

BOX 193
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BROADSIDE

#30
AUGUST
1963
35¢

TALKING BIRMINGHAM JAM

by

PHIL OCHS

© 1963 by AUTHOR

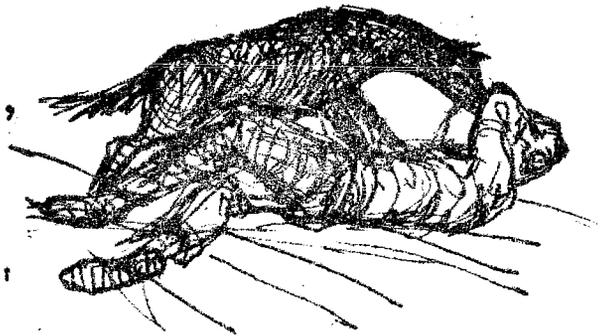


Walkin' down to Birmingham, way down south in Dixieland,
Thought I would stay a while, take a vacation Southern style.
Got some Southern Hospitality - down there in a Southern Hospital.

All the signs said welcome in, welcome if you're white my friend,
Come along & watch the fights while we feed our dogs on civil rights.
We believe in Segregation -- Negroes in one mob,
Policemen, politicians -- & dogs -- in the other.

Well, I've seen travel in many ways,
I've traveled in cars & old subways,
But in Birmingham some people chose
To fly down the street from a fire hose,
Doin' some Hard Travelin',
From hydrants of plenty.

Well, a pack of dogs was standin' by,
I walked up to them & said, Hi.
I asked one dog what they all were doin'
He walked up to me & started chewin'.
It was a black dog. Seems everybody
down there is prejudiced.



(cont'd →)

So I said there must be men around, There can't only be you dogs in town. They said, sure, we have old Bull Connor. There he goes a walkin' yonder... Throwin' some raw meat to the mayor... Feedin' bones to the City Council.

Well, there's still something missing here, you must have a governor somewhere. Sure, he's doin' his duty, he ain't no fool, He's out blocking children from our school... Standin' in the doorway ...Crackin' jokes...Gettin' re-elected.

So I asked them why they spent their time with Segregation on their mind. They said if you don't like to live this way, get out of here, Go back to the U.S.A... Live with all them Russians... New York Agitators.

Some say they've passed their darkest hour, Those moderates are back in power. They'll listen close with open ears, They'll help us out in a couple of hundred years. But don't push 'em... Whatever you do... Or else those extremists Will get back in.

You see, Alabama is a sovereign state. With sovereign dogs and sovereign hate... They stand for the Bible, for the Constitution... They stand against Communist revolution... They say it's Pinkos like you That freed the slaves.

 T A L K I N G C I V I L R I G H T S By Debby Lewis
 (Dedicated to the Aug.28 March on Washington) ©1963 by author

If you want Civil Rights, let me tell you what to do --
 You've got to talk to the people who think like you.
 You've got to build you an outfit, got to make it strong
 And if we all stick together, boys, it won't be long.
 We'll get desegregated schools...Decent housing...Equal pay...
 We'll all go to the seashore.

Now it ain't quite this simple, so I'd better explain
 Just why you've got to ride on the integration train.
 Cause if you wait for the bigots to have their say
 You'll all be waiting till the Judgement Day.
 We'll be dead and buried... Gone to Heaven... St. Peter'll
 be attorney general up there.

Well, you can't get a job cause of the color of your skin,
 And you go to the restaurant but they won't let you in,
 Your kid's in a school house way around back
 Where it's all divided up -- white and black.

Yes, you know there's segregation, but they tell you that it's
 right. And they say you're a fool if you ever try to fight.
 You may be down and out, but you ain't beaten,
 You can get your friends together -- call a meetin',
 Talk it over... speak your mind...
 Decide to do something about it.

(cont. →)

Well, you're in action now, and you're sitting pretty
 Got a couple of laws in a Congressional Committee.
 The bigots don't listen when one guy squawks
 But they've got to listen when millions talk.
 They'd better... That's a lot of voices...
 All yelling for Freedom.

