

## ***Jews & Music for Social Change***

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*“Songs have been the not-so-secret weapon behind every fight for freedom every struggle against injustice and bigotry: “The Marseillaise,” “The Battle Hymn of the Republic,” “We Shall Overcome,” and many more...Songs are the pulse of a nation’s heart. A fever chart of its health. Are we at peace? Are we in trouble? Are we floundering? Do we feel beautiful? Do we feel ugly?...listen to our songs...the lyricist, like any artist, cannot be neutral. He should be committed to the side of humanity.” - E.Y. Harburg*

- I. First Things
  - A. An introduction
  - B. An explanation
  - C. An apology
  - D. A justification
  
- II. The 1st Half of the 20th Century
  - A. Labor
    1. Oppenheim: Bread & Roses (poem: 1911)
  - B. The Great Depression
    1. Harburg/Gorney: Brother, Can You Spare a Dime (1932) - performed by Fred Hellerman of The Weavers
  - C. Resistance to the Nazi’s
    1. Peat Bog Soldiers (words: Esser/Langhoff; music: Goguel, 1933)
  - D. Race
    1. Abel Meeropol (aka Lewis Allen): Strange Fruit (1937) - performed by Billie Holiday
  - E. Musical Theater
    1. Kern/Hammerstein: Show Boat (1927) - mention
    2. Weill/Brecht: The Threepenny Opera (1928) - Army Song
    3. Gershwin: Porgy and Bess (1935) - It Ain’t Necessarily So
    4. Harold Rome (w/ Arent, Blitzstein, Eisenberg, Friedman, Gregory, Schrank, Horwitt & Latouche): Pins and Needles (1937) - Sing Me a Song with Social Significance
    5. Marc Blitzstein: The Cradle Will Rock (1938) - Final Scene
    6. Rodgers/Hammerstein: South Pacific (Broadway: 1949; Film: 1958) - You’ve got to be Carefully Taught

- III. 1950s
  - A. McCarthyism
    1. Aaron Kramer/Betty Sanders: In Contempt (1950 or 1952)
    2. Joe Glazer: Joe McCarthy's Band (1953)
  - B. Rock 'n' Roll - unique role of Jews?
    1. Leiber/Stoller: Hound Dog (Big Mama Thornton - 1952); (Elvis - 1956)
  - C. Broadway
    1. Adler/Ross: The Pajama Game (Broadway: 1954; Film: 1957)  
- Seven and Half Cents
    2. Bernstein/Sondheim: West Side Story (1957) - Gee, Officer Krupke!
  
- IV. 1960s (& late 50s)
  - A. Protest
    1. Malvina Reynolds: I Cannot Sleep (1958)
    2. Bob Dylan: Blowin' In The Wind (1962); The Times They Are a-Changin' (1964)
    3. Phil Ochs: Power and the Glory, What's That I Hear (1964)
    4. Simon & Garfunkel: He Was My Brother (1964)
    5. PF Sloan: Eve of Destruction (1965) - performed by Barry McGuire
    6. Steve Reich: Come Out (1966)
  - B. Political Satire
    1. Tom Lehrer: Wernher von Braun (1965) [:33]
    2. The Fugs: Kill For Peace (1966)
    3. Country Joe & The Fish: I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-To-Die-Rag (1967)

**Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?** (by Jay Gorney & E.Y. Harburg)

They used to tell me I was building a dream, and so I followed the mob  
When there was earth to plow or guns to bear, I was always there, right on the job

They used to tell me I was building a dream, with peace and glory ahead  
Why should I be standing in line, just waiting for bread?

Once I built a railroad, I made it run, made it race against time  
Once I built a railroad, now it's done - Brother, can you spare a dime?

Once I built a tower up to the sun     Brick and rivet and lime  
Once I built a tower, now it's done - Brother, can you spare a dime?

Once in khaki suits, gee, we looked swell     Full of that Yankee Doodly Dum  
Half a million boots went slogging through Hell     And I was the kid with the drum

Say, don't you remember? They called me 'Al' - It was 'Al' all the time  
 Why don't you remember? I'm your pal - Buddy, can you spare a dime

**Strange Fruit** (by Abel Meeropol)

Southern trees bear a strange fruit  
 Blood on the leaves and blood at the root  
 Black bodies swinging in the southern breeze  
 Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees

Pastoral scene of the gallant south  
 The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth  
 Scent of magnolias, sweet and fresh  
 Then the sudden smell of burning flesh

Here is a fruit for the crows to pluck  
 For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck  
 For the sun to rot, for the tree to drop  
 Here is a strange and bitter crop

Part 1:

