

Broadside # 57

THE NATIONAL TOPICAL SONG MAGAZINE

APRIL 10, 1965

PRICE -- 50 ¢

I Don't Know Why

Copyright 1965
By SNCC

I don't know why — I have to cry sometimes, I don't know why — I have to
cry sometimes, Well it would be a perfect day But there's trouble all in my way;—
I don't know why but I'll know bye an' bye, Bye an' bye.

The musical score is written on three staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. It features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, and a bass line with eighth notes. There are three-beat triplets marked with a '3' above the notes. The lyrics are written below the notes. The second staff continues the melody and bass line. The third staff concludes the piece with a double bar line.

2. "I don't know why I have to bow so low, etc..."
3. "... to moan sometimes, etc..."
4. "... to march so long, etc..."
5. "... to fight so hard, etc..."
6. "... to go to jail, etc..."
7. "... have to die sometimes, etc..."

(Note: Often the "I" becomes "we". This is another old hymn made into a freedom song. Here it is as sung by Cordell Reagon & Bill Harris.)

In This Issue: FREEDOM SONGS FROM THE MONTGOMERY MARCH. Also, Songs By: PHIL OCHS, LEN CHANDLER, JULIUS LESTER, CARL WATANABE, MALVINA REYNOLDS.

ARTICLES

Pete Seeger on Selma March

Woody Guthrie the Man



Illustration from Josh Dunson's new book "Freedom In The Air — Song Movements of the 60's" to be published May 25, 1965.

SOME SONGS OF THE SELMA MARCHERS

By PETER SEEGER

Montgomery, Alabama
Wednesday, March 24, 1965

Dear Broadside -- Herewith I send you a few songs heard during the past day and a half, sung by a very wonderful group of people. Yesterday their numbers were limited to 300. Today they grew each hour till by mid-afternoon they were well over 5,000. Len Chandler can send you a lot more songs. He was on the march for the full 5 days. Guy Carawan was also there, and a fine young guitar picker and singer from Chicago whose name I forgot to write down. All of us wish we'd had tape recorders -- the young singers and songwriters of Selma were creating one great song after another, right before our eyes. One woman saw me trying to notate a melody, and said with a smile "Don't you know you can't write down freedom songs?" -- which has been said by everyone who ever tried to capture Negro folk music with European music notation. All I can do is repeat what my father once told me: "A folksong in a book is like a photograph of a bird in flight."

One of the most popular new songs uses a melody, I'm told, similar to a rock-and-roll song called "Kidnapped". Since I've not heard the record, I can't tell you how much it's been changed. The refrain "Dadat, dadat, dat" may be a vocalization of notes once played by instruments. In any case, though the syncopation is difficult, anyone can join in on the refrain. It's catchy. You won't be able to get it out of your head. And the first line of the chorus I think is truly great, and triumphant.

Words & Music by
young people of
Selma, Alabama

OH, WALLACE! © 1965 by SNCC

CHORUS ^{Dm}

Oh, Wal-lace! You never can jail us all! Oh,
Wal-lace! Seg-re-ga-tion is bound to fall, dada-da da-dat, Dada dada dada-
dat, dada da-da-dat 1. I read in the papers (dada dada-dat) just the oth-er
day (dada dada-dat) That the free-dom fight-ers (dada dada-dat) were on their
way (dada dada-dat) Oh, (into chorus)

Chorus: Oh, Wallace! You never can jail us all --- !
Oh, Wallace! Segregation is bound to fall
Dadat, dadat, dat. Dada dada dada dat
Dadat, dadat, dat!

1. I read in the paper (dadat dadat dat)
Just the other day (" " ")
That the freedom fighters (" " ")
Are on their way (" " ")

2. They're coming by bus (dadat dadat dat)
And airplane too (" " ")
They'll even walk (" " ")
If you ask them to (" " ")

When I asked people "What are the words to "Oh, Wallace!" they were perplexed. "There are no words," I was told. I found out my error was to ask for "the" words. I finally asked for "some" words, and found that the above three verses were the most common. But each singer had several favorite others, and had heard dozens more. Few of them are high class poetry, but tune and rhythms are so catchy, and the chorus is so great, that it doesn't matter. Here are a few of the other verses I was able to write down:

3. I don't want no mess (" " ")
I don't want no jive (" " ")
And I want my freedom (" " ")
In 'sixty-five (" " ")

4. Tell Al Lingo
And Jim Clark too
We want our freedom
And want it now.

5. The ocean is deep
The river is wide
I'll find my freedom
On the other side.

6. Don't worry about
Going to jail
Cause Martin King
Will go your bail

7. He'll get you out
Right on time
Put you back
On the picket line.

If the song is going well it can go on for 10 or 20 more verses, depending on how many can be remembered or improvised. If it only lasts for 3 or 4 verses, that means the spirit isn't moving the singers. Which reminds me of another song which, I'm told, also comes from Selma:

WE'RE GONNA MARCH WHEN THE SPIRIT SAY "MARCH"

©1965 by SNCC

Handwritten musical notation for the song "We're Gonna March When the Spirit Say March". The music is written on three staves in 4/4 time. The first staff starts with a treble clef and a common time signature 'C'. The lyrics are: "We're gon-na march when the spi-rit say march, We're gon-na". The second staff continues: "march when the spi-rit say march, And if the spi-rit say march, why then you". The third staff concludes: "march with the spi-rit. Gon-na march when the spi-rit say march." Chords are indicated above the notes: 'C' above the first staff, 'C7' above the second staff, and 'F' above the third staff.

Other verses: (2) "You got to move, etc", (3) "You got to sing, etc" , (4) "You got to pray, etc."

Again, the songleader can repeat and ad lib verses at will. When I say "the songleader" I am, of course, not speaking about any official person. In the march any person who felt like singing could start off a song, and it could continue as long as anyone within earshot wanted to keep it going. Toshi and I were fortunate to have for several hours a group of teenage girls walking in the row behind us. They had good voices and "h'isted" one song after another (I use the old folk term comparing starting a song to hoisting a sail or a flag, to see if the wind catches it). This group of girls helped me get down on paper most of the songs I send you today. Though they sang many others I failed to write down. They also would occasionally break into a standard tune which they might have sung in high school, such as "America The Beautiful", or the theme song from the movie "Exodus".

