

## CULTURE & HISTORY

# A Labor Haggadah Companion - Passover Supplement

Contributed by [Religious Action Center](#)

Source: Religious Action Center

In every generation, each of us should feel as though we ourselves had gone forth from Egypt.

In every generation, each of us should feel as though we ourselves had been freed from bondage.

In every generation, each of us should feel as though we ourselves fought for humane conditions in the workplace.

God may have freed us from bondage in Egypt with an outstretched arm, but redemption from injustice in the workplace, be it a non-living wage, oppression of undocumented workers, pay discrimination, substandard working conditions or wage theft, is within our own capacity. On this Pesach, let us remember the importance of labor unions and collective bargaining in our own history, and let us rededicate ourselves to fight for workers' rights in our own generation.

The Egyptians ruthlessly imposed upon the Israelites the various labors that they made them perform. Ruthlessly they made life bitter for them with harsh labor at mortar and bricks and with all sorts of tasks in the field. ~ Exodus 1:13-14

I have never declared a strike in all my life. I have done my share to prevent strikes, but there comes a time when not to strike is but to rivet the chains of slavery upon our wrists. Yes, Mr. Shirtwaist Manufacturer, it may be inconvenient for you if your boys and girls go out on strike, but there are things of more importance than your convenience and your profit. There are the lives of the boys and girls working in your business. ~ Samuel Gompers, AFL President (demanding better working conditions at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory one year before the 1911 fire there claimed the lives of 146 workers, mostly Jewish immigrant women)

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*Solidarity Forever sung to the tune of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic"*

When the union's inspiration through the workers' blood shall

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 stand 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

[Chorus]