BROADSIDE

The National Topical Song Magazine #42

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HANGING ON A TREE
by VANESSA REDGRAVE

Roll Turn Spin
by LEN CHANDLER

Little Sundi
by PETER LA FARGE

Songs
by

Tom Paxton  Dave Cohen  G. Mather  J. Zackery

RENT STRIKE SONGS

article by JULIUS LESTER

letter from LEN CHANDLER
This song comes from Britain and is, of course, about South Africa.

Don't buy our fruit sell your cars to me, If you're a-afraid then please don't say You pity me, You pity me, You pity me.

You've a thousand million pounds invested in my land, In trade & investment, that's a million grand, Take it away, Oh, take it a-way, If you leave it please don't say You pity me, You pity me, You -------

If you make money from Vorwoerd how can you tell him he's wrong, If you refer to make your money don't sing my Freedom Song; You say that you want set me free, "What can I do to set you free?" I asked & his white bones answered me, Called me, To me. Don't send your ships to us across the sea,

Then don't trade with the men who are killing me, Or don't you say You -------

* A Maj (#7) chord; ** F#min7 (continued → )
Hanging On A Tree (continued)  V. Redgrave

(Same chord pattern)

And don't you say it's a risky thing to do, I'm worried that a boycott might be bad for you, I know how to live on nothing much better than you, So don't you say, Oh please don't say You pity me. — So now you can choose but oh don't wait too long For my brothers they will fight & their freedom wish is strong, Your leaders they say they pity me, But your thousand million pounds the seeds of the tree on which they're hanging, hanging, hanging, On which they're hanging me. — Oh my loving friends, I can't get from my mind, The white in the sun that bones whispered in the wind; If there's no help soon, then hanging from this tree Will be thousands & thousands like you & me; No money making then, And no ships upon the sea, Just white bones in the sun a-hanging, hanging, hanging on my tree. —— (dimuendo ——)

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THE TIGER IS KING!

1. Oh, the ti-ger, he can roar—oh yes! He can make a lot of noise—but he only shake the jun-gle palm—he never make an a-tom bomb to kill a lot of girls and boys. Oh, the tiger he has teeth—oh yes! They are big and sharp and white—but he only kill to get his ca-lor-ie. He never hear of Chris-ti-an-i-ty and he don't know the wrong from right! (CHORUS) Oh, the ti-ger is a king—tho' he do not have that name—and it will take a lot of com-mon sense to beat the ti-ger's game!

2. Oh, the tiger, he has claws—oh yes! He can tear his food apart—But tho' he do not give and do not share—Still, he do not travel everywhere And brag about his great big heart. Oh, the tiger, he can purr—oh yes! Tho' I really don't know why—But he can do one thing the man can never do For tho' he cannot tell the truth to you He can also never tell a lie! Chorus

3. Oh, the man he have a little house And he go inside at night—But tho' the tiger sleep beneath the sky He is safer far than you or I Behind that door we lock so tight. Now the tiger is only an animal And he live from day to day—But the tiger do the very best he can Which is more than you can say about the man And that is why I want to say: Chorus

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LITTLE SUNDI

Words & Music by Peter La Farge
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Just a wret-ty and lost one—Wanderin' from East Germany—She spent her
heart with a bold hand—and it broke in the land of the free—She gave her
heart to a fellow,—She gave him her heart and her mind.—He loved her and left her and
lost her. And now she is wounded and blind.Sundi from o-ver the o-sean,—
Sundi from o-ver the sea, Little Sun-di, I wish you loved me.

Is this how a man treats a woman
Making gifts of dark tragedy
Is this how American manhood
Tears at a lone refugee.
I would build her a palace of laughter
Show her a doorway of song
But I see that the man who just passed here
Has withered the garden and gone. (CHO)

Dear, I've so little to give you
Here is a cup and a hand
I've little or nothing to give you
In your desert of bitter black sand.
Dear, as you pass in your wanderins
You're well on your way and gone
Remember that some of us love you
And remember that one wrote this song. (CHO)

ED. NOTE: In Broadside #41, in Eric Andersen's song "My Land Is A Good Land" the last lines in each verse are repeated, as in the chorus.
MORE GOOD MEN GOIN' DOWN

By Dave Cohen
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A baby cries in the morning sun, The mother looks down on her father-less one
The rescue team goes on and on— More good men goin' down.

