

"ODE TO SHERWOOD SPENCER"

by Sterling Ball

(to the tune of "O'le King Cole"

Now o'le Sherwood Spencer
is a hell of a man
and a hell of a man is he
He organized Local 347
and then went after this company
It's a hell of a task, to accomplish
for one man, can't you see
But determined and stubborn
and a lot of hard work
Kroger fell 660 to 3.

Now o'le Sherwood was determined
that this Local Union
would fight to be second to none
In benefits, wages, working conditions,
and a Pension Plan that's number one
He fought the strife and turmoil
and even desention he had to over come
But when the battle was over
and the smoke all cleared
I'll be dammed, o'le Sherwood won.

Now you can criticize this
and run down that
and even complain about things to be
but if you talk to Sherwood about his Union
you'd better speak favorably
He's proud as hell
of his Local
and will defend it vigorously
So don't think that you could
out argue Sherwood
He's beat the best of them
Don't you see.

Now Sherwood Spencer
still a hell of a man
and will live forever in our memory
of how he molded Local 347
and helped to be what it is today
We owe you alot Mr. Spencer
to this we all agree
As our founding father
who over came great odds
You made a mark in our history.

The D is for dedication to the labor movement
because to you it's more than just a job
And I stands for the interest you show
in helping workers overcome great odds
The C is caring about people
who slave in a sweatshop for nickles and dimes
The K represents the kind of man that you are
who can beat this company almost every time
The T is for the toughness you have
A quality the company soon finds out
The U A 100% Union -
And to that there is no doubt
The S Represents the strength you show
To a company - who makes the mistake of thinking
you're dumb
The other S is just pure mean stubbornness
a trait the company wishes they could overcome
The E is for all the energy you have
that keeps you going strong from day to day
And
Finally Y stands for yours truly
who hopes to be like you in each & every one of
these ways

You're a kind, caring, strong, stubborn, tough, dedicated,
100% union leader interested in helping people and have the
energy and knowledge to make anything work.

What If . . .

This poem was written by Sterling Ball. His dad works in Department 10, Local 570.

What if, brothers and sisters,
One morning you should get
The morning paper from the porch
And when you opened it
You found our legislators were busy
Figuring out a way
To curb our present inflation,
Or at least that's what they say.

And as you read on further
You couldn't believe what you saw.
Why, your very union
Is now against the law!

They say that they're corrupt
And way too powerful, too.
Why, it's just not right
Treating the companies the way they do.

Demanding bigger wages
And, of course, more fringes too.
Let's don't forget the insurance,
The poor company, they pay that too.

Now what about some of the laws
That unions are responsible for.
Like Workmen's Comp. and Unemployment
And God knows there's many more.

Now let's not forget about OSHA.
That's cost the companies plenty,
(Why it's a disgrace)
Just because the workers
Are wanting a safer working place.

So, you see, the unions are inflationary
Says the lawmakers of our land.
We had to do what we did.
They were getting out of hand.

But this will help our inflation
As the companies' profits start to rise
And without the higher wages.
Oh, yes! That's free enterprise.

But I thought I need not worry.
After all, I didn't before.
And I didn't want to get involved.
They sounded oh so sure.

But when I'd gotten to work
I found that things had changed.
Our fifteen minute breaks were gone,
And our schedules were rearranged.

We were still allowed to take a lunch.
The company said that's kind.
Production now was our main goal.
Lunch and breaks were a waste of time.

I couldn't believe all this had happened.
It seemed just over night.
And when they cut my wages
I decided it's time to fight.

I went straight to the foreman
To grieve and complain for all.
He said, 'you have no rights,
'Why, haven't you heard,
You're against the law.'

I cried, 'My God, what's happened
To the decency of this land?
And all the things I took for granted.
I just don't understand!'

The foreman said, 'I'll answer that.
They've all been taken away.
When the unions were declared illegal.'
Then he laughed and began to say:

'You'll have to take what we give you,
And you'd better not complain;
Because now we can replace you,
And we don't even have to explain.

'So, you see, the law's on our side.
They'll do you no good in court.
You have no rights, you have no say.
Now get the H— in there and go to work.'

By stroke of pen my union's gone,
Oh, why didn't I get involved,
Through united strength of one and all,
We now wouldn't be against the law.

Although this poem hasn't happened yet, it is very
important for each and every one of us to know as
much about the lawmakers who we put in office, as
possible, and vote wisely.

