

Songs of the Workers



a Socialist Party
publication



The Socialist Party of Ireland

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Songs of the Workers



The Socialist Party of Ireland ·

Páirtí Sóisialach Éireann

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The songs reproduced in this book show various aspects of the continuing struggle between the working class and the capitalists, whether employers or landlords. The Socialist Party believes that the international nature of the workers' struggle needs particular emphasis in Ireland today, where so many organisations exist, who would again lead us into the blind alley of nationalism.

The fight for socialism, for human rights and decent living standards is international. As James Connolly said- "the workers of all countries are my fellow patriots, the capitalist of my own country is my natural enemy".

Music and songs have an important part to play in the battle for socialism. They are invaluable in building confidence and strengthening class solidarity as well as in combating the attitudes of the exploiters.

We wish to thank the Workers' Music Association of London for permission to reproduce five of the songs in this book, the music of which is available on request.

These are 'Song of the Low', 'Song of the Future', 'Song of the Hunger Marchers' and 'Pity the Downtrodden Landlord'.

The red flag

A famous English labour song; first published in 1889.

Words by Irishman, Jim Connell (1852-1929); intended by the writer to be sung to the Scottish reel tune "The White Cockade" but now generally sung to the tune of "Maryland" also known as "Tannenbaum".



The people's flag is deepest red:
It shrouded oft our martyred dead.
And ere their limbs grew stiff and cold,
Their hearts' blood dyed its ev'ry fold.

Chorus:

Then raise the scarlet standard high.
Within its shade we'll live and die.
Tho' cowards flinch and traitors sneer,
We'll keep the red flag flying here..

Look round — the Frenchman loves its blaze;
The sturdy German chants its praise;
In Moscow's halls its hymns are sung;
Chicago swells the surging throng.

Chorus

It waved above our infant might,
When all ahead seemed dark as night;
It witnessed many a deed and vow —
We must not change its colour now.

Chorus

It well recalls the triumphs past;
It gives the hope of peace at last;
The banner bright, the symbol plain
Of human right and human gain.

Chorus

It suits today the weak and base,
Whose minds are fixed on pelf and place,
To cringe before the rich man's frown
And haul the sacred emblem down.

Chorus

With heads uncovered swear we all,
To bear it onward till we fall.
Come dungeon dark or gallows grim,
This song shall be our parting hymn.

Joe Hill

By Alfred Hayes and Earl Robinson.

Joe Hill was a native of Sweden (whose real name was probably Joel Haaglund) who emigrated to the USA in 1905. He became a leader of the trade union movement Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), popularly called the "Wobblies". He was framed on a murder charge by the US government in 1915, tried by a kangaroo court and shot by firing squad.

I dreamed I saw Joe Hill last night,
 Alive as you and me.
 Said I: "But Joe, you're ten years dead".
 "I never died", said he,
 "I never died", said he.

