

Broadside # 55

THE NATIONAL TOPICAL SONG MAGAZINE

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Arthur Miller in

THE NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE

The reader has probably been nodding in agreement with what I have just said about Germany, but who among us knew enough to be shocked, let alone to protest, at the photographs of the Vietnamese torturing Vietcong prisoners which our press has published? The Vietnamese are wearing United States equipment, are paid by us, and could not torture without us. There is no way around this—the prisoner crying out in agony is *our* prisoner.

See "Talking Vietnam"
by Phil Ochs, B'Side #32



Written 1964

The Silent, Guilty Ones

An Abstract Folk hymn

Come, all you race haters, you don't bother me at all,
And come, all you who take black paint and paint words on my wall.
Come, all ye hooded clansmen, kiss the flag and fall.
Come, all ye, and listen to me, cause you don't bother me at all.
But oh, you comfortable millions, who hide your heads in the sand!
You are the silent, guilty ones, driving freedom out of my land!
And come, all you politicians, who tell any lie to win,
And come, all you fast-buck hustlers, who worship gold and tin.
Come, all ye race bigots, who judge on the color of man's skin!
Come, all ye and listen to me, for your ice is growing mighty thin.
You saw a woman murdered, you saw her fall to the ground.
Your silent, guilty voices are drowning out freedom's sound.
I don't mind the vocal ones, for they will always be,
And those who criticize and would put down a young fool like me.
But I will cling to my one hope and pray that I live to see
The day when all men talk civilized and the truth does make us free.
So come on, you silent, guilty ones, get your heads out of the sand.
We need a billion, praying voices, or we won't save this land.

Words by Bill Comeau sung or spoken to an open G tuning.

Third Anniversary

Ed. Note: With this issue BROADSIDE begins its fourth year of publication. For something about the first three years see Dick Reuss' article and the reprint of Ralph Gleason's article from the San Francisco Chronicle. We have tried to stick to the policy enunciated first in B'Side #2: "Our policy is to let each songwriter speak freely -- even though we may not agree fully with the sentiments expressed" (extending this also to writers of other material to appear in B'Side.) Another thing we have tried to do is provide a place where new songwriters can show their wares. We're proud to have inspired other publications to begin publishing new topical songs and even start up whole topical song magazines -- such as The BROADSIDE Of Washington, D.C., edited by college student Stuart Crump, Jr., .25¢ a copy and put out by the Potomac Folk Music Society, 101 Evans St., Rockville, Maryland 20850; and the BROADSIDE Of New Britain, Conn., words & music & work mainly by "Bill" Comeau, Minister of Youth at the First Church of Christ in New Britain (The Silent, Guilty Ones on our front cover is reprinted from his Broadside).

IN THIS ISSUE

HARTMAN TURNBOW: "Hartman Turnbow was brought to my attention by Abe Osheroff, a Venice, California, carpenter who spent this past summer in Mileston, Mississippi, building a community center, with funds he raised mostly in LA. Osheroff is himself worth a song: a handsome, Bunyanesque man of 48, he taught philosophy at Columbia (which refused to roll on), fought in Spain, did some union organizing. Now he is fulfilling the tradition that every 2000 years a Jewish carpenter shall journey into a dangerous place and set something right.

"To Abe, Mr. Turnbow symbolizes the new Negro: he has lived like a new Negro throughout his sixty years in Mississippi, and his survival is a miracle. Last spring he walked up, with 13 of his Negro neighbors, to the county courthouse. These men were unschooled but they had learned by the grapevine that they had something coming to them. They announced they had come to register to vote. Sheriff Andrew P. Smith stood on the steps looking them over. Then putting one hand on his black-jack and the other on his pistol the sheriff raised his voice and said: "All right, who will be first?" For a moment nobody moved. Finally, one man stepped forth and walked up the steps. "I, Hartman Turnbow," he said. What happened after that is in the song.

