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Broadside

THE NATIONAL TOPICAL SONG MAGAZINE

#186



THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

*"I for one would like to have a clearer
definition of what they mean by 'overcome.'"*

SONGS • POETRY • PROSE

**To Vote or Not to Vote • Guns and Drugs • Contra Aid • Profits
Apartheid • Women's Liberation • We Will Never Give Up**

COVER: "A Clearer Definition"

"WE SHALL OVERCOME"

Directed and coproduced by Jim Brown, coproduced by Ginger Brown, George S. Stoney and Harold Leveathal.

To be shown on most PBS stations Aug. 27 from 9-10:20 pm. Check local listings.

By HERB BOYD

Of the several ways to distill the civil rights movement, examining it through its theme song "We Shall Overcome" is among the most imaginative approaches—and certainly the most melodic.

Evolving from the "sorrow songs" of Black slaves and undergoing a variety of changes as it bounced from freedom movement to freedom movement, "We Shall Overcome" can now be heard all over the world. In Beirut, the Palestinians sing a variation of it; United Farm Workers call it "Nosotros Venceremos"; and it resounds today in South African protest marches. In all these places it is a song of hope and a weapon of redemption.

Although tracing the spread of "We Shall Overcome" to the four corners of the earth is instructive, in this thoughtful documentary it is a secondary theme. What is most rewarding is how the derivation of a song illuminates the civil rights movement.

THE SONG'S LONG HISTORY

"We Shall Overcome" was first sung in social protest in 1945 among a group of striking tobacco workers in Charleston, S.C. "We based it on an old religious song, 'We Will See The Lord,'" one of the original strikers recalls. "We changed it to 'We Will Win Our Rights.'" By the time folksingers Pete Seeger and Guy Carawan came along to make their

contributions, the song had evolved to "We Shall Overcome," mostly through the nearly forgotten efforts of the Highlander Folk School's Myles and Zylpha Horton.

Bernice Reagon, one of the film's consultants, remembers Carawan as being instrumental in bringing the song to the attention of students at North Carolina's Shaw College during the early days of the movement. "I think it was from that moment that 'We Shall Overcome' became the song of the movement."

A MIX OF PAST AND PRESENT

With Harry Belafonte as narrator, the film is highlighted by the appearance of a number of singers and movement people, including The Freedom Singers, Taj Mahal, Peter, Paul and Mary, Andrew Young, Charles Sherrod and Jamila Jones. There is even a mellow chorus or two from Archbishop Desmond Tutu. The well-known singers are given additional time to introduce other movement songs, such as "Keep Yo' Eyes on the Prize," "Blowin' in the Wind," and "This Little Light of Mine," popularized by the late Fannie Lou Hamer.

Director Jim Brown and crew have assembled some rare film footage and matched it seamlessly with recent interviews. This technique is particularly brilliant near the end of the film where a phrase from one segues to another. And the musical discussion and examples of improvisation are poignantly balanced with political developments.

What Pete Seeger says about the song "We Shall Overcome," that "there's genius to simplicity...any damn fool can complicate things," also applies to the film itself. In a very simple and unpretentious way, Brown and company have created a powerful statement. ■

ENCLAVIAN—AUGUST 17, 1988

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Tom Paxton
Pete Seeger

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What is robbing a bank compared
to the crime of founding a bank?

— Bertolt Brecht

BROADSIDE #186

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THIS ISSUE -

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CORRECTIONS: ISSUE #185

Page 10: The first line of the 5th verse of "Do You See the Huddled Masses" should read "Remember how **your** ancestors...." (not **our**).

Page 22: In "An Encounter with Woody Guthrie" "Will Geer was the grandfather on "The Waltons" (not on "Little House on the Prairie").

"To vote or not to vote"--or perhaps more precisely, "when to vote and when not to vote"--has been a nagging question for many radicals since voting's been around. The Jesse Jackson campaign recently stirred it up again in many minds when he ran on the Democratic ticket. And come November we are offered the chance once again to choose between "the lesser of two evils." On the following several pages are some comments in verse, song and prose on voting and the 1988 elections. -CJH

REGISTER TO WHAT

Register to vote
I laugh
A deep gut reaction
Painful retraction
For whom
For a system
Guilty of fascism
Racism, sexism
Separation
Divide and conquer
Militarization
Of the children
You gotta be kidding
Vote
For a new tomb
To keep the people
Caught in
A new ripple
Of order and law
For folks behind bars
Mostly the poor
The minimum wager
Vote
Who me
For corruption
New ass kissing
You gotta be kidding
Freedom
For multi corporation
To sell
More lethal drugs
And weapons
To third world peoples
You gotta be jiving
Vote
They wince when I say
I am not for Democracy
I don't believe
In any unhappy minority
Even of one
I'd rather sit down
And do nothing
Than join a system
Caught up in the
Brutalization
Of any person

Freedom
For whom
Women
blacks
Native Americans
Prisoners, children
You gotta be kidding
I hear
Your forked tongues
Speaking
You want me to vote
For 1/4 teaspoon of hope
Crime is on the rise
For kids who think they're
Gonna die
In nuclear skies
Vote
Who me
For your idea of freedom
I don't hear the word
Humanity
In all that you say
Vote
To register to puke
Watching all the lies
On the TV skies
And the snake oil ties
The dollar time
Buys
Food stamps for the hungry
Cutting
Visibility of the homeless
Growing
Military budget
Bulging
Vote
You gotta be kidding
Have you seen the lines
Of men and women
At the soup kitchen
Growing
Since the last
Election

Vote
Who me
For pie in the sky
God and country
And the people
Ain't free
Not me
And politicians
Ain't listening
You gotta be kidding
Vote
Where death row exists
In a country that insists
In the constitution
Written after revolution
For the right to hope
Vote
You gotta be kidding
I see your hidden
Agenda for the folks
Struggling
At the bottom
Without an education
In the barrios and ghettos
Where no one
Hears them speak
But maybe Jesse Jackson
And you don't hear the
Shrieks
Of poverty and despair
In the electric chair

Of corruption prisons
And fat cat systems
Making the jailers rich
Vote
You gotta be joking
But
Yes, if it's Shirley Chisholm
A black woman
Who has paid her dues
And can't be fooled
By fools
But she's not running
And I wouldn't want her
In such a dirty game
Where money is the name
And the aim
And the end and
The tools
Of America is No. 1
Vision
And the third world
held ransom
In interest rate
Prisons
Vote
For whom
You gotta be fooling
Vote
Who me
Save your breath
Don't vote for death
Watch the flight of the dove
And register
To love.

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Jim Morin
The Warm Herbs
1987-1988-1989

DON'T READ THIS POEM!

By Julie Gordon

What's What In Party Politics

Every four years, the mainstream press and TV pundits trot out their set pieces on "Why the American People Don't Vote." Without bothering to ask the views of the millions who are rushing away from the polls, they say: The American public is apathetic. Complacent. Ignorant of the issues. And so on. But the solid plurality of voters who refused to cast a ballot for *either* Mondale or Reagan - remember that Ronnie got elected with 31 percent of the eligible vote? - understand the real reasons.

Let's start with the fact that the electoral process is anything but representative. Yeah, we get into the polling booth once in two or four or six years and pull the lever. Then for the intervening years, we literally have no voice in government, no influence. Meanwhile, the guys who contributed the big bucks to our "representative's" campaign have *plenty* of say, based on the threat that they might withdraw their funds next time.

We don't even get a chance to pick the people who supposedly represent us in the elections. No, they are chosen by the Party bosses for the most part. If there is a primary, then the bosses do everything they can to hide the information that would give us a voice - this is particularly true of the Demosquat party. If we manage to find out anyway and show up at primaries or party caucuses, officials use every maneuver in the book to deny our votes: "You registered too late - haven't been in the district six months" - and so on.

Once the "candidates" have been selected by the Reputrid or Demosquat party elites, it really doesn't matter who wins, because only one interest is served: that of the rich. If you need me to explain that for you, please stop reading - you're in the wrong magazine.

Party hotshots are anxious to make sure that the people who didn't vote in the last election continue to be non-voters. That way the bosses control the process, keep their jobs, and rise up the party ladder that takes *them* into the realm of the rich and powerful. Independent forces that take that power away - such as the Mississippi Freedom Democrat Party in the 60s or the Jackson-Rainbow campaign - make those bosses squirm!

So What's New?

November Belford's poem, "Register To What?" is right on the money. It tells the story of disenfranchisement in the language of people who are disempowered by our political process. Register to what? So that the murders will continue, so that the children will keep going hungry? So that *campesinos* will keep getting tortured? Ms. Belford's message is true. Yet, she is also telling this truth to us in the *wrong* way. Let me explain.

It makes party bosses really happy when their strategy is working. The Reputrids and Demosquats keep up the pressure - more people get discouraged and stay away from the primaries, caucuses and elections - and they love it, because it shows they are winning. Soon nobody but the affluent and their corrupt servants will select candidates and vote. That's the way this country was set up anyway, denying the vote to African-Americans, to women, to anyone who was not a property owner.

But look what's happening this year: a huge movement is coalescing around Rainbow politics, in which people of every class, every race, are demanding and grabbing a share of political power. They are insisting that the issues of the people be taken seriously for the first time in many decades. And people are entering the growing Rainbow movement through the Jesse Jackson campaign for the presidential nomination.

Jackson is the *only* candidate who has voiced the concerns of workers and unemployed persons, farmers and city dwellers of every color and gender, old and young, middle and lower classes. So strong and accurate has his message been that even mainstream Demosquat candidates have begun to sound like progressives - well, sort of. Which Walter Mondale sure as hell never did.

So is this the time to tell people that the system is powerful and corrupt and it's useless to enter the battle and try to slay the dragon? No way. Now is the time for everybody to be out fighting to change the balance of power. You say you don't want to work for politicians who will ignore the needs of the people? Then get in there and push the party bosses aside, and put forward the representatives that you think will represent you.

But why Jesse Jackson, you ask? After all, he has so many faults. Well, sure, Jackson is *not* perfect, but who is? He picks some wrong positions on issues, for example (in my opinion) on drugs. But is there any doubt in your mind Jackson is infinitely more of a people's representative than anybody else you ever heard of? So why let the party bosses put the Demosquat version of George Bush in Jackson's rightful place?

But, you continue, we *know* they won't let Jackson get nominated. If he did, the bosses would exploit racism and every other method to prevent his election. Just like last time. Jackson's progressive platform will be totally rejected again, no matter how many delegates he has.

Okay, you could be right. But the people who are building and working in the Rainbow organization are committed to keep on working long past the convention and November elections. The main goal is *not* to get Jackson, or any candidate, elected to any office right now, but to get the previously discouraged, previously disenfranchised, previously disempowered people active and moving again. Then, long after the ballots have been counted, we will build on the powerful movement catalyzed by Jesse's candidacy. If he wins, there will be a power base to press for progressive agendas. If he loses - well, it's only one man, one office. Meanwhile, we will build real working coalitions until over half the people in this country stand firmly behind a non-racist, socially progressive and economically just program. Imagine the power of millions of politically experienced and aware women and men!