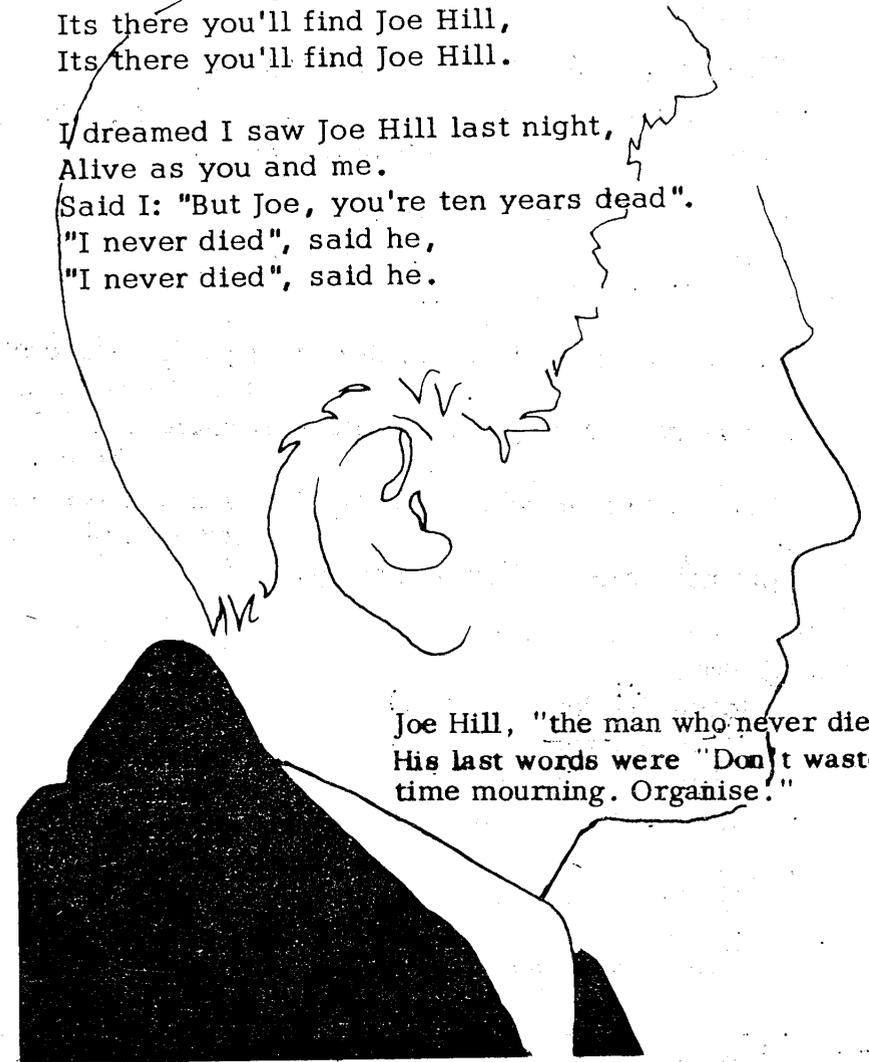
"In Salt Lake City, Joe", said I,
 Him standing by my bed,
 "They framed you on a murder charge",
 Said Joe, "But I ain't dead",
 Said Joe, "But I ain't Dead".

"The copper bosses shot you, Joe,
 They filled you full of lead".
 "Takes more than guns to kill a man",
 Said Joe, "And I ain't dead",
 Said Joe, "And I ain't dead".

And standing there as big as life
 And smiling with his eyes,
 Said Joe: "What they forgot to kill
 Went on to organise;
 Went on to organise".

From San Diego up to Maine,
 In every mine and mill,
 Where working men defend their rights
 Its there you'll find Joe Hill,
 Its there you'll find Joe Hill.

I dreamed I saw Joe Hill last night,
 Alive as you and me.
 Said I: "But Joe, you're ten years dead".
 "I never died", said he,
 "I never died", said he.



Joe Hill, "the man who never died".
 His last words were "Don't waste
 time mourning. Organise."

The blackleg

Connolly's attitude to the blackleg – a timely reminder now that trade union officials, not only tolerate but organise picket passing.

May be sung to any suitable air.

There's a cuckoo in our household
And he terrifies our young,
For the habits of the traitor
Have been often told and sung.
Though his feathers flutter softly,
There is murder in his heart,
And all down the toiling ages
He has played the villain's part.

Chorus:

Oh, we hate the cruel tiger
And hyena and jackal;
But the false and dirty blackleg
Is the vilest beast of all.

When we dress our brave battalions
And confront the lords of loot,
We behold the scab desert us
Ere the guns begin to shoot;
Just to gorge his greedy stomach
And to save his coward's skin,
With salvation in the balance
He betrays his kith and kin.

Chorus

You can tell him midst a thousand
By his cringe and by his crawl,
For of dignity or courage
He possesses none at all.
In the aleshop he's a sponger,
In the workshop he's a spy,
He's a liar and deceiver
With low cunning in his eye.

Chorus

Let us flout him in the market,
Let us cut him in the street,
Let us jeer him from all places
Where the honest workers meet;
When to his brazen features
Every decent door is slammed,
We will leave him burst and broken
To go down among the damned.

Chorus

Pity the downtrodden landlord

Music by Arnold Clayton; words by B Woolf.

Words by B Woolf; music by Arnold Clayton.

Please open your hearts and your purses
To a man who is misunderstood.
He gets all the kicks and the curses
Though he wishes you nothing but good.
He wistfully begs you to show him
You think he's a friend not a louse
So remember the debt that you owe him,
The landlord who lends you his house.

Chorus:

So pity the downtrodden landlord
And his back that is burdened and bent;
Respect his grey hairs, don't ask for repairs,
And don't be behind with the rent.

You are able to work for your living
And rejoice in your strength and your skill,
So try to be kind and forgiving
To a man whom a day's work would kill.
You can work, and still talk to your neighbour,
You can look the whole world in the face,
But the landlord who ventured to labour
Would never survive the disgrace.

