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BROADSIDE VOL. 11

INTERVIEWS
WITH
**PHIL
OCHS**

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INTERVIEWS WITH PHIL OCHS

INTERVIEWS
WITH
**PHIL
OCHS**
PHIL TALKS ABOUT

GREED OF THE MUSIC INDUSTRY
HIS FIGHT WITH BOB DYLAN
HIS BITTERNESS AT BEING EXCLUDED FROM THE WOODY GUTHRIE TRIBUTE
GIVING UP ON AMERICA



BROADSIDE

Volume 11

These notes are from an interview between Phil Ochs and Izzy Young for Broadside Magazine.

Were produced for this record by Broadside to be included in this album.

PHIL OCHS BACK FROM CHICAGO

(Editor's Note. When Phil Ochs returned to New York from the chaotic 1968 Democratic National Convention, he gave an interview to Izzy Young of the Folklore Center in the Village to be sent up to Broadside. It is technically a pretty bad tape. The recorder had seen better times. Phil and Izzy seem to be sitting beside an open window with all the street noises in the background; the uproar of traffic; the clatter of garbage cans; johns honking at their hookers to come out; people screaming at each other. However Phil's and Izzy's conversation can be understood and we present the interview below, transcribed.)

IZZY: This is the afternoon of Wednesday, Sept. 4, 1968, in Izzy Young's apartment and I'm talking to Phil Ochs who has just come back from Chicago.

PHIL: Don't shoot! Don't hit me! I'll talk, I'll talk! We're not in Lincoln Park.

IZZY: It seems you were about the only folk singer in Chicago. I mean, Judy Collins didn't and Pete Seeger didn't show up, and --

PHIL: Peter and Mary showed up --

IZZY: Do you think there's a good reason why a lot of singers didn't show up?

PHIL: I don't know. It's hard to tell. I'm sure everybody was afraid. I was afraid. And it was sort of vogueish -- the folk crowd has always been very much an in-vogue crowd, and it became very vogueish to attack the Yippie festival of life as a festival of death, and it gave them a good reason to stay away. It was almost a cycle: first the underground press ballyhooed the Yippie thing and then there was all this publicity and everybody put their name on the list. And then second thoughts came in and people started to think, well, this is an exploitation of youth and they're leading them to a slaughter, and besides they really didn't want to go anyway. So everybody sort of mutually decided over a two month period -- the underground press and the performers -- that the whole thing was a shuck.

IZZY: You mean they decided not to go out of fear?

PHIL: I don't know. That's pretty strong language. They probably really thought it wasn't a worthwhile project in terms of confrontation. There hasn't been all that much involvement of folk people and rock people in the movement since the Civil Rights period except that one period where the anti-war action became in vogue and safe -- you know, large numbers of people and all that publicity, and then they showed up.

IZZY: Do you think things are really becoming serious and the singers are afraid to face up to it?

PHIL: I think it's become more and more like that, yeah. America is in desperate trouble, you know.



ISRAEL "Izzy" YOUNG. He ran the Folklore Center in New York's Greenwich Village for many years, but has moved to Sweden.

IZZY: Well, how important is the underground press in all this?

PHIL: The underground press is a vital link, it's a way to break the censorship of the establishment press, and that is very important. But the underground press is very skittish too, very immature. But it's a good thing.

IZZY: I heard there was a tremendous reaction to your singing in Chicago, that it went over very big.

PHIL: Yeah. (Laughs)

IZZY: They really wanted to hear music. But they didn't have much of a chance. I heard that, in terms of rock music, that was impossible altogether. That was really squelched from the start.

PHIL: There was so much intimidation. On Sunday they tried to get a sound truck through, just for some local rock bands, and they couldn't. Police blocked that. Some people were beat up; a guy I know was hit on the back of the head with handcuffs and they cut his head wide open. Anyway the songs I wrote, the political songs, are coming into vogue -- I'll use that word again. I think in '63 especially, at the Civil Rights apex, musical esthetics came together with politics, and it was good to be involved with both. And I think now the same thing is happening.

IZZY: Where do you find politics mixing with esthetics now? What music groups?

PHIL: I mean just that certain historical movements come more to the fore than mere love of music, and then they start to merge. And music becomes very important.

IZZY: Can you give me some examples of groups that are that way today. How about Country Joe and the Fish?

PHIL: Country Joe and the Fish is a definite example of that.

