NOTHING BUT A SOLDIER

Words & Music by CHARLES SHERROD

When I was a baby, Ma-ma held me closely
One day Mister Charley

No more could my mother stay and
rock me as her babe. Nothing but a soldier, Nothing but a

Daddy never knew me
Never wiped my tears
Folks say don't go marching
Without an alibi

I became a young man
Proud as I could be
Hoses were a-spurtig

Working for the white man
Sun-up 'til sun-down
Po-lice every where

He would
Used to hear them saying
Dragged me to the wagon

Always wear a frown. Cho.
Hang him on a tree
Stripped to underwear

Blood ran down my forehead, Blood ran down my back

Trees limb couldn't hold me
Dogs tore off my clothing

Segregation tried
Cow prods burnt my flesh

Jumped the gun for Freedom
Cops beat me with blackjacks

Getting
They were

Closer every stride. Cho.
Stomping on my chest. Cho.

We don't need the H-bomb
Power for every nerve. Cho.

Folks say give me Freedom
Before the day I die

We have got Non-Violence
Hoses were a-spurtig

Packs more
Po-lice every where

Blood ran down my forehead, Blood ran down my back
We don't need the H-bomb

You can jail my body, But I'll never be your slave.

Cho.
'The Cement Octopus'

By MALVINA REYNOLDS

There's a cement octopus sits in Sacramento, I think,
Gets red tape to eat, gasoline taxes to drink,
And it grows by day and it grows by night
And it rolls over everything in sight,
Oh stand by me, and protect that tree
From the freeway misery.

Who knows how the monster started to grow that way,
Its parents are frightened and wish it would go away.
But the taxes keep coming; they have to be spent
On big bulldozers and tanks of cement,
Oh stand by me and protect that tree
From the freeway misery.

That octopus grows like a science-fiction blight,
The Bay and the Ferry Building are out of sight,
The trees that stood for a thousand years,
We watch them falling through our tears,
Oh stand by me and protect that tree
From the freeway misery.

Dear old McLaren won't take this lying down,
We can hear his spirit move in the sandy ground,
It builds this Eden on the dune plain,
Now they're making it a concrete desert again,
Oh stand by me and protect that tree
From the freeway misery.

The men on the highways need those jobs, we know,
Let's put them to work planting new trees to grow.
Building new parks where kids can play,
Pushing that cement monster away,
Oh stand by me and protect that tree
From the freeway misery.
TWO MORE TODAY
by ALEX LUKEMAN

"Try walking down The Bowery; then think about how New York City spent $25,000,000 for Shea Baseball Stadium and only $1,000,000 on the 'War Against Poverty' - some war." ... Alex Lukeman.

As I went out walkin' one cold winter's day - I saw the hearse rollin' - rollin' a-way; I asked a young man - who you takin' a-way - Just an old ho-bo, That's two more to-day.

Well, I started to wonder as the hearse rolled away
Perhaps it was better that it ended this way
How can you be happy with no clothes for your skin
When you'll give your last dollar for a bottle of gin?

You sleep in an alley or a doorway of stone -
Where ever you wake, you call that your home;
If you go to a mission for an hour or 2
Well, they'll make you sing hymns 'fore they'll give you your gruel.

You've nothing to live for, you've no place to go
You freeze in the winter, you've no shoes for the snow -
If you live till the summer, it'll be better then
But autumn slides by and it's winter again.

These thoughts I was thinking as the hearse rolled away,
Taking that hobo to a cold Potters' grave -
Just an old hobo they were taking away;
Just an old hobo, that's two more today.

BROADSIDE #46
My dog's bigger than your dog,
My dog's bigger than yours,
My dog's bigger and he chases mailmen,
My dog's bigger than yours.

(Instrumental Melody) 
(Sing v.2, then Cho.) 
I'm not afraid of the dark any more,
I can tie my shoe; I've been to the country and
I am goin' to school.

Cho.

