looking hard for work,
And he heard the same old story every-where.

Tramp, tramp, tramp keep on a-tramping,
There's nothing doing here for you;
If I catch you 'round again,
You will wear the ball and chain.
So just keep on tramping, the best thing you can do.

He walked up and down the street,
Till the shoes fell off his feet,
In a house he spied a lady making stew,
And he said, "How do you do,
Can I chop some wood for you?"
What the lady told him made him feel quite blue.

'Cross the street a sign he read,
'Work for Jesus,' so it said.
And he said, "Here is my chance. I'll surely try."
And he knelt upon the floor,
Till his knees got mighty sore,
But at eating-time he heard the preacher cry:

Down the street he met a cop,
And the copper made him stop,
And he asked him, "When did you blow into town?
Come with me up to the judge."

But the judge, he said, "Oh fudge,
Bums that have no money needn't come around."

Finally came that happy day
When his life did pass away,
He was sure to go to heaven when he died,
When he reached that pearly gate,
Santa Peter, mean old skate,
Slammed the gate right in his face and loudly cried:

In despair he went to Hell,
With the devil for to dwell,
For the reason he'd no other place to go.
And he said, "I'm full of sin,
So for Christ's sake, let me in!"
But the Devil said, "Oh, beat it, you're a bo!"

11. "Joe Hill" (words: Alfred Hayes, music: Earl Robinson/©1938 MCA Music, ASCAP)

Earl Robinson guitar and vocals
From *Songs for Americans* (Timely Records 503-A), originally released 1940.

The name and legend of Joe Hill appeared often in proletarian literature of the 1930s: in Carl Sandburg's *The People, Yes*, in John Dos Passos' *Nineteen Nineteen*, part of his *USA* trilogy, and in many small publications like *The New Masses* and *The Partisan Review*, of which Alfred Hayes was an editor. Part of Alfred Hayes' poem "I Dreamed I Saw Joe Hill Again" appeared in the 1935 *Proletarian Literature in the United States: An Anthology* (New York: International Publishers), along with the full text of Kenneth Patchen's poem "Joe Hill Listens to the Praying." This literature, however, generally did not reach a wide audience.

That changed during the summer of 1936 when, at Camp Unity, a left-wing camp in upstate New York, Hayes sent fellow staff member Earl Robinson into a tent with the poem, a guitar, and instructions to produce a song for that evening's Joe Hill campfire. Forty minutes later, Earl Robinson made Al Hayes' poem into the song that can be credited with keeping the legend of Joe Hill alive. By the end of the summer the song was heard at the New Orleans Labor Council, on a San Francisco picket line, and with the Lincoln Brigade in Spain. Many performers have spread the song to new audiences. Joan Baez sang "Joe Hill" at Woodstock, and it was included on the soundtrack (*Woodstock*, Cotillion 3-500).

Earl Robinson was the composer of "Ballad for Americans" (for the Works Progress Administration) and songs like "Abe Lincoln" and "Black and White" (made popular during the 1970s). He played piano on the first commercial recording of "Joe Hill" by Michael Loring (1940, TAC Records) and then recorded it himself the next year on Timely Records. For more than fifty years he has continued to sing this song.

12. **"The White Slave"** (words: Joe Hill, music: "Meet Me Tonight in Dreamland" /1913)

Alfred Esteban Cortez vocals
Recorded by Carlos Cortez, 29 October 1953 in South Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Digitally remastered by Air Show, Springfield, Virginia.

This song emphasizes the economic base of prostitution in contrast to sentimental treatments of the subject in other popular songs of the time. Joe Hill borrowed a love song and wrote about a prostitute; in contrast, in "The Rebel Girl" (for which he is credited as composer as well as lyricist) he took the tune of a song about a prostitute and wrote a song of his respect for the women in the I.W.W.

Alfred Cortez (1880-1961), born in Mazatlan, Mexico, joined the I.W.W. in 1916. Among the songs in his repertoire were many of Joe Hill's songs, which Cortez played on harmonica as well as sang. His son Carlos Cortez has remained active with the I.W.W. as an artist and a writer for *The Industrial Worker*. Carlos remembers as a child that people used to come from miles around to ask his father to sing but that when his father recorded this song at the age of seventy-three, "his voice was long past its prime." Alfred Cortez sang these songs for over forty years, and his is the voice of one of Joe Hill's contemporaries.

One little girl, fair as a pearl,
Worked every day in the laundry;
All that she made for food she paid,
So she slept on park bench so soundly;
An old procuress spied her there,
She came and whispered in her ear:

Come with me now my girly,
Don't sleep out in the cold;
Your face and tresses curly
Will bring you fame and gold,
Automobiles to ride in, diamonds and
silks to wear
You'll be a star bright, down in the
red light,
You'll make your fortune there.

Same little girl, no more a pearl,
Walks all alone 'long the river,
Five years have flown, her health is gone,
She would look at the water and shiver,
Whene'er she'd stop to rest and sleep,
She'd hear a voice call from the deep:

Girls in this way, fall every day,
And have been falling for ages,
Who is to blame? You know his name,
It's the boss that pays starvation wages.
A homeless girl can always hear
Temptation calling everywhere.

13. Narrative

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn narration
From lecture at Northern Illinois University, "Personal Recollections of the Industrial Workers of the World." 8 November 1962. Sponsored by Clio History Club and the Student Peace Union. Digitally remastered by Air Show, Springfield, Virginia.