So, Ms. Belford, I say "Right on!" for your splendid analysis of the electoral system's failures. But reconsider what you tell our friends. Voting is not the whole story by a long shot. Don't tell them to drop out, not now. And *please* don't make the argument that even good candidates shouldn't participate in a corrupt system. That is bullshit, because they are the people who will get rid of the corruption, with our help.

Would I work for Shirley Chisholm if she ran? Damn right I would. And will I go on working for Jesse Jackson? You don't even need to ask.

Both Parties Debase My Self-Respect

By Jackie Mason

Who's a better American — the one who votes or the one who doesn't? I was always told that you were some kind of irresponsible, ungrateful nincompoop if you didn't vote, but I found out that the opposite is true.

You're proving you're a dope who has been duped if you do vote. Hardly a word of truth seems to come from either Presidential candidate, and they want me to confirm their opinion of me as an idiot by helping either of them get elected. Both parties are equally guilty of debasing my self-respect.

Take Dukakis, for example. He has spent his whole political life as a liberal crusader — staunch, rough and proud of his liberal record. Then he found out that although liberalism was a big hit in Massachusetts, it has been a big miss lately on a national level.

So in the tradition of all courageous politicians, he immediately announced that labels mean nothing — it's only principles that count.

Then when he realized that with his principles he could lose the election, he immediately announced that his principles didn't count either, and chose for Vice President Lloyd Bentsen, whose whole life has been dedicated to principles that would destroy all of the Duke's principles.

If Dukakis is telling me I shouldn't vote for Bush because he's bad for America, why is Bentsen good for America? If Bentsen and Bush believe in the same policies, why shouldn't I just vote for Bush and eliminate the middleman?

Am I supposed to vote against Bush because he's a threat to the country or because he's a threat to Dukakis's quest for the Presidency? Dukakis keeps referring to jobs, better jobs. Is he talking about the American people or about himself?

When Dukakis is confronted with the issue of Bentsen, his replies would require you to wear a dunce cap to accept. We are not an exclusive party, he says, we are determined to include all Americans.

But what is the purpose of a two-party system? The purpose is to give me a choice between two positions. If one party includes both positions, you have eliminated my right to choose one position against the other. In your determination to win everyone's vote, you could destroy the purpose of voting at all.

Since you convinced me, Governor Dukakis, that the difference doesn't count to you, why should it count to me? Since Bentsen and Bush have identical voting records, the fact is that if Bentsen were running for President, the first man to tell me not

to vote for him might be Dukakis. If he would be a Bush-like catastrophe as President, what right, sir, do you have to inflict him on me as Vice President?

A Vice President obviously does practically nothing for a living. His only purpose on this earth besides attending funerals all over the world is to take over the Presidency in case of a calamity to the President.

Dukakis is therefore telling us one of three things: that if he dies, whatever happens to this country is none of his business; that he was fooling us when he said that the Reagan-Bush-Bentsen policies are so bad for the country, or that Bentsen never believed in what he was saying or voting for anyway and will be unprincipled enough to reverse himself about everything he stood for all his life.

It's no accident that politicians always rate the lowest of all professionals in the minds of the American people on almost any scale. In friendships, you expect total trust, in business, you expect some dishonesty. But in politics, you not only expect distortion as a way of life but accept it with pleasure.

If Dukakis were in charge of a corporation instead of a political party, he would not be celebrated today for his brilliance and acumen for picking Bentsen. Instead, he would have been laughed out or thrown out of his job. The reason is very simple: In business, the only question is how you do the job, in politics, the question is how do you get the job.

There is no simple, clear goal in politics. In business, it's profits. In politics, it could be anything. There is no clear-cut sense of direction, so you could define your goals on any terms you please and justify them as you go along.

People who are serious have no time for fake partnerships. If you wanted to eliminate infidelity from the face of the earth, would you make Gary Hart your partner? If you wanted to wipe out Communism all over the world, would you hire Fidel Castro? If you wanted to raise funds for the United Jewish Appeal, would you give the job to Yasir Arafat?

These questions don't require any answer. Obviously none of it makes any sense, but no one is outraged or even disturbed. Why? It's called politics. Politics is a code word, which means my country is the most important thing on earth, but it's nothing compared to my ambition.

Senator Bentsen doesn't look good in this story either. Dukakis could stretch the truth from a hundred directions with pretensions about "party unity." But what is Bentsen's excuse?

His differences with Dukakis are not about only school prayer. They

are also about life-and-death questions like the B-1 bomber, the MX missile "Star Wars" and aid to the Contras. If you, Mr. Bentsen, really feel that people who would dismantle the "Star Wars" program are threatening our survival as a country, what moral right do you have to serve under Dukakis?

If a politician gives up the defense of your country in time of war, he would be labeled a traitor; if he does it for money, he would be considered a fraud, and jailed as a thief. But if he does it for the Vice Presidency, it's not even considered bad taste.

The great crime of the politicians is not just the corrosion of their own morality but the corruption they've caused to the American spirit. The spirit to care, to feel, to get involved, to fight. If one is as bad as the other, who do you turn to for help?

Jackie Mason, the comedian, is currently appearing on Broadway in a one-man show and in the film "Caddyshack II."

If you happen to be a Republican who might be happy to read this opinion of the Democrats, let me tell you about Bush.

Was Bush any less hypocritical about Reagan than Dukakis has been about Bentsen? Didn't he claim throughout the primary campaign against Reagan eight years ago that voodoo economics would destroy this country, that Reagan was trigger-happy, ignorant in foreign affairs and totally unqualified for the job?

But as soon as he was offered the Vice Presidency his about-face was so abrupt that even in the incredible world of politics it sounded ridiculous. Suddenly, he never really meant what he said, if he said it he couldn't help it, he didn't mean to say it, he never heard it, he wasn't listening, it wasn't really him who said it — it was his brother-in-law.

In other words, this is politics. I don't have to make sense and, if you're an American citizen, you won't expect it of me. Unlike a personal relationship where you expect trust, or business where you expect some integrity, this is politics — where you expect nothing. □

The upper crust has been called "a bunch of crumbs held together by dough."

* Monday, October 26, 1987

Gainesville Sun 7A

People going hungry despite economic boom, study shows

The Associated Press

BOSTON — Despite 58 months of economic expansion, millions of Americans still do not get enough to eat, especially infants, the elderly and former blue-collar workers diverted into the service sector, says a study to be released Monday.

"Economic growth has not reduced hunger in any significant way because of the nature of that growth," says the latest report by the Physician Task Force on Hunger in America. "The economic pie has gotten bigger, but the unevenness of that growth leaves millions falling further behind."

Larry Brown, a professor at the Harvard School of Public Health who chairs the task force, said in an interview last week that he blamed the persistence of hunger on Reagan administration policies.

The report asserts that 20 million Americans are hungry, based on field investigations by the task

force in four areas of the country: Texas and Louisiana, where the oil and natural gas industries are in decline; Minnesota and Iowa, where the family farm is threatened; Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia, where many steel and mining jobs have disappeared and California's Silicon Valley, where service workers earn minimum wages.

"Record numbers of the poor are working today, yet the number of poor has gone up 35 percent in this decade. It doesn't take an economist to conclude what is going on," Brown said.

Guns and Drugs

(A George Bush Campaign Song)

words: c 1988 Ben Tousley
first verse, Charlie King

tune: "Johnnie, I Hardly Knew Ye" (Irish Traditional)
"When Johnnie Comes Marching Home" (Confederate, Civil War)

While on the road to eight more years, haroo, haroo
Up to height of your career, haroo, haroo
In Watts, a kid goes wild on crack
Nicaragua, a woman is shot in the back
And it's you that we find as we follow the track...
Oh Bush, we hardly knew you

CHORUS:

WITH YER DRUGS AND GUNS AND GUNS AND DRUGS, HAROO, HAROO
WITH YER DRUGS AND GUNS AND GUNS AND DRUGS, HAROO, HAROO
WITH YER DRUGS AND GUNS AND GUNS AND DRUGS
WE SEEM TO BE LOOKIN' THROUGH YOU
AND WE SEE WHAT YOU'RE SWEEPIN' UNDER THE RUG...
OH BUSH, WE HARDLY KNEW YOU

Where is the genteel prep school boy? haroo, haroo
The ivy-covered prince of oil, haroo, haroo
He's sleeping in Noriega's bed
With cocaine nightmares in his head
And he wakes in a sweat as the night turns red...
Oh Bush, we hardly knew you

Where is the fighter-pilot brave? haroo, haroo
Our hero tossed upon the waves, haroo, haroo
He flies by night for the CIA
And gladly looks the other way
While Sonozza's friends get their coward's pay...
Oh Bush, we hardly knew you

Where is your son so debonair? haroo, haroo
With polished speech and coiffured hair, haroo, haroo
Down in Miami he's greasing hands
To buy more guns with contraband
While you scorn life and limb with your cool command...
Oh Bush, we hardly knew you

You haven't a leg on which to stand, haroo, haroo
With Gregg and Noriega in your band, haroo, haroo
You haven't the guts to "just say no"
To the thugs who trade in fire and snow
You say "death for drug dealers"--well, you should know
Oh Bush, I'm swearin' to ya

A Forecast

"The Democratic national convention promises either confrontation or false solidarity. If Jackson seeks serious gains, he will be rejected by the party, but revered by the people. If he seeks crumbs, the media will celebrate, but the people will lose another champion."

--Michael Albert,
writing in the June edition
of Zeta magazine.

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131 MANGELS AVE. S.F. CA 94131

Voting is the lowest common denominator of democracy. But the proportion of Americans voting in Presidential elections has declined almost steadily since a postwar apex in 1960, when 82.8 percent of eligible voters cast ballots.

In the last Presidential election, only 53 percent of the voting age population turned out. The 1986 mid-term elections posted not only the lowest turnout since 1942, but outside the states of the old Confederacy it was the lowest in history. This November, up to 90 million people of voting age are expected to shun the ballot boxes, assuring that the United States will remain last among industrialized democracies in voter participation.