2. My Dad's meaner than your Dad
My Dad's meaner than yours
My Dad's meaner and he yells louder
My Dad's meaner than yours.

Cho.

3. Our car's faster than your car
Our car's faster than yours
It has a louder horn, it bumps other cars
Our car's faster than yours.

4. My Mom's older than your Mom
My Mom's older than yours
She takes smelly baths
She hides the gray hairs
My Mom's older than yours.

Cho.

BROADSIDE #46
LINKS ON THE CHAIN  
by Phil Ochs
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Come you ranks of labor, Come you union core and

See if you remember the struggles of before when

You were standing helpless on the outside of the door and you

Start ed building links on the chain, on the chain, as you started building links on the chain.

And then there came the boycotts and then the Freedom Rides
And forgetting what you stood for you tried to block the tide
The automation bosses were laughing on the side
As you lost one more link on the chain, etc.

You know when they block your trucks by laying on the road
All that they are doing is all that you have showed
That you gotta strike, you gotta fight, to get what you are owed
When you're building your links on the chain, etc.

Then the army of the fascists tried to put you on the run
But the army of the Union they did what could be done
The power of the factory was greater than the gun
As you built one more link on the chain, etc.

And the man who tries to tell you that they'll take your job away
He's the same man who was scabbing hard just the other day
And your Union's not a Union till he's thrown out of the way
And he's choking on your links of the chain, etc.

Then in 1954, decisions finally made
The black man was a-rising fast and racing from the shade
Your Union took no stand and your Union was betrayed
As you lost yourself a link on the chain, etc.

For now the times are telling you the times are rolling on
And you're fighting for the same thing the jobs that will be gone
Now it's only fair to ask you, boys, which side are you on?
As you're building all your links on the chain, on the chain, etc.
CALLING DR. GREENWAY

The theory that genius is somehow caused by disease was given widespread circulation back in the 1880's and again some 35 or so years ago. There was a spate of articles for public consumption triumphantly pointing out that Julius Caesar, Alexander the Great, Dostoevski, were epileptics; insanity plagued Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, Abraham Lincoln; Beethoven had trouble with his ears; Darwin had a sour stomach, Samuel Johnson the hives. A case could be -- and was -- made for practically every well-known name (although I disremember offhand exactly what William Shakespeare supposedly suffered from). It soon became obvious that medical enlightenment of the populace was not the real aim of those propagating this theory; it was a political thing; for an integral part of it was the claim that "social and political protest" was not really evoked by objective conditions. Such protests were actually symptoms of "aberrations" or mental distress over some personal bodily impairment. For instance, it was analyzed that Lord Byron bitched about a lack of liberties not because such a lack in fact existed but simply because he felt bad about his club foot. Abe Lincoln opposed slavery because he was a victim of melancholia touched off by the tragic loss of his sweetheart, Ann Rutledge. And so on, ad nauseum.

There was quite a flurry of this humbug for a while. It finally died out in the Great Depression, along with somewhat similar theories designed to distract attention from external realities (after all, it was extremely difficult to pretend, with 18 million jobless men in the streets, that hard times were a mental aberration.) Also, we presumably entered an age of stricter science -- and stricter professional accountability.

But now this old discredited theory has been resurrected in the pages of Hoetstommy and applied to Woody Guthrie, in an article authored by a John Greenway. It still suffers from the same fatal flaw; there is absolutely no scientific evidence to support it; it is all conjecture, pure flimflam, sleight-of-hand. Dr. Greenway admits that "even now few physicians and fewer laymen know very much about " Woody's illness -- Huntington's Chorea. This does not prevent him from donning his white jacket and tracing and diagnosing cases wholesale (he even grabs his stethoscope and transports himself all the way back to the 17th Century to diagnose whole families). He rigorously applies what will probably go down in medical history as the "Greenway Test". Did the patients engage in "social and political" protest? Did this get them into trouble with the authorities? If the test shows positive, the diagnosis is plain: they're all a bunch of Huntington's Choreics.

