

*Folk singers were in the lead
of the student rebels at the University of California.
The demonstration was the social philosophy
of folk singers set to action.
In the following pages, the action at Berkeley
is linked with the songs that inspired the students.*

WE SHALL OVERCOME





TO BE A MAN Lyrics by T. S. Eliot, 1918, 1964 by FALL RIVER MUSIC, INC. All rights reserved. Used by permission

*Don't wade in muddy water if you can't swim
The snags and holes make chances slim
If you can swim don't wade at all
Why stub your toe, why risk a fall
But the water's clear, the bottom's sand
I swim the sea, I walk the land
The great design, the master plan
To be a man*

*With my swing blade in my hand
As I looked across the land
And thought of all the places that I'd been
Of that old house that I called home
Where I'd always been alone
And of that weedy grave that held my closest kin
And as I cut the weeds from o'er my father's grave, father's grave
I swore no child I bore would be a slave*

FATHER'S GRAVE (For Cordell Reagon) Words and music by Len H. Chandler, Jr. © Copyright 1964 by FALL RIVER MUSIC, INC. All rights reserved Used by permission





ONE MAN'S HANDS Words by Alex Comfort, music by Pete Seeger © Copyright 1960 by Sanga Music, Inc. All rights reserved Used by permission



*One man's hands can't tear a prison down
Two men's hands can't tear a prison down
But if two and two and fifty make a million
We'll see that day come 'round
We'll see that day come 'round*



*Nobody knows about
Nobody knows about
What's going on down there
Who's going to tell about
Who's going to tell about
What's going on down there
What's going on down there*

WHAT'S GOING ON DOWN THERE Words and music by Malvina Reynolds © Copyright 1964 by Schroder Music Company, Berkeley 4, Calif. All rights reserved Used by permission

