

Leon Rosselson & Roy Bailey



Songs of Life from a Dying British Empire

Since the notes below were written, the economic situation in Great Britain has deteriorated even further. Unemployment has soared, particularly among people of color, and social unrest is growing. The British establishment still attempts to maintain its facade of solid tradition with pomp and circumstance like the lavish wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana. But such images are shattered by major riots of working class youth in several English cities and the deaths of 10 Irish patriots in protest against the barbaric conditions suffered by political prisoners of the British. But the British empire is dying and the people say ever stronger of its' rule, "That's Not The Way Its Got To Be."



A NOTE ON THE BRITISH SITUATION IN THE SEVENTIES

The old image of a Britain, decent, tolerant, fair, a land of polite bus queues, kindly policemen helping old ladies across the street, Speaker's Corner, is hard to sustain nowadays. The liberal mask is slipping. With the shortage of buses, the queue has become a scramble; the kindly policeman is more than likely lurking to arrest a young black on suspicion of being a person intending to commit a criminal offense. The much-vaunted tradition of freedom is looking somewhat tarnished, too: official censorship on Northern Ireland; Agee* and others deported; radical journalists prosecuted under the Official Secrets Act.

The crisis affecting Britain is no different from the crisis affecting the rest of the Western world—declining profitability, inflation, high unemployment. The attempted cure is much the same, too: cuts in public spending, the rationalization of production, wage controls, money channelled away from hospitals, schools, welfare, towards private capital. In 1974, this policy led the Conservative Government into a confrontation with the miners and its defeat at the election. Since then, the Labor Government has carried out the same policy with the connivance of the Unions and with—until now—remarkably little opposition. So the last four years have seen a real decline in most people's standard of living, a deterioration in public services and a consistently high level of unemployment, despite government-sponsored job creation schemes to make the statistics look better.

And this decline and the everyday frustrations it has brought have been accompanied by a drift to the right and a growing chauvinism and racism, made more nasty by vague schoolbook memories of Britain's former 'glory' as a great empire. Strict controls on immigration are imposed. West Indians and Asians are baited, attacked, stabbed in Bradford, East London, Wolverhampton. The fascist National Front, waving Union Jack banners and singing 'Rule Britannia', marches, protected by battalions of police, through areas with a large black population. Margaret Thatcher talks of fears that our British culture will be swamped.

At the same time, Law'n'Order is showing its teeth. Police harassment and surveillance grows. The Special Patrol Group is brought in to attack and intimidate strikers. Torture is tried out in Northern Ireland. Laws, old and new, are put into operation to silence potential 'subversives': Conspiracy laws, the Prevention of Terrorism Act, the Official Secrets Act, the Incitement to Disaffection Act, the Criminal Act (directed at squatters and workers' sit-ins.)

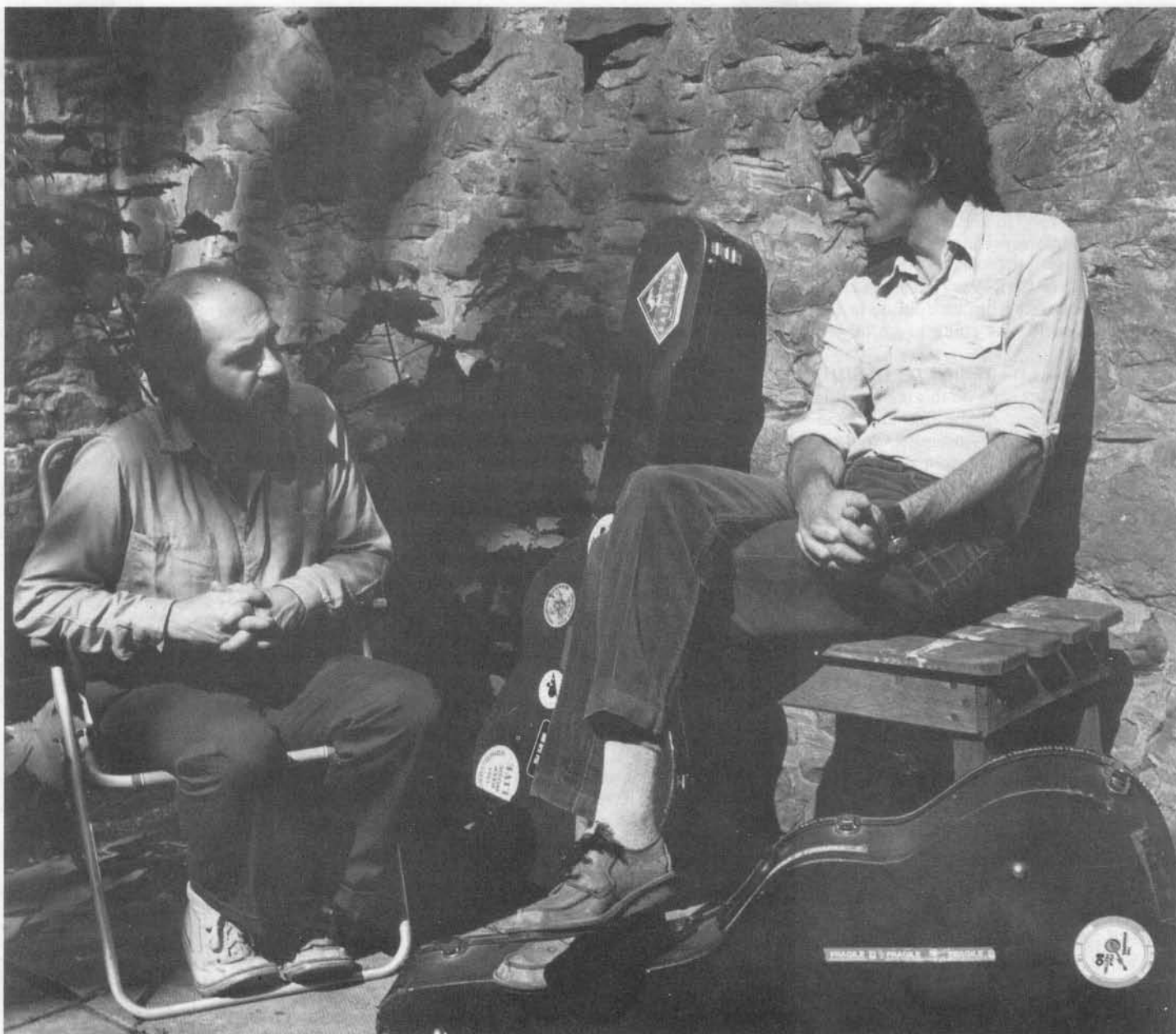
And yet it would be wrong to suppose that the situation is explosive, that the system is on the verge of falling apart. Those at the bottom, those on the fringes of society, the sick, the old, the poor, the unemployable, are feeling most of the turn of the screw, but they don't carry much political or economic weight. The Queen still reigns and stirs, it seems, a patriotic response. The welfare state still acts as a cushion against the worst ef-