Chorus

When thunder clouds gather and darken
You can sleep undisturbed in your bed,
But the landlord must sit up and hearken
And shiver, and wonder, and dread,
If you're killed, then you die in a hurry
Then you never will know your bad luck
But the landlord is shaking with worry-
'Has one of my houses been struck?'

Chorus

When a landlord resorts to eviction
Don't think that he does it for spite,
He is acting from deepest conviction
And what's right, after all, is what's right.
But I see that your hearts are all hardened
And I fear I'm appealing in vain,
Yet I hope my last plea will be pardoned
If I beg on my knees once again.

Chorus

We shall not be moved

Fighting song of the Arkansas sharecroppers in the 1930s, popularised as a civil rights song in the USA.

We're fighting for our freedom, we shall not be moved,
We're fighting for our freedom, we shall not be moved,
Just like a tree that's standing by the waterside,
We shall not be moved.

Chorus:

We shall not, we shall not be moved,
We shall not, we shall not be moved,
Just like a tree that's standing by the waterside,
We shall not be moved.

We shall stand and fight together, we shall not be moved,
We shall stand and fight together, we shall not be moved,
Just like a tree that's standing by the waterside,
We shall not be moved.

Chorus

We are black and white together, we shall not be moved,
We are black and white together, we shall not be moved,
Just like a tree that's standing by the waterside,
We shall not be moved.

Jarama valley

A song of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion – American volunteers who fought in defence of the Spanish Republic against Franco's fascists 1936 – 1938.

To the air of the "Bright Mohawk Valley" or the Irish Civil War song "Take it Down from the Mast".

There's a valley in Spain called Jarama
It's a place that we all know so well
It was there that we gave of our manhood
Where so many of our brave comrades fell.

We are proud of the Lincoln Battalion
And the fight for Madrid that it made
There we fought like true sons of the people
As part of the Fifteenth Brigade.

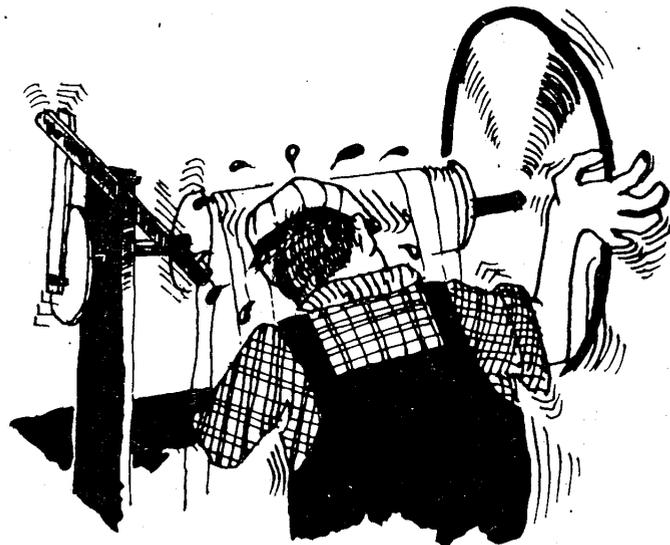
Now we're far from that valley of sorrow
But its memory we ne'er will forget –
So before we conclude this reunion
Let us stand to our glorious dead.

There's a valley in Spain called Jarama
It's a place that we all know so well
It was there that we gave of our manhood
Where so many of our brave comrades fell.

Willie Brown

A traditional song from Britain.

To the air of "So Early in the Morning".



A nice young man was Willie Brown,
He worked for a wage in a Yorkshire town,
He turned a wheel from left to right,
From eight in the morning 'til six at night.

Chorus:

Keep that wheel a-turning,
Keep that wheel a-turning,
Keep that wheel a-turning,
And do a little more each day.

The boss one day to Willie came,
And said "Look here, young what's-your-name,
We're far from pleased with what you do,
So hurry that wheel or out you go".

Chorus

So Willie turned and made her run,
Three times round in the space of one.
He turned so hard he was quickly made
The Lord High Turner of his trade.

Chorus

The nation thrilled at the wonderous tale
The news appeared in the Sketch and Mail,
The railways ran excursions down
And all to look on Willie Brown.

Chorus

He turned all day with a saintly smile,
The goods he made grew such a pile,
They filled the room and the room next door,
And overflowed to the basement floor.

