

Working-Class Heroes

A History of Struggle in Song: A Songbook

Mat Callahan and Yvonne Moore

Working-Class Heroes is an organic melding of history, music, and politics that demonstrates with remarkably colorful evidence that workers everywhere will struggle to improve their conditions of life. And among them will be workers who share an insight: in order to better our lot, we must act collectively to change the world. Carefully curated by Mat Callahan and Yvonne Moore, this profusely illustrated treasury of song sheets, lyrics, photographs, histories, and biographical sketches explores the notion that our best hope lies in the capacity of ordinary working people to awaken to the need to emancipate ourselves and all of humanity.

Featuring over a dozen songwriters, from Joe Hill to Aunt Molly Jackson, *Working-Class Heroes* delivers a lyrical deathblow to the myth that so-called political songs of the twentieth century were all being written by intellectuals and outside agitators in New York. Many, like Ella May Wiggins, were literally murdered by the bosses. Others, like Sarah Ogan Gunning, watched their children starve to death and their husbands die of black lung, only to rise up singing against the system that caused so much misery. Their heroism resulted not from their being different from their fellow workers but from being the same.

Most of the songs collected here are from the early twentieth century, yet their striking relevance to current affairs invites us to explore the historical conditions that inspired their creation: deep, systemic crisis, advancing fascism, and the threat of world war. In the face of violent terror, these working-class songwriters bravely stood up to fight oppression. Such courage and heroism is immortal, such heroes should be celebrated and their songs can still lift our spirits, if we sing them today.

Heroes featured in this twenty-song collection: Sarah Ogan Gunning, Ralph Chaplin, Woody Guthrie, Ella May Wiggins, Joe Hill, Paul Robeson, John Handcox, Aunt Molly Jackson, Jim Garland, Alfred Hayes, Joseph Brandon, and several more anonymous proletarian songwriters whose names have been long forgotten, though their words are immortal.

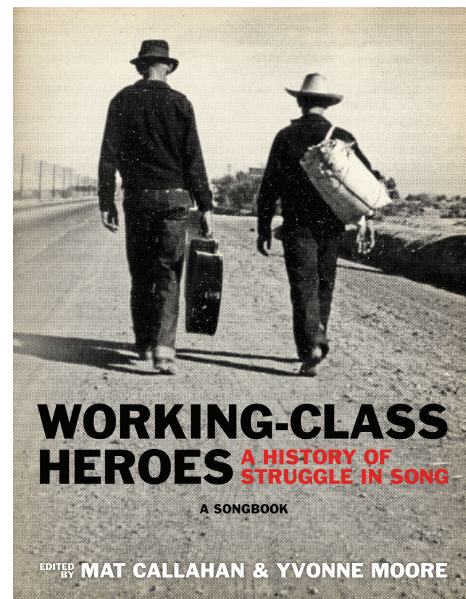
ABOUT THE EDITORS

Mat Callahan is a musician and author originally from San Francisco. Recent projects include the republication of *Songs of Freedom* by Irish revolutionary James Connolly, the recording and publication of *Working-Class Heroes*, and the launch of the multimedia project *Songs of Slavery and Emancipation*. He is the author of five books including, in 2017, *The Explosion of Deferred Dreams* (PM Press) and *A Critical Guide to Intellectual Property* (Zed Books). Callahan can be reached at www.matcallahan.com.

Yvonne Moore is a singer and bandleader originally from Schaffhausen. In addition to recording numerous albums of her own music, Moore is cofounder and treasurer of the Art in History and Politics Association, whose purpose is to discover, publish, and popularize music, graphic art, and texts created by participants in conflicts such as the struggle to abolish slavery. Her exploration of the songs of Sarah Ogan Gunning led to the making of *Working-Class Heroes*. Moore can be reached at www.matandyvonne.com.

ACCOLADES

"The world needs more thinkers like Mat Callahan."
—Jared Soper, *SLUG* magazine



SUBJECT CATEGORY

Music/Folk & Traditional
Labor & Industrial Relations

PRICE

\$14.95

ISBN

978-1-62963-702-0

PAGE COUNT

96

SIZE

8.5x11

FORMAT

Paperback

PUBLICATION DATE

9/19

DISTRIBUTED BY

Independent Publishers Group
(312) 337-0747
www.ipgbook.com

DISTRIBUTED IN THE UK/EUROPE BY

Turnaround Publisher Services Ltd
t: 020 8829 3000
orders@turnaround-uk.com

◆ PM PRESS ◆

P.O. Box 23912 • Oakland, CA 94623
www.pmpress.org
info@pmpress.org
(510) 658-3906

PM

PM Press was founded in 2007 as an independent publisher with a veteran staff boasting a wealth of experience in print and online publishing. We seek to create radical and stimulating fiction and nonfiction books, pamphlets, T-shirts, and visual and audio materials to entertain, educate, and inspire you.