fects of the crisis. The fight back—from the Anti-Nazi League, Rock Against Racism, the Right to Work Campaign, the campaign to stop the cuts, to keep open hospitals, the mass pickets brought out by the Grunwick strikers, and now the resistance to any more wage controls—is on issues that are short-term, economic. How this fight back will develop, whether it will be contained by compromise or become coherently and consciously political, is too early to say.

The songs on this record, then, are not by and large for singing on the barricades because that's not where we are. A few of them, it's true (PLAN, THEY'RE GOING TO BUILD A MOTORWAY) have been used in campaigns, and all of them have given heart to audiences wherever we've sung them, in folk clubs and concerts, theatres, political benefits and socialist gatherings. But they are not really about simple-minded slogans and revolutionary rhetoric. On the other hand, they're not greatly concerned either with private fantasies or moody introspection. The situation is too serious for that. What these songs do, I think, is to probe, examine, throw light on the point at which the impersonal world presses on, chafes, tears at, constricts, deadens the personal life. They are songs about people in political situations. They are about trying to be human in the face of an inhuman system.

Leon Rosselson

*Agee = Philip Agee, ex-CIA man who sought refuge in England after writing a book exposing practices of his former employer. He was subsequently deported from England in co-operation with U.S. authorities.



Roy Bailey and Leon Rosselson

ABOUT THE ARTISTS AND THEIR MUSIC

Leon Rosselson and Roy Bailey have combined their talents to produce an album of social criticism in the tradition of Bertolt Brecht—inventive, comic, never settling for the obvious. It challenges not only the smugness of the bourgeoisie but also the easy dogmatism that has all too often characterized the left. Rosselson and Bailey offer us penetrating social criticism as independent artists, but their songs provide trenchant observations on the era of capitalism's decay from the point of view of those who work to transform it.

Leon Rosselson, who wrote most of the songs on this album, has his musical roots in the British folk revival of the fifties in which he was a prominent figure. But his art and intellectual outlook is that of the political satirist or, as one British reviewer put it, Rosselson is a "sort of anarchist

Noel Coward." He has sung in several folk groups, has run a folk club in Hampstead and has recorded several albums in Britain which all too quickly became collector's items.

Roy Bailey also began singing during the British folk revival. At the start of his career in 1961, his major source of material was British traditional songs, industrial ballads and broadsheets. His work today is a mixture of traditional, industrial and contemporary and he has established himself as a fine singer and interpreter of both lyrical and dramatic songs with a clear, political stance. In 1964 he joined Leon and a folk group called the Three City Four with whom he made his first album. Roy has for the past twenty years combined a singing career with an academic one. He is a sociologist and is best known for his widely

used book, *Radical Social Work*.

Rosselson and Bailey perform in concert together and have jointly made several albums. Of their work, a British member of Parliament wrote, "The importance of Leon Rosselson and Roy Bailey is that they use their talents to bulldoze the sludge away and lay bare the deeper tradition of thought and feeling which the establishment has tried to keep safely covered up."

Together, through the songs on this album, Rosselson and Bailey successfully walk a thin political and artistic line between satire and cynicism. Along with the targeting of social hypocrisies and the noting of political ironies, there is a recurrent thread of optimism and humanity which in the final analysis places this work solidly on the side of struggle.