What is it that leads Dr. Greenway into this jungle of speculation? He simply finds unendurable the fact that "most overpowering of all his (Woody Guthrie's) characteritics" was so much "dissatisfaction and protest" in his songs. It can't be that there was anything, at least not seriously, wrong in the world in which Woody lived. There has to be another answer. And Dr. Greenway finds it: Woody's "dissatisfaction and protest" was all due to "genetic defects"; "mutated chromosomes"! It's not hard to understand what Dr. Greenway is up to; like the originators of the theory, he isn't really concerned with medical science; like his predecessors he is merely using some pseudo-medical claptrap to camouflage the real field in which he is working, which might best be described as "political genetics" (This, incidentally, is the first extended excursion into this particular field we have encountered since Hitler's doctors were rather forcefully invited to close up shop).

Dr. Greenway is quite aware that he has no case. So he adopts a comman's approach: talk real glib and fast, use a lot of big important sounding words, carefully leave out key facts which might expose the argument. For example, he claims that Woody's songs after World War Two were motivated "factitiously" -- whatever that means --
by hate, presenting this as a symptom of Woody's illness at this stage. He studiously ignores the fact that it was exactly during this period that Woody wrote his many children's songs. If there's anything in these songs except an overwhelming love of human life and humanity even Dr. Greenway wasn't able to find it (and he must have been looking pretty closely, brother, with that little microscope of his). What motivated the great Guthrie scholar to leave out any reference to these songs in this context? In the answer to this question lies the answer as to why he wrote the article at all.

An example of the flimsy straws out of which Dr. Greenway tries to reach his diagnosis is his proffering of the claim that Woody's "sad facial expression" as seen in photographs is evidence of Huntington's Chorea. The simple truth of the matter is that Woody looked so woebegone as the result of going hungry for years -- not only as a kid but as an adult with kids of his own. And the additional fact that during the period in which most of these photographs were taken he was trying to live -- and create -- on a diet consisting mainly of boilermakers -- slugs of cheap Wilson's whiskey and beer chasers -- endless pots of coffee and a 15-cent bowl of chili about 3 times a week. (I'd like to lure Dr. Greenway into my own little laboratory, keep him on a similar regimen for a while, and then snap his picture -- I bet I could prove he was a classical clinical case of the "staggering grumps" or almost anything else). No, I have news for Dr. Greenway: such sad faces are not rare, nor are they caused by a rare disease; there are millions of them in the world and they are symptoms of a universal disease: Poverty.

The trouble with the "Greenway Theory" -- as its original propagators learned -- is that it is so close to the borderline of the ridiculous as to be ineffective for sustained argument. Almost anybody who can read can see through it; it is as transparent as the soup in one of Woody's songs. As long as you don't need scientific proof you can apply it to almost anybody. You can say John Kennedy shrank from atomic war and yearned for peaceful times because of the aggravation of his chronically painful back; President Johnson has launched a "War ON Poverty" because he had a heart attack and not so much blood is reaching his brain cells as before (H.G. Wells propounded the theory that a man's thinking was influenced by the cc.'s of blood reaching his brain). And what about the greatest "social protestor" of them all? -- He got into mental trouble with the authorities just as did Dr. Greenway's "choreic" patients back in Salem in the 1690's. They forgot to take photographs of Him, but most painters feel He was a pretty "sad facial expression," too.

You see, there's just no end as to where one can go once he accepts Dr. Greenway's thesis that "social and political protest" is a disease rather than a normal reaction to objective reality. You wind up with an awful sick world on your hands. Sam Adams and that whole gang of disgruntled misfits hanging around with him didn't really want independence for the U.S. There must have been "medical reasons" why they made such bad records with the British authorities. And there must be something medically faulty with the millions of American Negroes on the march today. It cannot be clinically accepted that their demonstrations and "trouble-making" are attributable only to the fact that they are tired of several hundred years of discrimination and humiliation and lynching, fed up with living in rat-infested ghettos, fed up with being denied admittance to a toilet when their kids have to go. That's too simple an explanation, at least for a Dr. Greenway. This good doctor is just the scientific analyzer to prove to us all that they are choreics into whose blood snuck some mutated chromosomes the afternoon of Aug. 13, 1627, on a slave ship bringing their ancestors over from Africa. (I must confess, however, that I
Calling Dr. Greenway -- 3
haven't the slightest idea what Dr. Greenway could do with Mark Twain. Here is the fiercest "social and political" protester America has ever produced. Yet we can't find that he suffered from anything -- not even dandruff or halitosis.