For the convenience of you guitarists I have indicated chords and harmony, but you must realize that the accompaniment for these songs (if any) was handclapping on the 2nd and 4th beats of the measure. If you do accompany the songs remember one of the characteristics of so much Afro-American folk music: You can sing in minor and play in major. The next song is typical. Sung alone, it sounds in the key of E minor. But I guarantee you, better not accompany it in E minor. Play E major and it will come out just right.

I LOVE EVERYBODY

©1965 by SNCC

Handwritten musical notation for the song "I Love Everybody". The music is written on four staves in 4/4 time. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The first staff starts with a treble clef and a common time signature 'C'. The lyrics are: "I love ev'-ry bo- dy in my heart, I love ev'-ry bo-". The second staff continues: "dy in my heart. I love ev'-ry bo-". The third staff concludes: "dy, I love ev'-ry bo- dy. I love ev'-ry bo-". The fourth staff ends with: "dy in my heart." Chords are indicated above the notes: 'E' above the first staff, and 'B7' and 'E' above the fourth staff.

Other verses: (2) "You can't make me doubt it in my heart, etc", (3) "I love Governor Wallace in my heart, etc."

This is another song obviously easy to add verses to. The 1st and 2nd verses return from time to time almost as a refrain.

Many of the freedom songs which have become well-known in the last five years were sung on the march. I especially heard "Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around", "Which Side Are You On", "Hold On", "Woke Up This Morning", and of course "We Shall Overcome". Sometimes the local version of the tune was slightly different from the way I had known it. For example "We Shall Not Be Moved" was usually sung with the below melody. The verse given here was one of the most popular, along with the usual "Black and white together, etc."

WE SHALL NOT BE MOVED

© 1965 by SNCC

Se-gre-ga-tion is our en-e-my, it must be re-moved. Se-gre-ga-tion is our en-e-my, it must be re-moved. Just like the can of gar-bage in the al-ley-oh, it must be re-moved.

Here's one I'd not heard before, but juvenile as it may look on paper it was a welcome relief, and gave non-singers a chance to participate, as well as some rest for the throats of those who were hoarse. I trust you all know the tune.

(Tune: She'll Be Coming Around The Mountain)

1. If you want to get your freedom
clap your hands (clap-clap-clap)
If you want to get your freedom
clap your hands (clap-clap-clap)
If you want to get your freedom
if you want to get your freedom
If you want to get your freedom
clap your hands (clap-clap-clap).
2. If you want to get your freedom
stamp your feet (stamp-stamp-stamp, etc)
3. If you want to get your freedom
jump and shout (everyone jumps in air, etc)
4. (Repeat and improvise at will -- this same thing could be said for almost every song).

Altogether, any folklorist would have found the day a fascinating experience in living folk music. I've read arguments about how folksongs of the past must have been created. For me, there's no argument any more. One talented person may start a song off (using traditional elements) and others add to his creation and change it. I'm positive in my mind that this is how "the Old Chizzum Trail" and "Blow the Man Down" were made up.

Maybe some of the chants should be given as well. The most common one (which is not new at Selma) is a short crisp one. Some one person will holler out, "What do we want?" -- and all within earshot shout back, "FREEDOM!" "When do we want it?" "NOW!" "Who do we want it for?" "ALL OF US!" Sometimes if the leader feels the first response is not loud enough he repeats the first question 2 or 3 times, before going on to the 2nd and 3rd questions.

The 300 marchers were mostly younger people, but I saw a woman of 60 or so with a sign tied across a small cheap suitcase that read: "If you don't vote, don't squawk -- REGISTER!" Probably two-thirds of the 300 were Selma Negroes, and the other third were Negro and white from other parts of Alabama and from all over the USA, including Hawaii. About 10%, it seemed to me, were clergy. I've never been surrounded by such an ecumenical group: Catholic priests, Jewish rabbis, and ministers from a dozen Protestant denominations. Two young men had beautiful flowing beards, like John the Baptist, and were continually photographed by that section of the southern press which wants to show that all the out-of-state participants were "communists and beatniks".

Next month I hope Broadside can carry some more of the songs which came out of Selma. There's another sassy, syncopated one Len Chandler told me about.

"Last night and the night before,
(Jump back, Wallace, jump back!)
Twenty-five troopers at my door,
(Jump back, Wallace, jump back!)
I got up and let 'em in....

And I didn't get down more. There's also a lyrical song, "Can't You Hear Them Freedom Bells Tolling?" by young Fred Moss of Selma. (One case where we know the author).

Sincerely,
Pete Seeger

Days of Decision

Words and Music by PHIL OCHS
copyright 1965 by M. Witmark
& Sons

Oh the shadows of doubt are in man-y a mind
Lookin' for an answer they're never gon- na find
But they'd better de- cide 'cause they're
run-nin' out of time, For these are the
days of de- ci-sion. ci-sion, Yes,

Chords: Em, C, D, Bm, G, D, Am, D, G, FINE, G, D S(5), G, FINE

Oh, the games of stalling you cannot afford,
Dark is the danger that's knocking on the door,
And the far-reaching rockets
say you can't wait anymore,
For these are the days of decision.

In the face of the people who
know they're gonna win,
There's a strength that's greater
than the power of the wind,
And you can't stand around
when the ice is growing thin,
For these are the days of decision.

I've seen your heads hiding
'neath the blankets of fear,
When the paths they are plain
and the choices are clear,
But with each passing day, boys,
the cost is more dear,
For these are the days of decision.

There's many a cross that burns in the night,
And the fingers of the fire are
pointing as they bite,
Oh you can't let the smoke keep on
blinding all your sight,
For these are the days of decision.

Now the mobs of anger are roamin' the street,
From the rooftops they are aimin'
at the police on the beat,
And in city after city
you know they will repeat,
For these are the days of decision.

There's been warnin's of fire, warnin's of flood,
Now there's a warnin' of the bullet and the blood,
From the three bodies buried in the Mississippi mud,
Sayin' these are the days of decision.

Springtime of the Year

Words & Music: By JULIUS LESTER
Copyright 1965 by author

The Sunday after-noon was --
quiet and still, Three young men drove
down a - road; The sun was big and
hot and slow -- It was the springtime
of the year.