NEW YORK TIMES - 3/11/88

Reaganation

(The Liar's Song)

by Tull Kupferberg

Sung to the tune of "Acres of Clams"

Vm = Verse Melody Cm = Chorus Melody

- Vm** They tell us a story of lying
Of lying and of murder too
To whom is this tale mystifying
Not me boys, perhaps 'tis to you.
- Cm** They're telling a story of Reagan
Our President so bold and so true
How can he be a false killer -
When he's wrapped in the red, white and blue?
- Vm** Rapped in the red, white and blue boys
Rapt in the red, white and blue
A man of the movies, a starlet
But he's just an asshole like you.
- Cm** He's just an asshole like you, boys
Yes, he's just an asshole like you
You lectured him in 1980
Dunce more in '84 too.
- Vm** O my, o my he's a liar
As if you didn't even know
He's killed many people off welfare
Nicaragua, Grenada, much more.
- Cm** He smiles when he gives you the shaft, me lad
He smiles while he gives you the shaft (ha-ha)
If you think he cares about poor folks
Well then I surmise that you're daft.
- Vm** He always finds money for war, girls
He always finds money for death
He'll fight for the rights of the rich, boys
He'll fight for them to your last breath.
- Cm** So here's to President Reagan, boys
To Ollie, to Dick and to Cap
To some they're American heroes
To me they're just murderous crap.
- Cm** So here's to Dumb Run Reagan, boys
To Ollie, to Fawn and to Cap
To some they're American heroes
To us they're American Crap

Where Was Mike?

In one of the least convincing moments of an otherwise eloquent speech at the Democratic National Convention, Jesse Jackson spoke of the need for an all-inclusive Democratic Party, one in which hawks and doves can lie down together in the same nest. Indeed, winged metaphors were very popular this year, as in "We need a party that can fly with both wings." The metaphors were not accidental; Democratic standard-bearer Michael Dukakis made clear his election strategy when he named as running mate Lloyd Bentsen, a right-wing Senator known for his advocacy of Reaganite policies, including support for the terrorist war against Nicaragua.

The Democrats would have done better to heed Malcolm X's warning about "chickens coming home to roost." In fact, that's just what happened less than a month later, when Senate Democrats, in a strict party line vote, pushed through a package of aid to the contra terrorists. According to numerous press reports, the Democrats felt compelled to unite behind this package to dispel impressions of a split on the contra aid issue between Bentsen and Dukakis - who, in his previous incarnation as a liberal, campaigned in the primaries on a position opposing contra aid. The Democrats' contra aid package, in short, was our first gift from Dukakis, a direct outgrowth of his electoral strategy.

As Jackson and others should know, hawks are predatory creatures and doves don't stand much of a chance when the two bed down together. So it was in the Senate: party liberals, previously known for opposing contra aid, suddenly grew beaks and talons and drummed up support for the legislation. The allegedly "all-inclusive" party no longer had room for anyone who did not support the terror war.

The chief "dove", Michael Dukakis, was conspicuously silent. This despite the fact that the convention platform includes a plank, fought for by Jackson forces, opposing aid to "irregular forces" in Central America. Where was Mike when his fellow Democrats cynically ignored the position to which they were supposedly pledged?

Mike, as commentators have repeatedly told us, was "cleverly" courting the so-called Reagan Democrats, conservatives who deserted the party and must be won back if a Democrat is again to make it into the White House. That's why Dukakis felt it necessary to name someone like Bentsen as his running mate. That's why he lost his voice where contra aid is concerned. That's why he gave a speech to a predominantly white audience in Neshoba County, Mississippi on the 24th anniversary of the murder of three civil rights workers and managed to avoid mentioning the incident.

Supporters of this Dukakis strategy fail to explain why conservatives, who already have in George Bush a bona fide right wing candidate, would switch to a Dukakis-Bentsen ticket. They also ignore a much larger group that has been deserting the Democratic Party in increasing numbers. The proportion of the electorate that votes has been steadily declining over the same period that the Democrats have been trying to look more like Republicans. (Reagan, in his famous 1984 "landslide" received the votes of only 31% of Americans; 47% of the voting age population stayed home.) The non-voters are largely poor and working people, the traditional Democratic constituency, who feel, quite rightly, that they are unrepresented by politicians in either party. Only Jackson recognized the potential of this constituency; Dukakis is seemingly blind to it and looks for support elsewhere.

Meanwhile in Nicaragua, the contras have again stepped up their attacks on civilians and, sensing the possibility of renewed military aid, refuse to return to the negotiating table. The economic war is still ravaging the daily lives of Nicaraguan citizens, and the U.S. continues to promote internal destabilization by financing opposition media and political parties openly dedicated to overthrowing the government. When Nicaragua refuses to roll over and play dead, the U.S. Congress, in one voice, hypocritically bemoans the lack of "democracy."

Democratic Party leaders insist that our government's Nicaragua policy is bipartisan, and we should believe them. Whether or not we hold our noses and vote for a lesser evil in November is less important than what we do before and after the election to expose and stop U.S. intervention in Central America. We must stop BOTH parties from using Nicaraguan blood to grease their political machines.

WHO REAPS THE PROFIT?

By Leon Rosselson
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You sit there handing down or-ders, You ex-am-ine the terms of the deal, A car is al-ways waiting, Other hands turn the wheel, The doors slide open be-fore you, The doors slide shut be-hind, Other hands carry your luggage, weight-i-er mat-ters en-gage your mind. You take the gold out of the earth, You throw the corps-us in, One crop is as good as another as long as the cash keeps pouring in, The wheels must never stop turning The ma-chine must be o-beyed, The future has got to be fuelled and there's a price to be paid! Black like the dust, Brown like the earth, This is our land, the land of our birth, Si-lent-ly digg-ing, Digg-ing our graves, Cho-king our bo-dies, Cho-king our lives, Li-ving on scraps, Dy-ing in debt, Digg-ing in dark-ness so our child-ren can eat. Once we were free, Greet-ing the sun, Shar-ing the earth, Giv-ing thanks to the corn, Sang with the wa-ters, Sang with the wind, Danced with the drum, Cir-cle with-out end. Now we are si-lent, They have ta-ken our tongues, They have ta-ken our pride, They have ta-ken our songs, On-ly our bo-dies, on-ly our eyes, Burn with the mem-o-ry of the old ways, Brown like the earth, Black like the dust, Who can we turn to? Who can we trust?

You've got no patience with failures,
You've got no time for delay,
Certainty points to the future,
Straight lines carve out the way.

You never make moral judgments,
Only one truth you defend,
Money must be free to make money.
That's all there is in the end.

You take the diamonds out of the earth,
You throw the corpses in etc.

Brown like the earth
Black like the dust.
Who can we turn to?
Who can we trust?

The gun is their god
They have taken our land
They take what we dig
They take without end.

We drown in the dust
We choke in the heat
Our skin grows sores
Our lungs rot.

Still we remember
The cold clear air
Waking at dawn
With the morning star.

Still we remember
The sound of the flutes
The feel of the grass
Under our feet.

Death may come quickly
If the mine floods
If the rock talks
If the gas explodes.

Mostly we linger
On death's cold bed
Clutching for air
Coughing up blood.

Nobody cares
 Nobody sees
 We make no headlines
 Dying by degrees.

A thousand shapes wait to attend you,
 The ones who drive your cars,
 Who reserve you your place at the table,
 Who order your daily cigars,

Who silently guard your privacy
 And make sure your ties are new,
 Who remind you of your appointments,
 You know that they all depend on you.

You take the uranium out of the earth,
 You throw the corpses in . . . etc.

Nobody cares
 Nobody sees
 We make no headlines
 Dying by degrees.

What choice do we have?
 They have taken our home
 We wait in silence
 Our time will come.

They tear from the earth
 They leave nothing behind
 Only raw scars
 On a waste land.

Some day and soon
 The mountains will shake
 The drum will sound
 The sun will turn black

And from out of the dust
 And from under the earth
 We will arise
 Proclaiming this truth

*All life is sacred
 All life is one
 From the rocks on the mountains
 To the children unborn.

*And the walls will topple
 And the fences will fall
 And the scars will be healed
 And the earth will be whole.

This is our land
 The land of our birth
 Black like the dust
 Brown like the earth.

You never carry money,
 You like your life ordered and clean,
 You make out cheques to charity,
 No-one can call you mean.

Through your double-locked gateways
 Only the privileged pass,
 Admire your taste and elegance,
 Marvels of marble and silver and glass.

You take the earth out of the earth,
 You throw the corpses in,
 One crop is as good as another
 As long as the cash keeps pouring in.

The wheels must never stop turning,
 The machine must be obeyed,
 The future has got to be fuelled
 And there's a price to be paid.

* These two verses sung to the tune of the previous two verses



THE FRUITS

When the sowers decided
 to cultivate the fields
 they knew that they would have to clear
 the stones
 the thorns
 the weeds.
 That they would bloody their hands
 and cut their feet.
 That they would have to be careful
 of the gnawing worm
 of the locusts
 and the rats.
 That the cleanup would be hard
 but that finally
 against all odds
 they would reap a harvest...

— DANIEL ORTEGA

Leon Rosselson's latest LP, which includes "Who Reaps the Profits?", is entitled BRINGING THE NEWS FROM NOWHERE (Fuse CF 390), available in the U.S. through DownHome Music in El Cerrito, CA. It also appears in an excellent collection of songs for Central America, BULLETS AND GUITARS, available from the Vancouver Folk Music Festival, 3271 Main St., Vancouver, B.C. V5V 3M6, Canada.

Albany Pledge of Resistance Newsletter - 6/18/88

Neighborhood Gets Sample of Nicaragua

In Chicago, IL, people left imitation corpses in a block of quiet neighborhood in an attempt to dramatize conditions in war-torn Nicaragua. Nurse Myriam Davis heard of volley of what sounded like gunfire and saw through her window dozens of bodies strewn about. She responded "It looked like a battlefield. I was running toward the police cars and I was halfway down the block before I realized they were dummies."

The Chicago Sun Times reported that whoever did the action accomplished exactly what they wanted: to make unsuspecting people feel the horror of living in the midst of sudden death.

Notes left on crosses during the raid at 4 am read "We have staged a mock contra attack in your neighborhood. If this were Nicaragua, the bodies, the blood and the terror would be real. You would be lying on the floor or running for your life..."

Another neighbor said, "It really made an impact on me. When I saw the people (the dummies), I thought, this could be my neighbor. I guess that's the way people feel all the time down there."

Who Censored the Mandela Concert?

By Little Steven

A billion people are said to have tuned in to the recent London concert to free Nelson Mandela. I was proud to have been one of the artists who took part. The show, televised to 60 countries, provided a rare opportunity to focus the world's attention on South Africa and to educate young people about apartheid.

Unfortunately, here in America that opportunity was squandered by a television broadcast that trivialized the event by deleting virtually every reference to the political situation in South Africa. In the process, the producers censored free expression by many of the participants and probably helped to lower political consciousness more than raise it.

The concert, promoted on radio and television in this country as the "Freedom Fest," was anything but free, as I realized when I reviewed a tape of the American broadcast. Comments that I made calling South Africa a terrorist state and urging sanctions were heard and seen in Britain -- but somehow did not get across the Atlantic. Harry Belafonte, Whoopi Goldberg and Peter Gabriel, among others, made political statements that were beamed around the world, but zapped in America.