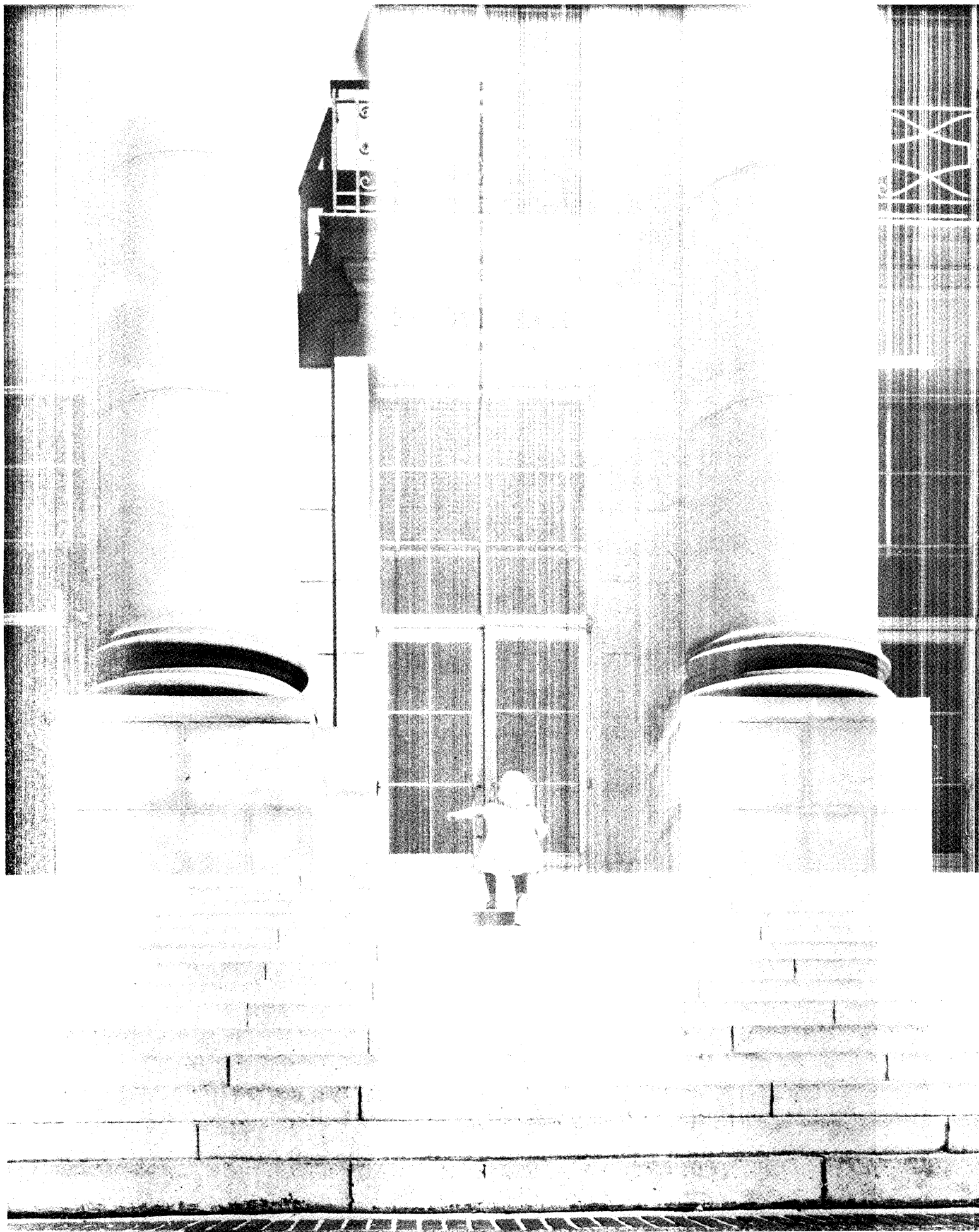


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*What did you learn in school today
Dear little boy of mine?
What did you learn in school today
Dear little boy of mine?
I learned that Policemen are my friends
I learned that justice never ends
I learned that murderers die for their crimes
Even if we make a mistake sometimes
And that's what I learned in school today
That's what I learned in school*

THAT'S WHAT I LEARNED IN SCHOOL Words and music by Tom Paxton © Copyright 1962 by CHERRY LANE MUSIC, INC. Assigned TEENA MUSIC CORPORATION 1963 All rights reserved Used by permission





What did you learn in school today?

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Malvina Reynolds, the greyhaired grandmother who wrote "Little Boxes," ties it all together. "He is *saying* something and saying it effectively and the fact that he has no voice and looks like nowhere is incidental," she says. "These kids have been betrayed by the good voices all their lives, have been told lies by the good voices. I mean social lies — that love is all, y'know, and if you're good everything will be wonderful. These are the things the good voices have told youth," Mrs. Reynolds points out and youth has rejected them in favor of Dylan's lyrics, his anti-slick image clothes and his Charlie Chaplin put-on style.

THE OTHER MASS MEDIA latched on to the folk music boom the moment the money glittered. The American Broadcasting Company started a weekly TV show, "Hootenanny," and it immediately demonstrated that the mass media is frightened by poets. All the singers sang his songs, but Pete Seeger was too hot politically to be allowed on a national TV show. The same was true for the Weavers and then, in a move that should have been but wasn't obvious to the producers, both Joan Baez and Bob Dylan refused to have anything to do with "Hootenanny" ("money doesn't talk, it swears" is a line in one of Dylan's songs).

The new songs, like the old radical songs, had a fatal flaw. They said things and thus frightened people. It was a rare song in the 30's, 40's or even the 50's, that ever really came out and said anything and still was a popular hit. One of the few that comes to mind is "Sixteen Tons," the classic protest against the company store and the miner's exploited life. It was a big juke box hit, but that was a decade ago.

The rock and roll, rhythm, and rhythm and blues songs of the past few years have had implications of a social nature. The Drifters' "Up on the Roof," for instance — with its lines about the teenager's rooftop hideout "right smack dab in the middle of town, I found a paradise that's trouble proof" is certainly a song of alienation and the lonely urban crowd.

And there's the hit country and western song of a few years back, "Hey Oakie" ("if you see Arkie, tell him I got a job for him, out in Californy"), a sentiment straight from a migrant worker's knapsack.

Malvina Reynolds' "The Concrete Octopus" protested the freeway rape of parks and timberland but was never a hit. One juke box song a couple of years ago told of a girl who was ashamed to bring her boyfriend home because her neighborhood looked so bad and she had to meet him where the surroundings were nicer — a sort of plea for urban renewal.