"It is now Abe's plan to tour the country with Mr. Turnbow, raising funds with which to start a school to train kids from Mississippi and elsewhere to become carpenter-sociologists. I would like any money from the song to go to the Mileston Community Center, c/o H. Turnbow, Box 25, Route 2, Tchula, Miss. Incidentally, Abe says that when the Community Center was formally opened in September, state and local police cordoned off the area and took down the license number of everyone attending. Yet the place was filled and they had to set up a loud-speaker to accommodate 400 people outside."

... Mike Kellin

THIRSTY BOOTS: "I didn't get down to Mississippi last summer so I wrote this song for those who did -- to you with the golden-throated eyes and the open-hearted hands." Eric Andersen.

DEVIL IN DIXIE: Sonia Brock was born and raised in a small market-town in Southwestern Ontario, Canada. Both her parents are musicians. Sonia's own songs range from blues to ballads and from standard folk to freedom songs.

HERE'S TO THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI: "I wrote this song about Mississippi letting those 19 men go free. It's a hate song. It says Mississippi should get the hell out of the union. My friends in the Movement say I shouldn't write a song like that, but it represents the hate I feel for Mississippi so I am going to add it to my new record, even though the tapes are already edited." Phil Ochs.

TATE'S HELL: Will McLean is a 45-year-old Floridian who is working on a project of writing the legends of his state into songs. He feels it will take 300 such songs, and has written 170 so far. He has a fine bass voice and plays a good guitar. Some of his songs, like "Tate's Hell", "Osceola's Last Words" and "Away O'Ee" are real gems. He is one of America's few true folk artists and any Folk Festival -- Newport, Univ. of California, Chicago, Philadelphia, etc., -- should be proud to present him. A songbook of 11 of his songs can be had for \$1.50 by writing Will McLean, Box 1123, Tallahassee, Florida. Between writing up Florida's legends in music he has found time to write the very good freedom song, "Freedom Train", which was in B'Side # 32.

BROADSIDE

HOOTENANNY

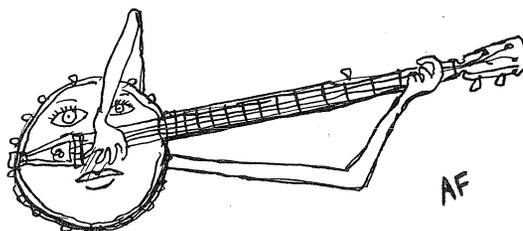
The fifth in the series of BROADSIDE HOOTENANNIES at the VILLAGE GATE, New York City (Bleecker & Thompson Sts.) will be held Sunday afternoon, 3 P.M., March 7th. \$2.

Scheduled for this HOOT is the famous McPeake family from Belfast, Ireland.

Also Pete Seeger is to be back.

And Billy Edd Wheeler (author of the classic "Coal Tattoo" -- in this issue) has promised to come around.

Also: Len Chandler, Jr., Phil Ochs, Julius Lester, Pat Sky, Peter La Farge, Tom Paxton, Eric Andersen, Dave Sear, and some new faces.



Hair of Spun Gold

By JANIS FINK

© by author 1965

... "Who knows, maybe there'll be a revival of very young folk singers & writers!" -Janis Fink, age 13.

When I — was just — the age of five, The
world had just come a- live With wondrous
things to be seen & be done — All that I could
think of — was fun. — (*) Hair of spun
gold, — lips of ru- by red, — And eyes as deep
— as the deepest sea.

(*Used only for indented lines below)

When I was just the age of ten
My life it did change again
I threw away all my childish toys and
Worked on getting noticed by the boys
And when I was just the age of thirteen
Going steady was all the rage,
I picked out the cutest boy
My leather-jacketed little toy.
Hair of spun gold
Turned to black as the night
Lips of red were turned to pale pink

When I was just fifteen years of age
He had my hand in marriage
And when sixteen years of age
In my arms I held a babe.
And now I'm just twenty-one
I feel my life's over and done
And I look down on my child
Wondering if she'll be so wild.
She's got hair of spun gold
Lips of ruby red
And eyes as deep as the deepest sea.

