

THE BOSSES' SONGBOOK



Songs To Stifle
The Flames Of Discontent

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Songs To Stifle The Flames Of Discontent

A collection of modern political songs of satire

Collected and edited by
Dave Van Ronk and Richard Ellington

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Dedication

*To Our Constant Companion – J. Edgar Hoover**

Makeup, printing, assembly and general slave labor
by Pat and Dick Ellington

Retyped from a remaining poor copy of Pat and Dick's original booklet,
assembled with more slave labor
by Nancy Kellerman, 2001

**(we mourn his loss)*

PREFACE...

A few slow-thinking people seemed to get pretty shook up by the first edition of this little booklet, so maybe we better start off this one by saying in loud letters:

THESE SONGS ARE SATIRES!!!

They were done for fun and meant to be sung for fun. I think I could do worse than to quote Van Ronk's preface to the first edition in which he says:

"These songs have been written and passed along by people from every conceivable political and apolitical tendency and sometimes they don't even express the serious views of the writers themselves. They are strictly for the hell of it, and unless the reader approaches them in this same spirit, he will become either very angry or very confused, or both. Actually though, we couldn't care less how angry or confused (or both) you may wax. We get a kick out of singing these songs and we think a lot of other people will too."

When we put the first edition together, things were pretty confused and the political climate was somewhat different so we left out credits entirely. I'm still somewhat doubtful about some of them but since I have managed to pin down a good number of names I'd like to give credit where it's due. Here then is a list of contributors, in no particular order. If you belong here and I left you out, please forgive me. I really tried.

Material written, thank up, passed along or collected by: Dave Van Ronk, Roy Berkeley, Larry Block, Shel Deretchin, Marty David, Sandy Cutrell, Dick Eney, Lee Shaw, Barry Kornfield, Jules Greenstein, Bob Brill,

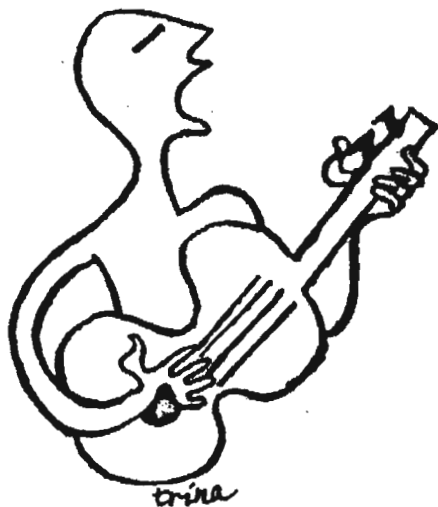
Frank Hamilton, Marty Jukovsky and Ed Jancke. Cover by Vince Hickey. Inside illustrations by Trina Castillo, Lee Shaw and Pat Ellington.

A word of apology is due here to all anti-censorship types who may read this. To my way of thinking, folk-process materials should be immune to the demands of censors, but I do want to mail this and the post office disagrees with me – hence the dashes. Silly, but what can you do?

There are still a lot more of these songs floating around. If you know of any, how about passing them along? If you have a whole stack of them, how about publishing them yourselves? If you can't publish them, get in touch with me and maybe I can help.

Anyway, I hope you like these and thanks for the half buck.

- Dick Ellington



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Two Poems:

ATOMIC SPRING

Behold the mushroom clouds of Spring,
And see the atom's fatal glow.
Hear the mutant birdies sing,
And watch the stunted children grow.

Feel the strontium-laden breeze
Blow the hair from off your head,
Feel the poisoned bloodstream freeze,
But never fear – you'll soon be dead.

--#--

SUMMIT TALK

Summit is icumin in,
Llude sing Khrushchev.
Bloweth boom and groweth gloom
But stayeth Dulles deaf.
Sing Khrushchev.

Eisenhower turneth sour,
Asia turneth left.
Rocket shrieketh, Sputnik beepeth,
Llude sing Khrushchev,
Sing Khrushchev.
But stayeth Dulles deaf,
But stayeth Dulles deaf.

--#--

Bosses' Lifeguard

Tune: Miner's Lifeguard

Miner's life is soft and plushy
In his air-conditioned mine.
He has lovely hours and wages,
Yet he'll grumble and he'll whine.
Persecute their organizers,
Throw their leaders into jail.
Get their fingers off the dollar,
Readjust your crooked scales.

Chorus: *Operators, stand together,
Heed no organizers' tale.
Get their fingers off the dollar,
Readjust your crooked scales.*

You've been victimized, my boys,
You've been paying through the nose,
But what's worse you've had to listen
To their awful songs of woe.
Step upon their horrid unions,
Give them reasons for their wails,
Get their fingers off the dollar,
Readjust your crooked scales.

How we hate their union leaders,
All this trouble is their fault.
Let us take their pious preaching
With at least a grain of salt.
Time will find their agitators
Thrown in prison without bail.
Get their fingers off the dollar,
Readjust your crooked scales.