People leaving church watched
the three young men ride by
A man on his porch saw their car
Its color was blue just like the sky
It was the springtime of the year.

The afternoon heat died for the evening warmth
Of sounds that come from the swamp
The croaking of the frog
and the shrill screech owl
It was the springtime of the year.

Through the dark night
people said they couldn't see
Through the thick night
they said they couldn't hear
The whining mosquitoes were unnoticed by all
It was the springtime of the year.

The chirping of the crickets
died with the dawn
The ground wet with dew slowly dried
The sky was blue like the four o'clock flowers
It was the springtime of the year.

There's a change in the wind,
and a split in the road,
You can do what's right or
you can do what you are told,
And the prize of the victory will
belong to the bold,
Yes, these are the days of decision.

What Next?

by LEN H. CHANDLER, Jr.

The problems of the modern man are
in-finite-ly complex -- I wake up ev - 'ry
morning wond'ring what should I do next.

The musical notation is in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 6/8 time signature. It consists of three staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps. The second staff continues the melody. The third staff concludes the piece with a double bar line. Chord symbols (A, D, G, C) are placed above the notes. The lyrics are written below the notes.

So sitting up most cautiously
I stretch and shake my head
All tense for now I must decide
Which side to leave the bed.

The point to first consider
Is the side of bed most near
Awakening in the middle's
Caused me endless nights of fear.

I'm nearer to the left side
Which is farther from the door
Guess the next point to consider
Is the temperature of the floor.

The floor is surely freezing
For we never get much heat
It would surely start me sneezing
Going forth in naked feet.

But I didn't let that panic me
With a clear and level head
Recalled that I'd retired last night
From the other side of bed.

And with the key of memory
The mystery unlocks
On the other side of bed last night
You see, I'd left my socks.

My nights are full of terror now
My days are getting worse
It seems I never can decide
Which sock to put on first.

Copyright 1965, Fall River Music, Inc.
Used by Permission

BROADSIDE #57

Which Side Are You On?

Tune: Which Side Are You On by Mrs. Florence Reese. New Lyrics: © by S.N.C.C., 1964

Note: This new set of words to the Kentucky miner's song of the 1930's, was brought to Broadside by Len Chandler in the fall of '64 when he returned from a summer of activity in the Freedom Movement in Mississippi. It was sung extensively there and recently by the Selma, Alabama, marchers.

Come all you bourgeoisie black men
With all your excess fat
A few days in the county jail
Will sure get rid of that. (Spoken: Everybody now)
Which Side are you on (4 times)

Come all you northern liberals
Take a Klansman out to lunch
But when you dine, instead of wine.
You should serve non-violent punch.
(Won't you tell me now)
Which side are you on, etc.

Come all you rough tough bullies
Forget your knives and guns
Non-violence is the only way
The battle can be won. (I want to know now)
Cho.

Come all you high-toned college girls
Pronounce your final "g's"
But don't forget your grandma
She's still scrubbin on her knees. (You'd better
tell me now) Cho.

You need not join our picket line
If you can't stand the blows
But join your dimes with dollars
Or be counted with our foes. (I really want to
know now) Cho.

Come all you uncle toms,
Take that hankie from your head
Forget your fears and shed a tear
For the life of shame you've lead. (You'd better
tell me now) Cho.

I heard that Governor Wallace (Johnson)
Just up and lost his mind
And he bought a case of Man Tan
And joined the picket line. (What you talkin'
'bout) Cho.

They say the Ku Klux Klan
Just up and dyed their sheets
And now they sing "Oh, Freedom"
Everytime they meet. Cho.

Len Chandler's verse
("I don't know if you want to add this or not"
-- L.C.)

I've been walkin' so long
I've put blisters on the street
I've caught the Freedom fever
And it's settled in my feet. Cho.

Joel and Me

By CARL WATANABE

Musical notation for 'Joel and Me' in G major, 4/4 time. The melody is written on a single staff with lyrics underneath. Chords are indicated above the notes: C, E7, Dm7, F, Am, D7, G7, C, E7, Dm7, F, Am, D7, G7, C.

I wish that I was Mis-ter Sun, so I could
see where I come from and vi-sit all my
re-la-tives each and ev-ery day and
Joel would come a - long with me, be
cause I'm sure he'd want to see the
pla-ces where he start-ed from that are so
far a- way

© by author, 1964

I've got a friend from up the street,
He can walk right on his feet
And he doesn't need a grown-up to help and hold
his hand
Joel is my neighbor's name,
And Daddy says we're both the same
Even tho he walks and talks and I can hardly stand.

Daddy says we're all alike,
Some are black and some are white
I must be in between 'cause look how tan I am
Part of me's from far away,
That's what Mom and Daddy say
Gee I wonder just how much of me I really am.

Joel is the same as me,
That's what Daddy said to me
Even with his big blue eyes and pretty yellow
hair
Part of him's from 'cross the sea,
From a land called Germany
I guess together he and I have been just everywhere.

Columbus crossed the sea with me,
'Cause part of me's from Italy
But Joel was waiting on the shore 'cause he's
part Indian too
And part of me's from Hawaii,
And Joel is part from Wales you see
So we have sailed the seven seas and every ocean blue

Don't Push Me

by MALVINA REYNOLDS

Musical notation for 'Don't Push Me' in G major, 4/4 time. The melody is written on a single staff with lyrics underneath. Chords are indicated above the notes: C, Dm, G7, C, Dm, G7, C, F, C, C, C, G7, F, G, C, G.

Don't push me, I'm headed my way, Don't block
my
highway, Don't push me. Don't shove I'm
walkin
soft-ly, So get off me, Don't push me. I been in
chains, An i-ron band, — I need some space,
Some room to stand, I need my breath, I need my
bread — I need some clear sky o-ver my

Musical notation for the word 'head.' in G major, 4/4 time. Chords: C, G7.

head.

You're born to die
Like any man,
You act as though
You rule the land.
I'm born to die,
But till that day
I am moving my own way

Cho.

I'm bound around,
Too many walls,
You are the walls
That crowd me in.
I am too strong
For any walls,
I'll break right through
and live again.

Cho.

© 1964 by SCHRODER Music Company
2027 Parker street
Berkeley 4, Calif.

