SONGS

Lift Every Voice

Lift ev'ry voice and sing, til earth and heaven ring
Ring with the harmonies of liberty
Let our rejoicing rise, high as the list'ning skies
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea

Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun
Let us march on 'til victory is won

Stony the road we trod, bitter the chast'ning rod
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died
Yet with a steady beat, have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered
God of our weary years, God of our silent tears
Thou who hast brought us thus far on our way
Thou who hast by thy might led us into the light
Keep us forever in the path, we pray
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met thee
Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we forget thee
Shadowed beneath thy hand may we forever stand
True to our God, true to our native land

Let us keep onward still, keep our resolve until
We achieve brotherhood (unity) for all mankind (our kind)
Look to the rising sun, new work each day is begun
Daily we strive til we true freedom find
Save our hope that we so long and so dearly did cherish
Lest our hearts weary with cruel disillusion should perish
Stretch forth a loving hand, you who in power stand
Lose not our faith, lose not our native land

—James Weldon Johnson (v.4 Henrietta McKee)

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It Could Have Been Me

Students in Ohio and down at Jackson State
Shot down by a vicious fire one early day in May
Some people cried out angry "You should have shot more of them down"
But you can't bury youth my friend, youth grows the whole world round

It could have been me but instead it was you
So I'll keep doing the work you were doing as if I were two
I'll be a student of life, a singer of songs, a farmer of food and a righter of wrongs
It could have been me but instead it was you
And it may be me dear sisters and brothers before we are thru
But if you can die* for freedom - freedom (3x)
If you can die for freedom, I can too *(other v. substitute: sing, live, fight)

The junta took the fingers of Victor Jara's hands
They said to the gentle poet "Play your guitar now if you can"
Well, Victor started singing til they shot his body down
You can kill a man but not a song when it's sung the whole world 'round

A woman in the jungle so many wars away
Studies late into the night, defends a village in the day
Altho' her life and struggle are miles away from me
She sings a song and I know the words and I'll sing them til she's free

One night in Oklahoma, Karen Silkwood died
Because she had some secrets big companies wanted to hide
Well they talk of nuclear safety, they talk of national pride
But we all know it's a death machine and that's why Karen died

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Our sisters are in struggle, from Vietnam to Wounded Knee
From Mozambique to Puerto Rico and they look to you and me
To fight against the system that kills them off and takes their land
It’s our fight too if we’re gonna win, we’ve got to do it hand in hand

It’s gonna be me and it’s gonna be you
So we’ll keep doing the work we’ve been doing until we are thru
We’ll be students of life, singers of song, farmers of food and fighters so strong
It’s gonna be me and it’s gonna be you
But it will be us dear sisters and brothers before we are thru
’Cause if you can fight for freedom, freedom (3x)
If you can fight for freedom, we can too!

—Holly Near


Mountain Song

I have dreamed on this mountain
Since first I was my mother’s daughter
And you can’t just take my dreams
Away — not with me watching
You may drive a big machine
But I was born a great big woman
And you can’t just take my dreams
Away — without me fighting

(bridge) This old mountain raised my many daughters
Some died young, some are still living
If you come here for to take our mountain
Well, we ain’t come here to give it

I have dreamed on this mountain
Since first I was my mother’s daughter
And you can’t just take my dreams
Away — not with me watching
No, you can’t just take my dreams
Away — without me fighting
No, you can’t just take my dreams away

—Holly Near


No More Genocide

Why do we call them the enemy
This struggling nation that’s won independence across the sea?
Why do we want these people to die?
Why do we say North and South, o why, o why, o why?

Well, that’s just a lie! One of the many and we’ve had plenty
I don’t want more of the same/no more genocide in my name!

Why are our history books so full of lies
When no word is spoken of why the Indian dies and dies?
Or that the Chicanos love the California land
Do our books all say it was discovered by one white man?

Why are the weapons of the war so young?
Why are there only rich ones around when it’s done?
Why are so many of our soldiers black or brown?
Do we think it’s because they’re good at cutting other people down?

Why do we support a colony
When Puerto Rican people are crying out to be free?
We sterilize the women and rob the copper mines
Do we think that people will always be so blind?

Nazi forces grow again, ignorance gives them a place
The Klan is teaching children to hate the human race
Where once there was a playground, now an MX missile plant
Do they think it’s fun to see just how much we can stand?