Now I look down upon my child
Swearing she'll have the time
Time to love and time to learn
For a child's memories she won't yearn
She won't be wild
She'll have a life
We'll wait for time to take its time.

BROADSIDE #55

Coming Out Blues

By DENISE KENNEDY

© by author 1965

The grass was green in the year I turned 18, In
old Connecti-cut home. 'Twas the night I knew for
making my de-but, And then I'd be on my own.
I'd a -waited it with such antici-pation; 'Twould
be a big success, I had no doubt. So listen well
while my story I do tell, How I got done in
out.

'Way back when in the town of Darien
Everything was decent and clean
Party night was always most polite
And if not, it couldn't be seen
They danced all night until the early morning
And then the lady's father kicked them out —
But this year instead, we all went up to bed
And I got done in, Coming Out.
Daddy dear was handing out the beer
While my aunt was tending the bar
It was quite all right until one kid got tight
And then took off in his car
Well, I hardly need to say he didn't make it
Several hours later we found out
It seems he drove on the wrong side of the road
And he got done in, Coming Out.

Late that night the boys began to fight
They were really having a clout
With bottles, brooms
They were breaking up the rooms
It was just one hell of a bout
And all this time my Mum was in the kitchen
Doling out a stinking mess of pot
When in walked the cop,
everything came to a stop
And we got done in, Coming out.

After awhile my folks came up on trial
For creating a juvenile spree
Things looked bad, my Daddy he got mad
When he knew he wouldn't go free
Of course it got in all the finest papers
And all the finest people found us out
Dad got hell, he paid a fine as well
And in ten days he's Coming Out.

HARTMAN TURNBOW

By MIKE KELLIN © 1965 by Author

My name is Hartman Turnbow and I be-
 long to me, I live in Mississippi down in
 Holmes Coun-ty, There's bullet holes in
 my front door, They've set my house on fire
 but I'm gonna vote this fall because it's
 Freedom I de-sire.

(Note: 1st verse may be sung as Cho. between verses, or repeated at the end.)

Last spring I went to register, to cast my one man's vote

They called me "boy", said "Tip yer hat",
but they didn't get my goat
Then come the very next morning,
when the clock was striking three
I heard this noise and I saw this fire
and I knew they'd come for me.

Now down in Delta country we got no runnin'water
So the missus drew some buckets and she passed 'em
to my daughter

While I greeted my guests with buckshot 'til the
four of 'em drove away
Then I went to see the sheriff as soon as it was
/day.

I told him how it happened, he said "Boy, yer a
liar",
He said I, Hartman Turnbow, had set m'own house
on fire
He threwed me in the jailhouse, but he
had to set me free
'Cause there's law in this here country,
and law means liberty.

I still won't bow and shuffle when I come into
town
My mind is set on voting, they ain't gonna
scare me down

I been to Atlantic City as a Freedom Democrat
And whenever they'll tip their hat to me,
why, then I'll tip my hat.

DELTA BUM

By ERIC ANDERSEN © 1965 by Deep Fork Music

Bass E string tuned down to D. Eric capoes up 4.

Delta bum, delta bum, tell me boy where
 are you from? Tourists wel- come if they're
 lookin' for fun, but tell me boy why did you come?

I come to help and join the fight
I brought my torch and I brought my light
I brought my torch and I brought my light
I come to work for peoples' rights.

Delta Bum, Delta Bum, I don't mean to hurt you none
Pack your bags and get on the run
But tell me first why did you come?

I'm just a stranger lookin' around
Could you help me, sir, I'm new in town
Help me, sir, I'm new in town
Tryin' to find a church burnt down.

Delta Bum, Delta Bum, I can give you trouble
if you want some

I hate to ask you over a gun
But tell me, boy, why did you come?

I come to stay a few weeks through
To find a church, I thought you knew
To find a church, I thought you knew
And that is what I plan to do.