And her eyes showed tears of pain
As she looked out her window-pane
Her man's not comin' home again.

Cho: More good men goin' down. (twice)

More good men goin' down.

He died when he was just twenty-two
A young man in his prime,
He left a wife and a baby boy —
More good men goin' down. (twice)

The mother will live and the boy will grow
In a few more years you never know
That mother from those other times
Has lost another man to the mines. (Cho)

THE CRUEL YEARS

By Dave Cohen
© by Author, 1963

The air was filled with a long sighing,
The day was filled with the smell of dy-ing,
And mothers for their lost sons crying. These are the cruel years,— years of dying.

For years the sky was dark above
Flew birds of hate and not of love
How we longed to see the dove.

These are the cruel years,
The years of dying.

How many prayers of peace were spoken?
Tired eyes searched for a token,
So many died till peace was chosen
These are the cruel years,
The years of dying.

Then came the years of rebuilding
New lessons learned to teach the children
So they can go and die willing.
These are the cruel years,
The years of dying.

Now I ask you all together
Another war can we weather?
Shall we live or die together?
These are the cruel years,
The years of dying.

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BROADSIDE #42
LETS PRETEND
by Tom Paxton

CHORUS F C F C F C D7 G7

Let's pretend just you and me be whatever you want to be

C G7 C F C G7 C

You will be my secret friend, And we'll play let's pretend

Verse C G7 C C C G7

1. Let's be a p'liceman, p'liceman, p'liceman Let's be a p'liceman now

F C C F C F C D G7

Blow your whistle as loud as you can Catch the burg-a-lar burg-a-lar man

C G7 C F C G7 C

Take him away and throw him in the can Let's be a p'liceman now

Let's be a dancer, dancer, dancer
Let's be a dancer now
Spin around and stand on your toes
Kick your heels and stick up your nose
Bow to your partner and do-si-do
Let's be a dancer now

Let's be a teacher, teacher, teacher
Let's be a teacher now
Teaching all the A B C's
Write on a blackboard big as you please
These are the leaves and these are the trees
Let's be a teacher now

Let's be a monkey, monkey, monkey
Let's be a monkey now
Hang 'way up in a monkey tree
Make a funny face and scratch your knee
Best little monkey that you ever did see
Let's be a monkey now

Let's be a gray wolf, gray wolf, gray wolf
Let's be a gray wolf now
Prowling around on four great feet
Mean and ugly and not very sweet
Lookin' for somethin' nice to eat
Let's be a gray wolf now

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Dear Sis:

I've got my feet up now and it's my time of night "when church yards yawn and hell itself breathes contagion to the world". That just came out from somewhere back there and it's not what I'm feeling but I wrote it, remembered it, and feel no more need to comment on it. This new ballpoint writes so smooth, seems to have a strong kind of independence, like it has its own special thing to say. I've seldom written prose but "there're things I've got to tell you" that I just don't want to sing. But about this ballpoint, Nancy bought it. She's asleep now in the front room. I kissed her goodnight when I came in, and closed the sliding door. She bought the other one also. It looked like a yellowjacket on top, except it was black and white, instead of Black and Yellow and it didn't have wings and didn't sting. But maybe it did. I wrote Secret Songs, Keep On Keening On, and To Be A Man with it and then lost it. Didn't write anything for the next two months, and I'm really not a mystic. O. K ... O. K, I give. I'm trying to tell you about Fran from next door, and the Rent Strike, Housing-type songs. But it's about this pen, seems to have its own platform which could be kind of scary, little bit had to cross it out. Guess I have secrets too. I don't think about Fran from next door, but I'm not going to. I'm getting braver, bolder, much more reckless. Assassinate all censors. Banish all editors. Burn all erasers -- then picket the uniform not wanting to lie to the Rabbi not wanting to lie to anyone, saying, "Why do you ask, don't you rent to Negroes?"

