

Songs of Work and Protest: 100 Favorite Songs of American Workers Complete with Music and Historical Notes (Dover Song Collections)

By Edith Fowke, Joe Glazer

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No other form could capture the history of the labor movement better than the songs sung in times both bitter and courageous by coal miners and textile workers, railroad men and steelworkers, farmers, seamen, and cow-hands as they worked to supply the nation's needs and as they worked to defeat political and industrial tyranny, child labor, hunger, poverty, and unemployment. This collection includes a hundred songs of the people, as they have been sung at one time or another on the workers' long road toward freedom and justice, together with the stories of the genuine situations from which they sprang.
They are straight trade union songs and ditties; specific songs of miners, textile workers, steel, and railway workers and farmers; typical working songs of sailors, canalers, lumberjacks, and cowboys; songs of the hardships that working men and women have to face during times of depression; philosophic songs and ironic comments on the economic system; songs that grew out of the fight against slavery; and songs expressing the dreams of people of many lands throughout the ages. Often set to tunes of familiar folk songs, popular songs, and gospel hymns, these are the songs by which unions organized and which the members of each labor group sang out. They are songs sung to words by itinerant wanderers, unlettered farmers, and factory hands; songs by Joe Hill, Ralph Chaplin, Joe Glazer, Merle Traive, Woody Guthrie, the Almanac Singers; songs by famous poets such as Burns and Blake. Most of the songs are American in origin. A few, drawn from England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Germany, Israel, and the Philippines, remind us that the fight for freedom knows no boundaries. The songs are presented with simple piano accompaniments and guitar chords to encourage their use in group singing.
The songs of work and the songs of protest are, in a very important sense, the songs of the New World, capturing the stirring sounds and deep emotions of people over hundreds of years on the march to build a better world. Whether you are looking for material for singing or whether you are looking for material on the struggles of the labor movement, there will be much in this important collection for song and for thought.

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