IZZY: Did you hear about them? I just saw in the Times they were beaten up in a hotel.

PHIL: Yes they were beaten up.

IZZY: And they didn't appear anywhere?

PHIL: No, and I understand Joe McDonald gave an interview to the press charging that the Yippies were irresponsible, which I thought very irresponsible on Joe's part. It's the kind of stuff that could be used by the Establishment. If people had been killed they would have used stuff like that against the protesters. It was a dangerous thing to do.

IZZY: About how many people were there on the march altogether, would you say? The papers said about 15,000.

PHIL: It's hard to gauge. But that's a good count. A lot of the bravest people showed up. I mean they were people from around the country who really went through a major personal dilemma. Daley's pre-convention terror tactics were a success in keeping out large numbers of people. For instance, his threats to set up large scale concentration camps. Daley issued many statements like that, very threatening statements, and these succeeded in keeping a lot of people away. But the people who did show up were the toughest, really, and the most dedicated. And a lot of great things happened in the middle of the terror of the police attacks. There was a definite spirit, a good spirit, unleashed in the streets. There was more coming together with Blacks, more than on any other march I've seen. A joining of Blacks and whites to resist mutual oppression. Especially in Lincoln Park.

IZZY: On television they kept calling these people -- I couldn't get over it -- they kept calling these people outsiders. You know, they're Americans. How can you call somebody an outsider in his own country?

PHIL: Yeah, well, the Chicagoans were unable to recognize that this was a national convention. They literally, psychologically couldn't. They kept thinking, "This is our city, our convention." When it's a national election they're talking about. I'm really starting to question the basic sanity of the American public. I think the public itself is just -- I think more and more politicians are really becoming pathological liars, and I think many members of the public are. I think the Daily News, Tribune poisoning that comes out is literally creating -- and television, all the media, are creating a really mentally ill, unbalanced public, a very dangerous public. And it's significant. I think what happened in Chicago was the final death of democracy in America as we know it: the total, final takeover of the fascist military state -- in one city, at least.

IZZY: Most people have no contact with politicians who are selecting the nominees.

PHIL: Well, in that sense, it was a major victory for the street people in terms of unmasking the facts. But still, basically, there's been opportunities to deal with the convention system and come up with decent candidates; you know, the conventions did produce Adlai Stevenson and John Kennedy. But now, I can't accept this election. I can't see myself being loyal to a Nixon or a

Humphrey administration. I don't think there's any choice. I think the final corruption has come home, the final -- the ugliness and corruption of a South Vietnamese election which is a non-election has come home to America, and now Americans are faced with a South Vietnamese election.

IZZY: Do you think there'll be any results from this unmasking, from this education of the American people, so to speak? I mean, are they going to be more radical, eventually, because of it -- the way some of the kids feel?

PHIL: I'm not sure; it's definitely one process of radicalization and definitely another process of reaction against it.

IZZY: And the reaction against it is stronger.

PHIL: Yes, I'm afraid the reaction is stronger than the radicalization. And it seriously makes me wonder about the country. How much does this country have a right to exist at all, especially with the kind of power it has?

IZZY: I think the question always boils down to: Can you change the country, or do you have to destroy the country?

PHIL: Yeah, right. I've always tried to hang onto the idea of saving the country, but at this point I could be persuaded to destroy it. For the first time I feel this way.

IZZY: I was with some girls from Germany yesterday, and they said, "You can talk to the Establishment people, you can be nice to these people." And I said, "You can be nice to Jacqueline Kennedy all day long and present beautiful arguments to her, and then she'll say no at the end of the day in very cultured language." What I mean is that the people in control are not going to give up their mode of income, and that's the only way the system can be changed. Did you come across any of that in the delegates there? I mean were there any delegates who showed an active support for the Yippies, the kids who want to change things?

PHIL: By the end some delegates were marching with the kids in the streets.

IZZY: You mean the Wisconsin delegation?

PHIL: Yes, and some New York people too.

IZZY: What about in the beginning.

PHIL: I'm sure there was mutual sympathy at the beginning. But they couldn't show it. Chicago was just a total, absolute police state. A police state from top to bottom. I mean, it was totally controlled and vicious.