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn (1890-1964) actively organized for the I.W.W., primar-

ily as an orator. She had joined the New York City local 179 of the I.W.W. at age 16. She was a leader of women in the U.S. and internationally, even beyond her roles in labor and politics (at her death in 1964 she was chair of the Communist Party USA). She was one of the founders of the American Civil Liberties Union. In her autobiography, *The Rebel Girl (An Autobiography, My First Life, 1906-1926)*. New York: International Publishers, 1973). Gurley (as Wobblies called her) wrote extensively of Joe Hill, and she often spoke of him in lectures such as this one nearly fifty years after she visited him in jail for one hour in May 1915. Though they met only once, they corresponded frequently—as she did with many labor figures. Joe Hill wrote to a friend, Oscar Larson, "The song and the 'Girl' that I like the best of my own is 'The Rebel Girl'" (30 September 1915).

14. **"The Rebel Girl"** (Joe Hill, arranged and adapted with additional original material by Hazel Dickens/© 1990 Happy Valley Music, BMI)
Hazel Dickens vocals
Dudley Connell guitar
Tom Adams banjo
Marshall Wilborn bass
David McLaughlin mandolin and fiddle
Recorded 1 March 1990 at Gypsy Studios, Falls Church, Virginia. Engineered by Mike Rivers

Joe Hill adapted the melody of "The Rebel Girl," at least in part, from a popular tune, and the words, though progressive at the time, reflect the attitude that the role of women was secondary and supportive to that of men. Joe Hill actually wrote a great deal about improving the conditions and recognition of women workers—he thought of "the rebel girl" as working together with "the fighting rebel boy." Elizabeth Gurley Flynn said the song had not "the best of words or the best of music." For current audiences, the song as Joe Hill wrote it, sung for the first time at his funeral, is outdated.

Hazel Dickens has updated "The Rebel Girl." This "queer" world has become this "cruel" world, and gone is "We've had girls before, but we need some more in the Industrial Workers of the World," in favor of a more wide-reaching reference: "From Maine to Georgia," not unlike Woody Guthrie's "From California to the New York Island" ("This Land Is Your Land"). Film producer Lorraine Gray commissioned Dickens to rewrite two verses for the soundtrack of *With Banners and Babies*, and she has since made other adjustments to the song. Dickens, a traditional Appalachian singer, works as an advocate for workers' and women's rights. She has two records on Folkways with Alice Garrard. She performs her new version of "The Rebel Girl" here in bluegrass style with members of The Johnson Mountain Boys.

There are women of many descriptions
In this cruel world, as everyone knows
Some are living in beautiful mansions
And are wearing the finest of clothes
There's the blue-blooded queen or the princess
Who have charms made of diamonds and

pearls
But the only and thoroughbred lady
Is the rebel girl

She's a rebel girl, a rebel girl
She's workingclass,
The strength of this world
From Maine to Georgia you'll see
Her fighting for you and for me
Yes, she's there by your side
With her courage and pride
She's unequalled anywhere
And I'm proud to fight for freedom
With a rebel girl

Though her hands may be hardened
from labor
And her dress may not be very fine
But a heart in her bosom is healing
That is true to her class and her kind
And the bosses know that they can't
change her
She'd die to defend the workers' world
And the only and thoroughbred lady
Is a rebel girl

15. **"There Is Power in a Union"**
(words: Joe Hill, music: L. E. Jones/1913)
Entertainment Workers Industrial Union 630, I.W.W.
Utah Phillips narrative and vocals
Marion Wade vocals
Bob Bovee vocals and guitar
Bruce Brackney vocals
Faith Petric vocals
Jeff Cahill vocals
J.B. Freeman vocals
Robin Oye vocals and mandolin
Fred Holstein vocals
Kathy Taylor vocals
Eric Glatz vocals
Mark Ross vocals and banjo
Recorded 1 September 1984 at Holstein's, Chicago, Illinois. Engineered by Rich Warren
From *Rebel Voices: Songs of the Industrial Workers of the World* (Flying Fish FF 484), originally released 1988.

Singing generally creates an unspoken solidarity between workers, but in this song Joe Hill gave specific voice to the power of community, advocating group action to improve working and living conditions rather than individual deals with bosses and belief in the delayed rewards of religion. The Entertainment Workers Industrial Union 630 of the I.W.W. "assert by their willingness to organize and work together that they are workers, like carpenters and plumbers, organized to improve the conditions of their labor and, in solidarity with other workers, to advance the emancipation of their class" (Rebel Voices). The twelve members of the union who appeared on *Rebel Voices* reflect a large percentage of the current membership of the Entertainment Workers I.U.

These workers represent the living spirit of the I.W.W., particularly the living spirit of the arts as an organizing tool. Joe Hill's songs live within an evolving tradition in which performers rewrite songs to reflect broad changes, as Hazel Dickens remade "The Rebel Girl," and simply adjust other songs like "There Is Power in a Union." A few words have been updated in this rendition and in The Little Red Songbook to eliminate gender

bias: "come, do your share, like a man" is "come, do your share, lend a hand" and "power in a band of workingmen" is now held by "workingfolk."

Joe Hill remains the archetypal example of the worker using music as an organizing tool. The breadth of his influence is hinted by the variety of performers on this album and beyond them to the performers and listeners they continue to influence. We may not be able to name our cultural forebears any more than we can name our great-grandparents, but we participate in the tradition every time we sing one of these songs, listen to these performers, or retell one of the stories we learn from them.

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Don't Mourn—Organize!
Songs of labor songwriter Joe Hill
Smithsonian/Folkways SF 40026
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