Modern Union Maid

Tune: Union Maid

There once was a Union Maid
Who always was afraid
Of Socialists and Anarchists
And the games the C.P. factions played.
She read the *New York Post*,
Thought Dubinsky was the most.
She fought the left
'Til she was out of breath
And this is what she'd say:

Chorus: *Oh, you've got me scared,
I'm sticking to the Union,
And Harry Truman,
As close as glue, man.
Oh, you've got me scared,
I'm sticking to the Union,
I'm sticking to the Union,
'Til the day I die.*

You girls who want to be free,
Just take a tip from me;
Don't marry a man who's a union man,
Might as well buy stock in the company.
Married life can sure be hell
If you're in the AF of L,
So take this tip,
Don't be a drip,
Just sing this song with me.

Repeat Chorus

Song Of The South

*Collected from among a group of Servicemen in
Boot Camp.*

Tune: The Girl I Left Behind Me

Screw the white and black
And the kind of kack
That Faubus gets his kicks on,
'Cause what I mean,
They should quarantine
States below the Mason-Dixon.
And I'd like to p--,
On Robert E. Lee
With his goddamn greyback brass on,

*For the rebel flag
Is a filthy rag
That a Yankee wipes his ass on!*

The Confederate Boys
Are a lot of noise
And it's s--t the Democrats spout,
They can blow their gas
Up Kasper's ass
And knock the b-----d's brains out.
And I wouldn't fool
With a G-dd--n school
That a Citizen's Group would pass on.

*For the rebel flag
Is a filthy rag
That a Yankee wipes his ass on!*

Hold The Line

Tune: Hold The Fort

There is a group in this here town
That really goes too far.
They've traded in their Ph.Ds
For a folk guitar.

*Chorus: Sing a song for Peoples' Artists,
Balladiers unite!
Buy your latest Peoples' Songbook,
There's a hoot tonight.*

Organize and fertilize
And sing your little song.
You are right on every issue,
All the rest are wrong.

The Stalingrad, Odessa and the Vladivostok

Tune: Atchison, Topeka and the Santa Fe

You'd better give that train the right of way.
It's bound from here to Siber-i-ay,
And it's got to leave at twelve o'clock
On the Stalingrad, Odessa and the Vladivostok.

*Chorus: Ooh-ooh--ooh--ooh--ooh--ooh,
We've had another change of pace.
Ooh-ooh--ooh--ooh--ooh--ooh,
Russia's got a new collective face.*

So you'd better forget your old arguments,
Burn up all your old documents,
Or you'll soon be working on a pile of rock
On the Stalingrad, Odessa and the Vladivostok.

Ribald Rebel's Song

Tune: Tramp, Tramp, Tramp The Boys are Marching

Slaves of Wall Street, here we sit,
Covered with reaction's s--t,
While our sweat is filling Morgan's filthy till.
And the Fascists as they pass,
Jam Taft-Hartley up our ass,
Well, I guess we've had our G--dd--n f-----g fill.

*Chorus: Fight, fight, fight for liberation,
Vote, vote, vote the peoples' way.
Rise ye workers of the world,
Let your banners be unfurled,
Storm the forces of reaction to the ground.*

When the fascist Forrestal
Give his fascist battlecall,
To take arms against the day of liberty,
We will all go underground
Till we hear the welcome sound
Of the Soviet Armies of Democracy.

Chorus

We will get a rugged rope
And we'll hang the bloody Pope,
And we'll burn the Cistine Chapel to the ground.
Then we'll all take up our guns
And we'll turn them on the nuns,
And the peoples' voice will be the only sound.

Chorus:

Then we'll get a rugged noose
For the likes of Henry Luce,
And we'll throw *Life, Time* and *Fortune* to the flames.
For the bitch who's known as Clair,
A garrote we'll prepare
When the democratic forces break their chains.

Chorus

Ballad Of A Party Folk-Singer

Tune: Wreck of the Old '97

Well, they gave him his orders
Up at Party Headquarters,
Saying, "Pete, you're way behind the times.
This is not '38; this is 1947,
And there's been a change in that old party line.

*Well, it's a long, long haul
From "Greensleeves" to "Freiheit,"
And the distance is more than long,
But that wonderful outfit they call the Peoples' Artists
Is on hand with those good old Peoples' Songs.*

Their material is corny,
But their motives are the purest,
And their spirits will never be broke,
As they go right on with their great noble crusade
Of teaching folksongs to the folk.

Radical Whiffenpoof Song

From the tables at Rienzi to the Lubyanka cells,
To the halls of AYS and YSL,
Sing the Trotskyites assembled
With *The Prophet Armed* on high,
and the sorrow of their music casts a spell.

We're poor little lambs who got the gate,
Bah! Bah! Bah!

We all got busted in '38,
Boo-hoo-hoo.

Social-fascists all so sad,
Damned from here to Petrograd,
Two legs good and four legs bad,
Baaah, Baaah, Baaah.