Mommy says we all have traces,
In far off lands or other places
So don't make fun of people's clothes or 'cause
they don't talk right
Daddy says we'd understand,
If people went to foreign lands
To them the way we talk and dress would be a
funny sight.

BRNADSIDE #57

BALLAD OF THE BRONXVILLE HOSPITAL STRIKE

(Tune: "Ballad Of The M.T.A.", also known as "The Ship That Never Returned")

Words by Henry Foner
© 1965 by Author

1. Let me tell you the story
Of a union bound for glory--
Local 1199.
Amidst abundance and bounty
Up in Westchester County,
We collided with the color line.

Did we finally win?
Yes, we certainly did win--
And we know what the future's like:
When freedom's cause will ring out,
You'll hear hospital workers sing out
The Ballad of the Bronxville strike.

2. First the Board of Directors
Said, "How can you expect us
To overcome our grief and rage?
You're brutal and you're callous,
And you're full of spite and malice--
And besides you want a living wage."

Did they have to give in?
Yes, they finally gave in--
But listen well before you shed a tear:
Their average Board member
Made more last December
Than the workers earned the whole
damned year.

3. Just when our hopes were fallin',
Two fine couples came a-callin'
And we made a tremendous find.
With the Richardsons and Turners
Operatin' on all burners,
They rekindled our faith in mankind.

Did we finally win?
Yes, we certainly did win--
We had the civil rights movement
in our ranks.
With support behind our backs an'
With a guy like Joseph Jackson--
He's worth more than all the dough
in Bronxville's banks.

4. We had what it took to save us
In two fellows named Davie--
I mean Ozzie and Leon J.
Though they're differently shaded,
Otherwise, they're aptly mated:
They're both fighting for a better day.

Did we finally win?
Yes, we certainly did win
Because the strikers' morale was fine.
Led by Nicholas and Black,
They turned the strikebreakers back
And they held fast to the picket line.

5. Then the gals from Sarah Lawrence
All expressed their abhorrence
At this medieval labor plan.
Lookin' spruced up and pretty,
They paraded through the city--
They were equal to any man.

Did we finally win?
Yes, we certainly did win--
We had both justice and femininity.
Then that bright press agent, Foner
Brought the boys up from Iona,
And they marched hand in hand for
liberty.

6. Well at last we were able
To get around the table
With the hospital hierarchy.
While the pickets did the walkin',
Phil Sipser did the talkin'
And he made the pitch with which
we all agree.

Did we finally win?
Yes, we certainly did win
When we pledged a thousand marchers,
white and black.
We made plans for assembly--
They got white-lipped and trembly,
And they took all our strikers back.

Ed. Note:

Despite police brutality in clubbing
the pickets, the strike was successful.

"The eight week strike of predominantly
Negro hospital workers was the subject of con-
siderable press and editorial coverage, and was
won largely due to the tremendous support we
received from the civil rights movement and a
Concerned Citizens Committee (of Bronxville
residents) headed by Mr. and Mrs. John
Richardson, Jr. and Mr. and Mrs. Harold M.
Turner. Bronxville, as you know, is one of
the 'last resorts'."

--- Moe Foner Executive Secretary,
Local 1199 Drug and Hospital Employees Union

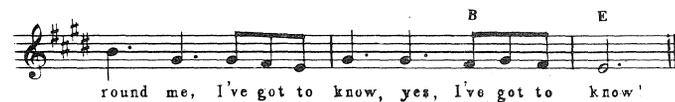
7. Now we've got our pressure steady
And the Legislature's ready
To fulfill our Bill of Rights throughout
the state.
In our trade union jargon
We'll collectively bargain
And they're goin' to negotiate.
Are we goin' to win?
Yes, we certainly will win --
We'll set the hospital workers free.
From Albany to Yonkers
We've a formula that conquers --
It's black and white unite for victory.

BROADSIDE #57

I'VE GOT TO KNOW

Words & Music by
WOODY GUTHRIE

CHORUS



VERSES



Copyright 1963 by Ludlow Music, Inc.

THE MAN WOODY GUTHRIE

By Gordon Friesen

In the late winter and early spring of 1951 Woody Guthrie paused for a little while, as it were, to look at himself and where he stood. He made an assessment of his career, reflected on what he had -- and had not -- accomplished, re-affirmed his beliefs, sought to gain renewed contact with what had always been his main source of inspiration. He did this in a series of letters written from New York to a young woman friend he had first met at Peoples' Songs, Jolly Robinson. He had developed a great admiration for her, the main reason being because she had gone on to become what he respected most: someone actively struggling for the betterment of the working man and woman. After participating in the Henry Wallace-Progressive Party campaign she had toured with a small singing and dramatic troupe for several leftwing labor unions (the Fur & Leather Workers and a large midwest local of

2. What makes your boats haul death to my people?
Nitro block busters, big cannons and guns?
Why doesn't your ship bring food and
some clothing?
I've sure got to know, folks,
I've sure got to know! (Chorus)
3. Why can't my two hands get a good pay job?
I can steelplow and plant, I can still sow!
Why did your lawbook chase me off my
good land?
I'd sure like to know, friend,
I've just got to know! (Chorus)
4. What good work did you do, I'd like to ask you,
To give you my money right out of my hands?
I built your big house here to hide from
my people;
Why do you crave to hide so,
I'd love to know! (Chorus)
5. Why can't I get work & cash a big paycheck?
Why can't I buy things in your place
and your store?
Why close my plant down and starve
all my buddies?
I'm asking you, sir,
Cause I've sure got to know! (Chorus)
6. You keep me in jail & you lock me in prison;
Your hospital's jammed & your crazyhouse full;
What made your cop kill my trade union worker?
You have to talk plain,
Cause I sure have to know! (Chorus)

(This song was written by Woody Guthrie at the time of Korea. Note how the first verses and chorus could be applicable to Vietnam today. The song is reprinted with permission from the book "Woody Guthrie Folk Songs", put out by Ludlow Music, 10 Columbus Circle, New York City.)

the United Packinghouse Workers). In these letters Woody tells much about himself, about the things that worried him, how he felt about his work already done, and his dreams of the future. He was at that time 38 years old, had been married twice and had fathered seven children but his thirst for love and more children was unquenched. The vast body of his creative work was behind him; there were only a few more short years left and although he of course had no way of knowing this he sensed that from here on time would be precious; he would have to work "for fast". His plans for the future, he believed, would come into fruition because he was at long last to be free of the financial worries which had bedevilled his whole life up to this point.