Now the great Southern bigot he's feeling mighty slick
 Cause he thinks his segregation's really got you licked,
 When he looks out the window and what does he see
 But a thousand demonstrators and they all agree
 He's a bastard... Throwback to the Middle Ages...
 Bet he burns crosses on Sunday nights.

Now, boys and girls, here comes the hardest time,
 The Bull Connors will try to break your demonstration line,
 They'll call out the police and the state troopers too
 Bring out the dogs, turn on the fire hoses -- that's what
 they'll do,
 Throw your leaders in jail, throw rocks at your head,
 They'll call every one of you a Goddam Red...
 Unpatriotic... Agitators...
 Send them back where they come from.

But down at Little Rock here's what they found
 And over at Ole Miss here's what they found
 And south in Birmingham here's what they found
 And in Albany, Georgia, here's what they found --

That if you don't let the po-lice dogs break you up
 And if you don't let the fire hoses break you up
 And if you don't let the vigilantes break you up
 And if you don't let the Ross Barnetts break you up
 And if you don't let the Klansmen break you up
 You'll win... What I mean is... Take it easy... Take it legal,
 But take it!

 T A L K I N G C R Y S T A L C I T Y ©1963 by author
 By Kenneth Harrison

(Crystal City, Texas, southwest of San Antonio, is the "Spinach Capitol of the World". A larger than lifesize statue of Popeye stands in the middle of town to emphasize this claim. It is said that on the evening of April 2, 1963, the faces of some of the owners of the fields around Crystal City turned as green as their beloved spinach. For a count of ballots showed that the migrant workers who pick the spinach, mainly Mexican-Americans, had with the help of Anglos from the Teamsters' Union won the municipal elections. It was the first major political victory for migrant workers in Texas, maybe the nation).

Crystal City is a migrant town,
 You don't live so good if your skin is brown;
 You pick the crops, you strain your back,
 You work in the sun, and you live in a shack...
 It's the Spinach Capitol of the World...

Stoop, you wetbacks...

(cont.➤)

They got a statue of Popeye on the downtown square,
 Seems like they care more for him than the migrants there.
 Cause they shine him up and wash him down,
 And keep the brown-skinned people on the other side of town.
 If Popeye suddenly came alive and started walkin
 Bet first thing off they'd ask him this question:
 ... "You wouldn't want Olive Oyl to marry one of 'em,
 Would you?"

It's a company town with company bosses,
 Company profits and migrant losses,
 Company schools and company busses,
 Company cars and company trusses.

...Company companies...Company rangers & company politicians
 All over that South Texas wasteland.

Now if you looked hard it was plain to see
 That Crystal City didn't have much democracy;
 But Dickens and Carnejo got to lookin' around,
 Got Anglo and Latin workin hand in hand;
 P-A-S-O and the Teamsters Union
 Came in to help and the ball started rollin.

...Didn't stop...They had meetins...campaigns...handbills...
 And all kinds of rallies and solidarities.

Time was runnin out, election comin round,
 Anglo kids started roamin the town --
 Throwin rocks at houses, tearin posters down,
 Puttin tacks under tires, pushin migrants to the ground.

...Just harmless teenagers... Protectin their sisters
 From them inferior races.

But they didn't scare nobody, and when election day come
 The migrants took off work and filled the town;
 The votes was counted and the migrants had won,
 Latins to Anglos, it was two to one.

...All around Crystal City, up in them big fine houses
 People started chakin on their spinach.

They howled and they saw red,
 Like the whole world done fell on their head.
 If it'd been Birmingham, they'd a called out the cops...
 State troopers... firehose departments...

And sixteen breeds of ravenous dogs.

Now old Colonel Byrd, he's a real rich owner,
 Owns the company school right down to the janitor;
 When he got the news you should have heard him squall,
 Began to rant, began to bawl:

...(falsetto) "I'm gonna take my school away... You Meskins
 don't play fair... You don't know your place."
 Goodbye, Mr. Byrd...So long, Mr. Byrd.