Thinking of Rabbi Katz with saintly soft wide mouth saying, "I just don't like to be deceived," Thinking of Nancy in her white nurse's uniform not wanting to lie to the Rabbi not wanting to lie to anyone, saying, "No one likes to be deceived" and signing the lease.

Thinking of Rabbi Katz -- the landlord

Rabbi Katz with the wide Blue, Happy, Honest, Holy eyes

Looking like a well fed Christ ascending OR a Black Bearded Santa Claus

Saying "Your husband wouldn't be a Negro, would he?"

Before Nancy could sign the lease, Thinking of Nancy in her white nurse's uniform not wanting to lie to the Rabbi not wanting to lie to anyone, saying, "Why do you ask, don't you rent to Negroes?"

Thinking of Rabbi Katz with saintly soft wide mouth saying, "I just don't like to be deceived,"

Thinking of Nancy cold in really knowing, now, with pen in hand, saying "No one likes to be deceived" and signing the lease.

Hurting for Nancy that he'd almost made a liar.

Hurting for the piece of Man that I'd lost, that they'd robbed from me when I had to send Nancy to sign for the lease. My appearance would have meant no apartment. Hurting for Mr. Katz (whom we don't call Rabbi anymore out of respect for the devout and honest men of God.)

Hurting for the dwarfed and hunch backed soul that could close its eyes and mash with hatchet words and stand before the smell of blood and reason, and think of other things. And maybe dream that I'll forget tomorrow that I'll forgive tomorrow that I'll be silent tomorrow that I'll be helpless tomorrow that I'll be alone tomorrow that I'll be too confused, mistimed, drunk, tired, injured or too old tomorrow.

But if he knew the hurt I'd been hiding, and how strong I was getting, he would get down on his knees, and pray forgiveness, to all the grasshoppers he'd made legless.

STILL ON THE STEPS

Thinking of the smell

Analyse the smell.

Let's see, urine, and Tammy's mildewed mop, cabbage with an overlay of onions, and a tinge of garbage.

CONT'D →
Thinking of the old people on the second floor. They say she's 92. She calls her roomer "the old man". The old woman is the most probable source of the urine smell. She sleeps in the front of the house and the toilet's in the back.

Thinking of Tommy in his painters' cap for most of his 65 years. Offering to kill the man who cut my hand, to do it just as a favor.

"Just say the word and he's dead."

Bragging that he'd graduated from Washington Irving High School.

Living, no sleeping in a classic hole behind the garbage cans, in the basement, at the end of the hall.

In the back of the building, bus, World, using the Enquirer for toilet paper a graphic critique Telling his valet -- that's what he called him

"My Valet"

Telling his valet

An alcoholic who sleeps in the alley picked, one time overstuffed, now understuffed chair when the day bed is taken by the countless, ever changing others who share the two roomed, lath walled, rent free in exchange for Superintendent duties, coffin

To shine his shoes

He did.

Tommy smiling through his crooked tooth lispy lips, watching me carry down the roach infested cabinets that I'd ripped with my new crow bar from the crumbling walls. The seven layers of linoleum, the wood and plaster from the wall I'd knocked down, and from the walls I'd bared of cracked plaster to see the natural brick. The beds and bad paintings and just junk that the last people had left behind them and in front of me.

Tommy smiling as I carried up wood for paneling the kitchen and book shelves, plaster, lime, paint remover, paint, shellac, and all those other things.

Tommy smiling as I'd stop to rest and he'd start to lie about being a light weight contender in '27. A big time mobster in Chi. Having a sub-machine gun and 2 forty fives in the back. Racing a motor cycle for big money and owning 2 buildings in Brooklyn.

Tommy swearing in a real drunken but phony rage at the landlord to prove to me that he didn't give a damn about Mr. Katz, the job, or rent free "coffin" (my quotes). "Wasn't afraid of anyone." would "die and go to hell for me" would "back my play against the "Rev" (Tommy's quotes).

Tommy copping out, when I caught the landlord discriminating and had him investigated by the N.Y. State Commission on Human Rights. He was just the superintendent and didn't know a thing.