—Holly Near

Union Maid

There once was a union maid who never was afraid
Of goons and ginks and company finks and the deputy sheriffs who made the raids
She went to the union hall when a meeting it was called
And when the company boys came 'round she always stood her ground

Chorus:
O you can't scare me, I'm sticking to the union
I'm sticking to the union, I'm sticking to the union
O you can't scare me, I'm sticking to the union
I'm sticking to the union til the day I die

This union maid was wise to the tricks of company spies
She never got fooled by a company stool, she'd always organize the guys
She always got her way, when she struck for higher pay
She'd show her card to the company guard and this is what she'd say:

Chorus

You women who want to be free, take a little tip from me
Break outa that mold we've all been sold, you got a fighting his-to-ree
The fight for women's rights with workers must unite
Like Mother Jones, move those bones to the front of every fight!

Chorus

—w: Woody Guthrie (new v. anon.) m: trad. (“Redwing”)
If I Had a Hammer

If I had a hammer, I’d hammer in the morning
I’d hammer in the evening, all over this land
I’d hammer out danger, I’d hammer out a
warning
I’d hammer out love between my brothers and
my sisters
all over this land

2. If I had a bell, I’d ring it in the morning...
3. If I had a song, I’d sing it in the morning...
4. Well I got a hammer and I got a bell
And I got a song to sing all over this land
It’s the hammer of justice, it’s the bell of
freedom
It’s a song about love between...

—Lee Hays and Pete Seeger

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Amazing Grace

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch (soul) like me
I once was lost and now am found
Was blind but now I see

’Twas grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed

The Lord has promised good to me
His word my hope secures
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures

Thru many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come
’Tis grace that brought me safe thus far
And grace will lead me home

When we’ve been here 10,000 years
Bright shining as the sun

We’ve no less days to sing God’s praise
Than when we first begun
Allelujah (3x) Praise God! (repeat)
Amazing grace has set me free
To touch, to taste, to feel
The wonders of accepting Love
Have made me whole and real

w: John Newton m: trad (v.5 by John P. Rees.
v.6 by New York YM Quakers)

Bread And Roses

As we go marching marching in the beauty of
the day
A million darkened kitchens, a thousand mill
lots gray
Are touched with all the radiance that a sudden
sun discloses
For the people hear us singing: bread and roses,
bread and roses!

As we go marching marching, we battle too for
men
For they are women’s children and we mother
them again (for men can ne’er be free ’til
our slavery’s at an end)
Our lives shall not be sweated from birth until
life closes
Hearts starve as well as bodies, give us bread
but give us roses

As we go marching marching, unnumbered
women dead
Go crying thru our singing their ancient call for
bread
Small art and love and beauty their drudging
spirits knew
Yes it is bread we fight for, but we fight for
roses, too

As we go marching, marching, we bring the
greater days
The rising of the women means the rising of the
race
No more the drudge and idler, ten that toil where
one reposes
But a sharing of life’s glories - bread and roses,
bread and roses!

w: James Oppenheim
O Freedom

O freedom, O freedom
O freedom over me!
And before I'd be a slave I'll be buried in my grave
And go home to my Lord and be free

No more killin's (3x) over me...
No more fear...
No more hunger...
There'll be joy...
There'll be singing...
There'll be peace...

trad. (adapted by SNCC)

Solidarity Forever

When the union's inspiration, thru the workers' blood shall run,
There can be no power greater anywhere beneath the sun.
Yet what force on Earth is weaker than the feeble strength of one,
But the union makes us strong.

Chorus: Solidarity forever! (3x)
For the union makes us strong.

Is there aught we hold in common with the greedy parasite,
Who would lash us into serfdom and would crush us with his might?
Is there anything left to us but to organize and fight?
For the union makes us strong.

It is we who plowed the prairies, built the cities where they trade,
Dug the mines and built the workshops, endless miles of railroad laid.
Now we stand outcast and starving 'mid the wonders we have made,
But the union makes us strong.

All the world that's owned by idle drones is ours and ours alone.
We have laid the wide foundations, built it skyward stone by stone.

It is ours not to slave in, but to master and to own,
While the union makes us strong.

They have taken untold millions that they never toiled to earn.
But without our brain and muscle not a single wheel can turn.
We can break their haughty power, gain our freedom when we learn
That the union makes us strong.

