WE SHALL NOT BE MOVED
ROLL THE UNION ON
CASKY JONES
MINER'S LIFEGUARD
SOLIDARITY FOREVER
YOU'VE GOT TO GO DOWN
AND JOIN THE UNION
HOLD THE FORTE
GET THERE, HOLD ME
THE UNION MAID
ALL I WANT
TALKING UNION
THE UNION TRAIN
WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON

DESCRITIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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TALKING UNION

THE ORIGINAL

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with the Almanac Singers

& other UNION SONGS

with Pete Seeger and Chorus
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Unlike most hymns and patriotic organization, employment. But equally important, they sang of

Hold the Fort was first written in the 1880s at which time it bore the title, "Storm the fort, ye Knights of Labor." At its height in 1886, the Knights of Labor had close to a million members. From these workers rose the militant cry:

"Tolling millions now are waking. See them marching on. All the tyrants now are shaking. Ere their power is gone.

Chorus: Storm the fort, ye Knights of Labor, For the cause. Equal rights for every neighbor. Down with tyrant laws!

"Who will dare to shun the conflict? Who would be a slave? Better die within the trenches, Forward, then, ye brave." Chorus.

The song spread to Europe where the Knights of Labor had a number of local assemblies. In England it was adopted by the Transport Workers' Union to the tune of "Hold the Fort." In 1883 it came back to the United States after the first World War. It was to be sung time and again on thousands of picket lines.

The miners, who occupy a prominent place in the splendid militant tradition of American labor, have contributed hundreds of songs and ballads to the literature of the working class. Miner's Lifeigaret was written in 1880 in one of their most famous songs. It voices, among other things, the miners' long-standing and bitter complaint against the operators' habit of changing the mesh size of the screen always to the disadvantage of the workers. The miners' car of coal was dumped to slide down the screen, and whatever went through the holes he was not paid for. "Keep your eye on the screen," the miners sang, for by making the holes larger, the miners would be paid less.

Which Side Are You On? is a miner's song written in 1882 in the bitter struggle of the miners in Harlan County, Kentucky, the mine owners, unyielding in their opposition to any union organization, went on a campaign of violence and terror to smash the union. At least a dozen miners were killed by deputies hired by the operators, but none of the deputies were indicted. "Which Side Are You On?" was written in the midst of the many terroristic raids by the sheriff and his deputies on the miners' homes. They came to the home of Sam Reece, one of the leaders of the National Miners' Union, but he had been warned in time and escaped. They poking their shotguns everywhere, under the closets, even into the piles of dirty linen, searching for the miners' leader. When Reece's young daughters, aged 8 and 11, answered the deputy who laughed and said: "What are you crying for? We don't want you. We're after your old man."

After the deputies had left, Mrs. Florence Reece, wife of the rank and file leader, was weeping with indignation. She tore an old calendar off the wall, and on the back side wrote the verses of the great labor song, which she put to the tune of an old Baptist hymn she had known from childhood. The song was immediately picked up by the striking miners after it had been sung at the union hall by Mrs. Reece's two little girls. From Harlan County, it spread throughout the entire labor movement.

A few of the verses of the song were slightly changed later by the Almanac Singers:

"My daddy was a miner, and I'm a miner's son. I'll stick with the union until the battle's won."

originally read:

"My daddy was a miner, he's now in the air and he'll be with you, fellow workers, until this battle's won."

The words "he's now in the air and sun" refers to the fact that he was blacklisted from work.

The song All I Want was written shortly after the same strike in Harlan County by Jim Gasland, a young miner also blacklisted from the mines.

Casey Jones. Of all the worker-poets in American labor history, the most famous was Joseph Hillstrom (popularly known as "Joe Hill"), the Swedish-born song-writing organizer who emerged from the ranks of the Industrial Workers of the World (I. W. W.) immortal labor songs, and who, at the age of 33 in the year 1915, was executed in Salt Lake City by a firing squad of the mine management for a crime he did not commit. Joe Hill's first labor song, composed in 1910, was his great song, "The Preacher and the Slave." Written to the tune of the popular Salvation Army gospel hymn, "In the Sweet Bye and Bye," his "Casey Jones" was based on the original railroad ballad, but instead of telling the story of a "brave engineer" who, in the original version, was a heroic figure, Joe Hill described a wretched and hated figure, the "scab." According to popular history, Hill composed his version of "Casey Jones" during a Southern Pacific strike in 1910, but there is no evidence that a strike of the magnitude described in the song took place in that year. It is most likely that it was written for the strike on the Southern Pacific in 1912. At any rate it became the most popular vehicle through which workers expressed in song their hatred of the scab.