Hurt for Tommy's dwarfed and hunch back soul that thanks me with his eyes for not holding up a mirror.

Tommy was a casualty before he was born. Maybe his mother thought she was the enemy and poisoned him through the umbilical cord with self contempt. I used to think the only thing I could do for Tommy was to give him the quarter for wine when he asked and not let him see my eyes. That was until I met the Rent Strike Beautiful tiger lady from next door. From her I learned:

Don't wait for the light to shine.
Build a fire.

STILL ON THE STEPS

Thinking of David the poet from across the hall

David on the Beach in Cuba when the trucks drove up, blaring, passing out arms, to the people, the people on the beach, passing out arms to every one who could stand, and they could stand, and they stood.

David in the doorway pressing a not long ago stranger's hand to his forehead in sort of a kiss without lips bow without bending salute without ceremony hand shake that only lifts up.

David from Tennessee where they don't say his name

Nor drown in his cascading Water Prose
Nor sink in the marshes of unheralded poet
alcoholic teacher
lonely listener

Nor kneel on the steps of his temporal cathedral
Nor help prepare his living sacrifice.
He has taken for his own the name of his Town And taken on himself the responsibility of all its citizens

To be strong
To see clearly
To resist
To convert.

In one room listening to Brahms
carving out a dome in wonder words passionately compassionate
bleeding for the bloodless
seeing for the blind
caring for the unconcerned
knowing for the ignorant
Stacking up the words, Word on phrase on question on pamphlet on book.

Building a new tower of babel to a new sky that the gods old or new can't confound. CONT
In another room stacking up a slum. Can on bottle on bag on box. Making his feet more insensitive to garbage and my nose more insensitive to perfumed roach spray.

Thinking of David hurting for the seven million Jews that the grand children of Brahms, Beethoven and Bach slaughtered, asking the son of an ex-wealthy German Jewish industrialist, what was your father doing in 1935? The whetstone of knowing puts an edge on the brain.

Dulling the razor edge of that Beautiful Brain with Booze.

Well you can't carve marble with a scalpel. I took my perfumed roach spray and sprayed the hall.

Now I can tell you about Fran from next door.

Standing on the steps of City Hall in her big hat passing out the words — leading the songs and I was

Thinking of her eyes. These weren't the eyes of
- a Cadillac driving evangelist
- exchange student from the enemy camp
- misplaced den mother
- speed demon Anarchist
- Destruction Worker

Nor were they the eyes of a Moses that would wander forty years in the wilderness being thankful for Mana dreaming of milk and honey on his way to a desert

Her eyes had the quiet of confidence, of direction of the inevitable — these were the eyes of the disciplined soldier that knows his weapon — knows his enemy and is positive of victory. The weaver at the loom.

Thinking of her children
- They might hurt but only out of empathy
- they might hide but only as a strategy
- THEY WOULD NOT BE
- Too sensitive to be effective
  (Thinking of David)
- Too callus to be concerned
  (Thinking of Mr. Katz)
- Too stunted to be seen
  (Thinking of Tommy)
- Too muzzled to be heard
  (Thinking of myself)

Instead of going On The Road they will be going on the March.
Thinking of all the wandering run away Kerouacs and folk singers.
Instead of finding themselves they will be leading others.

CONT. →
Thinking of the ex-ad men and school teachers hiding on an East Side where the sun never rises, not knowing what to promote nor what to teach. Thinking of millions who cry but don't vote and object but don't protest who are disenfranchised by rumors of futility and who run in all directions and hide in many corners and blame it on the system.

It might take a few decades to make an effective rebel. The drop outs, way outs, wayward dilettantes and the run aways are too busy fighting themselves or getting accustomed to their crutches to fight the system that deformed them.

I saw Fran in her big hat Carving out a dome in Wonder words Being strong Seeing clearly Resisting Converting And I was thinking Fran and all her soul sisters are the Mothers of the Rebel Generation

P.S. NO NAMES have been changed. There are no innocent.

Words & Music by Len Chandler
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Roll, Turn, Spin

Roll, turn, spin, Wheel we're in, Tick-tock and toll on the bell. Round and round, in, out, up, down, The wheel will be turn-ing for ev- er. (2) He (dawn-)ing. A new day will be dawn-ing.