IZZY: The police beat up about forty news people, and yet the news people on the radio and on television were on the side of Daley almost uniformly. In New York most of them later would say, "Well, Daley was just doing his job, taking orders from Johnson and Humphrey." I heard your voice just for a moment on the radio. And you were the only person quoted among the folk singers. You said: "This was not Daley, this was Daley doing a job for Johnson and Humphrey." Do you think McCarthy could have said more than he did?

PHIL: Yeah, you have to fault McCarthy for lack of dynamics and not being more outspoken. I mean it should have been summed up. There should have been a very literate and a clear-cut case made against the police

right there by a man of McCarthy's stature.

IZZY: That didn't happen.

PHIL: It happened in little bits. He and McGovern at different times spoke out. But there was nothing sustained, nothing up to the occasion. There was a definite lack of leadership on McCarthy's part.

IZZY: Ted Kennedy could have said something.

PHIL: All these so-called liberals kept their mouths shut. They're all still being good Germans, even up to today. I believe this election should be boycotted. It shouldn't be taken seriously. That section of the middle class who went for McCarthy and Kennedy should somehow organize themselves and break away from loyalty to the present government. But it could be the country is so diseased that it just can't function on any kind of a decent level. It may be that the country has to be destroyed from without. That seems as likely as anything. All we're getting is more and more repression.

IZZY: Wallace will get a lot of votes.

PHIL: Yeah, I think Wallace will get a huge amount of votes in this election.

IZZY: I think the liberal people will accept that too, now.

PHIL: Probably, and when they do that's the end. I really don't know what to say. At a certain point, I'm going to become an enemy of the state. I'm not going to be an American any longer. I'm going to be an enemy of the Americans.

IZZY: Yeah. But how can you be an enemy of America in America? What can you do? Sabotage?

PHIL: No, not that. I might leave the country.

IZZY: I can't see a guerilla movement in America, actually, because the guerilla movement, I think, would be destroyed. What other country could you go to?

PHIL: I might go back to Scotland.

IZZY: How can that help things in America?

PHIL: At a certain point you start losing interest in helping things in America.

IZZY: I'm also faced with the choice of leaving. I just got a letter from Africa and the writer says, "Gee, Izzy, I'm always thinking about what you're saying, that the people who go to Canada aren't helping people in America." Phil, if you leave America, you're making it harder for thousands of people that believe in you. You're already more than an individual. You stand for an idea already, and you can't just leave your followers behind.

PHIL: It's not fair (Laughs).

IZZY: Dylan doesn't care. Judy Collins doesn't care. Or they'd speak out openly. But you do care. And you do speak out openly.

PHIL: You can't presume to say that Dylan and Collins don't care. I'm sure they care.

IZZY: Well, I feel that when a person has access to the mass media and they keep quiet that means they don't give a damn what's happening to the people. In other words, getting Judy Collins on a TV spectacular doesn't help the cause of freedom or peace or any thing.

PHIL: It's just that at this point America is an uncontrolled death machine. And since she failed in electoral politics to check that, it has to be checked in other ways. And one way would be the mass denial of manpower to its corporations. The extension of draft resistance: keep your body out of the Army; all right, keep your body out of the college and out of the university. That is just preparing you for the corrupt corporation. Keep pulling people away from the Establishment until it collapses.

IZZY: I don't think it would collapse. If the intelligent people pull out the corporations would be happy.

PHIL: I'm not talking about intellectuals only. I'm talking about all the people who work for the corporations.

IZZY: Well, they're not leaving.

PHIL: No. But I'm only looking for a way to get them to quit.

IZZY: I don't think there is a way. These guys are getting their \$15,000, their \$20,000; they've got a taste of the honey and they want more.

PHIL: All right, then America is in the rule of the devil. The devil has won.

IZZY: Is there any country where you see a possibility of human advancement?

PHIL: I think Mao could be the most important man going in the world right now.

IZZY: Mao's is one of the few Communist nations to criticize the Soviet Union for Czechoslovakia, whereas Castro went along with it.

PHIL: Which provided an incredible psychological blow to the Left in America, which romantically almost equates Cuba and China. Which I still do. What is happening is that America is forcing the world into this kind of military protection. It's the same thing; what the Chicago police did, and the kind of attitude that Mayor Daley has, is the same kind of thinking that was going on with John Foster Dulles. That policy forced Russia, more and more, into this protective position -- this over-defensive position -- which led to Czechoslovakia. You can trace Czechoslovakia to John Foster Dulles. And you can trace Mayor Daley and the Chicago police to the same kind of reaction.