Chorus

But sad the sequel to our tale,
He turned out more than his boss could sell,
The market fell and the price came down,
Seven days more and they sacked young Brown.

Song to the future

Another song of the Chartist movement, also by Ernest Charles Jones.

Music by Alfred Roberts.

The land it is the landlord's
 The trader's is the sea
 The ore the usurer's coffers fills
 But what remains for me?
 But what remains for me?
 The engine whirls for master's craft
 The steel shines to defend
 With Labour's arms what Labour raised
 For Labour's foe to spend
 For Labour's foe to spend

The camp, the pulpit and the law
 For rich men's sons are free
 Theirs - theirs are learning, art and arms
 But what remains for me?
 But what remains for me?
 The coming hope, the future day
 When wrong to right shall bow
 And hearts that have the courage, man
 To make that future now,
 To make that future now.

Peace and liberty

Words by Robert Burns (1759 - 1796), farm labourer and Scottish folk-poet.

Has been set to various airs.

Why should we idly waste our prime
 Repeating our oppressions?
 Come rouse to arms. 'Tis now the time
 To punish past transgressions.
 'Tis said that kings can do no wrong,
 Their murderous deeds deny it,
 And since from us their power is sprung,
 We have the right to try it.
 Now each true patriot's song shall be:
 'Welcome death or liberty'.

Proud priests and bishops we'll translate
 And cannonise as martyrs;
 The guillotine on peers shall wait,
 And knights shall hang in garters.
 Those despots long have trod us down
 And judges are their engines;
 Such wretched minions of a crown
 Demand the people's vengeance.
 Today 'tis theirs; tomorrow we
 Shall don the cap of liberty.

The Golden Age we'll then revive;
 Each man will be a brother,
 In harmony we all shall live
 And share the earth together;
 In virtue trained, enlightened youth
 Will love each fellow creature,
 And future years shall prove the truth
 That man is good by nature;
 Then let us toast with three times three
 The reign of peace and liberty.

Strike for better wages

The London dockers strike of 1889, which became known as "the Strike for the Dockers Tanner" began with the dock labourers demand for the hourly rate to be increased from five pence to six pence, and the introduction of four hour work periods. The labourers were joined at an early stage by the stevedores and later by workers throughout east and south London.

The dispute lasted for five weeks, and involved more than 100,000 workers. It ended with the strikers demands being met in full.

Sung to the tune of "God Save Ireland".

At the docks there is a strike,
That the company don't like,
A tanner on the hour they'll have to pay,
Like slaves they'd have us work,
Far more than any Turk,
And make us sweat our lives out every day.

Chorus:

Strike boys strike for better wages,
Strike boys strike for better pay,
Go on fighting at the docks,
Stick it out like fighting cocks,
Go on fighting 'till the boss's they give way.

If its slavery that you seek,
For about a quid a week,
They'll take you on as soon as you come near,
Sweat your guts out with a will,
Or they'll try your job to fill,
But that won't work with working men its clear.

Every morning there are flocks,
For employment at the docks,
Hard working men who scarce can get a meal,
With wives and children dear,
It would make you shed a tear,
If you only knew the hardships that they feel.

Chorus

We'll stand up for our rights,
And the company we will fight,
Supported by our brothers everywhere,
For we have friends galore, the good old stevedores,
And the seamen and the firemen they are there.

Chorus

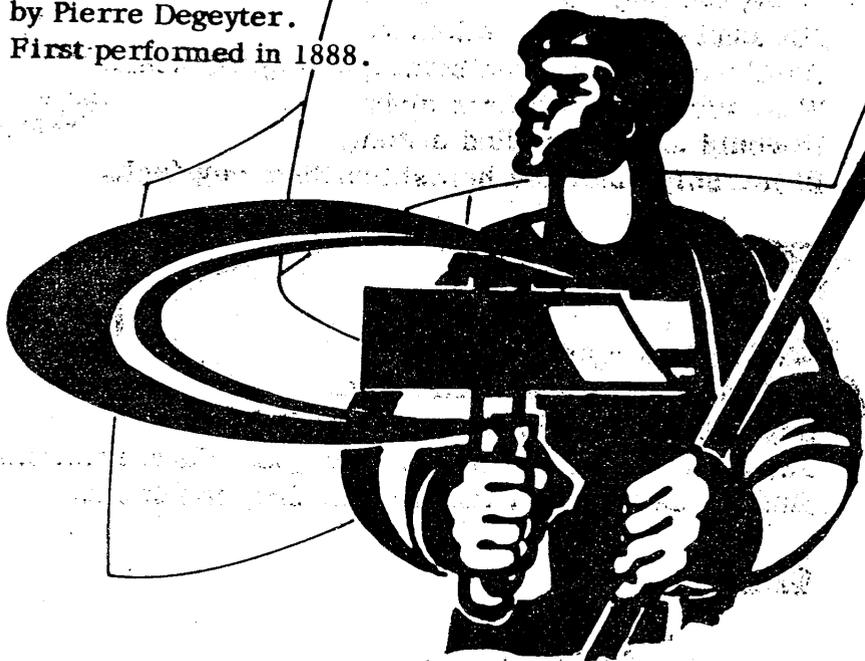
Starvation 'tis they'd bid,
To a man with seven kids,
When he brings 'em only fifteen pence a day,
For what you can get to eat on seven and six a week,
When it often takes it all to pay the rent.

