

Appendix G

Solidarity Forever

Solidarity Forever has become the unofficial anthem of the American labor movement. It was written in 1915 by Ralph Chaplin, a poet, writer and organizer for the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), a militant union known to all as the Wobblies. Chaplin said, “I wanted a song to be full of revolutionary fervor and to have a chorus that was singing and defiant.”

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.

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 could 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.