Up the road a shot gave sound
Up the road six miles from town
Neighbors all said it was a barkin' hound
Funny how a bark...could shoot a man down.

Delta Bum, Delta Bum, I never did know
why you did come

Tourists'r welcome, weren't you having any fun?
I don't know where, but I'm glad you're gone.



AF

Take off your Thirsty Boots

By ERIC ANDERSEN ©1965, Deep Fork

SLOW & EASY transcribed by Agnes Cunningham

You've long been on the o- pen road, you've been
But tell me of the ones you saw as
sleeping in the rain, From the dirt of words & the
far as you could see, A - cross the plain from
mud of cells your clothes are smeared & stained, But the
field to town a- march- ing to be free, And
dir-ty words the muddy cells will soon be judged in-
of the rust- ed prison gates that tumbled by de-
sane, So on- ly stop and rest yourself till
gree, Like laughing children, one by one who
you are off a- gain. Then take off your
looked like you & me. But
thirsty boots & stay for a while, Your feet hot & are
wea- ry - from a dusty mile, And may- be I can
make you laugh, Maybe if I try, Just lookin for the
eve- nin' & the morn- in' in your eyes.

I know you are no stranger down the
crooked rainbow trails
From dancing cliff-edged shattered sills
of slander-shackled jails
But the voices drift up from below
as the walls they're being scaled
All of this and more, my friend
your song shall not be failed.
CHO.: But take off, etc.

BROADSIDE #55

The Devil In Dixie

Music & Lyrics: By SONIA BROCK
Copyright 1964 by author

Listen to me, while I tell
brothers,
How to know you reach
when Hell.
Down below the Dixon line,
That's where Satan fine.
CHORUS
Satan likes it
Won't take long to show
Why old Satan loves it so.

2. Down where death grows on the trees
If hate were ice we all would freeze
Come on down and stay a while
Where a man kills with a smile.
3. Do you think you'd like to stay?
Well, you better learn to pray
Make your bed in a county jail
Water from a rusty pail.
4. If you want a bullet in your back
Say that white's as good as black
If you want an unmarked grave
Say it's integration that you crave.
5. Down where all the
murderers go free;
Greetin' friends
in the jury.
Every good man walks
in fear.
Hear old Satan laugh
and cheer. (CHO.)



You've long been on the open road
you've been sleeping in the rain
From the dirt of words and the mud of cells
your clothes are soiled and stained
But the dirty words, the muddy cells
will soon be hid in shame
So only stop and rest yourself
till you are off again. CHO.

Here's to the State of Mississippi

Words & Music: By PHIL OCHS

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The musical score is written on a single staff in G major and 4/4 time. It features a melody with various chords indicated above the notes: G, Em, D, G, F, G, F, G, Em, Am, D, and CHO: D. The lyrics are written below the staff, with some words in all caps. The score ends with a double bar line and a final G chord.

Here's to the State of Mississippi, For underneath her bor-ders the Devil draws no line,
If you drag her mud-dy rivers nameless bodies you will find, And the fat trees of the forest have
hid a thousand crimes, And the calendar is lying when it reads the present time, And
here's to the land you've torn out the heart of-- Mississippi, find yourself another country

Transcribed by Agnes Cunningham

to be part - of.

