

Preamble to the IWW Constitution

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of the working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life.

Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the Earth.

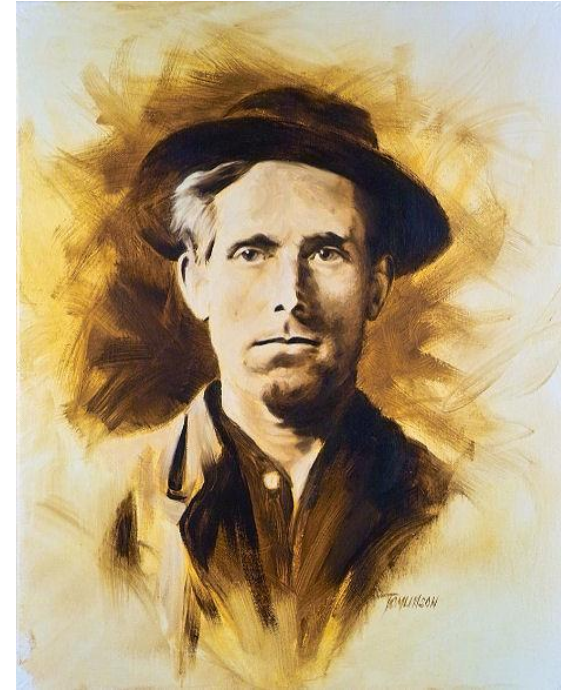
We find that the centering of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands makes the trade unions unable to cope with the ever growing power of the employing class. The trade unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping defeat one another in wage wars. Moreover, the trade unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

These conditions can be changed and the interest of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry, or in all industries if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

Instead of the conservative motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work," we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, "Abolition of the wage system."

It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism. The army of production must be organized, not only for everyday struggle with capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.

Joe Hill Centennial Soapbox Action



Joe Hill
Poet Laureate of Labor
October 7, 1879 – November 19, 1915



Industrial Workers of the World

Joe Hill Centennial Action, November 19, 2015

Fellow workers,

As we all know, fellow worker Joe Hill was executed by the state of Utah on November 19, 1915. He was executed on trumped up murder charges in a fraudulent trial, all of which has long been called one of the biggest injustices in United States judicial process of the 20th century. His life, actions, death, and legacy are all well known to fellow workers in the Industrial Workers of the World.

This November marks the 100th anniversary of the execution of the Laureate of Labor and in the spirit of fellow worker Joe Hill, and his reassuring last communiqué, we ask Wobblies around the world not to mourn his passing and legacy, **WE ASK YOU TO ORGANIZE!**

On November 19, 2015, the General Executive Board is calling on IWW members to go out and soapbox in their towns and cities, (a soapbox is a raised platform on which one stands to make an impromptu speech, often about a political subject). Plan the action with your fellow workers and branches and take organizing back to the streets. Speak to the legacy of Joe Hill and the anniversary of his execution, extol the merits and ideas of organizing workers, windmill (to use an old soapbox term) to people on the streets about rank and file organizations, unions, etc. We call on branches and members throughout the union to plan this coordinated action independently, with full discretion being left up to branches and members as how to plan their own action; you can focus on an area, an industry, a cause, etc. - design it to your branches current campaigns and strengths. This union-wide action is to remember Joe Hill and organize in his spirit, using the tactics, creativity, and defiance that he wielded in the fight against oppression, inequality, and injustice.

The requirements to accomplish this action are minimal, all you need are: a soapbox, crate, or box of some kind that fellow workers can stand on safely; a short memorized or improvised speech; and possibly pamphlets/leaflets to pass out to interested passerbys. The GEB is working on toolkit pamphlets and a short pamphlet on FW Joe Hill and will distribute them later in the year. Anything else is up to the discretion of members and branches. By taking this action, coordinating it union-wide and by keeping our action relatively inexpensive we can best remember Joe Hill while staying true to his legacy and the ideas of our union.