"I've gone just about as haywired in every way as any man can go;" he writes, "and have acted more the fool per hour than any other living man alive. My mainest painful trouble has always been my worries over the fact that I was not able to work at my trade and to drag in enuff greenstamp money to support my kids in the deep way every earthly man craves somehow to do..."

But now things were to be different. The Weavers, whose records were selling well, had recorded his

song SO LONG for Decca and Woody foresaw that some thousands of dollars in royalties would soon start rolling in. More importantly perhaps, doors to even wider horizons were swinging open as a result; several firms were offering Woody contracts. In fact, he visualized, if sarcastically, perhaps, more money pouring in than he could handle. "I need you to tell me what to do with all those several hundred G notes I'm fishnetting in by the hours... I am no more spiritually equipped to know what the hell to do with it all when I get it than with the weeds on the moonspots."

He knew what he was going to buy with the first checks. First of all, a new and shiny car and he anticipated the joy of picking out one. (Woody had owned cars before but found it difficult to hang onto them; he had two in quick succession around 1940, one of which was repossessed by the finance company and the other he gave away to Bob Wood, Communist Party organizer in Oklahoma). But principally his newfound economic security was to be used for two main purposes: protect the vast amount of work he had already done and pave the way for still further creativity. Woody seemed to sense that he was at a turning point, that this might be his "last chance" and he would have to, as he notes below, "go for broke".

"I don't choose nor want to make any more sadder mistakes than I've already made around this map of ours... I'm not the great, great, great hero of the masses that many minds have dreamt me to be; but I'm sure not the rubbout deadlygone failure that many others say I have been. I am somewhere just in between all of this and these guesses, hunches and opinions. I know the full values of the gifts and talents I can make to the labor movement...but I am quick to admit and to know that I have got to play now for keeps and for fast, and to go for broke; I have to protect my works now because they are at longlast turning into things that (like any factory job) make money; and I don't choose if I can steer clear of it to chase out

on wild drunken srees and loud verbal srees and to waste away all these things I've been mudbuild-ing now for such long seasons of times and tides."

Although considered now by many to be an American genius, Woody Guthrie for the preceding several years had experienced the humiliation familiar to many a husband whose wife has of necessity become the family wage-earner. He writes how his wife Marji, because of his own utter helplessness as a provider, had been working endless overtime hours in order to bring in the \$800 a month needed to support the Guthrie household. Woody consequently had been left with the domestic chores, the housework, minding and feeding their three children, changing diapers. He writes that he was gradually turned into nothing more than a drudging "housemaid". He goes on:

"... I was absolutely so unable to work (at home) that, well, I had to walk around there and rent me some little workroom, cellars you know, to do my workings in; and each little workingroom turned out to be more of a flophouse where I stumbled and fell down amongst my songs and papers dogdrunk deaddrunk and so messed up in general that -- well, I got some few things done, I guess,

but not one-sixteenth of what I cravened to get done; so I got to feeling so much like a guilty failure that I felt worse than some kind of a raper or a killer or a raving madman... I was afraid to look any earthly human in the face, and more afraid to look them in their eyes."

But now there was to be a great change, and in this change Woody hoped to find more of the companionship with fellow human beings he so desperately needed. Among his plans was one to organize a singing group which he felt would rise high in popularity and make money for everyone involved. This group was to consist of himself, another man (he had Tom Paley and later Cisco Houston in mind), and two women performers. One of the women was to be Jolly Robinson. But it was also to be an integrated group and the other woman, Woody reiterates in his letters, must be a Negro. Furthermore, he did not want the Guthrie group to be considered an attempt to imitate the then very successful Weavers. "I just don't want our four to look like this Weaverly bunch. I want all four of us to stand up, and even lay down, a whole lot prettier than them Weavers ever did or ever can." And again, "Three boys and one girl looks too much like the Weavers to please me." His group, as he saw it, would indulge in no phoniness to please the commercializers. He writes about the material the group would sing: "... the one mainest thing about these songs (is their) sincerity and honesty, truthfulness, usefulness..." He believes, or pretends to believe, that the commercial interests in control would not object to an integrated group (this was 1951) nor demand changes in the songs. This despite the fact that his own SO LONG had to be watered down and radically changed before Decca would record it. And despite the fact that only a short time earlier, in sending Miss Robinson a copy of his book "Bound For Glory" Woody described (in a letter typed on the back of the dust jacket where it took her several weeks to find it) how similar commercial interests had butchered the manuscript he submitted:

"... it (Bound For Glory) shows you a fair-sized chunk of me way back in my kidhood days. The later and more progressive, the more political parts of me, are not in this book... I did submit all of these better and more useful and more sensible phases and episodes of my life into the same mss. and shot it along to my very same publisher, and he, like the hands of all true good capitalist publishers, upped with his biglong reddish pencil and he marked out every single word that rizup in sense and horsensense above any other word in all of this. I submitted unto his hand more than 12 hundred pages of such mss. of my own and he and his chopped them back down to what you see and read here (some little 448 or some suchly)."

The singing group Woody envisioned never did materialize, as we know. Instead, one might say, he met a Brooklyn youth now known professionally as Jack Elliot and with Jack knocked around the country for some of the short period left before illness ended his dreams.

(continued →)

Through these letters Woody emphasizes how deeply important to him was the need of actively participating in progressive struggles. And the concomitant importance of having active participants in such struggles as companions to inspire and guide him (it is recalled that Woody's original "discoverer" and a close buddy was Mike Quinn, the West Coast Communist poet and journalist who died of cancer in the forties; it was from Mike that Woody got much of his understanding of what life and poverty and union battles were all about). Woody always looked up to, admired and respected progressives -- Communists or whatever -- totally committed to battling for the ordinary guy; he always wished he could be like them. Passive supporters who stand on the sidelines and cheer were never enough for Woody. In one of these letters he rejects those who are:

"...not born and bred nor raised up to be what you call an outright labor parader, picketer, shouter, leader, nor partaker in strikes, rallies, meetings, etc., militant scenes and struggles, such as I saw, for example, up there on those golfing grounds around the town of Peekskill." (Woody was present at Peekskill, New York, when native fascists some 18 months earlier attacked a Paul Robeson concert).