While all the facts are not yet in, it appears that Fox Television Network and Westwood One, the companies that arranged for the syndicated TV and radio transmission, decided that Americans were not interested in learning more about apartheid. When I asked Fox for an explanation, a spokesman said it was company policy not to comment on such matters.

Whatever the reasons, the show was neutered, the issue downplayed and the message muzzled. Celebrity gossip substituted for informational segments and inane chatter depoliticized the coverage. If people didn't know who Mr. Mandela was before tuning in, they weren't any better informed after five hours of programming.

How did this happen? How could Nelson Mandela, jailed for 26 years as the symbol of a nation's hunger for freedom, become an excuse for a "party" that stripped a struggle of its meaning and turned a man of ideas into a poster image? Where were the background reports on why he is in jail, on what he represents?

At the very least these questions lead to others that need to be answered. Who made the decision to sanitize the broadcast? Was there a deal between the promoter and the TV syndicator? Was there pressure from the sponsor? Why weren't the artists told ahead of time?

I, for one, would never knowingly have participated in an event that was to be purged of its politics, especially when the man being honored is known for his political courage and principles. If the South African Government cannot separate Mr. Mandela from his politics, neither should we.

"Politics" is, after all, the essence of democracy, freedom and human rights - the principles that separate us from the

Mandela Concert Prohibited

JOHANNESBURG, July 14 (AP) — The South African Government banned a rock concert that anti-apartheid campaigners had hoped would be the highlight of celebrations of Nelson Mandela's 70th birthday. The Justice Ministry conveyed its decision in a letter to the organizing committee for the daylong concert, which had been scheduled to be held near Soweto on Sunday, the day before the birthday of the long-imprisoned African National Congress leader.

NEW YORK TIMES, JULY 15, 1988



partisans of apartheid. Every time young people are shielded from this adult monster called "politics, they are being told "Don't think, don't try to understand, don't act, don't participate in the democratic process." Is it any wonder that apathy and frustration are rampant among the young, that so many of them don't vote?

One would like to think that it is no longer "controversial" to oppose apartheid. Indeed, with the South African Government's press ban already limiting news coverage, networks have a special responsibility to keep us informed.

Obviously, we have to do much more to get communications companies to communicate, to inform as they "entertain," to trust the intelligence of their audience, to serve the public interest.

South Africa crept into our living rooms the Saturday before last in more ways than one, and most of us never even knew it. □

Steven Van Zandt, known professionally as Little Steven, is a musician and the organizer of Artists United Against Apartheid, the group behind the "Sun City" Anti-Apartheid Album.

..... URGENT!

Longtime social and political activist Curtis Hayes Williams is being detained without charges in Monrovia, Liberia, and he needs our help.

He was arrested July 13. Friends of Curtis have sent out an appeal to mobilize pressure for his immediate release. The jail conditions cannot be regarded as healthy and there is concern for his well-being. The Liberian government has not been forthcoming in giving any reason for his detention and Friends of Curtis are also seeking legal help from someone who knows the situation in Liberia.

Curtis joined up with SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) when it came to his hometown of McComb Mississippi in 1961 when he was 18. McComb, in Amite County, was one of the most vicious places to be a Freedom Rider (as civil rights workers in Mississippi were called) and to become one meant daily danger and not knowing if one would be alive tomorrow. Curtis was arrested several times and was injured during the Mississippi Freedom Summer of 1964 when a building of the McComb project, which he headed, was bombed. He has continued to do community organizing over the years, most recently aiding Black farmers in the South and the homeless in the North. The father of seven, he now lives in New Jersey with his wife, Gwendolyn who, though about to give birth, has been working diligently for his release.

Letters asking for Curtis' immediate release and expressing concern that his basic human rights be respected as well as his right to nourishing food, clean drinking water and sanitary living conditions can be sent to:

Her excellency	The Honorable Keith L. Wauchope
Mrs. Eugenia A. Wadsworth Stevenson	Charge d' Affaires
Embassy of Liberia	The Embassy of the United States
5201 16th Street N.W.	of America to Liberia
Washington, DC 20011	APO New York 09155

Curtis can be written to: c/o Penny S. McMurtry, Consul
Embassy of the United States of Liberia
APO New York 09155

Broadsiders Sing for WIDF

The New York Chapter of Women for Racial and Economic Equality (WREE) held a reception recently for the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF) at which Sis Cunningham and Tom McClelland sang songs from our magazine.

Leaders and rank-and-file members of the WIDF were in New York to attend events around the United Nations' 3rd Session on Disarmament held early in June. The reception was in honor of WIDF President Freda Brown of Australia and Secretary Natalya Bereshnaya of the Soviet Union. Many women from Third World countries were present. Speakers addressed this issue of "Peace and Human Rights for Children."

*When I fed the hungrey
they called me a saint;
When I asked
why are they hungry
they called me a Communist.*

— Archbishop Camera of Brazil

NEXT ISSUE:
A musical profile on
Tracy Chapman, a rising
new star on the protest
horizon.

— S.C.

Helsinki Pact Flouted

To the Editor:

In Moscow, President Reagan chided the Soviet Union for failing to comply with the Helsinki accords of 1975 on human rights. Yet the Reagan Administration continues to impose stringent restrictions on the rights of United States citizens to travel to Cuba in violation of the very international agreement the President advocated in Moscow.

The Helsinki accords called for greater understanding among nations through freedom of international movement and communications. Both Congress and President Carter recognized that United States restrictions on travel to Cuba, North Vietnam and certain other socialist countries violated the accords. To achieve compliance with that agreement, President Carter lifted the ban on travel to Cuba in March 1977. Shortly thereafter, Congress enacted an amendment to the Passport Act insuring that the freedom-of-travel principle agreed to at Helsinki would be United States law.

Five years later, the Reagan Administration conveniently forgot about Helsinki. In April 1982, it reimposed restrictions on travel to Cuba, not by passport controls, but by preventing the spending of any money in Cuba by United States travelers. Technically, you can go there; you just can't spend money for transportation, meals or lodging. With the exception of scholars and certain other exempted groups, the average citizen is thus barred from visiting Cuba.

It is time we fully complied with the Helsinki accords and permitted our citizens to travel to a place where they are welcome and in no danger. As the folk singer Phil Ochs once sang, somehow it is strange to see the State Department say, you are living in the free world, in the free world you must stay.

JULES LOBEL
Assoc. Prof. of Law, U. of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, June 24, 1988

BALLAD OF WILLIAM WORTHY

Words & Music by
PHIL OCHS

VERSES:

1. It's of a bold re-port-er, a sto-ry I will tell. He

went down to the Cu-ban land; The near-est place to hell. He'd been there man-y times be-fore, but

now the law does say, The on-ly way to Cu-ba is with the C. I. A.

CHORUS:

WIL-LIAM Wor-thy is n't wor-thy to en-ter our door;— He! Went down to Cu-ba; He's not A-

wor-I-can an-y more.—But some-how it is strange to hear the State De-part-ment say, "You are

liv-ing in the Free World; in the Free World you must stay." 2) Five Dis-say-land this year, 1—

1) So 2) Well, there

1. It's of a bold reporter, a story I will tell.
He went down to the Cuban land; the nearest place to hell.
He'd been there many times before, but now the law does say,
The only way to Cuba is with the C.I.A.

CHORUS:

WILLIAM WORTHY ISN'T WORTHY OF ENTERING OUR DOOR.
HE WENT DOWN TO CUBA, HE'S NOT AMERICAN ANYMORE.
STILL IT IS STRANGE TO HEAR THE STATE DEPARTMENT SAY
YOU ARE LIVING IN THE FREE WORLD, IN THE FREE WORLD YOU MUST STAY.

2. Five-thousand dollars or a five-year sentence may well be
For a man who had the nerve to think that travellin' is free.
He should have listened closer, when he heard the experts say,
"This modern world is getting so much smaller every day."
3. So come all you good travellers, and fellow travellers too,
And travel all around the world; see every country through.
I'd surely like to come along and see what may be new,
But my passport's disappearing, as I sing these words to you.
4. Well there really is no need to travel to these evil lands,
And though the list grows larger you must try to understand,
And try hard not to worry, if someday you should hear,
"The whole world is off limits; Visit Disneyland this year."

Side 1, Band 5: WILLIAM WORTHY

(Words & music by Phil Ochs, Sung by Phil Ochs)

This is a ballad about a conscientious American citizen who took too seriously the assurances from all sides that he was truly living in a "Free World." He assumed this meant, among a lot of other wonderful things, freedom to travel. So he set off on a short trip. But it turned out he's having a tough time getting back home again; in fact, he hasn't made it yet. Somewhere along the line his passport was stamped "Good only for transit to the nearest jailhouse."

— From Phil's introduction
to the song on the LP
BROADSIDE BALLADS - VOL. 1.
(Folkways Records FH 5301)

© 1963 JOY MUSIC CO.

Reprinted from BROADSIDE #22, March 1963

WE WILL NEVER GIVE UP

Words adapted by Kristin Lems
 from a speech by Jill Ruckelshaus
 Music by Kristin Lems
 © 1983 Kristin Lems

words adapted C (2)dm C (1) to Cho.

I am asking ev-'ry-thing you have to give--- I am asking We will

never--- give up We will never--- give up We will never--- give in We will

never--- give in We will in. You will lose your youth, your sleep, your arches

your strength, your patience, your sense of hu-mor, & oc-ca-sion-al-ly, the help &

sup- port of peo-ple-- you love ve-ry--- much But we will in. in re-turn

I have no---thing to offer you but this, in re-turn I have no---thing to offer you

but this: Your pride in being a yo- man All the dreams that you have for your

daugh- ters (chil- dren) Your pride in being a wo- man All the dreams that you have for

your- self We will in. And the knowledge that at the end of

your days you will--- be ab- le--- to look back and say with a say We will

in, We will (desc) (for) never--- give (your) We will (daugh- ters) give

up We will (for) (your) (sel- f) never--- give in We will never give in We will never

give up We will never--- give up We will never--- give in un- til jus- tice is

ours

The musical score is written on a grand staff with a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. It features a melody line with lyrics and a guitar accompaniment line with chords. The chords are primarily C, G, D, E, and F, with some variations like C(2)dm and C(1). The lyrics are a feminist speech by Jill Ruckelshaus, adapted by Kristin Lems. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings like 'em' and 'dm'. There are also some handwritten-style annotations in the score, such as 'to Cho.' and 'to Cho. 14'. The piece ends with a final chord of G and a double bar line.

From an album by the same title recorded live at ERA rallies in 1982. It also includes "Failure Is Impossible," "Ballad of the ERA," "My Mom's a Feminist." One of the best upbeat feminist albums ever. Available in album or cassette for \$8.50 from CARLSDATTER PRODUCTIONS, 136 Main Street, Evanston, IL 60202.

