



Zines about Kentucky Folk songs



I

Hate this

Capitalist System

or

I hate the Company Bosses



Dump the Bosses Off Your back  
I've Endured

Song Suggestions  
Solidarity Forever  
Oh, Death

Lyrics

<https://www.protestsongslyrics.net/>  
[Labor\\_Union\\_Songs/I-Hate-Company-Bosses.phtml](https://www.protestsongslyrics.net/Labor_Union_Songs/I-Hate-Company-Bosses.phtml)

Background on the song

<https://archive.culturalequity.org/field-work/aunt-molly-jackson-sara-gunning-jim-garland-1937/new-york-city-1137/i-hate-capitalist>  
Transcript of a doc about Gunning.

**References:**  
<https://www.folkstreams.net/contexts/dreadful-memories-transcription>



struggle in Vietnam.



their privately hired guards.

Sarah Ogan Gunning, born 1910 in Bell County, Kentucky, was a folk singer and union supporter at the time of the Harlan County Coal War of the early 1930's. With her sister, Aunt Molly Jackson, Gunning sang songs in support of the push to organize in the midst of strong resistance from company bosses and



## SARAH GUNNING:

When I first composed that song, I said, I called it "I Hate the Capitalist System." Then when Moe Ashe and them heard me sing that song, they said, "Oh that sounds too radical. Don't sing it. The company bosses was the ones you hated, not the capitalist system." Well I didn't know what the capitalist system was at the time so I got, you know, I done a little research on it, you know, they all the time re-searching something, so I thought I'd research that and find out what it was, about the capitalist, you know. So I found out it was the people that had all the money. Then I said, "Well after all, they was the ones that I meant in the first place."

## ARCHIE GREEN:

You see, Sarah took traditional melodies and old conservative style and when she wrote songs of radical content, that is when she took, say, a Marxist concept of the evils of capitalism and put it into a song, she didn't feel that she had to set it to an up-town melody or a jazzy melody or a protest melody. These old songs were to her of such beauty and such depth and such continuity that they were appropriate to carry new messages .

I hate the company bosses,

I'll tell you the reason why,

They cause me so much suffering,

And my dearest friends to die.

Oh yes, I guess you wonder,

What they have done to me,

I'm going to tell you, mister, My husband had T.B.



Brought on by hard work and low wages

And not enough to eat,

Going naked and hungry,

No shoes on his feet.

I guess you'll say he's lazy

And did not want to work.

But I must say you're crazy,

For work he did not shirk.



My husband was a coal miner,  
He worked and risked his life  
To try to support three children,  
Himself, his mother, and wife.



Not workers like me and you.

But that's to the company bosses,

To them I guess it's true.

They call this the land of plenty,

That starvation disease.

Excuse me, it was Pellagra,

Oh tell us, if you please.

Well, what killed your mother?

I had a blue-eyed baby,

The darling of my heart,

But from my little darling

Her mother had to part.

These mighty company bosses,

They dress in jewels and silk,

But my darling blue-eyed baby,

She starved to death for milk.



I had a darling mother,

For her I often cry,

But with them rotten conditions

My mother had to die.

Well, what killed your mother?

I heard these bosses say,

Dead of hard work and starvation,

My mother had to pay.



*Well they call this the land of plenty*

*And for them I guess its true*

*For the rich and mighty capitalists*

*Not for workers like me and you*