If it were not presented for a calculated purpose, one could take Dr. Greenway's own article and "prove" that he himself is a victim of "anxiety neurosis" and is in full retreat from life's reality into the sanctuary of fantasy. The cold truth is that the "so much dissatisfaction and protest" he finds so objectionable in Woody Guthrie's songs is there not, as he wants us to believe, because of some "mutated chromosome" or "mental aberration" (Dr. Greenway, incidentally, is the first medical expert to maintain that Huntington's Chorea is due to a "unique mental defect" -- Woody's own doctors have repeatedly said his illness is purely physical, manifesting itself in physical, not mental deterioration.) The "social and political" protest Dr. Greenway finds so unpalatable in Woody's songs is there because Woody Guthrie looked life full in the face, unafraid, saw it in all its unlimited harshness, shot through with inequalities and injustices and suffering and death; furthermore, saw that all this tragedy and agony was being visted on men and women and children needlessly; should and could be corrected; and accepted without qualification his own personal obligation as a fellow member of the human race to use whatever talent he had to help bring about the better world he saw a-coming. If this is a disease, God save us from the healthy.

Woody lived and created in a period when the worst ills of our society were at a point of sharp focus. Those were the days of the Great Depression, remember? Millions out of work, hungry children everywhere (the medical experts of that day were also apt to falsify the record; as Woody noted, doctors often put down "pneumonia" and "heart disease" as the cause of death for children actually dead of starvation). It was the time of mass migration of hundreds of thousands from the Dust Bowl (Steinbeck's Grapes of Wrath only begins to tell how terrible this blind flight actually was -- and Woody was a part of it). It was a time of War, followed by McCarthyism.

To separate Woody Guthrie from his times, to attribute the songs and prose he wrote about them, to the vagaries of a "rare mental defect", is no more and no less than an attempt to rob a great American of his greatness. Dr. Greenway pretends he is using his scalpel only to tinker with Woody's brain; actually he is trying to use it to cut out Woody's heart.

Dr. Greenway piously mouths that he would never have written this genetic crap if he wasn't sure Woody Guthrie would never read his article. How can he be so sure? -- maybe someone will read it to Woody. And Woody has a number of children, and they have mothers. Does Dr. Greenway feel no obligation toward them? If any of them happen to take him seriously, how many long days -- and nights -- of watching for the first appearance of dread symptoms lie ahead of them? Quack doctors have caused untold needless suffering among human beings over the years. We can only hope now that this particular quack doesn't add to it.

GORDON FRIESEN

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THE SCRUGGS PICKER

Behold the great Scruggs-picker!
He arriveth early, and departeth late.
He crasheth the party, and disturbeth the whole household.
Mighty are his preparations.
He interrupteth the proceedings,
he deafeneth the multitudes.
He causeth the cat to hide, & the dog to depart.
He driveth others to drink, He pauseth not, nor yet doth he waver.
He finisheth not his songs,
he corrupteth one with another.
He lacketh taste, courtesy he knoweth not.
He goeth away, when the night is far spent, and the evening ruined,
and the truth is not in him.