1968 • Women's Liberation • 1988

September 7, 1988 marks the 20th Anniversary of the initial Miss America Protest, the first public "zap action" by the newly emerging Women's Liberation Movement in the U.S. in 1968. This article, written five years ago, describes the action and its roots and gives a brief assessment of the present.

THE TIMES HERALD RECORD

Friday, September 16, 1983

47

'Miss America' raised feminist consciousness

This year's Miss America Pageant marks the 16th anniversary of the first public action of the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM). On Sept. 7, 1968, feminists protested the contest in Atlantic City, demanding an end to beauty competition among women and bringing the concept of women's liberation into the mass public consciousness.

As a participant in that activity, I would like to share some historical notes on this often distorted piece of feminist history.

The idea for the protest came out of a group of women pulled together by Shulamith Firestone and Anne Koedt in the fall of 1967. It eventually named itself New York Radical Women and was a seedbed for much women's liberation theory as well as many groups, including Hedlocks, New York Radical Feminists and WITCH. The group had been meeting for more than six months and was developing a group method of analyzing women's oppression by recalling and discussing our own experiences. That method, first formulated into a program by Kathie Sarahild, became known as "consciousness-raising" and for a time was the very foundation of WLM organizing.

One night we were watching "Schmearguntz," a feminist film, at one of our meetings. The movie had flashes of the Miss America contest in it. I found myself sitting there remembering how I had felt at home with my family watching it as a child, as an adolescent and as a college student. I knew it had evoked powerful feelings. When I proposed the idea of the protest to the group, some were reluctant at first, feeling that the issue of women's appearance was petty, or at least might be considered so by others. But we decided to go around the room with each woman telling how she felt about the pageant and found that many who had always put down the contest still watched it on television, while others had identified with it and cried with the winner.

We agreed that beauty competition among women affected all our lives because it set standards by which all women were judged by bosses and by men in general. Men, in fact, tended to like us more for our appearance than for "our real selves" as Anne Farrow put it.

The concrete plans for the action came from our communal thinking. We all agreed that the main point of the demonstration would be that all women are hurt by beauty competition — Miss America as well as ourselves. We opposed the pageant in our own self-interest, e.g. the self-interest of all women. Or as Ros Barandall, one of our members, put it later on the David Susskind show, "Every day in a woman's life is a walking Miss America contest."

At the demonstration there was an all-day picket line, some street theater, and a Freedom Trash Can where women threw "objects of female torture," including high heels, nylons, girdles, hair curlers, Playboy magazines, make-up and false eyelashes. It was here that the epithet "bra-burners" was born. No bras were burned, but it is true that some of the protesters might like to have done so! (One side result of the protest and this media distortion of it was a rush by the fashion industry to create more comfortable undergarments for women.)

Some of us had acquired tickets to the pageant itself for the final evening to continue our protest inside the convention hall. Out of the necessity of not being noticed, we too dressed up with make-up and high heels and took our

Carol Hanisch lives in New Paris.

"my view..." Carol Hanisch



Photo: Freedom For Women

seats in the balcony. As the former Miss America began to deliver her farewell speech, we all shouted, "Women's Liberation!" and "No More Miss America!" until the cops hustled us out. The pageant was only disrupted for a moment and we later heard that the TV cameramen (they were all men back then) had been ordered not to put us on the screen.

Although radical political groups had generally renounced the demonstration as silly and unimportant, we were verbally attacked at the protest with such slogans as "Go back to Russia" and "Mothers of Mao." In fact by the end of the evening a rather surly crowd, mostly men, had begun pressing us and when we left it was under police escort.

When we woke up and read the papers the next morning, we knew our immediate goal had been accomplished: Alongside the headline of a new Miss America being

crowded was the news that a new feminist movement was afoot in the land. At the time few people would have guessed it was the beginning of women uniting in a force that would change everyone's life. The response from women was enormous, more, in fact than we were prepared to handle. Women wrote us passionate letters, many of which said, "I've been waiting all my life for something like this (the movement) to happen."

In those early days of the WLM, as we were growing stronger and stronger, many of us were convinced that women's liberation would be won in a few years. In retrospect that seems pretty stupid, but we did not understand just yet how entrenched male supremacy was and how intertwined with the corporate powers who super-exploit women as underpaid labor in the workforce (women still earn 59 cents for every dollar earned by men) and as unpaid housework and reproductive labor (childbearing and rearing) in the home.

Who among us would have believed as hundreds of thousands of women took to the streets on Women's Strike for Equality Day in 1970 that the Equal Rights Amendment would dare be defeated? Who would have dreamed that 15 years later the fight for safe, legal abortion and contraceptives would still be going on, or that women would still need abortions largely because men still act so irresponsibly about sex? Who would have believed that rapists and pornography would still run rampant, the latter mushrooming in the home video market? Who would have dreamed that men's response to women's demands for equality in relationships would be to flee from marriage and commitment, sometimes to other men? Who would have dreamed that we would have fewer child care centers in 1983 than in 1970, or that women would be working more and earning even less? Certainly not those who postponed having children until "things improved" for women. And I certainly never dreamed that 12 years later I would find myself the only woman traveler in the Minneapolis airport in comfortable shoes and pants!

There have been many important advances for women in the past 15 years that have not yet been swept away, but our gains are steadily disappearing because the Women's Liberation Movement is disappearing. Many feminists were not prepared for the long, drawn-out struggle liberation entails, or for the sacrifices in career, family and personal relationships. Many women were not prepared to recognize and acknowledge that those gains came about because some women consciously set out to build the kind of movement that would win these changes for women. Many think the WLM began when such "well-connected" women as Gloria Steinem appeared on the scene with \$1 million from Warner Communications with which to start MS magazine, or when politicians like Bella Abzug decided to throw their hats into the feminist ring.

In fact the WLM was pioneered by ordinary women with no special access to money or the halls of power. It was initially developed by women who had been in the Black civil rights and anti-Vietnam war movements. The rising of Black people definitely helped trigger the rising of women and the Black power movement was an important source of WLM theory and strategy.

If women do not learn about and acknowledge their actual, true history, and ideas and people that really made it happen, the Women's Liberation Movement and all its gains for women will soon disappear again. Maybe for decades and maybe even for our lifetime.

The Miss America Pageant, we did protest
The curlers, the girdles, high heels and the rest
That torture a woman — our real self is best
Fight on sisters, fight on.

— A verse from "Fight On Sisters" a song by Carol Hanisch which appeared in BROADSIDE #138

... Carrying it on 20 years later

Michelle Anderson, a 21-year-old junior at the University of Santa Cruz, took up the feminist torch this year in the protest against beauty competitions among women. After 18 months of planning and preparation to bring the protest into the pageant itself, she won the Miss Santa Cruz County title and went on the state pageant where, just before the crowning of the new Miss California, she reached into the top of her evening gown and pulled out a banner reading PAGEANTS HURT ALL WOMEN. Other contestants pulled the banner from her hands, but not before live T.V. cameras caught the action. Below (in excerpts from the September 1988 issue of *MS. Magazine*) she describes some of her experiences as a contestant.

I didn't win the first pageant because I did everything wrong. But the second time around, I read everything I could find on pageants back to the 1950s to determine if there was a standard and whether I could seem to fit it. And I could—with the help of heavy makeup to cover my acne scars, enough hair spray to defy gravity for four hours, tape to hold up my boobs, and spray adhesive to hold down my swimsuit. Being transformed into a beauty queen made absolutely clear how artificial and dangerous and self-denying that beauty standard really is. . . .

In order to win, I not only had to transform my appearance, but also my attitude. I was told I was too masculine, too aggressive, too assertive, that people were intimidated by me, "even judges, even men." The pinnacle pageant response to any question is: "Well, on the one hand . . . but on the other . . . and

quite frankly I'm not quite sure I have enough information to make that choice at this point in my life." . . .

I don't mean to suggest that the contestants are stupid. Actually, one thing that surprised me was that many of the women are so savvy about this exploitation. They are interested in acting or television work and see it as a career move. . . .

These pageant officials believe they are preparing the "girls" for what it takes to be a woman in this world. From my experience I would say that learning to be a woman is fundamentally a lesson in humiliation: how tormented, distorted, and uncomfortable can we make you, and know that you will still smile, how much can we make you not yourself, and still have you think we are rewarding you?



Michelle Anderson being crowned Miss Santa Cruz. If the Pageant officials had only known that her look of unmitigated joy was because she was one step closer to fulfilling her plan to bring the protest on stage at the Miss California Pageant!

A NEW OBJECT OF FEMALE TORTURE

Now there's a new product for the 65 million women who remove hair regularly. The Epilady, which looks somewhat like a telephone handle, uses small electrical coils to rip hair out at the root.

Since its introduction in the United States nine months ago, the company has sold 1.5 million Epilady shavers, a little wonder that costs \$70, according to Susanna Wilson, public relations director for Epilady.

But despite Epilady's commercial success, some users complain the product is too painful to be effective. Many compare it to having eyebrows plucked.

Cuts, pain, cost, time — why do women even bother getting rid of the hair that grows naturally on their legs?

It seems to have something to do with that old idea that women should be soft for their men.

"One of the things that define men from women is that their bodies are hairier than ours," says Wendy Cassleth, beauty researcher for *Mademoiselle* magazine.

MIDDLETOWN (NY) HERALD-RECORD - 7/28/88

The capitalist countries are not the only ones with beauty pageants these days. Both the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China have instituted or tried to institute them in the past few years. The Chinese Government backed off its original support of the contest after protests. However in the Soviet Union:

He enjoys the material comforts of official recognition. Many dignitaries, including the former Soviet leader Leonid I. Brezhnev and President Kurt Waldheim of Austria, have sat for his portraits.

At the same time, he has always lived with official disapproval, eschewing the heroic themes of Socialist Realism and gravitating increasingly toward religion and Russian nationalism. He has never received a state prize or had an exhibit by the official artists' union.

The liberalization of Soviet society, while permitting much of the modernism he dislikes, has also been good to Mr. Glazunov. There is the new exhibit, the high-level visitors, a prominent interview in *Sovetskaya Kultura* and his plan to begin a scholarship fund for young artists.

Mr. Glazunov, whose affinity for the naked female form is another aspect of his artistic notoriety, was even invited to help judge Moscow's first beauty pageant this summer.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SATURDAY, JULY 30, 1988

First-hand knowledge of plainsland droughts is one of the things I possess. And if this song seems to ring a little more of the 30's than of the present, that's what it does. - S.C.