In our hands is placed a power greater than their hoarded gold,
Greater than the might of armies magnified a thousand-fold.
We can bring to birth a new world from the ashes of the old,
For the union makes us strong.

— w: Ralph Chaplin m: Battle Hymn of the Republic

People Like You

Old fighter, you sure took it on the chin.
Where'd you ever get the strength to stand
Never giving up to giving in.
You know, I just want to shake your hand,
Because...

Chorus: People like you help people like me
Go on, go on
People like you help people like me
Go on, go on

Old Battler, with a scar from every town,
Thought you were no better than the rest.
You wore your colors every way but down.
All you ever gave was your best.
But you know that...

Chorus

Old dreamer, with a world in every thought
Where'd you get the vision to keep on?
You sure gave back as good as what you got
I hope that when my time is almost gone
They'll say that...
Chorus

—Si Kahn

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This Little Light Of Mine

This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine
(3x)
Let it shine (3x)

Everywhere I go...etc.

Shine on people everywhere...etc.

'Til we all get organized...etc.

Equal rights for everyone...etc.

All around the neighborhood...etc.

All around the universe...etc.

This little light of Mine, I’m gonna let it shine
(3x)
Let it shine (3x)

—trad.

Study War No More

Gonna lay down my sword and shield down by the riverside
Down by the riverside, down by the riverside,
Gonna lay down my sword and shield down by the riverside
And study war no more

Chorus: I ain’t gonna study war no more (6x)

1. Gonna put on that long white robe, down by the riverside...etc.
2. Gonna put on that starry crown...
3. Gonna walk with the Prince of Peace...
4. Gonna shake hands around the world...
5. Gonna lay down those atoms bombs...

Gonna lay down my income tax/I ain’t gonna pay for war no more
Gonna lay down my GE stock/and live off war no more
Gonna lay down my Honeywell job/and work for war no more
Gonna lay down those Congressional hawks/and vote for war no more

trad. (new v. anon.)

We Shall Not Be Moved

We shall not, we shall not be moved (2x)
Just like a tree that’s standing by the water
We shall not be moved

1. The union is behind us, we shall not be moved (2x)
   Just like a tree...
2. We’re fighting for our freedom...
3. We’re fighting for our children...
4. We’ll build a mighty union...
5. _______ is our leader...
6. Black and White together....
7. Young and old together...

No nos, no nos moveran (2x)
Como un arbol firme junto al rio
no nos moveran

1. Unidos en la lucha, no nos moveran...
2. Unidos en la huelga, no nos moveran...

—w: textile workers (Spanish v: from a Salvadoran union organizer)

Will The Circle Be Unbroken

I was standing by my window on a cold and cloudy day
When I saw the hearse come rolling for to carry my mother away

Will the circle be unbroken by and by, Lord, by and by?
There’s a better home a-waiting in the sky, Lord, in the sky
Lord I told that undertaker “Undertaker, please drive slow
For this body you’re a hauling, Lord I hate to see her go”
I followed close behind her, tried to hold up and be brave
But I could not hide my sorrow when they laid her in the grave

—Charles H. Gabriel

Will the circle be unbroken, by and by Lord by and by?
There’s a better way to live now, we can have it if we try
I was singing with my sister, I was singing with my friends
And we all can sing together, cause the circle never ends
I was born down in the valley where the sun refused to shine
But I’m climbing up to the highland gonna make that mountain mine!

—Cathy Winter, Betsy Rose and Marcia Taylor.

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**We Shall Overcome**

We shall overcome, we shall overcome
We shall overcome some day
Oh, deep in my heart I do believe
We shall overcome someday

1. We’ll walk hand in hand...etc.
2. We shall live in peace...
3. Black and White together...
4. We are not afraid...
5. We will organize...
6. The union makes us strong...

—trad.

