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-- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE --

100 Years On
Celebrating Labor Activist Joe Hill
Workers of the World, Awaken! The Life and Legacy of Joe Hill
Opens September 4th, 2015
At the American Swedish Historical Museum

Philadelphia, PA- Come celebrate the spirit of Labor Day by learning more about Joe Hill (born Joel Emmanuel Häggglund), the Swedish-American labor activist, songwriter, cartoonist, and member of the Industrial Workers of the World. Executed in 1915 by the State of Utah for a double murder in Salt Lake City, he quickly became a martyr for the cause of organized labor. His songs and letters, as well as tributes to him, galvanized striking workers throughout the 20th Century. Now, 100 years after his death, Hill's life and work still inspire.



Joe Hill (October 7, 1879 – November 19, 1915), was born Joel Emmanuel Häggglund in Gävle, Sweden. He came to the United States in 1902 and learned English as an itinerant laborer. After signing up as a member of the Industrial Workers of the World, Joe began writing songs for IWW organizing campaigns. His first surviving effort was "The Preacher and The Slave" (which added the phrase "pie in the sky" to the American lexicon), written for the Free Speech Fight in Spokane, Washington, in 1910. His songs, written to the popular tunes of the day, have continued to inspire young agitators, and he remains the best-known songwriter among IWW tunesmiths.

On November 19, 1915, Joe Hill was killed by a firing squad in Salt Lake City, Utah. After national and international appeals for clemency that included the American Federation of Labor, Helen Keller, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson, the Swedish Ambassador and many more, Hill was executed for the murders of a grocer and his son, who were shot in a robbery on January 10, 1914. There is little doubt today that Joe Hill was framed for the crime because he was a foreigner and a well-known labor activist. His death inspired several songs, and his life has inspired many fellow workers, but Joe also wrote some of our best-known labor songs, including "The Preacher and The Slave," "Casey Jones," and "There is Power in a Union," which are still sung today at union rallies and events.

Workers of the World, Awaken! The Life and Legacy of Joe Hill opens on ASHM's balcony level Friday, September 4, 2015. This special exhibition is included with museum admission.

Call 215-389-1776, email info@americanswedish.org or visit www.americanswedish.org for more information. The American Swedish Historical Museum is located in FDR Park at 1900 Pattison Avenue in South Philadelphia, five blocks west of the Sports Complex. The

Museum is easily accessible from Route 95 or 76 and has free parking. For those taking public transportation, the Broad Street subway AT&T station, or SEPTA's Route 17 bus is within walking distance of the Museum.

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