But it took Pete Seeger, Joan Baez and Bob Dylan to get the topical song, hard-hitting at specific issues, really going. It's spread out now so that a pop-folk (the music trade's category for the non-authentic but commercially successful) group like the Chad Mitchell

Trio can record "The John Birch Society" or a satire on Goldwater, "Barry's Boys," and even the usually tepid Kingston Trio can go deeply into protest songs for an entire album.

OF COURSE THE SUBJECTS of the topical folk songs from "Who Killed Davy Moore" (death in the boxing ring) by Bob Dylan to "As Long As the Grass Shall Grow" by Peter La Farge (a protest against the treatment of the American Indian) are not new. Nor are they unknown. But it is unusual for them to reach the mass audiences that the topical folk songs now do. And it is the fact that a good deal of the attitudes and opinions presented in the works of Dylan, Paxton, Ochs and the other writers, are not reflected in the mass communication media that has given added thrust to their concentration on topical songs. In essence the topical song writers have consciously or unconsciously transformed the medium of the phonograph record from pure entertainment to that of the communication of ideas and made of the concert hall a political platform.

When Bob Dylan finished a concert at the Berkeley Community Theater to which a capacity house of over 3000 had paid upwards of \$4 each, one of the audience said, "Do they know he is a revolutionary? Do they realize they have paid \$4 to hear him attack the whole social structure?"

Joan Baez, whose stepping stones to the top rank in the concert field were the old English and Kentucky ballads, has for some time now sprinkled in among them the direct message of the topical songs. Before an audience of 7000 in the gymnasium on a rainy Homecoming Day at the University of California, she paused in her program of "Copper Kettle," "Silver Dagger," and "Koom-bayou" to sing Malvina Reynolds' "What Have They Done to the Rain?" And before a similar crowd outdoors in the Greek Theater, she sang Richard Farina's memorial to the school children massacred in Alabama, "Birmingham Sunday." And I have witnessed uniformed officers of the U.S. Army and Marine Corps applaud her for singing "With God on Our Side," Dylan's classic anti-war song.

Sometimes the audience objects and customers call out "don't give us messages." But this doesn't have any effect. Miss Baez, like the others in this movement, is determined to have her say. Last year in a concert at Baltimore, Md., where the Negro maid, Hattie Carroll, was beaten to death by a cane-wielding farmer who got off with a light sentence and probation, she sang Dylan's "The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll." "I felt the audience stirring," she says, "and I couldn't think why until I finished and remembered it was Baltimore."

There is a deep thing at work in all of this. The Reality behind the American dream and the truth behind its mythology is being attacked relentlessly by a

generation that takes nothing for granted from its elders. They have added the weight of words to the anti-establishment humanitarian position the jazz musicians have wordlessly occupied for years. "There's a saying in the movement that you can't trust anyone over 30," Jack Weinberg, one of the University of California Free Speech Movement leaders, has said, and it is manifestly obvious that, with the exception of Pete Seeger, all the leaders in the field of topical song singing are well under 30, some barely out of their teens.

This is their audience, too. This postbeatnik group of Atom Bomb babies has produced some wildly devout Bob Dylan fans who have even, maintaining that he is, above all, a poet, insisted on bringing Dylan lyrics to English classes in high school and junior high school.

And as the Negro revolution is being played out and documented on that great equalizer, television, this generation has seen the history of the black man revised. Not only the history of the black man in America, but the history of Africa as well has undergone a great revision. It turns out that what it says in the textbooks is not the way it is, and it doesn't take a particularly perceptive youth to recognize it.

And not only to recognize it but to apply it to other things as well. To the history of the American Indians, for instance, and why stop there? Why not apply it to China and Vietnam and encourage the inevitable sneaking suspicions that the rest of history could bear a similar revision?

At the University of California, the FSM rebels sang parodies of Christmas carols like "Joy to the World" or irreverent lyrics to the theme of Beethoven's Ninth — "Make the students safe for knowledge, keep them loyal, keep them clean. This is why we have a college/Hail to IBM Machine!"

"For all people laugh in the same tongue and cry in the same tongue," Dylan says, expressing the universality of what he believes. "There's no right wing or left wing . . . there's only up wing and down wing."