Undoubtedly the greatest song in American labor history and one of the finest examples of how this literature formed a militant weapon to carry out the struggle was Solidarity Forever, written to the tune of "John Brown's Body" by Ralph Chaplin. Chaplin was one of the early leaders of the I. W. W. and worked closely for a number of years with its leader, William D. "(Big Bill)" Haywood. Soon after his release from prison, Chaplin expressed regret for his former activities in the labore movement. His song "Solidarity Forever" continued, however, to rally hundreds of thousands to the labor movement after the author had deserted it, and during the rise of the C. I. O., it was a regular feature on scores of picket lines.

The formation of the C. I. O. in 1935 marked the crumbling of a dam that had long been holding back American labor's strength and vigor. When that stream of energy broke through, it smashed over the old idea and the workers who had sung at a small meeting in Oklahoma City. During the meeting some men, obviously working for the company, came in and stood in the back of the room, singing for meetings and rallies of the C. I. O. in Detroit, where Ford had just been organized, these and others of their songs were played over sound trucks at mass rallies of the workers.

Union Maid was written by Woody Guthrie, one of America's greatest writing class minstrels, in 1940 after he and Pete Seeger had sung at a small meeting in Oklahoma City. During the meeting some men, obviously working for the company, came in and stood in the back of the room, singing for meetings and rallies of the C. I. O. in Detroit, where Ford had just been organized, these and others of their songs were played over sound trucks at mass rallies of the workers.

Union Train was written by members of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union in the mid-thirties during the drive to organize the sharecroppers and agricultural workers, most of whom were Negroes. All of the words of this song were inspired by the singing of hymns -- these words had been raised from childhood on hymns -- and at one such meeting near Memphis, when the workers had finished singing the spiritual called, "The Old Ship of Zion," a woman in the back of the hall started these new verses to the old tune. Another worker on the other side of the hall caught it up and added a few more verses. Still others contributed additional verses, and a great labor song emerged.

Roll the Union On is another song which emerged out of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union. It was written in 1936 by John Hancock, a Negro tenant farmer who was also a lay preacher and who was then attending classes at Commonwealth College, a school for workers and farmers in the Southwest. Hancock took the tune for the song from the spiritual, "Roll the Chariot On."

Get To Join the Union was written by Woody Guthrie in 1941 during a tour for the C. I. O. It was set to the tune of the famous hymn, "Get to Walk That Lonesome Valley."

WE SHALL NOT BE MOVED

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 water
We shall not be moved.

The union is behind us, we shall not be moved.
The union is behind us, we shall not be moved.
Just like a tree that's standing by the water.
We shall not be moved.

We shall not, we shall not be moved (etc.)

We shall stand and fight together, we shall not...

We shall not, we shall not be moved (etc.)