"Those places are my very spark of life... and my only spark at that. When I'm not around somewhere on the edges or middleparts of such scenes then, and only then, does my head go blank, my blood run cold, and my mouth fill up with a cold kind of chokey dust."

After these two dozen or so letters in January to March of 1951, Woody wrote one more letter. That was four years later, in June of 1955. He wrote from a hospital bed in Brooklyn, a prisoner of the Huntington's Chorea that was never to release him. His handwriting was now an unsteady scrawl but his faith in the things he had come to believe in was as firm as ever:

"... my last look at you was when me and Petey Seeger walked along with you in that year's laboratory parade here in New Jerky Titty Towne... If my damd damd old chorea stuff has already knocked me down too damd dizzy in my body to pace along any more good fine laborey daye parades with alla my best best bestest union men, and my union maides, well, my heart and my mind and my spirit and my strength and my everliving love will go on stepping it on down along past by here... with alla my only people that love on this earth, my union hearted army."

WOODY GUTHRIE ON SPRING -- AND WAR

On the first day of spring in 1951 Woody Guthrie in a letter to a young friend, Jolly Robinson, wondered on the significance of the day. He noted that spring was planting time in the United States.

"Is it also planting time in China? Or where the Yankee boots wade around the bloody muds of the land of Korea? Will the springtime season melt enough ice and Korean snowscape to flood us back home where we really belong? If spring

melts and flows will bring any two armed soldiers one half an inch closer to their passion's own home, then I for one say: Let the spring fevers fly! Let all the spring feelings roll! Boggle down the wheel of war, stick the war wagons plumb up above their axles and their hubs. Bring home your spring! Bring home your weary wearies from those crazy pastures of war bones that I don't want nor crave to own one solitary inch of."

(Ed. Note: It Might As Well Be Spring -- in Vietnam)

THE STORY OF A GERMAN TOPICAL SONG

Koreans In Vietnam Words: PETER H. SAND
©1965 by author
Music adapted

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of six staves of music with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: "Ko-re-ans are marching, fighting, Ko-re-ans are dying for the Ko-re-an way of life. They car-ry guns & yel-low fe-ver, all for the glo-ry of Ko-re-a -- Par-don my question: Just for how long will this go on down in Sai-". The score includes various musical notations such as chords (E, B7, A), dynamics (mf), and repeat signs.

gon? They - gon?

"Japaner marschieren,
Japaner erfrieren,
Japaner krepieren
fur japanischen profit.
Sie tragen Helme und Gewehre
fur Japans Ruhm, fur Japan's Ehre.
Wir, neue Jugend, fragen jedoch:
wie lange noch, wie lange noch?

(translation)

Japanese are marching,
Japanese are freezing to death,
Japanese are dying like dogs
for Japanese profits.
They carry helmets and guns
for Japan's glory and honor.
Yet we, the new youth, ask:
how much longer, how much longer?

(continued ->)

"When I first heard the above song in West Berlin in 1949 it had no specific target beyond its general anti-militarism; the reference to Japanese soldiery in Manchuria stood for any soldiery in the world. The tune allegedly was a parody of a militaristic movie. The text was anonymous; it originated in the "Jungenschaft", a German folksinging group founded in the 1920's. The "Japaner Song" suddenly became popular after a meeting at Celle (West Germany) in December, 1950, when another group called "Gefahrten-schaft" changed the original wording, replacing the first three Japanese references by the word for Germans, and the following references to Japan by the word "French" (i.e., "French profits", "French glory", "French honor"). The song thus turned "topical", since these were the years when many former German Nazi soldiers served as mercenaries with the French Foreign Legion in Vietnam (I first heard the song with the new words in Berlin in 53/54 when casualties at Dien Bien Phu were not "ugly American" "advisers" but chiefly ugly German Legionnaires -- "French" casualties in Indochina included more than 5,000 German Legionnaires killed by the Vietminh). Following a wave of public protests, spurred on to some extent by the new version of the song, recruitment for the Legion by French occupation authorities on German territory was eventually stopped and outlawed.

"I wish to dedicate this 1965 version of the 'Japaner Song' to Buffy Sainte-Marie for her wonderful, passionate song against the 'Universal Soldier' (March '65 issue of SING OUT). Please consider, Buffy, that a killer for hire cannot exist unless somebody else can afford to hire him -- and does."

Peter H. Sand
West Germany

(Ed. note: It would seem that if the process outlined above were followed the words in the latest version would read "American way of life", etc.)

A FESTIVAL FOR THE FOLK

By Josh Dunson

"These songs that you have heard a while ago has been on this island for years. The young man who has spoken just a while ago, his father, that's all he knows while he is alive. And he taught all his children, or maybe it's heredity, but every one in that family can sing. That is the reason I felt that before Mr. Carawan had come here, he would help these people to develop the songs that they have, and a lot of people who never had a chance to hear them would get a chance to hear these lovely songs.

"These are the kind of songs that have caused Negroes to hold out and to hold on. If they couldn't sing these songs, they would have been dead a long time. They sing it behind the dog's bite, they sing it behind the waterhose, they sing it behind the jail. They sing it after they has been thrown in the rivers, but they still sing these songs. And they are going to keep on singing until people who do not realize the dignity of man will realize that: "I've done wrong!" These songs are going to make you think..."

Esau Jenkins spoke these words from the stage of the December 26-27 Sea Island Folk Festival at John's Island, South Carolina. The stage is one part of a community center, the Progressive Club, built with the money and labor of those in the John's Island freedom movement and voter registration drives. The songs Mr. Jenkins described thrilled tens of thousands at Newport last summer, but their significance as songs is really felt "behind the dog's bite". The "dog" could belong to the police, or it could take other forms: an employer that pays \$15 to \$25 a week for domestic labor in Charleston, or the "bite" of freezing winds penetrating thin board shacks heated solely by wood or kerosene stoves. (Since this was written one of these stoves exploded, burned down the shack, and left two mothers and sixteen children homeless. Contributions should be sent in care of Guy Carawan, Route 1, Box 154, John's Island, South Carolina).