BARMAID

- Stanling Ball

Inspired by "Jenny"

When we think of the work force
We seem to like to forget
The ones we feel aren't worthy
Of our time or respect

But, I'm here to remind you
That they are people too
Doing a particular job
That not just anyone can do

I'm speaking of those special ladies
That tend bar and wait tables at night
In what we commonly refer to as nightclubs
Bars, and things of the like

Their hours are long and the pay is low
And they're subject to all kinds of abuse
From the customers that they have to wait on
Their boss, sometimes even nice people like you

They're wrongfully taken for granted
That they will go at the drop of the hat
And exist just for our enjoyment
But they are really nothing like that

They are warm, tender, and caring
Trying to stretch that hard earned dime
And have a heart that can be easily broken
By some guy just handing them a line

So next time don't take them for granted
As being some easy mark
Because you might end up disappointed
With a broken hand - along with your heart
Because you see they too are ladies
And expect to be treated as such
They're there to wait on and serve you
NOT TO TOUCH!!!!

THE ORGANIZER'S LAMENT
(To the tune of "When Johnny Comes Marching Home")
- Sterling Ball

When the union comes to our town
Hooray, hoorah
We'll look them up and flag them down
Hooray, hoorah
We'll sign their cards and let the vote begin
And pray to God that we win
Recognition to belong to the U-n-i-o-n

And after we win the right to speak
Hooray, hoorah
A contract we shall seek
Hooray, hoorah
We'll negotiate without no fear
The way we'll live for the next three years
And the unions there to guide us along.

And now please heed what I say
Hooray, hoorah
The union is your only way
Hooray, hoorah
To fight the battle you must engage
To win your right to a decent wage
And respect that you get by being in the union.

Now always take your union's side
Hooray, hoorah
It's through your strength that they survive
Hooray, hoorah
If ~~ever~~ they should falter then they would fall
And the companies would damn well have a ball
And in the end you could lose it all.

PROFITS

- Sterling Ball

Profits are what the companies cry they're not making enough of
So they raise they're prices and lower our wages
And couldn't care less whether we survive.
And as an end result we scimp and scrape
So this inflation we can beat
To pay our bills, and clothe our kids
And just plain have enough to eat.

The companies preach for more profits
To be competitive and stay alive
To build more plants and create more jobs
So we could all survive.

But how can we work in a plant
That's built thousands of miles away
In some foreign land, that couldn't give a damn
About America anyway.
And as for all that emense competition
That they lead us to believe with all their twisted up jive
90% of it they own, 8% of it they're buying
And the other 2% is just barely alive.

So I say, to Hell with all these inflationary profits
That were brought on by company greed. "
Let's curtail this marketplace monopoly
By passing some laws that we need.
Like making these corporations expand here
And create all these jobs at home
Because I think it's about time the American worker
Had some profits of his own.

ODE TO THE UNION

- Sterling Ball

(To the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic")

Mine eyes have seen the thunder from
The CO's horrible brutes
As they intimidate us workers
With their laws and twisted truths
They still harrass us
Till we feel so weak and small
And think there's just no hope at all.

CHORUS

L-o-n-g live the unions
L-o-n-g live the unions
L-o-n-g live the unions
To keep the bastards in their place.

Shop conditions are better
The work is equal to the pay
We have fringes and insurance
And a shorter working day
The foreman's still a bastard
But he doesn't stand in our way
He knows the union's here to stay.

Our fight was long and hard to get
Just where we are today
We have shed our blood and gone without
So we could have our say
And now that we have won it
I'll-be-damned if we'll give it away
And the union's here to stay.

IF

Oh how wonderful
if it could only be,
That mankind loved each other
and lived in harmony.

There'd be no need for wars
or men to die in vain
Or build those mighty missile
that destroy, kill and lame.

Oh how wonderful
if man could show compassion
To those that are down and out
in need, and in desperation.

To lend a helping hand
to get them on their feet
To share what's theirs - with them
for it's said - "My Brother I'm to Keep."

How wonderful it would be
if we could erase the greed,
Brought on by corporate profits
and corporate monopolys.

Earse their haughty power
to control the minds and souls
Of working men and women
that labor toward corporate goals.

And receive the pay that's earned
a fair share is their request,
Of wages, fringes and working conditions
for this is all they ask.

By: Sterling R. Ball