

Module 06: "Which Side Are You On?" The Flint Sit-Down Strike, 1936-37

Evidence 10: "Sit Down" by Maurice Sugar, 1937

A

Introduction

"Sit Down," perhaps the most famous song to emerge from the Flint sit-down strike, was written by Maurice Sugar, one of the UAW's attorneys, and published in the *United Automobile Worker* in January 1937.

Questions to Consider

- What did Sugar mean by the expression "tie the can?"
- What specific grievances did the song express?

Document

When they tie the can to a union man,
Sit down! Sit down!
When they give him the sack, they'll take him back.
Sit down! Sit down!

Chorus:
Sit down, just take a seat,
Sit down, and rest your feet,
Sit down, you've got 'em beat.
Sit down! Sit down!

When they smile and say, "No raise in pay,"
Sit down! Sit down!
When you want the boss to come across,
Sit down! Sit down!

When the speed-up comes, just twiddle your thumbs,
Sit down! Sit down!
When you want'em to know, they'd better go slow,
Sit down! Sit down!

When the boss won't talk, don't take a walk,
Sit down! Sit down!
When the boss sees that, he'll want a little chat,
Sit down! Sit down!

Source:

Alan Lomax, compiler, Pete Seeger, music transcriber and editor, *Hard Hitting Songs for Hard Hit People* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 244.