2. Here's to the people of Mississippi
Who say the "Folks up North they just don't understand".
And they tremble in the shadows at the thunder of the Klan
All the sweating of their souls can't wash the blood from off their hands
For they smile and shrug their shoulders at the murder of a man. (Chorus)
3. Here's to the schools of Mississippi
Where they're teaching all the children that they don't have to care
All the rudiments of hatred are present everywhere
Oh every single classroom is a factory of despair
And there's nobody learning such a foreign word as fair. (Chorus)
4. Here's to the cops of Mississippi
They're chewing their tobacco as they lock the prison door
And their bellies bounce inside them when they knock you to the floor
No, they don't like taking prisoners in their private little wars
And behind their broken badges there are murderers and more. (Chorus)
5. Here's to the judges of Mississippi
Who wear the robe of honor as they crawl into the court
They're guarding all the bastions of their phony legal fort
Oh, Justice is a stranger when the prisoners report
When a black man stands accused the trial is always short. (Chorus)
6. Here's to the government of Mississippi
In the swamp of their bureacracy they're always bogging down
And criminals are posing as the mayors of the town
And they hope that no one sees the sights and no one hears the sounds
And the speeches of the governor are the ravings of a clown. (Chorus)
7. Here's to the laws of Mississippi
The congressmen will gather in a circus of delay
While the constitution's drowning in an ocean of decay
"Unwed mothers should be sterilized" I've even heard them say
Yes, corruption can be classic in the Mississippi way. (Chorus)
8. Here's to the churches of Mississippi
Where the cross once made of silver now is caked with rust
And the Sunday morning sermons pander to their lust
Oh, the fallen face of Jesus is choking in the dust
And only Heaven knows in which God they can trust. (Chorus)

ODE to the Little Brown Shack Out Back

By BILLY EDD WHEELER

MODERATO

1. They passed an ord'nance in the town, They said we'd have to tear it down, That little old shack out back so dear to me. Though the Health Department said its day was o-ver & dead, It will forever stand in my mem-o-ry. — Don't let 'em tear — that little brown building down, Don't let 'em tear — that little brown building down, Don't let 'em tear — that little brown building down for there's not an-other like it in the country or the town.

2. It was not so long ago that I went tripping through the snow
Out to that house behind my old hound dog
Where I'd sit me down to rest like a snowbird on his nest
And read the Sears 'n Roebuck catalog. **CHO**

3. I would hum a happy tune a-peeping through the quarter moon
As my daddy's kin had done before
It was in that quiet spot daily cares could be forgot
It gave the same relief to rich and poor. **CHO**

4. It was not a castle fair but I could dream my future there
And build my castles to the yellow jackets drone
I could orbit round the sun, fight with Gen'ral Washington
Or be a king upon a golden throne. **CHO**

Coal Tattoo

By BILLY EDD WHEELER

BRIGHTLY

1. Travlin' down that co-al town road
2. Some-bo-dy said that's a strange ta-too you
Listen to my rubber tires whine. (1) Good-bye to got on the side of your head. I said that's the Buck-eye & white Syc-a-more, I'm leavin' blueprint left by the coal, A little more & you be-hind. (1) I've been a coal man all I'll be dead. But I love the rumble & I love my life, Layin' down track in the hole, the dark, I love — the cool of the slate.
Got-ta back like an i-ron wood bent by And it's on down the new road look'in the wind, (1) Bloodveins blue as the coal. for a job, Just trav'lin' & look-in a-head.

3. I stood for the union and walked in the line
And fought against the company
I stood for the U. M. W. of A.
Now who's gonna stand for me?
I've got no house, I've got no pay
Just got a worried soul
And this blue tattoo on the side of my head
Left by the number nine coal. (2x)

4. When someday I die and go to Heaven
The land of my dreams
I'm not gonna worry on losin' my job
To bad times or big machines
I'm not gonna pay my money away
For dues or hospital plans
I'm gonna pick coal while blue heavens roll
And sing in the Angel Band. (2x)

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5. It wasn't fancy built at all, we had newspapers on the wall
It was air-conditioned in the winter time
It was just a humble hut but it's door was never shut
And a man could get inside without a dime. **Cho**

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"Tate's Hell"

Words & Music: By
WILL McLEAN
© 1964 by author

(Narrate) Oh, listen! Good people, a story I'll tell
Of a great swamp in Florida, a place called 'Tate's Hell'--
One hundred and forty square watery miles
With millions of 'skeeters and big yellow flies,
And where all about the moccasins lie
With glittering death in their beady eye,
Where bull-gators beller and panthers squall.
Now this is a place to be shunned by all.