As in many areas of the South, it is impossible to separate the people from the music, and both from the freedom movement. The songs that were sung on stage that Saturday night and regularly in the homes and at Moving Star Hall are the same songs that the singers were made to feel ashamed of for most of their lives. The mainland people, both black and white, had often called the island residents "old fashioned" and "ignorant" because of their traditions. Through the work of Esau Jenkins, the Carawans, Septima Clark of the Highlander Folk School the people of John's and neighboring sea islands have begun to realize not only the worth of their culture but also to reap great enjoyment and find much pride in it.

This realization is especially marked at the Sea Island Folk Festivals, for the audience is meaningfully composed of the Island residents and a significant number of Charlestownians. At the concerts people from the audience rise to perform the sacred songs, ring games, and work songs that were once a hidden part of their lives. Travelling hundreds of miles for the pleasure and honor of singing with them were professionals from the North like Barbara Dane and Bob Yellin. Bessie Jones and the Sea Island Singers came from Simon Island 200 miles to the South and performed their own and different island songs and games. An exciting new group of freedom singers came from Atlanta. (The new group -- Betty Mae Fikes, the outstanding singer at the Atlanta Sing For Freedom, Walter Harris, James Peacock and Cordell Reagon -- was formed in hopes that even more ground could be covered by two groups of SNCC field secretaries. Musically, their singing reflects the older church and gospel styles as opposed to the popular harmonies and jazz phrasing that characterizes Matthew Jones' group).

The family to which Esau Jenkins referred is the Blijon family, whose father, the late Joe Blijon, was one of the legendary singers of the Island. His entire family "can sing" and it is their singing that often leads the services at Moving Star Hall. One cannot talk solely about the Blijon's music -- or the music the other families have retained -- for the music does not exist independently of the people. When Bertha Smith sings "The Storm Is Passing Over" or Benjamin Blijon preaches "Noah's Ark" or Jane Blijon leads "Michael Row The Boat Ashore", each has taken the subject of the song and has grown with it through the years. The song has become as personal as Jane's favorite dress, Bertha's best hat, or Benjamin's most handsome tie.

(cont. ->)

hearing over a period of time up North on the folk-song revival scene. One might also mention the hundreds of people who signed cards protesting Pete Seeger's blacklisting from the Hootenanny show as another example of the singer and his songs motivating folk devotees to action on a social issue, minimal as this action might have been and granted that many signed more out of loyalty to Seeger than anything else. Should this late trend of music stimulating participation continue, it may well prove to be the most significant contribution the topical song revival will make to the entire American nation as a whole, as well as to the folksong scene. In any case, however, it is indicative once again of how much the times have changed in this country, and how closely all of us who are part of the folk and topical song revivals are tied to them.