Dylan's lyrics are being collected in book form as poems and "A Hard Rain" has already been included in an anthology of contemporary poetry. America's youth seems to have found a voice. Is there something symbolic in the fact that it belongs to a young Minnesotan who changed his name from admiration of a Welch poet? But "my name it means nothing, my age it means less" Dylan wrote in "With God on My Side" as if to answer the critics. Perhaps it symbolizes his rebirth in a new world.

In any case, denied the orthodox channels of communication — as the graduate student says in Lawrence Ferlinghetti's "Routines," "we have no media, we have no person of prominence in our country who will lead us in any sort of campaign" — they have gone directly to the people with broadsides and with topical songs.

The traditional apolitical attitude of the American entertainment world, the pattern since Bogart apologized, is no more. These artists speak out. "Indeed I live in the dark ages," Brecht wrote 39 years ago, "a smooth forehead betokes a hard heart and he who laughs has not yet heard the sad tidings."

There are overtones of Brecht in Dylan to be sure. "I saw ten thousand talkers whose tongues were all broken/I saw guns and sharp swords in the hands of young children." And there is tragedy in Peter La Farge's "Coyote." "They strychnined the mountains, they strychnined the plains/my little brothers, the coyote, won't come back again." But there is, too, a dedication to joy and to life, as if the promises of the New World have not yet been lost entirely, just expressed differently.

"Bob Dylan says all the things I feel but can't say myself" a fourteen-year-old girl wrote. And among the things that he and Joan Baez and the other conscience singers are saying is that the Emperor has no clothes. "We have believed too long that he has," they tell us. And they add, "we want to love, not to be blown up, and we want to live free."

This is the New Morality and these are the New Moralists who are revising the priorities of the entire society. They are simplistic and evangelical and military visionaries. They say the virtues are Love and Truth and Beauty and the ultimate sins are to hurt another human, to break trust and not to love.

They have rejected so thoroughly all the language and attitudes and the concepts of their elders that a fragment of Dylan's verses seems like a summary of it all:

"Shoot craps
in the alley garbage pot
You say "nothin's perfect"
an i tell you again
There are no politics"

Folk music which began its revival with Leadbelly and Woody Guthrie and union songs is topical now and confronts Bull Connor as well as Vietnam. The times, indeed, are a-changin' and these young artists are among the reasons why and they have served notice on their elders to get out of the way.

LEAFACADIO HEARN, that romantic Irishman who explored Japan so deeply that he finally became a Japanese, visited an Eta settlement in the coastal village of Mionosoki, and later he wrote: "The children never pass the unmarked boundary; and the very dogs will not cross the prejudice-line."

Hearn was describing a scene from the 19th century; but his words have lost none of their dark meaning, for the Eta still exist today, and so does the "prejudice-line." The Eta are the outcasts of Japan, the pariahs, the "unclean," the dregs of society. They live, without hope, in ghettos attached to the country's major cities. For years they were not even counted as human beings in the national census, so it is impossible to say accurately how many Eta there are now. They certainly number in the millions; the highest contemporary estimate is three million, which is not a trivial fraction of Japan's population. Yet few foreigners, including those who make their homes in Japan, have ever heard of the Eta, so effective is the wall of silence that hides them.

The Japanese do not like to talk about the Eta. It is a shameful topic in a society where shame (but not guilt) is a large emotion. Moreover, a favorite way to solve a problem in Japan is to pretend that there *is* no problem. And hence, no Eta.

During a recent year that I spent in Tokyo I became curious about the Eta, and I asked a great many questions. Or rather, I asked the same question a great many times. It was a frustrating experience, because I did not get many answers. And although I brought back to America an abiding affection for the Japanese, I was appalled and puzzled by their attitude towards the Eta. I still am.

I tried to find out exactly *who* the Eta are. I discovered that they elude any precise definition. I also tried to find out exactly *how* the Japanese manage to segregate the Eta so completely, since they are, racially and ethnically, one and the same. I discovered that this is even more shadowy and mysterious, yet it is probably the key to the entire problem. A member of the Eta caste will occasionally try to "pass," as a light-skinned Negro will pass in the United States, although in Japan, of course, it is not a matter of color. Sooner or later, the ones who "pass," who seek to escape the ghetto, are betrayed by their Eta heritage, with results that are tragic: broken homes, lost jobs, and even suicide.

The Eta, then, seem to bear an invisible stain. At least it was invisible

QUEST FOR THE ETA

BY
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