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ERNEST MARRS
SLAVE SONGS AT THE "SING FOR FREEDOM"

By Josh Dunson

The "Sing For Freedom" held at the Gammon Theological Seminary in Atlanta, Ga., May 7th thru 10th under the sponsorship of SNCC, SCLC and the Highlander Folk School and directed by Guy and Candie Carawan was a great meeting ground where few slept and all sang. During the five workshops and three concerts the best of the freedom movement's singers were learning and teaching, adding new verses to the songs that have marked the battles in their home towns: Americus and Albany, Ga.; Hattiesburg, Mississippi; Aikens and Wagner, South Carolina:

If you miss me at my girl friend's house,  
And you can't find me no where,  
Go on over to the picket line  
I'll be doin' my lovin' there.

There were new songs like "You Should Have Been There", which arose out of the Americus voter registration struggle (it and others are to appear in BROADSIDE when Len Chandler comes back from the South with the tapes he made that weekend) and Charles Sherrod's ballad-type narrative with a gospel chorus, "Nothing But A Soldier" (in this issue). There were moving and subtle anti-slavery songs of Bessie Jones and the Sea Island Singers, and the prison work songs and stories of Dock Reese, who served four years in the Texas prison in the early 1940's. There were the northern ballad makers: Phil Ochs with his new song "Links On The Chain"; Len Chandler and Tom Paxton; and Theo Bikel singing the freedom songs of his heritage and of different peoples of the world.

The aim of the Festival, as verbalized by Guy Carawan, was to expose the leading singers from the different areas of the South to the 40 or 50 freedom songs that have grown in the last three years. A free copy of WE SHALL OVERCOME (the SNCC book published by Oak, $1.95) was given to all who registered, and a great part of the workshops was spent in learning the techniques of such diverse styles of freedom singing as those of the Birmingham Gospel Choir and the Albany singers. More than with spreading existing songs newly created, Guy was concerned that the young singers of today be exposed to their own roots, exemplified by the music of the Sea Island Singers and Dock Reese. In many ways, the meeting of the young and the old was strained. The older singers wondered if by all that "shouting" the "kids" were not going to ruin their voices, and the "kids" in some cases seemed ashamed of the "down home" and "old time" music. To a significant number, though by no means to all, the slave songs seemed out of place at a "sing for freedom." Emotions came to a head at the Saturday morning workshop while the Sea Island Singers were showing how their songs were sung and danced to.

Charles Sherrod started the discussion off by frankly asking: "Why??? Why sing those songs here?"

Bessie Jones tried to explain. "Your children are gonna call your music old later on, too... You should know the bottom before you come to the top."

Bessie tries to explain that the slave songs were "the only place where we could say we did not like slavery, say it for ourselves to hear."

An older woman says: "We can listen to those songs anytime back home. I came here to sing freedom." There is a loud undertone and much cross discussion.

Guy recognizes Len Chandler. The effect of what Len says is very strong. His words go something like this:

"I went through this scene, man. I was ashamed of my Grandmother's music. I went to school to get the degrees, in .A.ken, and things were all put up in a nice little box, a package of the Western World's music. But there was nothing in that box about my music. Why even the spirituals were fitted
"Sing For Freedom" -- 2

out for a white audience, made to sound nice and polite -- you know the bit: Marian Anderson, Paul Robeson... It wasn't until this white professor took me to his house to listen to some tapes that I started to know what my music is about. It took a white man to teach me -- me -- about my own music! Why this music (Bessie Jones') is great, and the boys on the radios and the t-vees have stopped you from hearing it -- but this is it, man, this is the stuff..."

Carlton Reese, director of the Birmingham Choir understands "why we hear the slave songs, but why the children's game songs?" Bessie says, "we could not read, and the master thought he could trap us with no existence, he thought we could do nothing about it. But we did, even as children, with this music. And it is our own, it is ours, it came from ourselves."