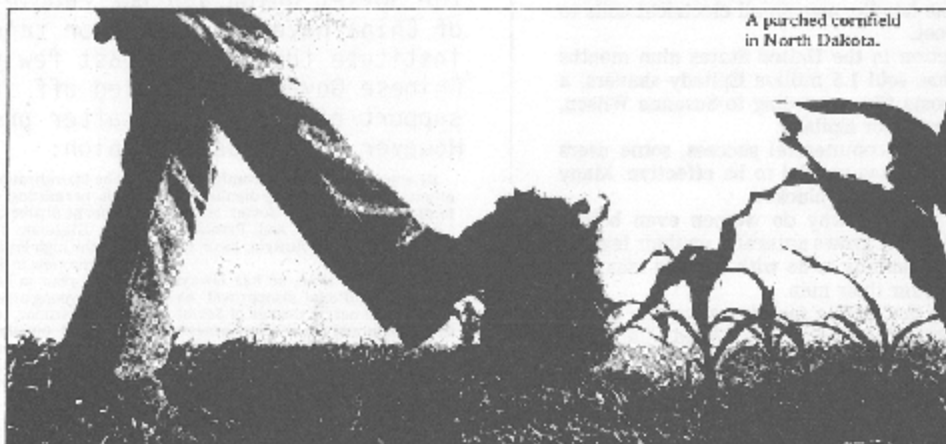
DAMNABLY DRY!

© 1986 by Sis Cunningham

The musical score is written for a single melodic line in treble clef, with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is accompanied by a simple harmonic accompaniment consisting of chords (A, D, E7) and a bass line. The lyrics are written below the notes.

I lived on the prairie. I walked o'er the plain. The
white clouds a-bove showed dark ridges of rain, I kept my gaze
upward and studied the sky But nar-y a raindrop splashed down in my
eye. Down in my eye, Down in my eye, Nar-y a raindrop splashed
down in my eye.

2. My cornfield was planted right there on the plain
That's where my acreage of Farmland had lain
I cocked my head skyward and kept it in place
But no drop of rainwater fell on my face.
Full on my face, etc.
3. My corn it was spindlin', all curled up and brown
You could see it was beggin' for rain to come down
I stood there a-shakin' my fist at the sky
But the ground at my feet, it stayed devilishly dry.
Devilishly dry...
4. Farewell to my prairie, goodbye to the plains
I loved 'em and left 'em to go where it rains
There on my farmland my work was in vain
The white clouds was fakin' those ridges of rain.
Ridges of rain...
5. I lived On the prairie, I walked o'er the plain
But I'm damned if I'll ever go back there again!
Those ridges of rain that you see in the sky
Always turn out to be damnably dry!
Damnably dry!...



A parched cornfield
in North Dakota.

The Accordion - The People's Instrument W.S.A. by Len Wallace

There is a spectre haunting the music world - the spectre of the accordion. Rumor has it that the accordion enjoying a resurgence of popularity as of late. It's about time. No other instrument around has been so established in the homes of working people for so many years, yet no other instrument has been the butt of so many disparaging remarks.

Tell someone you play the accordion and they immediately conjure up visions of Lawrence Welk, polka bands or a slick-haired accordionist grimacing and gyrating to the tune of "Lady of Spain". That's what North American "pop" (as opposed to "popular") music has conditioned us to accept in the past twenty years.

The accordion has a forgotten history of being a popular instrument of working people. It was invented in 1822 by Friedrich Buschmann of Berlin. He called it the "Handoline" (hand aeoline). Seven years later, the Viennese, Cyril Demian improved it and called it the "Akkordion". The variant is the concertina devised by Charles Wheatstone of London in 1829. In 1852, the application of a piano-type keyboard to the accordion was patented in Paris and became known as the "accordion-piano" or piano accordion.

Its use quickly spread across Europe. From the Urals of Russia through eastern and Central Europe, the Mediterranean countries, to Britain, Scotland, and Ireland, it would be hard to name one country in which the accordion did not play a significant role in its music tradition. The instrument has even been characterized in literature as downright heroic:

That evening Paul played unusually well, and when to everybody's amazement, lanky Pankratov started, dancing, Paul forgot himself, and the accordion obtained new strength and burst into a music of fire. The instrument spoke of past days, of fiery years and than of the comradeship of today, of their struggle and joy they were living through."

— *Making of a Hero*, 1929, by Nicholas Ostrovski

It was truly the peoples' instrument. It was earthy, loud and took skill to play well. John Berger's characterization of the instrument indicated these qualities:

"Perhaps they are right, those who pretend there are hearts in heaven. Maybe flutes and violins too. But I'm sure there are no accordions, just as I'm sure there's no green cow shit that smells of wild garlic. The accordion was made for life on this earth, the left hand marking the bass and the heart-beats, the arms and shoulders labouring to sake breath, and the right hand lingering for hopes! -"

— *The Accordion player*, *Granta*, New York, 1986.

From its European home it spread to a number of Arabic countries, and is used today by striking black workers of South Africa and in the folk music of Central and South America.

It was brought to North America by working people. Compact, light and versatile, one person could play melody, chords, bass and punch out a rhythm. Also, it was still affordable to working men and women. It was the "poor man's

piano" in contrast to the instruments of the well-to-do.

Look at some old photographs from unionizing efforts and of workers banding together and invariably you will find someone playing the accordion. Perhaps you can recall the well-known photo from 1940 of Agnes "Sis" Cunningham playing her accordion for the UCAPA workers, or the famous photo of an older black gent in uniform playing the accordion during the funeral procession for FDR. Or how about the unforgettable final scene from the movie "It's a Wonderful Life" after the ordinary townspeople came to the aid of hero Jimmy Stewart to save him from the clutches of the greedy, evil banker. What instrument was being played while everyone sang Auld Lang Syne? It wasn't a guitar.

The "disappearance" of the accordion from the general music scene may have a lot to do with the issues of both social class and ethnicity. The commercial pop music boom emphasized non-ethnic and non-class values and, in North America at least, social class is linked in many ways to ethnicity. If you were growing up in an Eastern European, working class family you had a greater chance of playing an accordion than if you were from an upper middle income family. If you grew up striving to be upwardly mobile, it meant that you ditched your accordion and picked up something else to play. Being working class and ethnic was not considered "hip". And if "hip" is defined by those above you (whether it be music, fashion, etc.), then being "unhip" meant being a failure.

The resurgence of Celtic, Quebecois folk music in the seventies, the burgeoning recognition of zydeco, tex-mex, klezmer and cajun music has forced many people to reconsider its unique qualities. In the communities that enjoyed such music, the accordion needed little revival since it never disappeared. Links of these forms to contemporary rock has necessarily highlighted its use. Its unique sounds have thus come through in the works of, among others, Ry Cooder, John Cougar Mellencamp, Bruce Springsteen, the Hooters, The Pogues, Los Lobos.

So the next time you think of "peoples' music", forget the guitar. Remember, you can't play the Third Movement of Tchaikovsky's concerto Opus 35 for violin and orchestra on a guitar. You can on the squeezebox. And believe me, you've never heard "Union Maid" till you've heard it on the "Stomach Steinway." Accordion players of the world, unite!

*Len Wallace is a musician/singer/political activist who has been increasingly performing music about working people and issues for social justice. His first recording, just released on cassette, is called **Open The Doors**. It is a call to open the doors of the shutdown and runaway plants, and about opening the doors to new ideas and new types of music.*

*Look for Len's song **They've Gone and Closed the Doors**, in our next issue.*

Ken Wallace is the very best accordian player I have ever heard. His rendition of Russian folk tunes and Scottish dances are incredible. -S.C.

'I Give. I Don't Ask Why They Need the Money'

To the Editor:

In "Pass New York Panhandlers By" (Op-Ed, July 30), Douglas Platt sheds little light on why people panhandle and what those of us with extra money in our pockets can do to help.

Mr. Platt says that giving money to panhandlers discourages them from seeking social services. Many panhandlers already have sought these services, only to find them inadequate or unavailable. The Human Resources

Administration routinely closes public assistance cases because the recipient lacks an address. Those who are on public assistance are still living below the poverty level. When New York City fails to provide recipients with a subsistence income or cuts that income off altogether, the choice is often beg or starve.

The other mistake Mr. Platt makes is judging all panhandlers based on a few. Some panhandlers need only a

dollar to get to a soup kitchen. Others need money to pay for a room, which costs more than the \$215 monthly a welfare grant will cover. Some need food money after the Social Security check runs out. Some will buy alcohol or drugs. What they have in common is that they need help, and they are literally reaching out to us.

If you are worried about how the money will be spent, give a sandwich. If it's cold out, give a blanket. Offer a cup of coffee. If you are not comfortable making that kind of contact, volunteer. Religious and charitable organizations in all five boroughs need volunteers to help provide services to the homeless and poor. How we help is a choice each of us makes.

Whenever I pass a panhandler, I give. I don't ask why they need the money or how they will spend it; obviously, they need it. There is not enough housing or jobs, nor is there an adequate social service system to help those in need. Until such things exist, I cannot pass an outstretched hand and assume that someone else will help.

ED ABRAHAMS
New York, Aug. 2, 1988

The writer is New York director of the Coalition for the Homeless.

NEW YORK TIMES, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 1988

I Don't Want Your Handouts, Mister

Tune: "I Don't Want Your Millions, Mister"
Words: G. Friesen c 1988

CHORUS: I don't want your handouts, Mister
I don't want your chicken feet
If I can't have your precious whiskey
Give me my pint of Sneaky Pete

I don't like your clinics, Mister
I don't like your nosey shrinks
Don't make me take your pills and powders
Oh, give me back my right to think!

I don't like your welfare hotels
I don't want your shelter cots
I'd rather curl up in some back alley
My body sheltered in cardboard box

I am living in a rich nation
Where a man can be a billionaire
But me I sleep in a subway station
Ain't got a dollar for my subway fare

Don't put me in your sick-ward, Mister
Do not chain me to a iron bed
All I want is just to live decent
If yuh can't do that, yuh might was well be dead.

Koch

In a step that harks back to the Great Depression of the 1930's, Mayor Koch said yesterday that the city was planning a publicity campaign to urge the public to contribute to established charities rather than to street beggars.

The move comes as the number of beggars on the streets of the city has risen sharply, without any obvious explanation, leading to varying degrees of anger, fear, confusion and astonishment among both residents and visitors to the city.

"Many people who panhandle just don't want to work for a living," Mr. Koch said yesterday at a City Hall news conference.