Juan Carnejo was elected the Mayor,
 Anglos hollered, "He ain't educated, get him out of there."

(continued →)

Mayor Juan answered them back, said real careful:

"We are educated in the ways of our people."

...Aint many politicians can make that statement.

A big Texas Ranger roughed the Mayor up,
Like rangers do when they're feelin real tough;
But he didn't scare Juan and the migrants keep right on
Workin to bring justice under that South Texas sun...

Now we can forget the Alamo,
And Remember Crystal City!

GET ON BOARD, CHILDREN, CHILDREN
(Tune: "The Gospel Train")

Words by: Willie Peacock and
Sam Block, Greenwood, Miss. Nov. '62

Chorus (after each verse): Get on board, children, children
Get on board, children, children
Get on board, children, children
Let's fight for human rights.

I hear those mobs a-howling
And coming 'round the square,
Howling "Catch those Freedom
fighters",
But we're going to meet them
there.

As fighters, we go hungry
Sometimes don't sleep or eat
Gonna keep on fighting for
Freedom
In the end we will be free.

As fighters we're not running
For we are here to stay
Forget about Ross Barnett
The Lord will make a way.

As fighters we are aware of the
fact
That we may go to jail
But when you fight for Freedom
There's no such thing as bail.

I AINT A-SCARED O' YOUR JAIL

Tune: "The Old Gray Mare".

(This song is widely sung by the Negro Freedom Fighters as they demon-
strate and march. It is especially favored by the children, who do a
twisting dance to it. The verses below were brought back from the
South by Pete Seeger -- as was the song immediately above):

I aint a-scared o' your jail, Cause I want my freedom
I want my freedom, I want my freedom
I aint a-scared o' your jail, Cause I want my freedom
I want my freedom now.

(Subsequent verses simply substitute a new word for "jail"):

First verse and these "zipper"
words are from Birmingham, May
1963: Bull hose dogs water

These from Greenwood, Mississippi:
dogs Mayor Sampson shooting
County Farm bombing hose

(Sometimes the song is sung "I don't mind walking, Cause I want my
freedom, etc." and "I don't mind your dogs, ...", "...your Bull",
"...your hoses", etc.

NEVER TURN BACK

By Bertha Gober
(c) by author, 1963

(Bertha Gober is the Albany, Georgia, teen-ager who wrote "Oh, Prichett, Oh, Kelly" (see Broadside #17) in jail in December of '61.)
--"This song 'Never Turn Back' is a very slow thing. Has a soft persistence which is one of the most wonderful things about this whole freedom movement." ---Pete Seeger

Slowly but with very steady pulse

We've been 'buked and we've been scorned, We've been talked about
sure's your born.- But we'll nev-er turn back, No we'll never
turn back Un-til we've all been freed and we
have e- quality----- (last time) and we have e- qual-i-ty.-----

We have walked through the shadows of death
We've had to walk all by ourself
But we'll never turn back
No, we'll never turn back
Until we've all been freed
And we have equality.

We have served our time in jail
With no money for to go our bail
But we'll never turn back
No, we'll never turn back
Until we've all been freed
And we have equality.

We have hung our heads and cried
Cried for those like Lee who died
Died for you and died for me } (Same tune as
Died for the cause of equality } 1st two lines)
No, we'll never turn back
No, we'll never turn back
Until we've all been freed
And we have equality
And we have equality

THE INTEGRATION BATTLE: A "SINGING" MOVEMENT

(Report From Greenwood, Mississippi)

By P E T E R S E E G E R

I was three days in Greenwood, Mississippi, this past July lending some small support to the Negro voter registration drive down there. Sang in a small Baptist church, at a large NAACP meeting in Jackson, and out in an open field. The last was a songfest also attended by Theodore Bikel, Bob Dylan, and several hundred of the most enthusiastic Freedom fighters and singers one could imagine. All ages.

Because reporters were present from LIFE magazine and the N.Y. TIMES as well as press and television cameramen, the police were on their guard against any rough stuff taking place. They dispersed a crowd of vengeful Dixiecrats who tried to assemble across the highway from the field.

