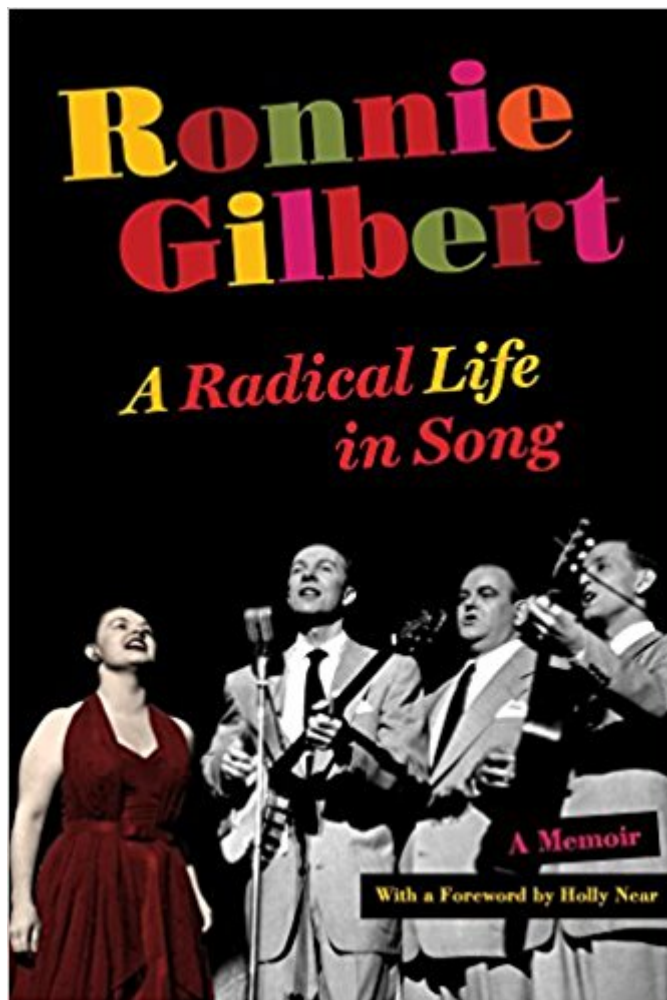


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# Ronnie Gilbert: A Radical Life In Song



## Synopsis

Ronnie Gilbert had a long and colorful career as a singer, actor, playwright, therapist, and independent woman. Her lifelong work for political and social change was central to her role as a performer. Raised in Depression-era New York City by leftist, working-class, secular Jewish parents, Gilbert is best known as a member of the Weavers, the quartet of the 1950s and '60s that survived the blacklist and helped popularize folk music in America. Her joyous contralto and vibrant stage presence enriched the celebrated group and propelled Gilbert into a second singing career with Holly Near in the 1980s and '90s. As an actor, Gilbert explored developmental theater with Joseph Chaikin and Peter Brook and wrote and performed in ensemble and solo productions across the United States and Canada. Ronnie Gilbert brings the political, artistic, and social issues of the era alive through song lyrics and personal stories, traversing sixty years of collaborations in life and art that span the folk revival, the Cold War blacklist, primal therapy, the back-to-the-land movement, and a rich, multigenerational family story. Much more than a memoir, Ronnie Gilbert is a unique and engaging historical document for readers interested in music, theater, American politics, the women's movement, and left-wing activism.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Readers of Ronnie Gilbert: A Radical Life in Song will finish the book inspired, reinvigorated, and more committed than ever to continue the fight for justice." (Randy Shaw Beyond Chron 2015-10-09)"Activism is just one of the threads winding through this title, along with music, theater,