Solidarity forever,

2015 General Executive Board
Michael Garcia - GEB Chair shugeE Mississippi
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"Goodbye, Bill, I die like a true blue rebel. Don't waste any time mourning. Organize!" Telegram sent from Joe Hill to Big Bill Haywood

"Could you arrange to have my body hauled to the state line to be buried? I don't want to be found dead in Utah." Telegram sent from Joe Hill to Big Bill Haywood

The Rebel's Toast

Poem first published in 1914 edition of IWW *Little Red Songbook*

*If Freedom's road seems rough and hard,
And strewn with rocks and thorns,
Then put your wooden shoes on, pard,
And you won't hurt your corns.
To organize and teach, no doubt,
Is very good – that's true,
But still we can't succeed without
The Good Old Wooden Shoe.*

Where the Fraser River Flows

Tune: "Where The River Shannon Flows" (James I. Russell) (1905)
First published in the 1912 edition of the IWW's *Little Red Songbook*.

Fellow workers pay attention to what I'm going to mention,
For it is the fixed intention of the Workers of the World.
And I hope you'll all be ready, true-hearted, brave and steady,
To gather 'round our standard when the red flag is unfurled.

CHORUS

*Where the Fraser river flows, each fellow worker knows,
They have bullied and oppressed us, but still our union grows.
And we're going to find a way, for shorter hours and better pay,
Yes, we're going to win the day, where the river Fraser flows.*

For these gunny-sack contractors have all been dirty actors,
And they're not our benefactors, each fellow worker knows.
So we've got to stick together in fine or dirty weather,
And we will show no white feather, where the Fraser river flows.

*Now the boss the law is stretching, bulls and pimps he's fetching,
And they are a fine collection, as Jesus only knows.
But why their mothers reared them, and why the devil spared them,
Are questions we can't answer, where the Fraser River flows.*

Biography of Fellow Worker Joe Hill

Joel Haaglund was born to a religious family in Gavle, Sweden on October 7, 1879, he was one of nine children, six of whom lived to adulthood. In 1902, after the death of his parents, Joe and his brother Paul immigrated to America. After working various jobs in New York City, Joe moved to Chicago to find work. Shortly after moving there, he was fired from his job and blacklisted for attempting to organize at his workplace. As a result, Joel Haaglund changed his name to Joe Hill. He traveled extensively around the country before joining the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in San Pedro, California in 1910.

Joe Hill served for several years as the secretary for the San Pedro local, this is also where he wrote many of his most famous songs including "The Preacher and the Slave" and "Casey Jones—A Union Scab." In 1911, he was in Tijuana, Mexico, and joined the movement to overthrow the Mexican dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz and attempted to seize Baja California. In 1912, Joe Hill was active in a "Free Speech" fights in San Diego that protested a police decision to close the downtown area to street meetings. He also put in an appearance at a railroad construction crew strike in British Columbia, writing several songs before returning to San Pedro.

As an itinerant worker, Hill moved around the west, hopping freight trains, going from job to job. By the end of 1913 he was working as a laborer at the Silver King Mine in Park City, Utah, not far from Salt Lake City. On Jan. 10, 1914, Joe Hill sought treatment from a local doctor in Salt Lake City for a gun shot wound. Earlier that same evening in another part of town a grocer and his son had been killed. One of the assailants was wounded in the chest by the younger victim, Joe's injury tied him to the incident.

The trial that came from this turned into a major media event. Hill said that he had been shot in an argument about woman, whom he refused to name. The doctor reported that Hill was armed with a pistol. A red bandana was found in Hill's room, which was seen worn by the gunman, also the pistol said to be in Hill's possession at the doctor's office was never found. Hill resolutely denied that he was involved in the robbery and killing. Also, bullet wounds in Joe's coat compared to his wound suggested he had his hands raised above his head when he was shot. Hill did not testify at his trial, but his lawyers pointed out that four other people were treated for bullet wounds in Salt Lake City that same night, and that Hill's unfamiliarity with Morrison left him with no motive. But the prosecution was able to produced a dozen eyewitnesses who said that

the killer resembled Hill, the jury took just a few hours to find him guilty of murder.

An appeal to the Utah Supreme Court was unsuccessful. His supporters pushed for clemency and included the socially prominent daughter of a former Mormon church president, labor radicals, activists and sympathizers including AFL President Samuel Gompers, the Swedish minister to the United States and even President Woodrow Wilson.