IZZY: So Dubcek didn't have a chance from the start then?

PHIL: He had much less of a chance with a crazy America running around. You know, from the Russian point of view, America is a mad dog loose around the world. What it will lead to is lots more assassination; terror will start in Europe against American business. I mean America is buying Europe, America is completely buying Europe. Economic brutality, you know, comes before police brutality.

IZZY: I agree with you completely on that. I've been saying for two years -- my friends say I'm crazy -- that America is going to be destroyed from the outside, not from the inside.

PHIL: From both.

IZZY: When Bob Kennedy is killed by an Arab that shows how American imperialism has

pervaded the whole world. Christian Arabs are one of the smallest minorities in the world; there are only a few hundred thousand of them -- but if they get angry they can kill a Kennedy. That means almost anybody now could kill an American and get away with it.

PHIL: We're helping every government towards hell. Maybe America is the fulfillment of the final end of the Biblical prophecy: We're all going to end up in fire this time.



Agnes Friesen

America represents the absolute rule of money, just absolute money controlling everything to the total detriment of humanity and morals. It's not so much the rule of America as it is the rule of money. And the money happens to be in America. And that combination is eating away at everybody. It destroys the souls of everybody that it touches, beginning with the people in power.

IZZY: There's one man, Mao, who is trying to change all that. He's trying to change to character of the Chinese people in one generation; do you think he'll succeed?

PHIL: It's going to be very difficult. More importantly, Mao has really succeeded in spreading an international revolutionary feeling. In his lifetime he physically transformed China and set the basis for a sensible world revolution. And in the years when he's supposed to be retired or dead, he had managed to mentally psych out the world. You can trace a lot of what happened in Paris and what happened in Chicago to Mao Tse Tung and the Red Guards: the whole idea of transfer of power to youth and thereby salvaging the militancy of the Revolution. Which I happen to think is a very noble effort.

IZZY: Phil, while you're saying all this I'm thinking of folk music and how can that possibly fit into the way the future is going to be.

PHIL: Well, by the use of brute force by America internally and on the world, resistance will have to be formed step by step. In music, things like the Newport Folk Festival will have to be radicalized.

IZZY: Yeah. But there was no radicalization in Newport this year.

PHIL: No, there wasn't; there should have been.

IZZY: I mean zero, and you had some supposedly left-wing people helping to run it as directors. This year they ran amok with country-western singers who are for the war. When Roy Acuff got the humanitarian award they gave it to him for his many appearances for the troops overseas.

PHIL: Yeah, well.... As a middle-aged Jewish merchant in America, you are in trouble, Izzy. That's all I can say.

IZZY: I hear that from other people.

PHIL: We're all in trouble.

IZZY: How do you stay sane? How do you stay sane in America? That's the problem I have; how can you actually stay sane?

PHIL: I don't know. That's what I think about right now. I've always felt a contact with political reality from 1960 to 1968. But after Chicago I'm totally disoriented. I'm disoriented really because the time has come for guns, and I'm not personally ready for guns. America's such a violent country. The American revolution is going to be ridiculously bloody.

IZZY: Do you see a resistance growing in America? Is that possible?

PHIL: I'm just not sure.

IZZY: I think other things are happening which illustrate what you're talking about. There is a tremendous discontent among the workers, even though they're getting supposedly higher salaries. They're not happy at all. And the next step would be for the workers to try and understand why they are not happy. It's not so much that they have bad working hours or low wages. It's just that they are not part of anything. I think the worker knows it but he hasn't formulated what to do about it. In other words the workers hate the Kennedys and they hate the Melons and the Rockefellers, but they're still afraid even to say it openly. They see the advertisements on TV and in the subway: travel to beautiful Bermuda. But now they're beginning to realize they can't go to Bermuda, you know -- fly to Hawaii and all that stuff.

PHIL: I disagree with you. Part of the problem is that a lot of them can vacation in Bermuda. This part of the problem is the entrenching of the working class's right wing by the bosses giving them an extra amount of money, which is what Hitler did, and what's going on in America right now. And that's the most dangerous aspect.

IZZY: Do you see any rebellion coming from the managerial class?

PHIL: I do see more signs of discontent coming from the managerial class -- much more.

IZZY: How do you see it? How is it showing? What's the visible form of it?

