

The Soup Song, circa 1930

Lyrics by Maurice Sugar; sung to the tune of the well-known song, "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean." Sugar was a labor lawyer who served as the general counsel for the United Auto Workers (UAW) from the union's founding in 1937 to 1947. "The Soup Song" was a participatory sing-along, widely sung by workers who learned the lyrics at marches and rallies, and through song-books published by workers' organizations.

• THE SOUP SONG •

Words by Maurice Sugar Tune: "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean"

I'm spend-ing my nights in the flop-house;—
I'm spend-ing my days on the street.—
I'm look-ing for work, and I find none.—
I wish I had some-thing to eat.

CHORUS

Soo - ooop, soo - ooop, They
give me a bowl of soup.—
Soo - ooop, soo - ooop. They
give me a bowl of soup.

Audio

[The Soup Song
by Cisco Houston,
Smithsonian Folkways](#)

[The Soup Song
by Tony Paris](#)

14:25 MAURICE SUGAR
"THE SOUP SONG" (ORIGINAL COPY?)
232

THE SOUP SONG

(TUNE: My Bonnie Lies Over The Ocean)

(1) I'm spending my nights at the flop house,
I'm spending my days on the street,
I'm looking for work and I find none,
I wish I had something to eat.

5

CHORUS

Soo-o-o-up, Soo-o-o-up,
They give me a bowl of soo-o-o-up,
Soo-o-o-up, Soo-o-o-up,
They give me a bowl of soo-o-o-up.

(2) I spent twenty years in the factory,
I did everything I was told,
They said I was loyal and faithful,
Now, even before I get old:

(Chorus)

(3) I saved fifteen bucks with my banker,
To buy me a car and a yacht,
I went down to draw out my fortune,
And this is the answer I got:

(Chorus)

(4) I fought in the war for my country,
I went out to bleed and to die,
I thought that my country would help me,
But this was my country's reply:

(Chorus)

(5) I went on my knees to my maker,
I prayed every night to the lord,
I vowed I'd be meek and submissive,
And now I've received my reward:

(Chorus)

Source: "The Soup Song," Folder 25, Box 14, Maurice Sugar Collection, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (ALUA), Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.