Joe Hill was executed by firing squad on November 19, 1915, calling out the order "fire!" for his own execution. Just prior to his execution, Hill had written to IWW Secretary-Treasurer 'Big' Bill Haywood saying, "Goodbye Bill. I die like a true blue rebel. Don't waste any time in mourning. Organize... Could you arrange to have my body hauled to the state line to be buried? I don't want to be found dead in Utah." Fellow Worker Joe Hill penned his last will the eve of his execution, it reads:

**My Will is easy to decide,
For there is nothing To divide
My kin don't need to fuss and moan—
Moss does not cling to a rolling stone
My body?—Oh!—If I could choose
I would want to ashes it reduce,
And let The merry breezes blow
My dust to where some flowers grow

Perhaps some fading flower then
Would come to life and bloom again

This is my Last and Final Will.—
Good Luck to All of you,**

Joe Hill

Casey Jones - The Union Scab

Tune: "Casey Jones"

First published in the 1912 edition of the IWW's *Little Red Songbook*.

The Workers on the S. P. line to strike sent out a call;
But Casey Jones, the engineer, he wouldn't strike at all;
His boiler it was leaking, and its drivers on the bum,
And his engine and its bearings, they were all out of plumb.

*Casey Jones kept his junk pile running;
Casey Jones was working double time;
Casey Jones got a wooden medal,
For being good and faithful on the S. P. line.*

The workers said to Casey: "Won't you help us win this strike?"
But Casey said: "Let me alone, you'd better take a hike."
Then some one put a bunch of railroad ties across the track,
And Casey hit the river bottom with an awful crack.

*Casey Jones hit the river bottom;
Casey Jones broke his blessed spine;
Casey Jones was an Angelino,
He took a trip to heaven on the S. P. line.*

When Casey Jones got up to heaven, to the Pearly Gate, He said:
"I'm Casey Jones, the guy that pulled the S. P. freight."
"You're just the man," said Peter, "our musicians went on strike;
You can get a job a' scabbing any time you like."

*Casey Jones got up to heaven;
Casey Jones was doing mighty fine;
Casey Jones went scabbing on the angels,
Just like he did to workers of the S. P. line.*

They got together, and they said it wasn't fair,
For Casey Jones to go around a' scabbing everywhere.
The Angels' Union No. 23, they sure were there,
And they promptly fired Casey down the Golden Stairs.

*Casey Jones went to Hell a' flying;
"Casey Jones," the Devil said, "Oh fine:
Casey Jones, get busy shovelling sulphur;
That's what you get for scabbing on the S. P. Line."*

The Preacher and the Slave

Tune: "Sweet Bye and Bye" (S. Fillmore Bennett/J. P. Webster)

First published in the 1911 edition of the IWW's *Little Red Songbook*

Long-haired preachers come out every night,
Try to tell you what's wrong and what's right;
But when asked how 'bout something to eat
They will answer with voices so sweet:

CHORUS:

You will eat, bye and bye,
In that glorious land above the sky;
Work and pray, live on hay,
You'll get pie in the sky when you die.

The starvation army they play,
They sing and they clap and they pray
'Till they get all your coin on the drum
Then they'll tell you when you're on the bum:

Holy Rollers and jumpers come out,
They holler, they jump and they shout.
Give your money to Jesus they say,
He will cure all diseases today.

If you fight hard for freedom and rights —
Try to get something good in this life —
You're a sinner and bad person, they tell,
When you die you will sure go to hell.

Working folk of all countries, unite,
Side by side we for freedom will fight;
When the world and its wealth we have gained
To the grafters we'll sing this refrain:

FINAL CHORUS:

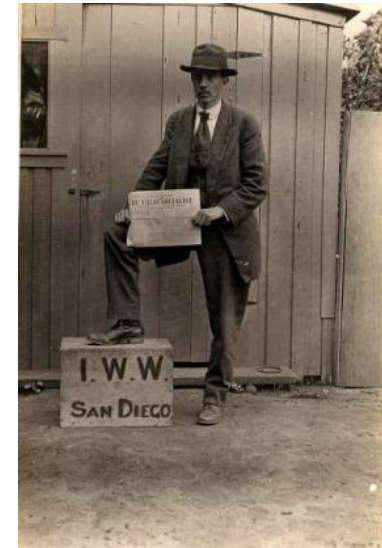
You will eat, bye and bye,
When you've learned how to cook and to fry.
Chop some wood, 'twill do you good,
And you'll eat in the sweet bye and bye.