PHIL: The visible form was people like me participating in the McCarthy/Kennedy drive.

I saw how elements of the middle class and the upper-middle class could be brought out in large numbers and contribute large sums of money to try to get a basic change in American policy. That's the major fact that was overlooked in the Chicago convention. It had already been clearly shown that the American public would get behind decent candidates. Most of those people who came out were from the managerial class.

IZZY: Do you think they could force McCarthy to go on a fourth ticket?

PHIL: If McCarthy had the right personality, yes. But I think he's too much a member of the democratic Establishment himself to make that break. We still need a Kennedy.

IZZY: I've always disagreed with you on a Kennedy.

PHIL: I know you have. But I still think that way.

IZZY: I don't, because I feel a man like that can't help the people unless he changes the mode of his own income. He has to give the example. He can't keep taking a dollar from every bottle of whiskey coming from England to America. He has to work for his living, and until he does I don't believe a man like that can possibly change anything. I mean, I wonder why they kill only the Kennedys. Many of the rulers of this country lounge around on inherited wealth.

PHIL: The Kennedys went out of their way to flirt with the American public, and the American public is totally infatuated with death. Anybody who flirts with the American public is taking a chance with their life...

IZZY: Do you feel that wiping out McCarthy wiped you out too?

PHIL: It wiped out that part of me that was interested in electoral politics. But I do feel frustrated all around.

IZZY: Yeah, we still have the same problem.

PHIL: Yes. And that problem is can America be saved. And for the first time in eight years I question whether it can. I think it's quite possible the country is so far gone and decayed that there may be no way left to save it, and that the only logical course for the progress of mankind is the destruction of America.

IZZY: America has pushed everybody to the edge of the cliff. It's forcing people to make this kind of a decision: shall I enjoy what's left of my life and forget everyone else, or should I devote myself to working for a better world. If you can't do either then you just have to leave. And if you leave, you get the inevitable feeling that you're copping out.

PHIL: Well, I may cop out. But the basic thing I feel is that there's going to be death and destruction as far ahead as one can see now. That's all I can possibly see.

IZZY: I can see that if I continue my radio program and give concerts and put out my newsletter, then I'm going to be shot, or I'll have to shoot somebody else. But I still can't imagine coming to that point.

PHIL: I can see it happening to you. Our only hope is the emergence of a politically tempered international youth movement which will involve itself in international revolution.

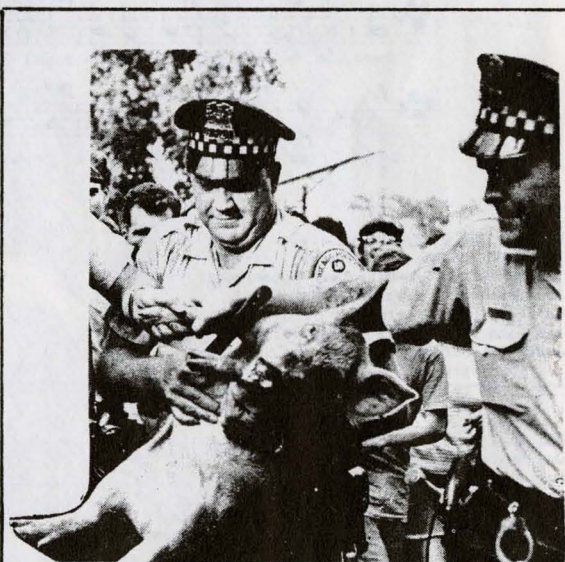
IZZY: Now, how do you feel that writing songs can help such a movement?

PHIL: I'm not so sure that they can. The radical German students think it's past that stage. The songs themselves aren't enough obviously. The songs are an adjunct to the movement, essentially, which is why the Chicago experience was really interesting for me. Let me explain: there the songs were being used in a totally non-professional, non-show-business, non-paying, non-staged situation. It was an integral part of the movement while things were happening, and therefore the words and music had their greatest possible effect.....

I've got to go. Thanks a lot, Izzy. It was nice being here on this September day, in this rotting country.

IZZY: One more question, Phil. Do you think Dylan is a secret revolutionary? In other words, he's reaching more people and changing their minds without them realizing it. A sort of a subliminal revolutionary.