NEW YORK TIMES - 8/11/88

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR - 2/29/88

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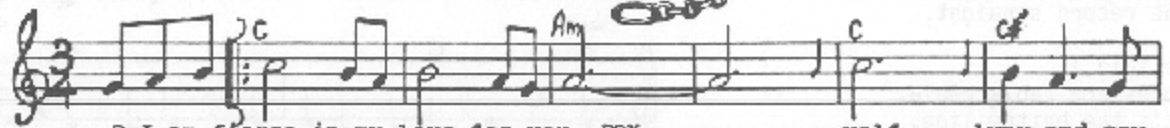
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FILE PHOTO/MAL WENSCHEL - AP/WIDE

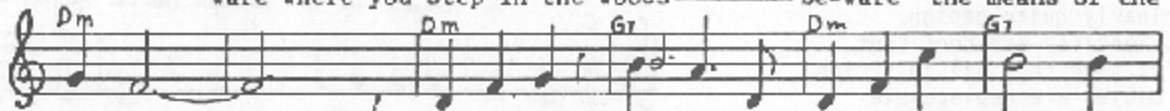
FOX



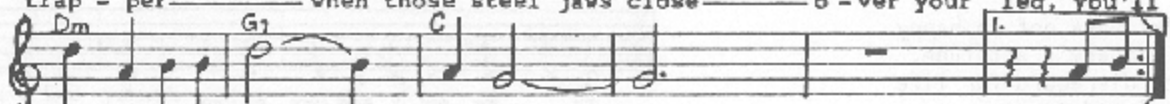
© 1987 Sue Stater

flowing $\text{♩} = 72$ 

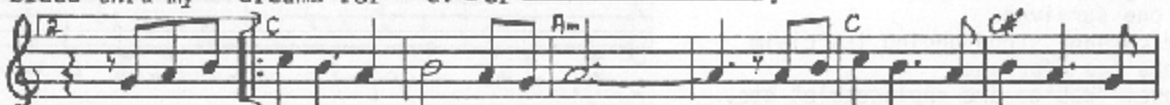
O I am fierce in my love for you, FOX — wolf — lynx and coy-
ware where you step in the woods — be-ware the means of the



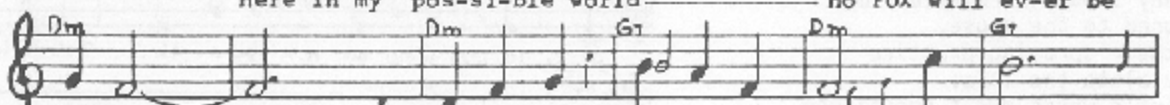
o - te — bob-cat and beav-er, o - pos-sum, rac-coon, you
trap - per — when those steel jaws close — o-ver your leg, you'll



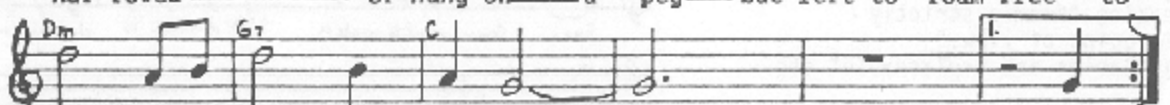
lift me with your wi - ld beau-ty — 1.
bleed thru my dreams for ev - er — 2. Then be-



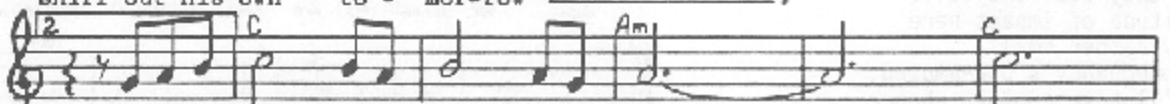
3. So I im - ag-ine a pos-si-ble world — where no wo-man wd ev - er con-
here in my pos-si-ble world — no FOX will ev-er be



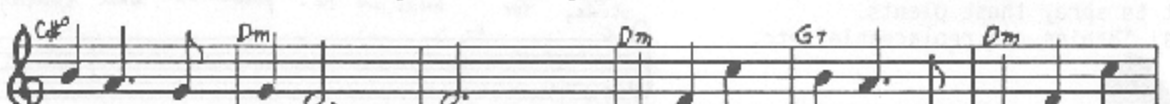
sid-er — wrap-ping her van-i - ty up — in skins
har-rowed — or hung on — a peg — but left to roam free to



wrenched from a fel - low crea-ture — 4. And
sniff out his own to - mor-row —



5. O I am fierce in my love for you, FOX — wolf,



lynx and coy - o - te — bob-cat and beav-er, o - pos-sum, rac-



coon, you lift the world — with your wild beau-ty —



Words & Music © Mark Levy 1986

A company up in Washington state
was spraying 2, 4-D.
Their program has a snag, it seems,
when the community
began to have some problems
when they tried to procreate.
So the company sent a chemist there
to set the record straight.

(She said,)
"Babies are replaceable,"
that's the bottom line.
Compared to weeds a birth defect
is clearly quite benign.
We scientists are confident
you'll take this all in stride,
for babies are replaceable
when spraying herbicide.

These folks were not so happy
with the company's attitude.
Such utter disregard for life
is criminal and crude.
A dozen pregnancies this year
but only one survived.
Still the company stood behind its claim
that no one was deprived.

(Cause) "Babies are replaceable" etc.

The company's public relations man
was summoned to the cause.
He said their spraying practice
did not violate the laws.
Our chemist's words don't constitute
a legal ground to sue--
she's speaking "from a strictly
scientific point of view."

(Oh) "Babies are replaceable" etc.

Now women can have children
any time they feel the call.
The magnitude of impact here
is really rather small.
If your pregnancy's pre-empted,
why, you'll have another chance,
but plan around our schedule, please;
we've got to spray those plants.

(Yes) "Babies are replaceable" etc.

Babies Are Replaceable

Key of C
Moderately

Words & Music © Mark Levy 1986

Verse 1
A company up in Washington state was spraying 2, 4-D.
Their program hit a snag, it seems, when the community
began to have some problems when they tried to procreate.
So the company sent a chemist there to set the record
straight. (She said) "Babies are re- place a- ble," That's the bot- tom
line. Com- pared to weeds, a birth de- fect is clearly quite be-
nign. We sci- ent- ists are con- fi- dent you'll take this all in
stride, for babies are re- place- ble when spraying herbi-
cide. [Chorus] These



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Spray 2,4-D And See

Babies are replaceable"—that's the word from a Weyerhaeuser forest products chemist in answer to charges that the company's herbicide spray program causes pregnant women to miscarry.

Dr. Illo Gauditz made the statement while meeting in Ashford, Washington, with members of the local Succotash Alliance. The Mt. Rainier-vicinity group says that in the past year, out of 12 pregnancies in Ashford, there were nine miscarriages, one child was stillborn and one infant died shortly after it was born with a rare heart defect.

During the past year, Weyerhaeuser sprayed a large area just outside Ashford approximately 15 times with the herbicide 2,4-D. That chemical is currently suspected by the Environmental Protection Agency of being linked to various health problems.

Gauditz's statement was amplified by Weyerhaeuser community relations manager Karl Burch, who explained that it "was spoken from a strictly scientific point of view, purely biological. In the animal kingdom, including humans, if a woman loses a child through miscarriage, or even when it's older through an accident, the woman can have another one. That's really all she [Gauditz] meant."

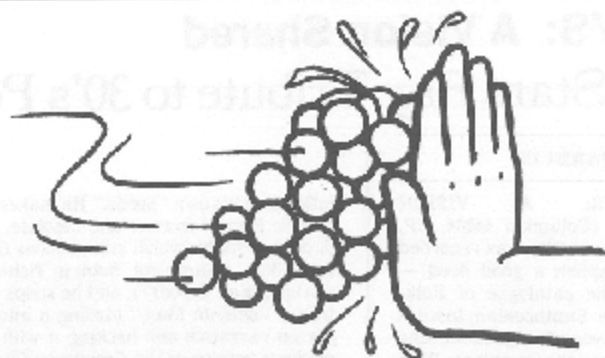
Gauditz and Burch also suggested to the group that women plan their pregnancies around the spray schedule.

The Alliance labeled both statements "unbelievable." □

MOTHER JONES
FEB./MARCH 1981



STOP OVERDEVELOPMENT



STOP THE GRAPES THEY HAVE POISON.

Consumers all over America are unknowingly buying grapes laced with deadly pesticides. Many of these poisons don't wash off and leave a health-threatening residue. The farm workers who pick these grapes are in even greater danger.

Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers are working to remedy this situation and need your support. With consumers refusing to buy California table grapes the United Farm Workers can pressure growers to come to the bargaining table. The UFW's demands include regular testing of grapes; banning of the five most deadly pesticides; and free and fair elections for farm workers.

Join the United Farm Workers in boycotting California table grapes—the life you save could be your own!

UNITED FARM WORKERS c/o DC 1707

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Nobody Needs a Nuke

a.k.a. Everyone Needs a Hug and a Kiss

1. Everyone needs a job.
Everyone needs some food.
Everyone needs a hug and a kiss.
Nobody needs a nuke.

Nobody needs a nuke (uh uh).
No one Nobody needs a nuke (un un).
Everyone needs a hug and a kiss.
Nobody needs a nuke.
2. Everyone needs the rain.
Everyone needs the sun.
Everyone needs a hug and a kiss.
Nobody needs the bomb.

Nobody needs the bomb (uh uh).
Nobody needs the bomb (un un).
Everyone needs a hug and a kiss.
Nobody needs the bomb.
3. Everyone needs a roof.
Everyone needs a floor.
Everyone needs a hug and a kiss.
No one needs nuclear war.

No one needs nuclear war (uh uh).
No one needs nuclear war (un un).
Everyone needs a hug and a kiss.
No one needs nuclear war.

words by Carole Rose Livingston © 1986
Tune: Here We Go Loop-de-loo

4. Everyone needs the ground, the earth.
Everyone needs a flower.
Everyone needs a hug and a kiss.
No one needs nuclear power.

No one needs nuclear power (uh uh).
No one needs nuclear power (uh uh).
Everyone needs a hug and a kiss.
No one needs nuclear power.
5. Everyone needs some love.
Everyone needs some friends.
Everyone needs a hug and a kiss.
And a song about peace without end.

A song about peace without end
A song about peace without end
Everyone needs a hug and a kiss.
And a song about peace without end

(1st ending)

So
We'll sing it all over again.

(2nd ending)

And
That's how the so--ong ends.

FOLKWAYS: A Vision Shared

80's Pop Stars Pay Tribute to 30's Populists

Reprinted from
NEW YORK TIMES
8/21/88

By JON PARELES

FOLKWAYS: A VISION Shared" (Columbia 44034, LP, cassette and CD) was recorded to accomplish a good deed — buying the catalogue of Folkways Records for the Smithsonian Institution. The album also gives a few good reasons why Folkways deserves the attention. With Bruce Springsteen, U2, Bob Dylan, John Cougar Mellencamp, Willie Nelson, Little Richard, Brian Wilson and five others performing 14 songs by Woody Guthrie and Leadbelly (Leadbelly) Ledbetter, it should remind a few million fans just how much rock owes a pair of itinerant, ornery, left-leaning songwriters who were discovered in the 1930's and have stayed current ever since. Instead of the feel-good sentimentality of typical pop benefit records, "A Vision Shared" has at least a few moments of populist anger; its songs won't be bullied.