performance, politics, and the challenges of building a life outside of the 20th-century mainstream. . . Yet it's the music that shines the brightest in this memoir; Gilbert's time with the Weavers and her creative partnership with Holly Near bookend a life no less remarkable for being remarkably nonlinear." (Library Journal 2015-12-02)"Gilbert's memoir brings to life the frightening political climate of the times. . . . We are fortunate that Gilbert took the time to document her singular experiences as a committed activist and singer whose soaring contralto and "dangerous songs" both accompanied and animated the progressive movements of her time." (Elaine Elinson San Francisco Chronicle 2015-12-25)"Offers an exceptional narrative about the life of a courageous and radical woman who believed that 'songs are dangerous.'" (The Gay & Lesbian Review 2016-04-01)"This posthumously published memoir offers an exceptional narrative about the life of a courageous and radical woman." (Irene Javors The Gay & Lesbian Review 2016-08-01)"Gilbert's Radical Life in Song is an honest self-examination after a long career of enthusiastic pursuits, free of defensiveness and open to change." (Eric A. Gordon People's World 2016-09-06)

"Ronnie Gilbert's life and new book are brilliant, inspirational, exuberant. She has brought me hope for fifty-five years now with no end in sight." "Anne Lamott, author of Help, Thanks, Wow "A passionate life, boldly lived by a social and artistic rebel. Brava!" "Joan Steinau Lester, author of Fire in My Soul: Eleanor Holmes Norton "Ronnie Gilbert was living history, and I'm so grateful she wrote this book. My only regret is that she didn't live to see it published, but knowing her, the journey was the thing." "Janis Ian, Grammy Award winner and writer of "Society's Child" "What an extraordinary, well-lived, lefty/Jewish life, complicated and engaged, a glorious weaving of art and politics: hootenannies to Red-haters, Carnegie Hall to Mother Jones, women's music and love for a woman to the bombing of Gaza. Sing now to the heavens, dear Ronnie!" "Penny Rosenwasser, author of Hope into Practice: Jewish Women Choosing Justice Despite Our Fears "A Radical Life in Song is an uplifting, bold, and adventurous journey with the resilient Ronnie Gilbert as she goes from challenge to challenge, from strength to strength, with gusto and heart." "Clare Coss, playwright and author of Emmett, Down in My Heart and Dr. Du Bois and Miss Ovington "Ronnie Gilbert approached her memoir as she lived her life: with love, compassion, and forthright courage. Vividly written, this splendid book presents a life of stunning surprises, harmony and struggle, and the enduring realities of political and personal activism, from the Weavers to Women in Black." "Blanche

Wiesen Cook, author of Eleanor Roosevelt, vols. 1 & 2

I've been a fan of the Weavers for many years. I've read books on Pete Seeger and Lee Hays. I was interested in how Ronnie Gilbert became part of the group. This book offers insight into Ronnie's life and her strong beliefs in unions and helping the underdogs of society. I loved the book and would recommend it to anyone interested in the folk music rebellions.

I much enjoyed the book, having lived through the times, from "Goodnight Irene" forward. For many, it will be a history lesson, so best to enjoy history. For me it was reminiscence, which I often haven't time for. Unless the memories are happy ones. as my memories of those trying, exciting times are.

I grew up listening to The Weavers and it has been wonderful having the background story of the evolution of the group. Ronnie Gilbert's voice is clear and pure and a pleasure to listen to (I've been playing and re-playing Weavers at Carnegie Hall CD). I also just saw the movie "Trumbo" so more background on the McCarthy witch hunts has really broadened my knowledge of that blight of time in our history. If you have not heard the music you can still find The Weavers music as well as Pete Seeger.

Fabulous memoir with much about Gilbert that is less known than her time with the Weavers. She was a peace activist, an actor, a solo singer, and a strong woman who became a beloved lesbian in late life.

Ronnie Gilbert is a folk legend. Her book does not disappoint. She is a wonderful storyteller who shares the behind the scenes life fans may not know about. A must read for folk and women's music fans!

My folk heroes, especially Erik Darling and Pete, all the rest, enriched my life seeing them live and reading her book. Fascinating.

I love/d Ronnie Gilbert! She is such a fierce that should be followed for generations to come!

Excellent. Clear, informative and entertaining.

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