He brought her sweets and things to eat And a clip to bind up her hair Her hair hung down but he liked it bound She'd bind it no more come morning. His candy and his beaded strands Were not all he would pay For secrets slip from love-drunk lips And help pave the way to coming morning. She'd shine his boots and press his suits And pass his secrets on Not caring what the townsmen thought When calling her the wife of the invader. Old friends pretend that she is dead As dead she'd risked to be But they would know at dawn's first glow They'd know she never was a traitor. The day she vowed, the tears she cried The dawnless death she had died Her enemies still couldn't see That she must only feign her love till morning. Till in the circle of her arms He caught a warning chill You could not weigh the purse he'd pay To hold back the sun and the morning. With every tick that followed tock He'd wish that clock were still The hour-glass calls just as fast But silently -- the coming of the morning.

Mati Hari, Ingrid Bergman in "Notorious" and especially the character played by Godfrey Cambridge in "Gone Are The Days"-- the Uncle Tom who "yassas" and "yassas" the old captain but finally brings him down -- inspired this song.
(Ed. Note: Several weeks ago there was a great demonstration of tenants in front of New York's City Hall, a mass protest against intolerable living conditions in the city's slums and against a drive by the city's landlords to abolish rent controls. Fran Goldin, Meryl Lewis and Bill Tatum combined to write the songs below for the occasion and led the crowds in singing them. Change the name of the mayor and they can apply to your city as well.)

(To the tune of Easter Parade)

In our rundown houses,
Full of rats and mouses,
We are the saddest tenants
In the Housing Parade.

With our peeling ceilings
And landlords' dirty dealings
We are the saddest tenants
In the Housing Parade.

Here at City Hall,
New York City Hall,
The newsman will see us,
and they'll, tell the world,
of our need for repairs --

Oh, we've composed a letter,
Mayor Wagner, make life better
For tenants who are marching
In the Housing Parade.

------------------------

(Sidewalks of New York)

East Side, West Side,
All around the town,
Old folks & children together
All our homes are coming down.

We've cried & cried for action
And all we've gotten is talk
So we'll be with our belongings
On the sidewalks of New York.

(Show Me The Way To Go Home)

Show me a place to call home,
I'm weary & I want a place to live,
The only ones I find demand
a hundred a room,
And I don't have that to give.

Build for us & don't tear down
And we'll have a better town,
Until then you'll hear me singing
this song, --

Show me a place to call home.

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(Ed. Note: Well, change the name of the town, too... These are only some of the parodies. Others:
"Mine Eyes Have Seen My Landlord" ("raising rents without repairs"), and of course "We Shall Not Be Moved

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(Broadside # 42)
FREEDOM SONGS IN THE NORTH
By Julius Lester

If the sixteenth century author of "Greensleeves" were to return and hear his song today, I wonder how he would react to the lyric heights it reaches in the voices of the city-singers? In Shakespeare's Merry Wives of Windsor Falstaff says, "Let the sky rain potatoes! Let it thunder to the tune of 'Greensleeves'!" It is difficult to imagine too much thunder while Richard Dyer-Bennett sings of being "cast off discourteously". Yet, it is inevitable that once a song is removed from the situation which produced it, it will become, in effect, a different song. How different will depend on the singer's attitude to the song.

Should the city-singer concern himself only with the words and melody or should he be concerned also with the people and social conditions out of which the songs come? Is the city-singer's responsibility solely to himself and the personal meaning that he finds in the songs? Or does he have a responsibility to the miners, farmers, slaves, blind street singers and southern freedom fighters out of whose joys and sufferings these songs come? If so, what is the nature of that responsibility?