We are black and white together, we shall not.
ROLL THE UNION ON
We're going to roll, we're going to roll,
We're going to roll the union on,
We're going to roll, we're going to roll,
We're going to roll the union on.
If the boss gets in the way, we're going to roll right over him,
We're going to roll right over him, we're going to roll right over him,
If the boss gets in the way, we're going to roll right over him,
We're going to roll the union on.
We're going to roll, (etc.)
If the goons get in the way, (etc.)
We're going to roll, (etc.)
If the scabs get in the way, (etc.)
We're going to roll, (etc.)
CASEY JONES
The workers on the S. P. line strike sent out a call;
But Casey Jones, the engineer, he wouldn't strike at all.
His boiler it was leaking, and its drivers on the bum,
And the engine and the bearings, they were all out of plumb.
Casey Jones kept his junk pile running,
Casey Jones was working double time,
Casey Jones got a wooden made,
For being good and faithful on the S. P. line.
The workers said to Casey, "Won't you help us win this strike?"
But Casey Jones said, "Let me alone, you'd better take a hike."
Then Casey's wheezy engine ran right off the wheezy track,
And Casey hit the river with an awful smash.
Casey Jones hit the river bottom,
Casey Jones broke his bloomin' spine;
Casey Jones turned into an Angel,
He got a trip to heaven on the S. P. line.
When Casey got to heaven up to the Pearly Gate,
He said, "I'm Casey Jones, the guy that pulled the S. P. line."
"You're just the man," said Peter, "Our musicians are on strike;
You can get a job a-scabbing any time you like."
Casey Jones got a job in heaven;
Casey Jones was doing mighty fine;
Casey Jones went scabbing on the angels
Just like he did to workers on the S. P. line.
The angels got together, and they said it wasn't fair,
For Casey Jones to go around a-scabbing everywhere.
The Angels' Union Number 23, they sure were there,
And they promptly fired Casey down the Golden Stair.
Casey Jones went to Hell a-flying,
"Casey Jones," the Devil said, "Oh fine!"
Casey Jones got busy shoveling sulphur,
That's what you get for scabbing on the S. P. line."

MINER'S LIFEGUARD
Min'er's life is like a sailor's,
'Board a ship to cross the waves,
Every day his life's in danger.
Still he ventures being brave.
Watch the rocks, they're falling daily
Careless miners always fail,
Keep your hand upon the dollar
And your eye upon the scale.
Union miners stand together
Heed no operator's tale,
Keep your hand upon the dollar
And your eye upon the scale.
You've been dodged and docked my boys
You've been loading two tor one,
What have you to show for working
Since this mining has begun?
Overalls, and cans for rockers
In your shanties sleep on rails,
Keep your hand upon the dollar
And your eye upon the scale.

SOLIDARITY FOREVER
When the union's inspiration, through 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,
Solidarity forever,
Solidarity forever
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're outcast and starving, mid the wonders we have made
But the union makes us strong.
Chorus
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 atoms, magnified a thousandfold,
We can bring to birth a new world from the ashes of the old
For the union makes us strong.

GET THEE BEHIND ME
Boss comes up to me with a five dollar bill,
Says, "Get you some whiskey, boy, and drink your fill."
Get thee behind me, Satan,
Travel on down the line.
I am a union man,
Gonna leave you behind.

YOU'VE GOT TO GO DOWN AND JOIN THE UNION
You've got to go down and join the union,
You've got to join it by yourself,
Ain't nobody here can join it for you,
You've got to go down and join the union by yourself.
Sister's got to go down and join, (etc.)
Papa's got to go down and join, (etc.)
Now though the road be rough and rocky,
And the hills be steep and high,
We will sing as we go marching,
And we'll win that one big union bye and bye.
You got to go down and join the union, (etc.)

HOLD THE FORT
We meet today in freedom's cause
And raise our voices high;
We'll join our hands in union strong
To battle or to die -
Hold the fort, for we are coming,
Union men be strong.
Side by side we battle onward,
Victory will come.
Look my comrades, see the union,
Banners waving high;
Reinforcements now appearing
Victory is nigh -
Hold the fort, (etc.)
See our numbers still increasing,
Hear the bugles blow;
By our union we will triumph
Over every foe -
Hold the fort, (etc.)

IN CONCLUSION
In conclusion, bear in memory
Keep the passwords in the mind.
God provides for every nation
When in union they combine.
Stand like men, and linked together
Victory for you'll prevail.
Keep your hand upon the dollar
And your eye upon the scale.
Union miners, (etc.)
A redheaded woman took me out to dine,  
Says, "Love me baby, leave your union behind."

On the Fourth of July the politicians say,  
"Vote for us and we'll raise your pay."

Oh, then the company union sent out a call, they said  
"Join us in the summer, we'll forget you in the Fall."

If anyone should ask you your union to sell,  
Just tell him where to go, send him back to hell.

THE UNION MAID

There once was a union maid, she never was afraid  
Of goons and guns and company finks  
And the deputy sheriffs who made the raid.

