

U.A.W.– C.I.O., 1942

Lyrics by Butch Hawes and Bess Lomax Hawes

This song was written five years after the newly formed United Auto Workers [UAW] won a major strike against General Motors, and shortly after the US entered World War II. At its founding in 1937, the UAW was one of the largest unions in the newly formed Congress of Industrial Unions [CIO]. The Union Boys folk music group, which included Pete Seeger and Josh White, performed the song at union events and various progressive gatherings. They recorded the song in 1944 as part of Asch Records' "Songs for Victory" album.

I was hangin' 'round a defense town one day, one day,
When I thought I overheard a soldier say, soldier say:
"Every tank in my camp
Has that UAW stamp,
And I'm UAW too, I'm proud to say."

CHORUS:

It's that UAW-CIO makes the army roll and go
Turnin' out the jeeps and tanks, the airplanes ev'ry day
It's that UAW-CIO makes that army roll and go
Puts wheels on the USA

I was there when the union came to town.
I was there when old Henry Ford went down.
I was standing by Gate Four
When I heard the people roar:
They ain't gonna kick the auto workers 'round.

CHORUS

I was there on that cold December day,
When we heard about Pearl Harbor far away.
I was down on Cadillac Square
When the union rallied there
To put those plans for pleasure cars away.

CHORUS

There'll be a union label in Berlin,
When the union boys in uniform march in.
And rolling in the ranks
There'll be UAW tanks
Roll Hitler out, and roll the union in.



Access recording at Labor Arts, [here](#)

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