The most popular song by all odds was "This Little Light of Mine - I'm Going To Let It Shine". I must have heard it sung a dozen times a day, and once it was started it would go on for ten and 15 and 20 minutes with people singing new words and repeating old ones. They sing it slightly differently than the way I've been used to singing and hearing it, and end with the lines:

"Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine."

This is actually the better known version. They don't put any verses in; but what they do is change the first line of each chorus so the second time through it might go:

"I've got the light of freedom,
I'm going to let it shine.
I've got the light of freedom,
I'm going to let it shine.
I've got the light of freedom,
I'm going to let it shine,
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine."

Another popular song is one written by Bertha Gober, a teen-ager in Albany, Ga., last year entitled "We'll Never Turn Back" (see this issue of Broadside). It is a slow and deeply moving song that was sung by thousands at the funeral of Medgar Evers.

"We Shall Overcome" is still, of course, the theme song of the Negro Freedom Movement. But equally popular down in the south are songs which have been printed in Broadside such as "Everybody Wants Freedom" (same tune as "Amen"), and "Ain't Goin' To Let Segregation Turn Me Around". Also "Keep Your Eyes On The Prize, Hold On", "I'm Goin To Walk The Streets Of Jackson One Of These Days", "Oh, Freedom", "We Shall Not Be Moved", "Wade In The Water", and others.

In each case they keep on putting new words into the old songs, including a lot of names of friends or foes in the integration battle. To hear them singing these songs with hands clapping and bodies swaying and faces lighted up with a fierce joy of the Freedom struggle was an experience I'll never forget.

Is the surf set dying to be different? Newest zany among them is coffin races—using army surplus plastic coffins with outboard motors attached.

SUNDAY NEWS, AUGUST 4, 1963

ONE MORE RIDE

Words & Music by Malvina Reynolds
(c) 1963 by author

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of six staves of music with lyrics underneath. The chords are: G, D7, Em, C, G, Am7, D7, G, C, D7, and D.C. (Double bar line).

One more ride, One more ride, One more ride in the
fly-in tide, One more ride and then the bomb,
One more ride. A- ride. long the Coast on a
sunny day, surf boards ride the breaking spray,
Lean brown surf-ers in a line hit the wa-ter
one more time.

SURFING DICTIONARY For Students of The Surf

SURF'S UP - Expression meaning the waves are running at a high level; ideal for surfing.
SHOOTING THE CURL - Catching the wave at exactly the precise moment and riding it all the way into the beach.
WIPEOUT - Catching the wave at the WRONG time and being thrown off the surfboard.

Current events may make this song a "wipeout". Here's what the author herself says about such in the latest SING OUT:

The gripe may be a temporary one, a local one, and the song as transient as a handbill or a letter in today's newspaper column, but it serves a purpose and nobody cares if it dies tomorrow. If the grievance passes, so much the better. If the song gave it a push into oblivion, so much the better.

Cars and wagons run and stop,
Pile of sticks are lashed on top,
Dozen surfers piled inside
Hit the beach for one more ride. Cho

Some bring babies, some bring beer,
Fill the cove from ear to ear,
Sand and water is their home,
One more ride and then the bomb. Cho

Daily paper ran a spread
Telling what the surfers said,
"There's a wipeout sure to come
So one more ride and then the bomb." Cho

STRANGERS IN YOUR TOWN

By **PETER LA FARGE** (ASCAP)
© by author, 1963

TUNE ADAPTED FROM
"KEVIN BARRY"

1st Cho: I'm an Indian, I'm an alien, I'm a stranger in your town,
2nd Cho: I'm an Indian, I'm an alien, I'm a stranger in your town,

All your pret-ty roads lead upward, All my pathways lead me
All your white men's roads lead upward, All my red man's lead me
down. - 1. And the dark fields flow a-round me & the shadows
down. -

deep as snow, But the road says keep on singin' & the road knows
where I go; For there's got to be somebody, Indi- an or not,
to be singin' on the dark road to o-pen up the lock and -
(to 2nd Cho)

The musical score is written on a grand staff with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The time signature is 4/4. Chord symbols E, B7, and A are placed above the staff. The lyrics are written below the staff, with some lines starting with "1st Cho:" and "2nd Cho:". The score ends with a double bar line and a "D.C." (Da Capo) instruction.