She went to the union hall when a meeting it was called  
And when the Legion boys come round  
She always stood her ground.

Oh you can't scare me, I'm sticking to the union,  
I'm sticking to the union, I'm sticking to the union.

Oh 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 couldn't be fooled by a company stool,  
She'd always organize the guys.

She'd always get her way when she struck for better pay  
She'd show her card to the National Guard  
And this is what she'd say.

Oh, you can't scare me, (etc.)

You gale who want to be free, just take a tip from me  
Get you a man who's a union man  
And join the ladies' auxiliary.

Married life ain't hard when you've got a union card,  
A union man has a happy life  
When he's got a union wife.

Chorus: Oh, you can't scare me, (etc.)

ALL I WANT

Chorus: I don't want your millions, master,  
I don't want your diamond rings.  
All I want is the right to live, master.  
Give me back my job again.

Now I don't want your Rolls-Royce, master,  
I don't want your pleasure yacht.  
All I want is just food for my babies.  
Give to me my old job back.

We worked to build this country, master,  
While you enjoyed a life of ease.  
You've stolen all that we built, master.  
Now our children starve and freeze.

Think me dumb if you wish, master.  
Call me green or blue or red.  
This one thing I sure know master.  
My hungry babies must be fed.

Take the two old parties, master,  
No difference in them I can see.  
But with a Farmer-Labor Party  
We could set the people free.

TALKING UNION

Now, if you want higher wages let me tell you what to do.  
You got to talk to the workers in the shop with you.  
You got to build a union, got to make it strong.  
But if you all stick together, boys, it won't be long.

You get shorter hours... better working conditions...  
Vacations with pay... take your kids to the seashore.

It ain't quite this simple, so I better explain  
Just why you got to ride on the union train,  
"Cause if you wait for the boss to raise your pay  
We'll all be waiting 'til Judgement Day -

We'll all be buried... gone to heaven.  
St. Peter'll be the straw boss then...

Now you know you're underpaid but the boss says you ain't  
He speeds up the work 'til you're about to faint.  
You may be down and out but you ain't beaten.  
You can pass out a leaflet and call a meeting!

Talk it over... speak your mind...  
Decide to do something about it....

Course, the unions may persuade some poor damn fool  
To go to your meeting and act like a stool.  
But you can always tell a stool, though, that's a fact.  
He's got a yellow streak running down his back -

He doesn't have to stool.... he'll always get along...  
On what he takes out of blind men's cups....

You got a union now and you're sitting pretty.  
Put some of the boys on the steering committee.  
The boss won't listen when one guy squawks  
But he's got to listen when the union talks -

He'd better... be mighty lonely....  
Everybody decided to walk out on him....

Suppose they're working you so hard it's just too outrageous  
And they're paying you all starvation wages.  
You go to the boss and the boss will yell  
Before I raise your pay I'd see you all in hell!

Well, he's puffing a big cigar, feeling mighty slick  
"Cause he thinks he's got your union licked,  
Well, he looks out the window and what does he see  
But a thousand pickets, and they all agree -

He's a bastard... unfair.... slavedriver...  
Bet he beats his wife...

Now boys, you've come to the hardest time,  
The boss will try to bust your picket line  
He'll call out the police, the national guard,  
They'll tell you it's a crime to have a union card.

They'll raid your meetings, they'll hit you on the head,  
They'll call everyone of you a red -  
Unpatriotic... Japanese spies... sabotaging national defense...  
But out at Ford, here's what they found,  
And out at Vultee, here's what they found,  
And out at Allis-Chalmers, here's what they found,  
And down at Bethlehem, here's what they found,

That if you don't let red-baiting break you up,  
And if you don't let vigilantes break you up,  
And if you don't let race hatred break you up -

You'll win... what I mean, take it easy, but take it -

THE UNION TRAIN

Oh, what is that I see yonder, coming, coming, coming.  
What is that I see yonder, coming, coming, coming.  
What is that I see yonder, coming, coming, coming.  
Get on board get on board.

It's that union train a-coming, etc.  
It has saved many a thousand, etc.  
It will carry us to freedom, etc.