A video documentary connected to the album is scheduled for Sept. 17 on the Showtime cable network, with an expanded home-video version to be released by CBS Music Video Enterprises in October. It includes live versions of the songs rather than the album's studio recordings, and will also generate donations for the Smithsonian.

The Smithsonian, which intends to make new Folkways recordings and to keep old ones in print, got a bargain. For \$800,000, to be raised by the performers' donating their royalties (yielding \$1.38 per album, \$1.23 per cassette and \$1.03 per CD, according to Joel Cherry, the attorney for the Smithsonian), the institution will own not only original Leadbelly and Guthrie recordings, but a vast sonic archive.

Moses Asch, Folkways' founder, was a documentarian, collector and pack rat of sounds, unwilling to let any interesting noise get away. Folkways released more than 2,000 albums of American folk music, blues and jazz; a huge selection of world music; electronic music, radio broadcasts, poetry readings and just plain sounds, from tree frogs to junkyards. By example and by design, Folkways showed that ordinary people could make great, lasting music — music that the label preserved and circulated. The same democratic impulse lives on in some of the best rock, even in the professionalized 1980's.

It's a little paradoxical to depend on stars to finance Folkways, but most of them live up to the commission. "A Vision Shared" is by no means an archival album; the songs are often radically recast and edited. (The originals will be reissued on a companion album, "Folkways: The Original Vision," Smithsonian/Folkways SF 40001.) Yet Guthrie and Leadbelly still come through, stubborn as ever — Guthrie as an earthy moralist who saw honest workers pitted against high-class hypocrites, and Leadbelly as a guardian of traditional songs and a dry-eyed social observer.

By and large, the performers chose songs on the same topics they'd write about themselves. Mr. Springsteen remade Guthrie's "Vigilante Man" and "I Ain't Got No Home," two bleak songs about displaced workers that probably

influenced his own "Seeds." He makes "I Ain't Got No Home" somber and desolate, a ballad of pure despair (which still includes Guthrie's reminder: "Gambling man is rich/and the working man is poor"), and he strips rhetoric from "Vigilante Man," turning it into a first-person narrative and backing it with a more ominous version of the Creedence Clearwater twang he brought to "Seeds."

Mr. Mellencamp shows a little more humor in Guthrie's "Do Re Mi," about Dust Bowl refugees getting turned back at the California border; he cackles through the lyrics as a fiddle saws and an accordion chortles behind him. U2, a band of born-again Christians, revs up and revamps Guthrie's "Jesus Christ," a precursor of liberation theology; the band drops the original's narrative about Judas's betrayal, but keeps its lessons ("If Jesus was to preach what he preached in Galilee/They would lay Jesus Christ in his grave"), and adds a sing-along chorus of "Hallelujah!"

Mr. Nelson chose Guthrie's "Philadelphia Lawyer," a cowboy ballad with overtones of class warfare. While his band waltzes as if it were playing "Streets of Laredo," Mr. Nelson slyly relishes the last verse, in which the slick Easterner gets his just desserts.

Little Richard hoots and hollers through Leadbelly's "Rock Island Line," backed by steaming gospel-rock from the band Fishbone — true to the old train's momentum. And in the album's oddest selection, Brian Wilson, the former Beach Boys leader and one of rock's most celebrated recluses, sings Leadbelly's "Goodnight Irene"; its toiling

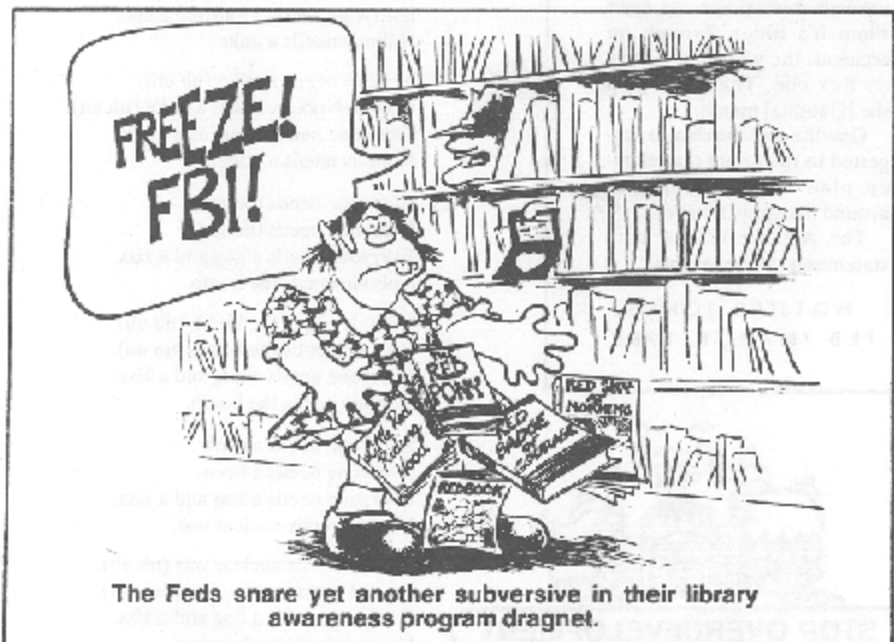
backup and Beach Boys-style harmonies only deepen its sense of suicidal isolation.

The album's other Leadbelly songs are gems. Sweet Honey in the Rock, a five-woman vocal group, delivers two traditionalist songs that sound like parables. "Sylvie," harmonized like a hymn, might be a dying man's last requests; "Gray Goose," treated as a call-and-response field holler for voices and percussion, commemorates the world's toughest bird. And with the ironically jaunty "The Bourgeois Blues," Taj Mahal puts ragtime piano and guitar behind a tale of housing discrimination that's barely dated.

Guthrie's folksinging cohorts also appear on "A Vision Shared." His son Arlo revives "East Texas Red," a deadpan Guthrie song about the revenge of hungry men; Bob Dylan plays a straightforward, solo "Pretty Boy Floyd," Guthrie's version of the ballad with the outlaw as Robin Hood, buying Christmas dinner "for the families on relief." Pete Seeger leads a sing-along of "This Land Is Your Land," Guthrie's alternative national anthem, joined by Doc Watson, the Piedmont blues duo John Cephas and Phil Wiggins, Sweet Honey in the Rock and a choir of schoolchildren. And Emmylou Harris turns up with a sweet-voiced, rather sanctimonious version of "Hobo's Lullaby."

The album should have made room for Woody Guthrie and Leadbelly themselves; their voices deserve to be heard, too. But for the most part, "A Vision Shared" matches its good intentions to good music. As always, the underdogs have the best songs. □

Chan Lowe
Fort Lauderdale News & Sun-Sentinel



Celebrate Paul Robeson

by Marti Roger

On April 9, 1988, Paul Robeson's 90th birthday was celebrated in Philadelphia, with a scripted concert produced by *Swords Into Plowshares*. Paul Robeson was a "superstar" of the 1920's, 30's and 40's, literally star of stage and screen, and a scholar and athlete as well. He was also an activist for civil and human rights, organized labor, and peace. As a result of these activities, he was not only attacked and persecuted during the McCarthy era, he was also virtually written out of American history altogether.

The McCarthyites exerted pressure on concert hall owners and promoters, forcing them to cancel his performances, and eventually into a total public boycott of his concerts and records. Only labor organizations, colleges, churches, and similar groups struggled to present concerts by Paul Robeson. The government even went so far as to revoke his passport, depriving him of the freedom to perform in the countries of the world that still honored and revered him.

Although in the late 50's and early 60's, his career was revived following the return of his passport (forced by public outcry and legal battles) there was not enough time for this country to recover from the damage done before illness overtook him, and deprived him of the vigor necessary to continue performing. Unwilling to do anything less than his best, he retired, first to New York City, then to Philadelphia, where he enjoyed a restful and pleasant private life -- not the impoverished and lonely life misleadingly rumored by the people who still sought to defile his name and to undermine his message of pride of heritage combined with friendship among all people of all nations.

Swords Into Plowshares gave their second birthday party/tribute concert in two years for "Big Paul". The concert/parties were held to celebrate for ourselves and those who knew and loved him, to spread his messages to this city and beyond, and to help repair the history that is missing his story.

The production team of Joyce Brown, Executive Director of *Swords Into Plowshares*, Larry Rubin, and myself, Marti Rogers, began planning this year's event right after last year's. Our program then was a documentary based on Susan Robeson's biography of her grandfather, *The Whole World in His Hands*. This year, we emphasized more of his activism and philosophy. After many "months of research, extensive conversations with performers and team meetings, and building upon the 1987 tribute, Larry developed a script for a simulated Paul Robeson concert intermingled with narration about his life, and quotations from Robeson's many writings and speeches. After a medley of tunes and *Old Man River*, the program opened with a dramatization of his interrogation before the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC). The concert of the diverse music usually sung by Robeson, from spirituals to popular songs to folk songs to Dvorak; was interspersed with contemporary civil rights and labor songs, and illustrated by slides of Paul Robeson and relevant scenes.



John Anthony portrayed Paul Robeson, singing Paul's songs and speaking his words. Pete Seeger narrated and sang. Earl Robinson sang, told stories about "Big Paul", and accompanied many of the songs. Luci Murphy alternated parts of the narration with Pete and sang with David Sawyer, Judy Gorman, and Chris Owens as "themselves" and as "Paul's chorus". The entire program was sign interpreted for the hearing impaired by Susan Leviton.

Luci, David, Judy and Chris all sang with beauty and inspiration. Earl was mesmerizing; and Pete Seeger was Pete Seeger, great as usual. John Anthony actually seemed to be Paul Robeson on the stage, a phenomenal accomplishment.

Highlights of the night were the personal touches: memories of Paul and the Peekskill Concert related by Pete, followed by *Hold the Line*, Earl Robinson's recollection of traveling on Paul's Hawaiian tour as his accompanist, and singing his own songs, *The House I Live In*, and *Joe Hill*. Hearing Earl perform *Joe Hill* is hearing the ultimate *Joe Hill*. The audience's rising to sing *Lil' Every Voice and Sing with Paul/John*, and John's teaching the audience to sing an African chant, then stepping out of character to say to Pete, "You really taught these people well -- they'll sing along with anything!" were memorable moments.

Earl directed the big production number of the evening, *Ballad for Americans*, as he had done in 1939 with Paul himself. He also accompanied and sang with John and the chorus. They received a standing ovation, and many in the audience agreed that it sounded just like the People's Chorus record with Paul!

A reprise of *Jacob's Ladder* with Pete on the 12-string guitar, the chorus, the audience, and progressively joined on stage by John, and the production team provided the finale. The memory of looking out on the audience, our hands joined on the stage, and theirs in the auditorium, all singing Paul's favorite song, sends chills through me still.

Happy BIRTHDAY PAUL! May your memory and your message live forever!



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