2. You can fill up all your prisons
Lock and bar the door
But for everyone you lock up
There'll be a thousand more
For the red man and the black man
The yellow and the brown
We walk this road together
And this road is freedom bound

Last Cho:

Then the Indians won't be aliens
Won't be strangers in your town
And we all will walk together
On the road that's freedom bound.

FROM THE WORKER
JUNE 11, 1963

**"AS LONG AS THE GRASS
SHALL GROW: Peter LaFarge
Songs of the Indians" Folkways
Records Album No. FN 2532.**

By **MIKE NEWBERRY**

What is a folksinger? There's nothing mysterious about it. The folksinger is someone who comes from the people, or goes to the people—it doesn't much matter which as long as this basic tie exists — and creates out of the people's and his personal, experience, humor, tragedy, and struggle the substance and the music that he sings. Creates is the second key word; for folksongs are not classic and museum like music to be repeated ad infinitum like Bach fugues. There are traditional tunes, it is true; yet even these grew directly from some living experience, not from an abstracted musical theory. For though folksongs are created by individual musicians, as is all music, they are created very directly from life.

Therefore by the nature of their origin the folksongs, and the folksingers, too, hardly can exist as static, aloof, concert-isolated artists. If the direct tie to the source of the music is torn out by the roots, though a lovely bouquet of a performance may be fashioned, it will not be long before the beauty shrivels and the music itself dies. So it is that there is much more to folksinging than merely singing.

PETER LA FARGE is, by this definition a true folksinger.

He is an ex-cowhand, Bronco buster, rodeo rider, professional fighter, and of Indian ancestry to boot. This last bit of heritage, more difficult to shake from the soul than a Brahma bull, has been the source of his album of modern Indian songs — "As Long As The Grass Shall Grow."

In the tradition of the folksinger rooted in life, young La Farge has not simply resung the old Indian chants and Tribal religious songs. Nor has he rewritten the genuine in the artificial Tin Pan Alley style. He has rather taken his experience, and his people's, to combine the mood, meaning, rhythm, and meter of the ancient Indian music with his own, topical, sometimes jazzy, very modern

feelings about things. Result: a synthesis of old and new, personal and social, that is the essence of folksinging as a living art.

La Farge sings often to the soft and slow, oh so timeless, beat that typifies much Indian music and Indian ways of thinking. It is not, as some seem to think, an artificial style; but it arises directly from the culture of the Indian, the belief in harmony of man and nature and what is mistakenly thought by whites to be a "stoic" attitude.

Thus there is a type of "talking blues" style to "The Senecas" tale of their battle to save their land and again in the Cheyenne wail "The Trail of Tears."

What may surprise some listeners though is the satiric humor of his "Damn Redskins" and "Take Back Your Atom Bombs." Is this Indian song? Do Indians have a sense of humor too? How about the words:

Take back your atom bomb
Give us back the arrow
God's eye is on the neutron
As well as the sparrow.
Take back your fallout
Give us back the bow

You whites are always in a hurry

But we don't want to go.

It is I fear the din of Hollywood chauvinism that has deafened the whites so that they seem never to have heard the

Indians laughing at them. Humor of the American Indian is, sly and uproarious by turn and La Farge has caught a faint echo of its richness in some of his songs and in his spoken reminiscence that ends the album. Would that there were more of these.

★

STRANGELY, or maybe not so strangely, of all the new folksingers who have recently hit New York young La Farge, both in his album and his personal appearances, has been singled out by the reviewers for attack.