Since I came North in 1961 these questions have come to me while listening to young white people sing the songs of the Southern freedom movement. In a sense, it is unfortunate that freedom songs have the pulsating rhythms and driving melodies that they do. It is unfortunate because once these songs come North, this "sound" communicates and seemingly, nothing else. It is quite easy to imitate The Freedom Singers' rendition of "Woke Up This Morning" and remain completely unaware of what it is to live a life in which one is forced to produce songs such as this, "Certainly, Lord", "Fighting For My Rights", and "We Shall Overcome". To paraphrase the definition of a minister, freedom songs should comfort the disturbed and disturb the comfortable. But as I have heard them in the North, they are only embarrassing. As Peggy Seeger said, "Folk music...is not a comfortable music. That's why it frequently sounds funny in the mouths of comfortable people."

Freedom songs have a definite "sound". They also have a very definite fabric. The "sound" of a freedom song can only communicate to the ear and set the foot tapping in rhythm. It is the fabric which spirals from within the singer and his tradition outward, to spin itself around and into the listener. It is the fabric of freedom songs that so few in the North know and it is the "sound" of freedom songs that is so easy to imitate and so unimportant. As Pete Seeger said in speaking of Leadbelly, "...if you would learn from Leadbelly, you should look deeper to find his greatest qualities...don't just try to imitate his southern accent: Learn his straightforward honesty, vigor and strength." I would go one step further and say that the city-singer has a responsibility to Leadbelly and to the southern freedom fighters in whose songs live the blood and body of every Negro who has wept and laughed, suffered and exulted at life in America. It can be nothing more than a travesty when the city-singer forgets them. The "sound" of freedom songs is so powerful that we forget to listen to the music. We take from freedom songs what we can immediately enjoy, but the songs exist so that we may receive from them the beauty and pain of human experience as it has been for the Negro. Unless we sit
Freedom Songs In The North -- 2

quietly and open ourselves to the songs, unless we let them dwell within us for a while, we will never know another person because we refuse to listen when they speak.

"We are but links in a long human chain," says Pete Seeger, "and the important thing is to be a strong link. May we strive through our music to bring deeper understanding between all human beings so that there may be many more links to come."

Being Negro is not a necessary prerequisite for singing freedom songs. Being willing to understand the Negro and his history is. It is here that the fabric of freedom songs is found. Only when a singer can communicate this will he be able to discharge his responsibility as a link between the anonymous creators of the songs and his audience. This will be true even if his audience never extends beyond himself.

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NOTES

JULIUS LESTER was active in the South leading mass singing of the freedom songs about which he writes. He now lives in New York. An earlier article of his was in BROADSIDE #39...Peter Seeger and his family are now in eastern Europe. After a week each in Czechoslovakia and Poland, they are to arrive in the Soviet Union April 6th for an extended one-month tour of that country. His T-V appearance in Feb. on the British "Sunday Night At The Palladium" show was so successful he has been invited to return at a later date. Tickets for his concert at the Royal Festival Hall in London were sold out three weeks in advance. He concluded his short stay in England with a special half-hour television show of his own for the BBC-TV network. In March he made television appearances in Holland and Denmark... The SNCC FREEDOM SINGERS will perform April 1st in Columbia University's McMillan Theatre in New York in a benefit for the FAYETTE COUNTY PROJECT (tickets are $1.50). Fayette County, Tenn., is where Negro farmers were forced from their homes when they began a voter registration drive several years ago. They have kept right on registering and now actually have more names on the voting books than do the whites. A victory there in this summer's elections would have a tremendous impact on boosting Negro morale in adjoining Mississippi and all through the South where Negroes are struggling for the right to vote. All proceeds of the Columbia concert will go to bolster the Fayette County drive... Lester Flatt & Earl Scruggs & The Foggy Mountain Boys plus "Grandpa" Jones will appear at N.Y.'s Carnegie Hall Friday evening, April 3... PHIL OCHS debut L-P, "All the News That's Fit To Sing" is scheduled for immediate release by ELEKTRA RECORDS, 51 W. 51 St., New York City. The album has Phil singing 14 of his songs, many of which have appeared in BROADSIDE: "Celia", "Power & The Glory", "Lou Marsh", "Bound For Glory", etc... TOM PAXTON has also been signed up by ELEKTRA for an L-P... GIL TURNER will appear in a concert "Folk Songs Of America" April 11, 1964 at Kossuth Hall, 346 East 69 St., New York City, N.Y. (tickets: $2).

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