- Elyokum Zunser (1836-1913): many protest songs, re: pogroms, etc.
- David Edelstadt: In Kamf ("In Struggle"), Vakht Uf ("Awaken") (1888)
- Oppenheim: Bread & Roses (poem: 1911)
- Kern/Hammerstein: Show Boat (1927)
- Weill/Brecht: Threepenny Opera (1928)
- Harburg/Gorney: Brother, Can You Spare a Dime (1932)
- Peat Bog Soldiers (1933) - resistance to Nazi's
- Gershwin: Porgy and Bess (1935)
- Hayes/Robinson: Joe Hill (1936 - poem: 1930)
- Abel Meeropol (aka Lewis Allen): Strange Fruit (1937)
- Harold Rome (w/ Arent, Blitzstein, Eisenberg, Friedman, Gregory, Schrank, Horwitt & Latouche): Pins and Needles (1937)
- Marc Blitzstein: The Cradle Will Rock (1938)
- Aaron Copland: Fanfare for the Common Man (1942)
- Tom Glazer (/Bach): Because All Men Are Brothers (1948)
- Rodgers/Hammerstein: South Pacific (1949) - You've got to be carefully taught
- Aaron Kramer/Betty Sanders: In Contempt (1950)
- Leiber/Stoller: Hound Dog (Big Mama Thornton) (1952); (Elvis - 1956)

- Joe Glazer: Joe McCarthy's Band (1953)
- Adler/Ross: The Pajama Game (1954)
- Bernstein/Sondheim: West Side Story (1957)
- Malvina Reynolds: I Cannot Sleep (1958)
- Tom Lehrer: We Will All Go Together When We Go (1958)
- Malvina Reynolds: We Hate to See Them Go (1959)
- Joe Glazer: The Mill Was Made of Marble (1960)
- Bob Dylan: Blowin' in the Wind (1962)
- Malvina Reynolds: Andorra, Little Boxes, What Have They Done to the Rain? (1962)
- Bob Dylan: "The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan" (1963)
- Fred Hellerman/Fran Minkoff: Man Come into Egypt (1963)
- Phil Ochs: "All the News That's Fit to Sing" (1964) - One More Parade, Power and the Glory, Too Many Martyrs, What's That I Hear
- Bob Dylan: "The Times They Are a-Changin'" (1964)
- Simon & Garfunkel: The Sounds of Silence, He Was My Brother (1964)
- Malvina Reynolds: It Isn't Nice (1964)
- Tom Lehrer: National Brotherhood Week, MLF Lullaby (1964)
- Bock/Harnick: Fiddler on the Roof (1964)
- Phil Ochs: "I Ain't Marching Anymore" (1965) - title, In the Heat of the Summer, Draft Dodger Rag, Iron Lady, Here's to the State of Mississippi
- PF Sloan: Eve of Destruction (1965)
- Simon & Garfunkel: Richard Cory (1965)
- Tom Lehrer: The Folk Song Army, Send the Marines, Pollution, So Long Mom, Who's Next, Wernher von Braun (1965)
- The Fugs: Kill For Peace (1966)
- Steve Reich: Come Out (1966)
- Phil Ochs: I'm Going to Say it Now, Is There Anybody Here?, There but for Fortune, Cops of the World, Love Me I'm a Liberal, When I'm Gone (1966)
- Malvina Reynolds: Lambeth Children (1966)
- Country Joe & The Fish: I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-To-Die-Rag (1967)
- Phil Ochs: Outside of a Small Circle of Friends (1967)
- Janis Ian: Society's Child (1967)
- Arlo Guthrie: Alice's Restaurant Massacree (1967)
- Phil Ochs: White Boots Marching in a Yellow Land, The War is Over (1968)
- Simon & Garfunkel: America (1968)
- Laura Nyro: Save the Country (1969)

## Resources:

### Articles:

- Altman, Ross, *Paul Robeson and the Jews*. Folk Works, March-April 2008 - <https://folkworks.org/columns/how-can-i-keep-from-talking-ross-altman/41814-paul-roberson-and-the-jews>
- Jewish Women's Archive, *Sing a New Song: Jews, Music, and the Civil Rights Movement*. <https://jwa.org/teach/golearn/apr10>
- Muraskin, Bennett, *Jews In The American Labor Movement: Past, Present And Future*. 2016 - <https://www.labor-studies.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Jews-in-the-American-Labor-Movement-Sept.-2016-1.pdf>
- Wilensky, David A. M., *Where delta blues, queer liturgy and Yiddish protest songs meet*. The Jewish News of Northern California, 9/21/18 - <https://www.jweekly.com/2018/09/21/where-delta-blues-queer-liturgy-and-yiddish-protest-songs-meet/>