Chorus

Here's a health to Mr Burnes,
He's done us all a turn,
Ben Tillet man and Mr Twomey too,
We won't give in a bit,
For we've got 'em in a fit,
And we've put the old dock company in the stew.

International anthem of
the working class.

Original French words
by Eugene Pottier, music
by Pierre Degeyter.
First performed in 1888.



The Internationale

Arise, ye starvelings from your slumbers,
Arise, ye criminals of want;
For reason in revolt now thunders
And at last ends the age of cant.

Now away with all superstitions,
Servile masses, arise, arise:
We'll change forthwith the old conditions
And spurn the dust to win the prize.

Chorus:

Chorus:

Then, comrades, come rally, and the last fight let
us face:

The Internationale unites the human race.

Then, comrades, come rally, and the last fight let
us face:

The Internationale unites the human race:

No saviours from on high deliver,

No trust have we in prince or peer;

Our own right hand the chains must shiver,

Chains of hatred, of greed and fear.

Ere the thieves disgorge their booty

And to all give a happier lot,

Each at his forge must do his duty

And strike the iron while it's hot.

Chorus

We peasants, artisans and others
Enrolled among the sons of toil,
Let's claim the earth henceforth for brothers,
Drive the indolent from the soil.

On our flesh too long has fed the raven,

We've too long been the vulture's prey:

But now, farewell the spirit craven,

The dawn brings in a brighter day.

Chorus

Be moderate

An excellent song by James Connolly which for some reason is not published very often.

May be sung to any suitable air.

**"Be moderate" the timorous cry,
Who dread the tyrant's thunder,
"You ask too much, and people fly
From you aghast, in wonder".
'Tis passing strange, and I declare
Such statements cause us mirth,
For our demands most moderate are:
We only want THE EARTH.**

Our masters all — a godly crew
Whose hearts throb for the poor;
Their sympathies assure us, too,
If our demands were fewer —
Most generous souls, but please observe,
What they enjoy from birth
Is all we ever had the nerve
To ask: that is, THE EARTH.

**The Labour fakir, full of guile,
Such doctrine ever preaches
And, whilst he bleeds the rank and file,
Tame moderation teaches.
Yet in his despite, we'll see the day
When, with sword in its girth,
Labour shall march in war array
To seize its own: THE EARTH.**

For Labour long with groans and tears
To its oppressors knelt,
But never yet to aught save fears
Did hear of tyrant melt.
We need not kneel; our cause is high,
Of true men there's no dearth,
And our victorious rallying cry
Shall be: WE WANT THE EARTH.



Song of the low

A song of the Chartist movement (the first mass political movement of the English working class).

Words by the Chartist leader Ernest Charles Jones (1819-1869).

Music by John Lowry; first published in 1852.

We're low, we're low, we're so very, very low,
That we delve in the dirty clay
'Till we bless the plain with the golden grain,
And the vale with the fragrant hay.
Our place we know, we're so very, very low,
'Tis down at the landlord's feet:
We're not too low the grain to grow
But too low the bread to eat.

We're low, we're low, mere rabble we know,
But at our plastic power
The mould at the lording's feet will grow
Into palace and church and tower.
Then prostrate fall in the rich man's hall
And cringe at the rich man's door
We're not too low to build the wall
But too low to tread the floor.