What is Soapboxing?

Soapboxing is street-speaking, it is when a person uses a raised platform to stand on in order to make an impromptu public speech. The speech often deals with political, social, and/or economic subjects. The term originates from the days when speakers would elevate themselves by standing on wooden crates originally used as containers for shipping soap or other dry goods. The IWW used these tactics in its various free speech fights and different organizing efforts across the US and Canada in the early part of the 20th century. Joe Hill was involved in street-speaking for the working class and the IWW, his songs and poems were used for soapboxing to entertain, critique capitalist society, and pass along important working class ideas and traditions. These tactics were the advanced use of social organizing and social networking, they helped to inspire and organize workers, and they resulted in some of the most historic battles for democratic rights in US history.

What You'll Need

- A raised platform, safe for fellow workers to stand on
- A short memorized or improvised speech
- Pamphlets/leaflets to pass out to interested passerbys
- A flag, poster, or other visual effects
- Everything else is up to you, be creative!



Examples of Soapboxing Scripts

HELP! HELP! I've been robbed! Robbed I tell you by the capitalist system.

"Fellow workers! The Industrial Workers of the World is going to organize the entire working class. What is the working class, fellow workers? The working class is anyone who has a boss and works for wages. Always remember, class is not defined by income level but by your relationship to the means of production. If you don't own the tools of your production, if you don't own your workplace, if all you're doing is selling your labor energy to get a paycheck, it doesn't matter if you're a college professor or a ditch digger - you're in the working class and better be proud of it. Why, the middle class is just a joke made up by the bosses to keep us fighting against each other."

- Yours for the O.B.U.", Utah Phillips, X342908; **The industrial Workers of the World: Its First 100 Years**, pg vi. (via fyeahsocialism)

Draw near, draw near. Fellow Workers pay attention to what I'm about to mention. Fellow Worker Joe Hill was murdered by the state of Utah. And what was he murdered for?

Joe Hill was murdered for fighting for the 8 hour day. Joe Hill was murdered for demanding better conditions. Joe Hill was murdered for fighting a system built on the worst human trait, Greed, rather than the best, co-operation. Joe Hill was murdered for advocating worker control at the point of production. Joe Hill was murdered for organizing the working class against the boss who sets the price of the only commodity that labour has to sell and then sets the price for the things that labour must buy. Joe Hill was murdered for fighting to over throw the capitalist system and the economic freedom of the working class

The point is to keep it short and sweet, make it entertaining, hit passerbys with facts, explain the ideas of our union, working-class radicalism, and fellow worker Joe Hill, especially extolling the similarities between his times and ours. The more coherent and understandable your speech is to people the better and more successful your soapboxing experience will be. Be creative, use songs and rhyming schemes. Use this union-wide action to your advantage by targeting areas and industries in which your branch is trying to organize, and, again, keep it fun and creative!

Songs and Poems by Joe Hill

There Is Power in a Union

Tune: "There is Power in the Blood"

First published in the March 1913 edition of the IWW's *Little Red Songbook*.

Would you have freedom from wage slavery,
Then join in the grand Industrial band;
Would you from mis'ry and hunger be free,
Then come! Do your share, lend a hand.

CHORUS:

There is pow'r, there is pow'r
In a band of working folk.
When they stand hand in hand,
That's a pow'r, that's a pow'r
That must rule in every land –
One Industrial Union Grand.

Would you have mansions of gold in the sky,
And live in a shack, way in the back?
Would you have wings up in heaven to fly,
And starve here with rags on your back?

If you've had "nuff" of "the blood of the lamb,"
Then join in the grand Industrial band;
If, for a change, you would have eggs and ham.
Then come! Do your share, lend a hand.

If you like sluggers to beat in your head,
Then don't organize, all unions despise,
If you want nothing before you are dead,
Shake hands with your boss and look wise.

Come, all ye workers, from every land,
Come join in the grand Industrial band.
Then we our share of this earth shall demand.
Come on! Do your share, lend a hand.