### Books:

- Beeber, Steven Lee, *The Heebie-Jeebies at CBGB's: a secret history of Jewish punk*. Chicago Review Press, Inc., Chicago, 2006.
- Billig, Michael, *Rock 'n' Roll Jews*. Syracuse University Press, 2000.
- Broughton, Ellingham, Muddyman & Trillo, Eds., *World Music - The Rough Guide*. Rough Guides LTD, London, 1994.
- Brown, Courtney, *Politics in Music - Music and Political Transformation From Beethoven to Hip-Hop*. Farsight Press, Atlanta, 2008. [Mixed - some good, some shallow]
- Buhle, Mari Jo, Buhle, Paul and Georgakas, Dan, editors, *Encyclopedia of the American Left*. University of Illinois Press, 1976
- Cott, Jonathan, *Back to a Shadow in the Night: Music Writings and Interviews, 1968-2001*. Hal Leonard Corp., Milwaukee, WI, 2002. [truly great, insightful writing about an incredibly wide range of music, including Lennon, Dylan, Jagger, Ray Davies, Van Morrison, Lou Reed, Patti Smith, Norman Greenbaum, Smokey Robinson, etc.]
- DeCurtis, Anthony, *Lou Reed: A Life*. Little, Brown & Co., NY/Boston/London, 2017. [good overview of his life and career; reader of audiobook annoyingly puts on accents]
- Denisoff, Serge, *Great Day Coming: Folk Music & the American Left*. UofIL Press, 1971. [reactionary]
- Doggett, Peter, *There's a Riot Going On: Revolutionaries, Rock Stars, and the Rise and Fall of the '60s*. Canongate, NY, 2007. [focus on 1966-72]
- Eyerman, Ron & Jamison, Andrew, *Music and Social Movements - Mobilizing Traditions in the 20th Century*. Cambridge Univ. Press, UK, 1998. [Excellent, very academic]
- Fischel, Jack and Pinkser, Sanford, editors, *Jewish-American History and Culture: An Encyclopedia*. Garland Publishing, 1992
- Goldsmith, Peter D., *Making People's Music - Moe Asch and Folkways Records*. Smithsonian Inst Press, Washington/London, 1998.

- Gracyk, Theodore , *I Wanna Be Me - Rock Music and the Politics of Identity*. Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 2001. [Excellent]
- Greenway, John, *American Folksongs of Protest*. U of PA Press, 1953. [great for trad]
- Hajdu, David, *Positively 4th Street: The Lives and Times of Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, Mimi Baez Farina & Richard Farina*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, NY, 2001. [very good]
- Katz, Pamela, *The Partnership - Brecht, Weill, Three Women and Germany on the Brink*. Nan A. Talese/Doubleday, New York/London/Toronto/Sydney/Auckland, 2015.
- Lynskey, Dorian, *33 Revolutions Per Minute - A History of Protest Songs, From Billie Holiday to Green Day*. HarperCollins Publishers, New York, 2011. [Brilliant]
- Mordden, Ethan, *Coming up Roses: The Broadway Musical in the 1950s*. Oxford Univ. Press, Oxford/NY, 1998. [Excellent, insightful, well-written]
- Petrus, Stephen & Cohen, Ronald D., *Folk City: New York and the American Folk Music Revival*. Oxford Univ. Press, Oxford/NY, 2015.
- Rogovoy, Seth, *The Essential Klezmer – A Music Lover’s Guide to Jewish Roots and Soul Music, from the Old World to the Jazz Age to the Downtown Avant-Garde*. Algonquin Books, Chapel Hill, NC, 2000. [very good]
- Ross, Alex, *The Rest is Noise - Listening to the Twentieth Century*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, NY, 2007. [Some interesting material, but some dubious info]
- Seeger, Pete & Reiser, Bob, *Everybody Says Freedom - A history of the civil rights movement in songs and pictures*. W.W.Norton & Company, New York/London, 1989.
- Shaw, John, *This Land That I Love: Irving Berlin, Woody Guthrie, and the Story of Two American Anthems*. PublicAffairs/Perseus Books, NY, 2013. [good, but strangely glosses over the reasons Guthrie wrote This Land in response to God Bless America!]
- Sidran, Ben, *There Was a Fire: Jews, Music and the American Dream*. Nardis Books, 2012. [the best book for this subject I found - excellent, far-ranging, thoughtful]
- Viertel, Jack, *The Secret Life of the American Musical - How Broadway Shows Are Built*. Sarah Crichton Books, NY, 2016. [excellent look at what makes musicals work]
- Ward, Brian, *Just My Soul Responding - Rhythm and Blues, Black Consciousness, and Race Relations*. University of California Press, 1998. [Excellent, thorough]
- Weissman, Dick, *Talkin’ ‘Bout A Revolution - Music and Social Change in America*. Backbeat Books/Hal Leonard, WI/NY, 2010.
- Weller, Sheila, *Girls Like Us: Carole King, Joni Mitchell and Carly Simon and the Journey of a Generation*. [interesting, but too long and too gossip-y]
- Wilder, Alec, *American Popular Song: The Great Innovators, 1900-1950*. Oxford Univ. Press, NY, 1972. [excellent if somewhat dated, academic lots about the music]
- Wilentz, Sean, *Bob Dylan In America*. Doubleday, NY, 2010. [very thorough, with sections on various eras; audiobook has musical examples]
- Zinsser, William, *Easy To Remember: The Great American Songwriters and Their Songs*. David R. Godine, Publisher, NH, 2001. [good overview of Great American Songbook writers and songs]