We're low, we're low, we're very, very low,
And yet when the trumpets ring,
The thrust of a poor man's arm will go
Through the heart of the proudest king.
We're low, we're low, mere rabble, we know,
We're only the rank and file
We're not too low to kill the foe,
But too low to share the spoil.

Down, down we go, we're so very, very low,
To the hell of the deep-sunk mines;
But we gather the proudest gems that glow,
When the crown of the despot shines;
And when'er he lacks, upon our backs
Fresh loads he deigns to lay
We're far too low to vote the tax,
But not too low to pay.

We're low, we're low — we're so very, very low,
And yet from our fingers glide
The silken flow and the robes that glow
Round the limbs of the sons of pride;
And what we get, and what we give
We know, and we know our share
We're not too low the cloth to weave
But too low the cloth to wear.

A rebel song

Words by James Connolly.

Music by Gerald Crawford ; first published 1903.

Come workers sing a rebel song,
A song of love and hate,
Of love unto the lowly
And of hatred to the great.
The great who trod our fathers down,
Who steal our children's bread,
Whose hands of greed are stretched to rob
The living and the dead.

Chorus:

Then sing our rebel song as we proudly sweep along
To end the age-old tyranny that makes for human tears.
Our march is nearer done, with each setting of the sun.
And the tyrants' might is passing with the passing of
the years.

We sing no more of wailing
No song of sighs or tears;
High are our hopes and stout our hearts
And banished all our fears.
Our flag is raised above us
So that all the world may see,
'Tis Labour's faith and Labour's arm
Alone can Labour free.

Chorus

Out of the depths of misery
We march with hearts aflame;
With wrath against the rulers false
Who wreck our manhood's name.
The serf who licks the tyrant's rod
May bend forgiving knee;
The slave who breaks his slavery's chain
A wrathful man must be.

Chorus

Our army marches onward
With its face towards the dawn,
In trust secure in that one thing
The slave may lean upon.
The might within the arm of him
Who knowing freedom's worth,
Strikes hard to banish tyranny
From off the face of earth.

Chorus

Sit down

Written by Maurice Sugar, 1936 (American).

This song was sung by the workers of General Motors, Cleveland, who on 28 December 1936 adopted a new tactic in their struggle against the bosses – the sit down strike.

When they tie a can to a union man,
Sit down, sit down!
When they give him the sack, they'll take him back,
Sit down, sit down!

Chorus:

Sit down take a seat,
Sit down and rest your feet,
Sit down you got 'em beat,
Sit down, sit down!

When they smile and say no raise in pay,
Sit down, sit down,
When you want the boss to come across,
Sit down, sit down!

When the foreman comes just twiddle your thumbs,
Sit down, sit down;
When you want them to know they better go slow,
Sit down, sit down!

When the boss won't talk don't take a walk,
Sit down, sit down!
When the boss see's that he'll want a little chat,
Sit down, sit down!

Song to labour

Words: Charlotte Perkins Gilman.

Music: Alan Bush.

Shall you complain who feed the world,
Who clothe the world, who house the world,
Shall you complain who are the world,
Of what the world may do?

As from this hour you use your power
The world must follow you
As from this hour you use your power
The world must follow you.

The world's life hangs on your right hand
Your strong right hand, your skilled right hand,
You hold the whole world in your hand,
See to it what you do!

Or dark of light, or wrong or right
The world is made by you.
Or dark or light, or wrong or right
The world is made by you.

Then rise as you ne'er rose before,
Nor hoped before, nor dared before,
And show as ne'er was shown before
The power that lies in you.

Stand all as one, till right is done
Believe, and dare, and do!
Stand all as one, till right is done
Believe, and dare, and do!

Larkin

A Dublin folk song about James Larkin (1876-1947), founder of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union and the Workers Union of Ireland.

Sung to the air of "Preab san Ól".

In Dublin city in 1913, the boss was rich and the
poor were slaves.
The women working and the children hungry, then
on came Larkin like a wave.
The workman cringed when the bossman thundered,
Seventy hours was his weekly chore
He asked for little and less was granted
To let him live 'till he'd ask for more.

But on came Larkin in 1913, a mighty man with a
mighty tongue,
The voice of labour, the voice of justice
And he was gifted and he was young,
On came Larkin in 1913, a labour man with a
union tongue.
He raised the worker and gave him courage,
He was their hero, the workers' man.

It was in August, the bossman told us,
No union man for him could work.
We stood by Larkin and told the bossman
We'd fight or die but we would'nt shirk.
Eight months we fought and eight months we starved
We stood by Larkin through thick and thin
The foodless homes and the crying children
They broke our hearts. We could'nt win.