San Francisco CHRONICLE, 1/22/65

Broadside--- Topical Song Bible

~~~~~ **Ralph J. Gleason**

**T**HE BIBLE OF THE TOPICAL song world, which is the truly vital part of folk music, is a mimeographed monthly newsletter and magazine from New York called Broadside.

Broadside printed a Bob Dylan song in its very first issue and ran the music and lyrics to Dylan's "Blowin' in the Wind" a year before it became popular. The big discussion sparked by Newsweek's slur that maybe Dylan hadn't written the song cut no ice with Broadside's readers. They'd had the true story from the New Jersey high school student, who had composed a totally different song with a similar title printed in Broadside long before.

★ ★ ★

**B**BROADSIDE got its name from the practice of printing songs and statements on single sheets of paper which was prevalent in England for hundreds of years. The British Museum has thousands of samples of old broadsides in its collection and the practice was common in this country too in the early years. Among those who published their writing via broadsides was Benjamin Franklin. More recently, Woody Guthrie, the folk singer and composer mimeographed his compositions himself when they were turned down by commercial publishing houses.

Guthrie's example was an inspiration in the founding of Broadside (\$5 a year; P. O. Box 193, Cathedral Station, N.Y.C.) but another person important in its genesis was Pete Seeger the singer. Seeger in 1961 made a concert tour of England and was much impressed by the crop of topical songs he heard there and wanted to encourage that kind of songwriting in the U. S. He urged a New York secretary, Agnes "Sis" Cunningham, to start Broadside and the first issue came out in 1962.

★ ★ ★

**I**T WAS a labor of love. "At least there were no profits in it," Mrs. Cunningham says. "We used \$40 of our own money mimeographed 300 copies and sent them free to a list of people we thought would be interested."

By the end of 1962 Broadside was struggling along with only 60 subscribers but has had a steady growth since then. The magazine now prints over 1200 and has an international circulation.

Mrs. Cunningham and her volunteer staff get songs, records and tapes from "all over the U.S., Canada, Australia, the British Isles, Sweden, Denmark, Japan and Italy." Among the topical folk singers and composers whose work appeared either first in Broadside or at an early stage are Tom Pazton, Phil Ochs, Peter La Farge, Eric Anderson, Len Chandler and Mark Spolettra.

Since Broadside goes out to young singers in colleges and coffee houses all over, publication of a song in its pages connects the song to the topical song underground right away and helps build an audience for it and for its composer.

★ ★ ★

**B**ACK IN 1962, Mrs. Cunningham reports, most of the songs submitted were concerned with war and peace and protests against The Bomb and fallout. By the end of 1963 they had shifted to Civil Rights and they are still mainly concerned with that subject today.

Mrs. Cunningham sees the Civil Rights movement as the catalyst in the song writing world.

"The Negro movement has done more than provide these songwriters with subjects to write about, Mrs. Cunningham says, "we feel that it and their participation in it, has influenced all their work, made their songs more honest, more direct, more sincere whether these songs are about war or peace, poverty in the city slums and Appalachian mountain valleys or Vietnam."

★ ★ ★

**A**T TIMES BROADSIDE has suggested subjects for songs in its issues but that is no longer necessary. Topical songwriting, which was all but a lost art a few years ago, has prospered to the point where dozens of songs come unsolicited in the mails to Broadside on almost any event or newstory of significance in any month.

Agnes Cunningham and her volunteers regard all this as a most happy development even if it does threaten to drown them in a sea of manuscripts. There's the joy of discovery. "Little Boxes," Sis Cunningham recalls, was printed in Broadside over a year before it was a popular hit and more than 50 of the songs Broadside has first published have been recorded and made available on the general market. And that's no small achievement.



"Please, madam, won't you subscribe to the **LITTLE SANDY REVIEW**, \$5 a year at Box 1109 Minneapolis, Minn.? Don't you know it's charming, exciting, lively, spicy, reflective, philosophic and sad?"

Ed. Note: We are glad to print the above ad free of charge for the **LITTLE SANDY REVIEW**. We owe the LSR an eternal debt of gratitude for the help its editors, Jon Pankake and Paul Nelson, gave us when Broadside had sunk to its Lowest Ebb. Our circulation had fallen from a high of 37 down to 14; we were about to throw our mimeograph machine back into the junk heap. Then the LSR kindly undertook to point out what was wrong with us. There were so many faults it required an entire issue of the LSR to deal with them; but its editors did not shrink from the task. We immediately corrected all these flaws; for example, we began to print only perfect songs. The tide turned; within ten days we had a new subscription. That was two years ago, and we have remained steadily on the Road to Glory.

Thus, by the late 1950's it had become apparent that while topical song production and performance had never completely halted by any means (as has been pointed out by others, Pete Seeger, Malvina Reynolds, Sing Out! and a few more old timers kept the flickering flames alive), the number of such songs being written and sung had nevertheless decreased considerably, both quantitatively, and in many cases, qualitatively. (The 1950's also saw the end of Woody Guthrie's productive career.)

In retrospect, it can be seen that the emphasis placed by the new non-political folksingers and fans on the intrinsic merits of traditional folksong without the attachment of external social philosophies which at times had no basis in the original traditions, was long needed and overdue. From another vantage point, however, the preoccupation of urban young people with the music of a rural past, but with little or no concurrent attempt to relate in their music to the present world around them, can be viewed in a good many cases as nothing more than an escape mechanism by which individuals could duck the confusing complexity and impersonality of their modern surroundings for a more secure, simpler, and sometimes pastoral world. It is probable that the negative reaction (or ignorral) of topical songs in this period resulted in part from a mixture of both these factors, and given the group of young people who had taken over the folksong revival, it would appear presumptuous to deny the presence of one, or to over-emphasize the other.

But the early 1960's brought a new mood, symbolized nationally by President Kennedy's election, and within the folksong revival current social problems, most notably the unresolved integration situation, once more attracted the interest, concern, and commentary of large numbers of urban folk buffs. Topical songs began to be heard again, and a new generation of songwriters began sharpening their pencils. Early in this period, Broadside made its debut, issue #1 appearing in February, 1962 (although the idea for such a publication had been kicking around for some time, and Malvina Reynolds had suggested it in a letter to Sing Out! more than a year earlier. In contrast, however, to the expansive way in which the members of People's Songs had begun their planning and operation fifteen years before, the editors of Broadside began on a relatively cautious note. The success of the venture was by no means assured at the outset: Broadside sought to provide an outlet for the new songs being created, but whether many would be interested enough in the songs to support the magazine was still open to doubt, and the interest at first was perhaps more hoped for than real. The days when Broadside's subscription list would run over a thousand were not even imagined; in fact Pete Seeger offered to bet that the subscriptions would not number a hundred. "Be satisfied with fifty," he said.

The subsequent success of Broadside and the songwriters whose compositions were featured in its pages is a story too well known to need further elaboration here. What is worth noting though are some of the reasons why this resurgent interest in topical songs took place. Phil Ochs, in a recent article published in Modern Hi-Fi and Stereo Guide entitled "Topical Songs--History On The Spot", provided some intelligent explanations which will probably hold up in the long run, and which again illustrate how closely the folksong revival has been linked to the changing times on the American scene. His tentative conclusions

are worth repeating: 1) there was both a need for new song material and an urge in some to create it as the folksong revival kept increasing in size; 2) the widespread lethargy of the 1950's which had contributed greatly to the complacent ignoring of pressing social problems was dissipated by the idealism and dynamism of the Kennedy Administration; 3) the Civil Rights movement "...generated the kind of excitement and tension that produces creativity in all fields of the arts;" and 4) given these other factors, topical songs have enabled many who have never had serious economic and social inequities to overcome in their own lives to identify more closely with those who face such problems, and hence these songs have "...provide(d) an avenue to a more involved life and a deeper morality."

Ochs made one more point, which had he contrasted it with the preceding years, would have provided the key to an understanding of the essential differences of the two eras of topical song activity in the last generation. He said of the new songwriters of the '60's: "Topical lyricists now become involved with their subjects by going to places where there is a real struggle going on, rather than just writing songs out of the newspapers," the inference being quite clearly that the songs were motivating many to participate in direct concrete action in social issues. The difference in the times that produced a statement like this, in comparison to the Thirties and Forties, becomes evident when one considers some off-hand remarks made by Dr. Kenneth Goldstein at the Philadelphia Folk Festival last summer. In effect, Goldstein said that "the topical singing of a generation ago, while necessary and important to the various progressive movements, was nevertheless secondary to direct personal participation. Action was paramount. Being on the picketline came first, singing 'Solidarity' came second. And he indicated that generally the topical singers of those days thought in no other terms. Their songs in most cases came out of first hand contact with the crisis or issue at hand.

As is perhaps obvious by now, this was not the case in the years after 1950. For one thing, there was little topical singing going on, hence there was little participation on the part of those whose concern was principally music. More important, when the production of topical material picked up again in the years after 1950, it was an entirely different class of songwriters who dominated the scene. These newcomers were not part of the various radical and reform movements, which were so strong in the Thirties; rather (as Ochs also noted) nearly all of them have come from a middle class background and at the beginning of their writing had little or no first hand experience with what they were trying to write about. But interestingly enough, as Ochs has pointed out, in the last year or so these writers and other devotees of folk and topical music have again, like their predecessors of twenty and twenty-five years ago, begun to share personally in the issues which have motivated their topical songs. Only this time the reverse of the action-singing sequence is in progress: the singing and writing of contemporary material comes before and leads to the action of the singer (and some of his listeners) Probably no better example could be given than the Mississippi Caravan of Music last summer, where, although I do not presume to speak for all those who participated, many were obviously stimulated in large part to contribute their time and effort because of the topical and freedom songs they had been learning and