Way Down In Lubyanka Prison

Tune: Columbus Stockade

Way down in Lubyanka Prison
Wish I was back in the old Ukraine.
I was a faithful Party follower,
Until the line got changed again.

*Chorus: I denounced that Fascist Bastard Tito,
No one could doubt my loyalty,
Til four a.m. a week ago last Wednesday,
I had a call from the M.V.D.*

All I said was what I read in *Pravda*,
I'd never doubt or hesitate.
And 'cause I said just what I read in *Pravda*,
I'm now an enemy of the State.

My wife and I were both good party members,
I was loyal – and so was she.
So four a.m. a week ago last Wednesday,
She turned me in to the M.V.D.

Way down in Lubyanka Prison,
They left me there to lose my mind,
Thinkin' 'bout my embarrassing position,
Stranded by a change in line.

Last night while I was sleeping,
I dreamed I was a commissar.
But when I woke I found I was mistaken,
I was still behind those prison bars.

Though I'm down in Lubyanka Prison,
I cannot hardly help but smile,
For from what my brand new cellmate tells me,
My line may soon be back in style.

*Last Chorus: It seems he praised that grand old fellow, Tito,
No one could doubt his loyalty,
Til four a.m. a week ago last Wednesday,
They picked him up in Hungary.*

Which Side Are We On?

My father is a member
Of the bourgeoisie,
And I will talk for freedom
While he's supporting me.

*He's a bourgeois slob,
But I don't have a job.*

Time was when people thought,
In days that now have passed,
That Socialism was a movement
Of the working class.

*That was long ago,
Marx should only know.*

We always thought that Stalin
Carried things a bit too far,
Now Stalin is a fascist
And we don't know where we are.

*Which side are we on?
Which side are we on?*

Now come you Village Loafers
And join our happy band.
We'll show the world and Mom and Dad
Just where the hell we stand.

*Join the YSL--
See you first in hell!*

The Smith Act was a good law--
It protected civil rights,
And saved us all from Fascists
And dirty Trotskyites.

*Keep them all in jail.
Don't give them no bail.*

Then we were Anti-Fascists,
At least that was our line,
'Til Joe and Adolph signed that thing
In nineteen-thirty-nine.

Which side are we on?

Which side are we on?

Then we were ardent pacifists
And praised peace to the skies.
Yes, we were ardent pacifists --
'Til they told us otherwise.

Which side are we on?

Which side are we on?

Fink's Song

Tune: Greenback Dollar

(I Don't Want Your Millions, Mister)

I don't want your union, mister,
I don't want your David Becks.
All I want is your million dollars
Then I'll wring your scrawny necks.

I don't want your boring meetings,
I don't want your goddam dues.
I won't walk your picket duty,
In my patent leather shoes.

Keep your Farmer-Labor party,
Keep your goddam working class.
Keep your Lenin, keep your Trotsky,
Stick your union up your ass.

Don't tell me your troubles, mister,
Don't sing your peoples' songs to me,
Starve your children, sell your sister,
I am going to Capri.

Jesus Christ

Tune: Jesse James

Jesus Christ was a man, an honest working man,
A carpenter true and brave.
He told all the rich to give their money to the poor,
So they laid Jesus Christ in his grave.

*Chorus: Jesus had no wife to mourn for his life,
And he needed a bath and a shave,
But that foe of the proletariat,
Judas Iscariot,
Laid Jesus Christ in his grave.*

Born in 29. B.C. in a barn in Galilee,
Bathed in his unwed mother's tears,
He fought the ruling classes
And preached the Gospel to the masses,
And predated Marx by 1800 years.

Judas was the guy, the lousy labor spy,
A stoolie for the Roman boss,
He ate Jesus' body and he drank Jesus' blood,
And he nailed Jesus Christ to the cross.

With thieves on either side,
Jesus Christ was crucified,
And tears filled Mary's eyes.
But his last words to you and me,
From that hill on Calvary,
Were, "Don't pray for me - ORGANIZE!"

(optional verse for Trotskyites)

When he was planted in the ground,
His followers gathered 'round
To spread the gospel by the sword and Cannon,
But his following today
Is as corrupt in every way
As the party of Khrushchev and Bulganin.

The Twelve Days of Marxmas

Tune: The Twelve Days of Christmas

On the first day of Marxmas
My comrade gave to me
A picture of Leon Trotsky.

On the second day of Marxmas
My comrade gave to me
Two *Das Kapitols*
And a picture of Leon Trotsky.

On the third day of Marxmas
My comrade gave to me
Three bayonets,
Two *Das Kapitols*
And a picture of Leon Trotsky.

Fourth Day: The Fourth International

Fifth Day: The Five Year Plan

Sixth Day: Six splinter groups

Seventh Day: Seven strikers swinging

Eighth Day: Eight Bulganins bulging

Ninth Day: Nine men in the Kremlin

Tenth Day: Ten shaking days

Eleventh Day: Eleven Lenins leaping

Twelfth Day: Twelve Hunkie Fascists