Then Larkin left us we seemed defeated
The night was black for the working man.
But on came Connolly, with new hope and counsel,
His motto was that we'd rise again.
In 1916, in Dublin city, the English soldiers, they
burned our town.
They shelled the buildings, and shot our leaders
The harp was buried beneath the crown.

They shot McDermott and Pearse and Plumkett;
They shot McDonagh and Clarke the brave.
From bleak Kilmainham they took their bodies
To Arbour Hill and a quich lime grave.
But last of all of those seven leaders,
I'll sing the praise of James Connolly,
The voice of labour, the voice of justice
Who gave his life that men might be free.



Song of the hunger marchers

A song from the English unemployed movement of the 1930s.

Words by Randall Swingler; music by Alan Bush.

We march from a stricken country,
From broken hills and vale,
Where factory yards are empty,
And the rusty gear for sale.
Our country will not thrive again,
Our strength is not for use,
The bubble of prosperity
Has never come to us.

Chorus:

Then rouse to our tread
When you hear us marching by;
For servility is dead
And the Means Test too shall die!
Though they think our spirit's broken,
Because we're underfed,
We will stamp the Starvation Government
Beneath the workers' tread!

We pass through sleeping villages
And poor and struggling farms,
We pass through towns where factories
Are forging war and arms.
In towns and fields and villages
We see it more and more,
How the boss exploits the worker
And drives him into war.

Chorus

And this Employers' Government
Is hoping for the best,
To set one against the other
By the grading of the Test.
They would train us in their Labour Camps
For action against you,
But we march for the working class,
For we are workers too.

Chorus

Remember, fellow workers,
Who earn a wage to-day,
That they'll throw you on the scrapheap,
When they find it doesn't pay.
All you who are employed,
Making cartridges and bombs,
We'll be marching side by side,
When the final crisis comes.

Chorus

Dump the bosses off your back

A short but pointed essay on capitalism from the USA.

Words by John Brill (IWW).

Tune: "Take it to the Lord in Prayer".

Are you poor, forlorn and hungry?
Are there lots of things you lack?
Is your life made up of misery?
Then dump the bosses off your back.

Are your clothes all patched and tattered?
Are you living in a shack?
Would you have your troubles scattered?
Then dump the bosses off your back.

The klan song

The Ku Klux Klan was founded by ex-Confederate soldiers after the end of the American Civil War. It terrorised, intimidated and murdered Negroes in an attempt to maintain white supremacy.

The country side was cold and still
There was a cross upon the hill.
That cold cross wore a mask of blood,
To hide its rotten heart of wood.
"O Father, I hear the iron sound
Of hoof beats on the frozen ground".

Now o're the hill the riders came,
"Jesus" it was a crying shame,
To hear the snarl upon their lips,
To see the blood upon their whips.

"O Mother, I feel a stunning pain
Blood flows down like summer rain".

Now each one wore a mask of white,
To hide his yellow face from sight,
And each one sucked a little breath,
Out of the empty jaws of death.

"O Sister, hold my bleeding head
It is so lonely to be dead".

Now he who travels with the Klan,
Is a monster not a man,
For beneath that flowing white disguise,
I have gazed into his eyes.

"O Brother, won't you stand with me
It is not easy to be free".



James Connolly

An anonymous ballad about James Connolly; revolutionary working-class leader. Born 1868 – executed 1916, at the special request of Dublin businessmen.

"Where, O where is our James Connolly,
Where, O where is that gallant man?"
"He is gone to organise the union
That working men might yet be free".

"Then who, then who will lead the van,
Then who, then who will lead the van?"
"Who, but our James Connolly,
The Hero of the working man".

"Then who will carry high the burning flag,
Then who will carry high the burning flag?"
"Who, but our James Connolly,
Could carry high the burning flag".

They carried him up to the jail,
They carried him up to the jail,
And they shot him down on a bright May morning,
And laid him quickly in his gore.

"Who mourns the death of this great man,
Who mourns the death of this great man?"
"O bury me down by yon green garden,
With union men at every side".

They buried him down in yon green garden,
With union men at every side,
And they swore they would build a mighty weapon,
That James Connolly's name could be filled with pride.

"Where, O where is our James Connolly,
Where, O where is that gallant man?"
"He is gone to organise the union,
That working men might yet be free".



