

A culture Bulletin

We have included these poems and songs to lift and inspire you in 1999. Apologies to the great British folk singer and union supporter, Billy Bragg, for not getting his permission, but we know that he will understand. The song is taken from an article by Elsabe Brink in a *Bulletin* of 1984. The song was sung by the Garment Workers' Union in the 1930s and 1940s.

There is power in a union

Billy Bragg (from 'Talking to the taxman about poetry,' 1986)

There is power in a factory, power in the land

*Power in the hand of the worker
But it all amounts to nothing if together we
don't stand*

There is power in a Union

*Now the lessons of the past were all learned
with workers blood*

*The mistakes of the bosses we must pay for
From the cities and the farmlands to
trenches full of mud*

War has always been the bosses way, sir

*The Union forever defending our rights
Down with the blackleg, all workers
unite*

*With our brothers and our sisters from
many far-off lands*

There is power in a Union

Compiled by Etienne Vlok

*Now I long for the morning that they realise
Brutality and unjust laws cannot defeat us
But who'll defend the workers who cannot
organise
When the bosses send there lackeys out to
cheat us?*

*Money speaks for money, the Devil for his own
Who comes to speak for the skin and the bone?
What a comfort to the widow, a light to the
child
There is power in a Union*

*The Union forever defending our rights
Down with the blackleg, all workers unite
With our brothers and our sisters from
many far-off lands
There is power in a Union*

The strikers' song

*(The Garment Worker, May/June 1911.
Translation by Elsabe Brink, SA Labour
Bulletin, vol 9 no 8 To the tune of 'Wat
maak oom Kallie daar', composed for the
tobacco workers' strike.)*

*What are the scabs doing there? 2x
The scabs smell of rotten fish
People think 'tis the Railway bus
O, what are the scabs doing there? ★*