Medium Fast

The musical score is written in G major and 6/8 time. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a G chord. The second staff has Em and G chords. The third staff has Em and G chords. The fourth staff has G and C chords. The lyrics are: Old Tate left Su-ma-tra a-long a-bout dark, He had his two big dogs and a pup-py named Spark, an old Long Tom shot-gun, a sharp bar-low knife, that pan-ther would sure have, (guitar) the chase of his life! (guitar)

A little past moon-down
The dogs struck the scent;
Thru bramble and ti-ti
A-running Tate went;
For hours and hours,
Until it was dawn;
Then Tate knew that he was
A long way from home.

He leaned back to rest,
And his eyes did not see;
The big rattler struck him
Above the bent knee;
The lick was so hard
That a-sprawling he fell;
This was the beginning
Of poor old Tate's Hell!

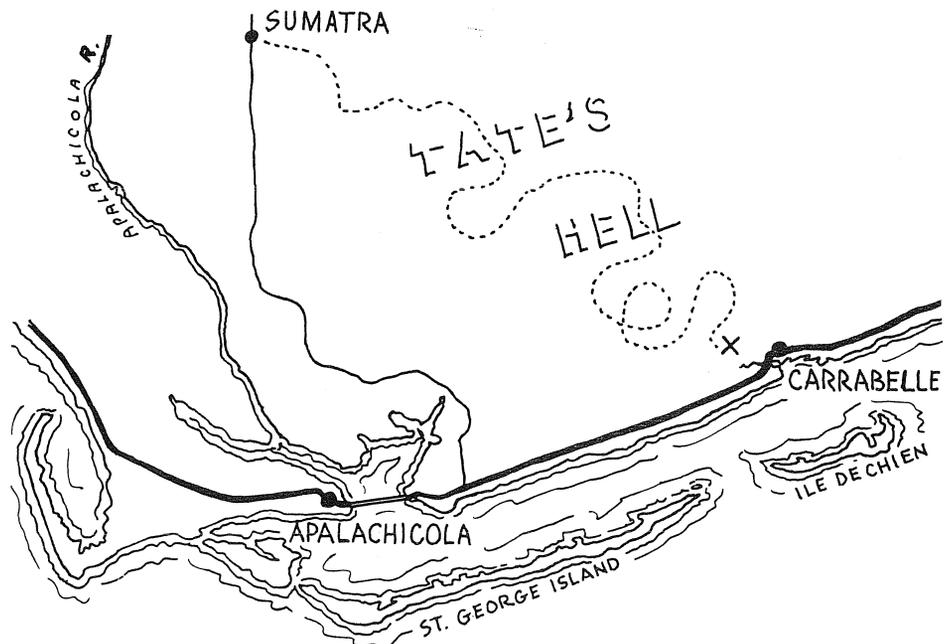
When Tate was discovered
These words he did tell,
'My name is Old Tate, Boys!
I've just been in Hell!'
These few-spoken words
Were the last that he said;
His spirit it left him,
Old Tate he was dead.

He blew thru his gun-barrel;
The dogs did not hear;
The panther had killed them,
And now Tate felt fear;
The sun was not shining,
The mist it was thick;
'Oh, Lordy!' Tate holler'd,
'I'm lost up the crick.'

He opened his barlow
And grabbed him some moss;
A cut he made one-way,
Another across;
He wrapped his leg tightly
And tied it with string;
Then sickness came on him,
His body turned green.

(Narrate)
No man can dispute
This legend of yore --
How Tate lived a full week
And then five days more,
And somehow crawled out
Close to Carrabelle,
From the deep-ghostly swamp
That we know as 'Tate's Hell.'

Note: This swamp, located near the little Florida town of Sumatra, is still one of the most formidable in the United States. It is said Tate was a young man when he entered the swamp. When he emerged 12 days later his face was that of the aged and his hair had turned snow white. The notes for the guitar can best be handled by "hammering on".