I am a union woman

Written by Aunt Molly Jackson, 1931 (American).

Aunt Molly Jackson; songwriter, poet, union organiser in the Kentucky coal fields, died in 1966. During her lifetime she fought, despite great odds and unbelievable personal tragedy, to improve the conditions of the coal mine workers.

After her expulsion from the Kentucky coalfields in 1931, she began the task of organising and collecting funds and support for the National Miners Union (NMU). To this end she toured thirty-eight states, and this song was the prelude to her appeals.

I am a union woman,
As brave as I can be,
I do not like the bosses,
And the bosses don't like me.

Chorus:

Join the NMU,
Come and join the NMU.

I was born in old Kentucky,
Kentucky born and bred,
And when I joined the union
They called me a Russian Red.

Chorus

My husband asked the boss for a job,
This is what he said,
"Phil Jackson I can't work you Sir
Your wife's a Russian Red".

Chorus

These are about the worst times,
I have ever saw,
To get shot down by gun fire,
Or framed up by the law.

Chorus

Now if you want a union,
As fine as one can be,
Just join the dear old NMU,
And come along with me.

Chorus

We are many thousand strong,
I am proud to say,
And we are getting stringer,
And stronger every day.

Chorus

The bosses ride fine horses,
While we walk in the mud,
Their banner is the dollar sign,
While our's is dried with blood.

Chorus

I am a union woman,
As brave as I can be,
I do not like the bosses,
And the bosses don't like me.

The watchword of labour

Anthem of the Irish working class.

Words by James Connolly; music by JJ Hughes.

Date of publication or first performance not known.

Oh, hear ye the watchword of Labour,
The slogan of those who'd be free,
That no more to any enslaver,
Must Labour bend suppliant knee;
That we on whose shoulders are borne,
The pomp and the pride of the great,
Whose toil they repay with their scorn,
Must challenge and master our fate.

Chorus:

Then send it aloft on the breeze, boys,
That watchword, the grandest we've known,
That Labour must rise from its knees, boys,
And claim the broad earth as its own.

Aye, we who oft won by our valour,
Empire for our rulers and lords,
Yet knelt in abasement and squalor,
To the thing we had made by our swords,
Now valour with worth will be blending,
When, answering Labour's command,
We arise from our knees and, ascending,
To manhood, for freedom take stand.

Chorus

Then out from the field and the city,
From workshop, from mill and from mine,
Despising their wrath and their pity,
We workers are moving in line,
To answer the watchword and token,
That Labour gives forth as its own,
Nor pause till our fetters we've broken,
And conquered the spoiler and drone.

Chorus



Workers must organise politically to achieve their rights

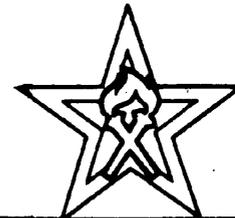
Many people are dissatisfied with the present political and economic set-up in Ireland. High prices, low wages and unemployment ensure that the heaviest burdens fall on the majority of the population – the working people. In contrast, a small minority enjoy ownership of 75% of the wealth of Ireland and live at a level of luxury never reached by the workers, whose labour produces everything of value. This system of exploitation – capitalism, to give it its scientific title – is not permanent. It can, and will be changed. One of the ways of bringing about change is for the exploited people to organise politically to remove the exploiters. This is the reason for the existence of the Socialist Party of Ireland.

WHAT TO DO

You can share in the work of transforming society by becoming a member of the Socialist Party of Ireland. All applications will be acknowledged, and details of procedures given by return post. These include a political education programme designed to give an understanding of the relationship of classes in society and how socialism will be established in Ireland.

THE POLICY

The policy and main objective of the party is to establish in Ireland a socialist form of society, the economic basis of which will be public ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange following the abolition of capitalist ownership.



Join the

Socialist Party

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Please send me

Address _____

application form

more information

The Socialist Party of Ireland - 23 Parliament St. - Dublin 2

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- ▶ 'Ireland into slavery' — a history of the EEC and an analysis of its effects on Ireland, produced by the SPI as part of the campaign of opposition to membership: 15p (post free)
- ▶ Report of the 1st National Congress of the SPI: 5p (post free)
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Cash with order to: The Socialist Party of Ireland,
23 parliament Street, Dublin 2.

Title: Songs of the Workers

Organisation: Socialist Party of Ireland [1971]

Date: 1975

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