PHIL: I think it's possible. It's possible for any writer, depending on the quality of his work, to function in that way. Brecht faced it as a responsibility. He said to himself, here I am, a writer, and I can write things that can change peoples' minds therefore do I belong in the street getting my skull cracked which may damage my writing, or should I stay out of the way of the charging police and create my plays? Where is the primary responsibility? To me, Phil Ochs, the answer is obvious.



Chicago pigs arrest YIP presidential candidate

BROADSIDE #94

OH, CHICAGO

Phil took part in the nomination of Pig-asus as a counter candidate to the choice of the Democratic machine. He and other Yippie delegates were arrested along with their nominee and jailed overnight. If Pigasus had been elected we would at least not had a crook in the White House and thousands of American boys, Cambodians and Vietnamese would still be alive.

IZZY: Anyone who has any control in the mass media has a responsibility to speak out, both as an artist doing his or her work, and separately as an individual. Definitely, the case now is that most people won't speak out any more.

PHIL: But there are always those artists that function outside the active realm of politics.

IZZY: I prefer the example of William Blake who dreamt of Jerusalem and Heaven and Hell; but when Tom Paine was in England and it was dangerous to harbour him, William Blake was hiding Paine in his own home. So William Blake knew what was going on politically even though he had his own private world as a mystic poet.

PHIL: If you'd been around at that time, you'd probably have condemned Blake for not issuing a statement to the London Times about what was wrong with the King's politics.

IZZY: Oh, no. That wouldn't have been necessary. Blake went on one of the few marches of the century against the King. And that was a very dangerous thing to do. But it was his way of speaking out. He believed in his vision and the only way he could protect his vision was by fighting for it.



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Words and Music by
PHIL OCHS

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2. We pick and choose as we please, boys
Pick and choose as we please
You'd best get down on your knees, boys
You'd best get down on your knees
We're hairy and horny and ready to shack
And we don't care if you're yellow or black
Just take off your clothes and lay down on
your back
'Cause we're the cops of the world, boys,
we're the cops of the world.

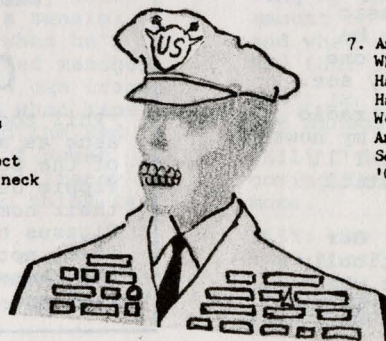
3. Our boots are needing a shine, boys
Our boots are needing a shine
But our coca cola is fine, boys
Coca cola is fine
We've got to protect all our citizens fair
So we'll send a battalion for everyone there
And maybe we'll leave in a couple of years
'Cause we're the cops of the world, boys,
we're the cops of the world.

4. And dump the Reds in a pile, boys
Dump the Reds in a pile
You'd better wipe off that smile, boys
Better wipe off that smile
We'll spit through the streets of the cities
we wreck
And we'll find you a leader that you can elect
Those treaties we signed were a pain in the neck
'Cause we're the cops of the world, boys,
we're the cops of the world.

5. And clean the johns with a rag, boys
Clean the johns with a rag
If you like you can use your flag, boys
If you like you can use your flag
We've got too much money, we're looking for toys
Guns will be guns and boys will be boys
But we'll gladly pay for all we've destroyed
'Cause we're the cops of the world, boys,
we're the cops of the world.

6. And please stay off of the grass, boys
Please stay off of the grass
Here's a kick in the ass, boys
Here's a kick in the ass
We'll smash down your doors, we don't bother to
knock
We've done it before so why all the shock
We're the biggest and toughest kids on the block
'Cause we're the cops of the world, boys,
we're the cops of the world.

7. And when we've butchered your sons, boys
When we've butchered your sons
Have a stick of our gum, boys
Have a stick of our bubblegum
We own half the world, oh say can you see
And the name of our profits is Democracy
So like it or not you will have to be free
'Cause we're the cops of the world, boys,
we're the cops of the world.



FOOTNOTES: Phil Ochs's predictions had an uncanny quality of coming true. He unilaterally declared the war in Vietnam over in 1967. To all intents and purposes this was correct. The mighty U.S.A. and its cowardly puppets in Saigon had been defeated. However, the US dragged the war on, involved Cambodia, bombed Hanoi and sent more billions of our money to Thieu. 22,000 more Americans, a million Cambodians, and countless thousands of Vietnamese died needlessly before Washington would admit its defeat and negotiate a peace.