**Joe Hill**

I dreamed I saw Joe Hill last night
Alive as you and me
Says I, But Joe, you’re ten years dead
I never died, says he
I never died, says he

In Salt Lake, Joe, by God says I
Him standing by my bed
They framed you on a murder charge
Says Joe, but I ain’t dead
Says Joe, but I ain’t dead

The copper bosses killed you, Joe
They shot you, Joe, says I
Takes more than guns to kill someone
Says Joe, I didn’t die
Says Joe, I didn’t die

And standing there as big as life
And smiling with his eyes
Says Joe, What they forgot to kill
Went on to organize
Went on to organize

From San Diego up to Maine
In every mine and mill
Where workers strike and organize
That’s where you’ll find Joe Hill
That’s where you’ll find Joe Hill

I dreamed I saw Joe Hill last night
Alive as you and me
Says I, But Joe, you’re ten years dead
I never died, says he
I never died, says he

—1938, Earl Robinson and Alfred Hayes

**E.R.A. SONG**

What’s gonna happen in 2004
When your grandchildren ask
What you did before
Before you get all old and grey
There’s gonna be your judgement day

Were you there in the olden days, Grampa?
Were you there when they tried to say Grandma
Wasn't equal to you in every way
Tell us how you helped pass the E.R.A.

It'll sure sound funny when you tell those kids
Just what their grandpa really did
'Cause they just won't believe their own grandpa
Tried to keep down their own grandma

(Chorus)

What you gonna tell 'em on Judgement Day,
That their grandpa voted no on the E.R.A.?
What you gonna tell those little kids?
How you gonna tell them what you did?

— 1980, Jackie Kendall

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I Woke Up This Morning

(women) I woke up this mornin' with my mind
(men) Where was your mind?
(women) Centered on justice.
(women) I woke up this mornin' with my mind.
(men) Where was your mind?
(women) Centered on justice.
(women) I woke up this mornin' with my mind.
(men) Where was your mind?
(women) Centered on justice.

(men) Say it on.
(women) Say it on.
(men) Say it on.
(women) Say it on.
(all sing) Justice will be won
And when your mind's on the right
We'll win the fight
Our minds're on justice, forevermore.

w: slightly adapted by Kimberley Bobo
m: traditional

Workers and Health Care

There once was a working maid, who really was afraid. To tell her
boss her health care costs were not within her
means to pay.

This maid is not alone; all workers long have
known:
If health's a perk that comes with work
employers must be shown . . .

Chorus: That the time has come, we're going
for health care
We're going for health care! We're going
for health care!
That the time has come, we're going
for health care!
We're going for health care! Health
care for all!

There's many an employee, to raise a family,
Must toil all day at minimum pay to still wind
up in poverty.
It's also all-too-rare, for them to get health care.
The boss, you see, gets off scot free and doesn't
pay her share.

w: Jeff Kirsh; m: "Redwing" ("Union Maid")

Open the Doors! (To Health Care
for All)

There's a crisis in this country that's affecting
you and me.
The doors that lead to health care, don't open
easily.
The costs are astronomical; no care if you are
poor.
It's time we organize ourselves to open up the
doors!

Chorus: Open the doors! Open the doors!
Hear the people knocking loudly—
heed their call.
Open the doors! Open the doors!
The time has come for health care
for all!

Medicare has passed despite the fight of doctors
and their friends
To give the seniors health care, on which they
could depend.
But who knew the docs who fought it, would
make a mint instead,
And leave the seniors' pocketbooks forever in
the red.
Many women having babies do without pre-natal care.
We let that crime go forward, as if we’re not aware,
That the children are our future, our real security;
Instead of building missiles we should make all health care free.

There are thirty seven million who are outside looking in.
They are workers, they are children; they’re our neighbors and our kin.
They need universal health care, to keep them safe and sound;
We’re mad about those health care doors and aim to knock ’em down.

Oh, those doors are artificial and they ain’t made out of steel.
They are put there by a system that’s forgotten how to feel.
All the fear that people live with when an illness comes to call.
The system needs some changin’ and its called health care for all!

—Jeff Kirsch

Midwest Academy Fight Song

Mine eyes have seen the power of our coalition board.
We are tramping on the targets who want all the wealth to hoard.
We have loosed a great constituency and brought new folks aboard,
Through concrete victories!

Chorus: Plan the strategy together.
Work the strategy together.
Win the strategy together.
Organizing makes us strong!

On the newsprint at the meetings, we our goals articulate.
Coalition building strategies we must succinctly state.
We identify the forces to whom we can best relate,
Through concrete victories!

We identify the people who can give us what we need.
We develop all the actions that will make THEM pay us heed.
And give back to common people what THEY’VE stolen in THEIR greed!
Through concrete victories!

w: Peter Shuchter and other participants in the spring, 1990 Midwest Academy training session in Philadelphia

m: Battle Hymn of the Republic