What is it that they attack? His style is not night-clubbish, you hear no clink of cocktail glass cynicism in his rendition, and what's worse, he does not toy with social causes, but all but condemns "white" civilization en masse. Is there perhaps some not so secret guilt concerning crimes committed against the Indians — the genocide of a people — that distorts the reviewers' inner ear? I wonder —

Probably Peter La Farge shrugs it off. He has undoubtedly heard it all before. The American Indian has for centuries known that his conquerors refuse to see him as he is, but insist he conform to their image of him. It is not surprising that this Indian folksinger has not been given a fair hearing; for he refuses to conform.

TAKE BACK YOUR ATOM BOMB Words and Music by Peter La Farge (ASCAP)



CHORUS:

Take back your atom bomb
Give us back the arrow
God's eye is on the neutron
As well as on the sparrow.

Take back your fallout
Give us back the bow
You whites are always in a hurry
But we don't want to go.

Take back your atom bomb etc.

Take back your heavy rains
Give us back the sky
We liked it clean
We don't want to say good-bye.

Take back your atom bomb etc.

Take back the megaton
Give us back our lances
We will make our own wars
And we will dance our dances.

Take back your atom bomb etc.

N O T E S

BLACKLIST: At Newport some 2,000 visitors signed postcards to ABC-TV protesting that network's blacklisting of Pete Seeger and the Weavers from the "Hootenanny" show. The card campaign was handled by Tom Paxton, Pete La Farge and Dave Von Ronk. Meantime, the BOSTON BROADSIDE continues also the fight against the blacklist. In a recent article there Mark Spoelstra notes that the Folksingers Committee to Abolish Blacklisting lacks clarity on how best to wage an effective battle. Tom Paxton, provisional chairman of the Committee, says in a subsequent issue, "This fight may well be a long one." He asks that "in the event a segment of this show is taped in the Boston area a picket line be formed in front of the hall." A lesson can be learned from the Negro peoples' freedom fight; only when they went into the streets did the powers that be begin to listen to their just demands. Picket lines are needed not only in Boston and wherever in the nation the tapers reveal themselves, but at ABC-TV headquarters in New York City. The studio should be picketed whenever the tape is on the air, even around the clock. Manpower should be at hand when the colleges and universities reopen; this is not only the folksingers' fight; the rights of every citizen are fundamentally involved... Incidentally, the "Hootenanny" producers have flopped miserably in trying to make audience participation a part of the show. It is acutely painful to watch these embarrassed faces all wearing an expression of "how did I let myself get conned into this dopey predicament." It would be best for them and the viewers alike if the producers dropped this part of the show altogether. Unless they might want to try the guy in America who is best at getting audiences to sing with him. For a finder's fee we will provide his full name; his initials are P.S... The BOSTON BROADSIDE, by the way, has a new editor, Lynn Musgrave -- we wish him all success (BB's address is 375 Harvard St., Cambridge, Mass. It comes out every two weeks at .10¢ a copy, \$3 a year, full of folk music news and some songs)...

One might call this Broadside the "minorities" issue; with its songs of the Negro people, the Indians, and the Mexican-Americans. What we need now are songs by or about the Puerto Rican people... GOING TO THE ZOO: Dedicated to Messrs. Kennedy, Khrushchev, and MacMillan, the Aldermaston marchers, the U.S. peace marchers, and all the songwriters who have sent us songs for peace, equally those whose songs we didn't have room to print with those whose songs we did. Maybe the Moscow treaty will prove the first step toward the day when we can watch the animals with our kids and not have to worry about where the shelters are... DEBBY LEWIS is a young folksinger-songwriter in the Washington area, performing at Bassin's... "I play a guitar, blow a harmonica, and sing, in that declining order of goodness," Kenneth Harrison... Riverside Records has done an album of Bertolt Brecht songs, music by Brecht himself, Hanns Eisler and others, all sung and accompanied by Eric Bentley. Also, Folkways is preparing BRECHT BEFORE THE UNAMERICAN COMMITTEE, based on the tape of the historic encounter between Brecht and Parnell Thomas... Philadelphia Folk Festival: Sept. 6-7-8.

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Note: P-A-S-O: Political Ass'n of Spanish-speaking Organizations.