Phil said in the Izzy Young Interview that the electoral procedure in America had become a total failure. The subsequent events proved him absolutely right. We elected a crook for a president who finally had to be banished from his office. He was succeeded by a dolt who would have poured additional hundreds of millions of dollars into Vietnam had not Congress stopped him. He tried to involve the US in a war in Africa, but again Congress put the brakes on this idiocy. Now he is trying to get himself elected, assisted by his vice-President, the murderer of Attica. He succeeded Nixon's v-p who also turned out to be a crook and like his boss had to resign.

Take a look at the other characters now running for the presidency. One is a Georgia

cracker who considered Calley a hero and set a day aside for a state-wide celebration for the US troops who were in Vietnam killing men, women and babies at My Lai and hundreds of other My Lais. He is being contested by a third rate actor from California who called for a blood-bath of the students protesting the lunacy in Vietnam.

Meanwhile, we have a Congress swarming with sex maniacs spending the people's money to pay their prostitutes. No wonder Phil Ochs gave up on the electoral process.

Phil showed his sensitivity in many other ways. Last fall, shortly before he died, he was still expressing his bitterness at being excluded from the Woody Guthrie tribute concert and at the way he was mistreated by the Newport Folk Festival.

There remain unresolved mysteries surrounding his death in April of 1976. The Washington hearings revealed that the FBI, which works closely with the CIA, has a deliberate program of trying to drive dissidents to commit suicide. They admitted they tried it on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and failed. Who knows where they succeeded? When Phil in the early 70's attempted a tour of South America he was twice arrested, jailed, and deported the next morning from the capitals of South American military dictatorships.



YOUNG PEACE DEMONSTRATORS BEING HELD IN CUSTODY

Photo by Diana Davies

In each instance he was met at the Airport and taken into custody by the police. It seems obvious that CIA agents informed the police as to the plane on which he was travelling and what to do with him when the plane arrived. He was also expelled from Ireland on the second day after his arrival there. Again the hand of the CIA was evident.

In Africa, Phil was set upon by three "mug-gers" who concentrated on crushing his voice box to destroy his singing ability. Were they under instructions? He returned barely able to croak and never again could reach the high notes so essential to his songs.

When he tried to visit his ancestral Scotland, British police seized him in London and expelled him. Phil got off the plane in Dublin. Communications between the CIA and the Irish government seemed to have been slow, for Phil was allowed to stay in Ireland all of two days before being deported to the U.S.

Last fall while in New York, Phil several times made arrangements to get himself "dried out". A question arises: was someone assigned to accompany him and ply him with more alcohol to keep him in a stupor?

It is logical that the US government would want to see dead a man who wrote such savage anti-imperialist songs as "Cops Of The World," "United Fruit," "Santo Domingo," "White Boots Marching In A Yellow Land," and "Ringing Of Revolution."

Phil is the second Broadside songwriter to "commit suicide." Back in 1965, the same diagnosis was made of Peter La Farge, adopted son of Oliver La Farge, who won the Pulitzer prize

for his sympathetic novel of the Navahoes "Laughing Boy" (Albums of Peter singing his songs can be gotten from Folkways.) It was not so much Peter's songs to which the FBI objected. He became a target when he began organizing an Indian civil rights movement which he called FAIR. He made a nation-wide tour of Indian reservations to enlist young followers. One of his plans was to block Highway 66, a major US traffic artery.

The demonstration was to have taken place near Albuquerque, New Mexico, with Indians blocking the Highway with their bodies to draw attention to the injustices being inflicted upon our native Americans. Sometime after this tour, FBI agents invaded Peter's New York apartment at midnight. They tore up and scattered his papers; they handcuffed and took him in his pajamas to Bellevue where they tried to get him committed to an insane asylum. Bellevue was not impressed and turned him loose. But the FBI harassment continued.

Joe Hill was framed and executed. Woody Guthrie felt F.B.Eyes watching him. Fannie Sellins and Ella Mae Wiggins were murdered. In Chile singer Victor Jara was tortured and shot as was poet Lorca in Spain.

Perhaps at a hearing five or ten years from now we will learn how Phil Ochs really died.

It is dangerous to be a protest singer.

By GORDON FRIESEN



POLICE ASSEMBLING TO ATTACK PEOPLES' DEMONSTRATION

Photo by Diana Davies