HOLD THE CHAIR

By ALBI GORN

© by author 1965

(Tune bass string to D)

FLUIDLY

*DMaj7 Em7

D * Em7 A7 D * Em7 D *

the
Did you chance to see/sun to-day — Set upon a

C A7 Em7 Bm

blanket full of stars?— Or did you see a sky of
Em7 Bm Em7 D solemn

grey — Set in-to a row of i-ron bars?— Have/never
Em7 D Em7 C A7 D

spent a moment on a field of green,— Or had your
* Em7 D Em7 C A7 Em7

thoughts settle on a summer scene? I have
se-renely Bm Em7 Bm never

seen a man look as wist'f'ly on life's breath —
C D Em7

As the man you could not save and so condemned to
CHO: G F#m Em7 A7 G F#m

death. Hooded fin-gers seal his fate; Strap him to
C A7 C D C

the chair, But will he learn repentance honest
D * Em7 or A7

sor-row there? For God's sake at least reflect and
D * C A7 F#m

try to cure his brain;— Give him the chance to
Bm F#m E7

learn and earn the right to be a man a-gain
D * Em7 D

Hold the chair,— Hold the chair.—

The Last Thing on My Mind

By BILL FREDERICK

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C F G

Four hundred years the master, four hundred years
C Am

the boss, Four hundred years the Congo on a
F D/3 G C Am

gold & copper cross. The land it was so good and
D/3 G G7

profits were so fine, And mercy was the last thing
C D/3 - 3rd in bass

on my mind.

It's called the white man's burden to save the
black man's soul
I brought to him the Bible & I carried off his gold
I was my brother's keeper, I kept both his land &
mine
And mercy was the last thing on my mind.

Four hundred years of killing, four hundred years
of war
Four hundred years of profits, that's what I was
fighting for
I gave no rights to Africans in all that bloody time
And mercy was the last thing on my mind.

But now the times are changin', & now I start to
fear
I learned a new word, "mercy", it's spelled
"mercenary" here
I pay a man to murder & he's doin' mighty fine
And mercy is the last thing on my mind.

A hundred white men's bodies are a lyin' on the
road
And Stanleyville is floating in a sea of black
men's blood
I saved some missionaries & some European mines
And mercy was the last thing on my mind.

Children grow & learn from all they see
And they figure from the facts they find
Can you teach & preach that murder is wrong
While you pull the straps & draw the blinds?
The state must always have the right to punish
forcefully
But taking one eye for another will help no
one see
It's easy to condemn a man for he's no real man
then
The challenge lies in making him a human being
again. CHO.

My inspiration for this song came from Oscar Wilde's
poem "Ballad of Reading Gaol". The poem itself
should be condensed and set to music. Maybe my song
will inspire someone to the task, thus completing
the cycle. — Albi Gorn

TOPICAL SONGS FROM PEOPLE'S SONGS TO BROADSIDE:
THE CHANGING TIMES.

By Dick Reuss

Broadside is now rounding out its third year of existence, and thereby tends to bring to mind another topical song magazine of more than fifteen years ago which published for about the same length of time. The People's Songs Bulletin first appeared in February, 1946, and when it folded thirty-three issues later, had printed 319 songs, about two-thirds of them topical. To date Broadside has published over 350 songs in more than fifty outings, virtually all of them topical, and may indeed be said to have been instrumental in reviving the production and dissemination of topical songs that by and large had languished since the demise of People's Songs in 1949.

Between the two periodicals, however, lie significant differences in outlook and philosophy, as well as in scope and physical activity. It is perhaps unnecessary to point out that Broadside does not have a national organization backing it as the old PSB did, or that its approach and outlook are more pragmatic. These things have come about partially because in some cases the individuals involved differ, but ultimately more because the intervening years between the two magazines have brought with them profound historical, cultural, and philosophical changes on the American (and world) scene, which in turn have had a marked and direct influence on the course of the folksong revival. It is impossible to understand the outlook of either the People's Songs Bulletin or Broadside, separated as they are into two distinct eras by a third, without taking into definite account the shifting prevailing sentiments of various periods within the last generation. It is interesting, and perhaps instructive, to examine what some of these moods and changes have been, and in particular how they have influenced the urban folksong scene, in order to further illuminate the historical development of topical song in this country's recent past. Some of what follows has been said by others before, but it is hoped that the present essay will provide some depth and a clearer explanation of these matters. And unfortunately, space limitations have prevented the development of certain points made in passing which are nevertheless important in themselves, and which will eventually need further elaboration.