The discussion becomes sharp, personal. Tom Paxton tells of the racism in the white tradition that had to be rejected before he could seize on what was solid. Cleo Kennedy, the amazing soloist from the Birmingham Freedom Choir, says she sees the need for these songs at one time, but not now. Amanda Bowens, a slight girl of perhaps 90 pounds who spent two months in a rotted jail in America, Ga., becomes angry. Her eyes flashing sparks, her words magnetizing, she cries: "I'm tired of going to church and listening to teen-agers giggle and laugh when the old songs are sung. I want to know what the old songs are, I want to sing them. I want to know that my parents were working for 15 cents a day. What these songs are is what most of this means!" The first real applause and "Amens". "That child can speak, now!"

Andy Young, a secretary of the SCLC, drives home a key point with an example. "We all know you can't trust a Negro on a negotiating committee who doesn't like his people's music. We found that out in Birmingham... CORE tried to organize Plaquemine, Louisiana, but they did not do too well. Their people were mostly from the North, and really did not know how to sing. When we came into Plaquemine we had hundreds in the streets in a few days. That's because we learned how to sing in the old church way."

At the concert that night the Sea Island Singers were the only group to receive a standing ovation. Many of the people who had come to Atlanta ashamed of their own vibrant tradition went away with a deepening sense of pride in it. A number left somewhat troubled, not convinced, but thinking. All had many new songs to take home; and from the workshops an Atlanta Festival Songbook will be compiled to be sent to the towns and cities involved in the freedom battles. The singing of freedom songs has ceased to be solely a means for strength and unity in the face of brutality and harrassment. It is slowly becoming a wedge with which the treasure chest of Afro-American culture is being opened.

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NOTES

CEMENT OCTUPUS: Malvina Reynolds sang this song the other day to 10,000 people in San Francisco. They had gathered to protest plans to build a concrete freeway through the heart of that city's beautiful park lands. Construction would involve wholesale destruction of trees and shrubbery and permanent despoiling of many acres of nature's beauties. All this, it seems, just to make it easier for politicians to get downtown to City Hall. The San Francisco Chronicle said of the protest rally: "The warmest response of the day came to Malvina Reynolds, the folk singer who composed "Little Boxes", the famous song that lambasts the 'ticky-tacky' conformist-making ways of our times. Mrs. Reynolds sang a new song composed for the occasion -- 'The Cement Octopus'. Many of the thousands listening joined in the refrain as soon as they had heard it twice..."
SING OUT: In 1954 when it already had been published for four years SING OUT magazine was still limited to 16 pages. Now the latest issue, June, 1964, is off the press, and it is the largest ever — one hundred & 16 pages. This oldest of the folk song magazines is still the best of them. There are 14 songs in the new issue, including the famous "Oh! Death" — a chilling dialogue between a helpless, pleading mortal, and the remorseless grim reaper — as sung by Dock Boggs. Dock Boggs is also the author of one of the many articles in this latest SING OUT; an autobiographical piece in which we see how a man, his work, and his music are intertwined. Other articles: "Country Blues Comes To Town" (by Paul Nelson) and "Mike Seeger: The Style of Tradition" (by Jon Pankake). And there is the printed text of the revealing reminiscences of Woody Guthrie taped by Pete Seeger in London recently for broadcast on CBS-Radio's Saturday night folk music show. SING OUT is published at 165 W. 46 St. New York, N.Y. 10036. It sells for 75¢ a copy, $3 a year (6 issues)....

LATE NEWS FROM MOSCOW (via the New York Times, May 22, 1964): "Marlene Dietrich captivated her first Soviet audience tonight with a concert of songs that made her famous... One of the hits of the evening was her poignant delivery of Pete Seeger's antiwar song, 'WHERE HAVE ALL THE FLOWERS GONE?'" For the Russians' reception of Seeger himself, see BROADSIDE #45... CALLING DR. GREENWAY: And Karl Marx would never have expressed "so much dissatisfaction" with our society if it hadn't been for those pesky boils....

DAYLE STANLEY of Boston will appear at New York's GERDE'S FOLK CITY for a two-week engagement beginning May 26. Her new LP "CHILD OF HOLLO" got a SPECIAL MENTION listing in Billboard; Variety said: "Miss Stanley is one of the most promising balladeers around the country."