



## New Teaching Labor's Story Unit: The Soup Song from the 1930s

Posted on August 17, 2022 by Nikki Mandell

Do you know one of the most popular labor songs of the 1930s? Check out this new Teaching Labor's Story\* entry to discover why "The Soup Song" became an anthem of the employed and unemployed alike. Belt it out alone or with others to feel the outrage and solidarity that the song inspired. Use it in class to help students understand working class perspectives during the Great Depression of the 1930s.

[8-7-The-Soup-Song-1930](#)



Image source: [National Archives](#)

“The Soup Song” uses humor and sarcasm to convey workers’ experiences and attitudes during the Great Depression. As a widely popular participatory song, it was an effective tool for labor organizing. This latest TLS entry is authored by Ryan Pettengill. Also check out Pettengill’s recent monograph: *Communists and Community: Activism in Detroit’s Labor Movement, 1941-1956* (Temple University Press, 2020).

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[Teaching Labor’s Story \[TLS\]](#) is a repository of primary sources with supporting teaching guides. TLS entries can be incorporated into existing curriculum, allowing experts and non-experts alike to re-infuse labor’s story into the historical narrative. TLS sources are selected to reveal significant perspectives on essential historical questions, and each source is accompanied by a guide that includes an informative contextualizing essay, glossary, discussion questions, curricular connections, and additional sources. Each TLS entry is linked to one of ten commonly taught eras in American/United States history. TLS is a project of the Labor and Working Class History Association [LAWCHA].

We invite historians to write a TLS entry; see Call for Contributions, [here](#).

## Author



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Nikki Mandell is Professor Emerita at University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. She is the author of *The Corporation as Family: The Gendering of Corporate Welfare, 1890-1930* (2003) and co-author of *Thinking Like a Historian: Rethinking History Instruction* (2008) and project director of many teaching and public history initiatives, including *Teaching Labor's Story* for LAWCHA