People's Songs was born (on December 31, 1945) during the period of great (or at least hopeful) optimism that came for a time with the war's end: fascism was largely destroyed, the wartime coalition of the allies was still at least outwardly unified, and it did seem reasonable to hope that now, what with the lessons learned from World War II, peace might become more than just an interlude between wars. This same optimistic outlook led those who founded People's Songs, many of whom were frankly Marxist-oriented, to suppose that the internal reforms begun in the United States in the 30's would now be supplemented with many more similar in kind, and that the labor and proletariat groups would assume a greater role in the further assembling of the New American Society. People's Songs was conceived as

a singing adjunct to these new trends. Idealism was rampant among the group; as Irwin Silber wrote years later: "We believed that the world was worth saving, and that we could do it with songs." In large degree it might be said that the organization was characterized by starry eyes, willing hands, skimpy collective pocketbooks, an indestructable faith in the "one big union" that lay just ahead, and a strong hatred of all those who would prevent this last from being realized.

The reality of the changing American scene, of course, soon interposed itself (although People's Songs went defunct before it could feel the full effects of these changes). But while the organization fell far short of what it would have liked to accomplish, hindsight says that it nevertheless did lay the groundwork for the future folksong revival, and in the course of its existence produced quite a number of noteworthy topical songs (e.g. "Talking Atom", "Passing Through", "Wasn't That A Time", "Song Of My Hands", and others). This era of fruitful song productivity carried over for a year or two after the bankruptcy of People's Songs, and 1949-50 saw the initial appearance of such songs as "The Hammer Song", "Strangest Dream", "Banks Of Marble", and "Kisses Sweeter Than Wine." But thereafter the rich stream of topical songs dried up as 1) the Cold War abroad and its McCarthyist complications at home stifled the atmosphere of free expression which had been declining in the late 40's anyway; 2) the great singing labor movement as known in the 30's proved to be all but dead; and 3) the apathy and weariness of the American people after twenty years of depression, social upheaval, reform, and war tended to isolate progressives and radicals apart from the now somewhat sluggish mainstream of contemporary opinion.

Meanwhile the folksong revival had begun to materialize, not as a result of the efforts of any union or class movement, but through the commercial success of the Weavers and others, and as a result of the impetus generated by the increasing numbers of college students who were beginning to appreciate folk music. As this last group began to gain in affluence and size, the pendulum of interest, in large part reflecting the concurrent social atmosphere in America, began to swing away from topical songs, and from the crusading politically-oriented folksinger who sang them, towards a greater preoccupation with genuine folksong material unencumbered by the social gospels of latter-day New Dealers and left-wingers. (Sing Out!'s new format after 1955 was an obvious recognition of this shift.) The new blood being pumped into the folksong revival preferred ballads, bluegrass and blues; the topical singer who also sang folksongs had not nearly the status that he had had in the heyday of the People's Songs era. The (perhaps largely unconscious) symbol of this sans topical approach eventually became crystallized in the New Lost City Ramblers (who for many reasons which space does not permit enumerating have been one of the most important and influential groups in the whole folksong revival). Undoubtedly though, the anti-topical song attitude of the 1950's was most clearly illustrated in a hilarious but rather rough (and sometimes crude) burlesque of topical songs and singers known as The Bosses' Songbook, subtitled Songs To Stifle The Flames Of Discontent, published near the end of the decade, which lampooned most of the causes, issues and songs (and in a few cases, individuals) dear to the progressive-minded folksingers of the '40's.