ABOUT THE SONGS:

It is always useful to remind the pundits who tell you Britain is too conservative ever to have a revolution that three centuries ago the people of Britain rose and executed their own king for treason. Although, inevitably at that time, it was the merchants and money-lenders who came to the top, to the common people for a few years everything seemed possible. Through the prolific pamphlet literature of the Civil War runs a recurring phrase, borrowed from an episode in the Bible: the world was going to be turned upside down.

THE WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN is the key song on this record. It is constructed largely of the fine and vivid phrases of Gerrard Winstanley, spokesman for the handful of poor people who in 1649 on St. George's Hill in Surrey, inspired by a vision of the earth as a common treasury, tried to make a reality of the commonwealth of mankind. It puts better than a dozen history lessons the relevance of the past to the present. Like everything else on this record, it is a song for today.

What this record is about is the fundamental decency and creativity of ordinary people and the cruelty of those

who press the buttons, who see men as soldiers, children as an investment, homes as properties and aspirations and dreams as a source of profit. It is about the un-sinkability of those who have nothing. It is about a society in which there are those who expect only obedience—whether the orders are to die for king and country, to work harder for the national interest or to hail progress in the form of slot machines and motorways—and those who are expected only to obey. It is about a world in which the industrious self-made ant is held up as an example to us all.

But consider the poets and songmakers who say he's a selfish bastard, as Rosselson does in his version of the fable and as Adrian Mitchell does in **TIME AND MOTION STUDY**. The protagonist of **TIME AND MOTION STUDY** would regard the protagonist of **I JUST CAN'T WAIT** or **THEY'RE GOING TO BUILD A MOTORWAY** as a solid achievement—a man who recognizes that he can't hit back, who acknowledges that those in authority know what they're doing and do it for the common good. He would regard the working man in **COATS OFF FOR BRITAIN** as a bit of a red, too idle or too obstinate to respond to Harold

Heath's appeals to make more profits for someone else in the national interest. But above all he fears the initiative of the young boy in **PERSPECTIVES**, the nostalgia of those who groan when they see the Wombles* and remember the **PUNCH AND JUDY MAN**, the pride of the working man whose boast is that he has never been a blackleg*, and most of all the enduring vision of the Diggers. If all those people were isolated idealists it might not matter to the world's ants; but the ants know what the Digger's contemporary John Warr knew:

"There are some sparks of freedom in the minds of most, which ordinarily lie deep and are covered in the dark as a spark in the ashes."

These are the people who have it in their power to turn the world upside down once they decide **THAT'S NOT THE WAY IT'S GOT TO BE**.

Stephen Sedley

*Wombles = puppets (like muppets or Sesame Street character) from a popular children's show called "The Wombles of Wimbledon."

*blackleg = scab; strikebreaker

THE SONGS

Side 1, Band 1: (0:18)
SCHOOL TAUGHT ME
Words: Leon Rosselson

*School taught me
To write my name,
To recite the answers,
To feel ashamed,
To stand in corners,
To wait in line,
To kiss the rod,
To be on time,
And trust in God.*

*To make me a model citizen,
That was their goal.
Well I don't know about that,
But it was useful training
For a career
On the dole.*

Since this was written—as a bus ticket poem* for Inter-Action's Fun Art Bus—unemployment among school-leavers (drop-outs) has risen drastically. Meanwhile, schools, besieged by the irrelevance of most of what they're trying to teach, have nothing left to fall back on but the traditional pretense that their role is to produce socially-responsible citizens.

*bus ticket poem = the entrance fee to the Fun Art Bus was a piece of creative writing.

Side 1, Band 2: (2:00)
THE STREETS OF LONDON
Words: John Hasted
Music: Traditional Irish

*I'm a roving blade of many a trade,
I've every trade and all trades,
And if you want to know my name
Just call me Jack of all trades.
I've often heard of London town,
The pride of every nation.
At twenty-one it's here I come,
To look for a situation.*

*In Covent Garden I began
And there I was a porter.
My boss and I—we soon fell out,
Which made the acquaintance
shorter.
Then I drove a number 46,
From Waterloo to Wembley,
Where I became an engineer,
On airplane assembly.*

*In Charlotte Street I was a chef,
In Stepney Green a tailor
But very soon they laid me off,
So I became a sailor.
In Rotherhithe a stevedore,
In Gray's Inn Road a grinder.
On Hampstead Heath I lost my
wife.
It's sad, but I never did find her.*

*In Downing Street I was a lord,
In Denmark Street I made songs,
In every street and all streets
With my banjo I played songs.
In Harley Street I was a quack,
In Turnham Green a teacher,
On Highbury Hill a halfback
And on Primrose Hill a preacher.*

*In Gower Street I'd furniture,
With fleas and bugs I sold it,
In Leicester Square a big white card,
I often stood to hold it.
By London Bridge I'd lodging beds
For all who made their way there,
For London is of high reknown
And Scotsmen often stay there.*

*I'm a roving blade of many a trade,
I've every trade and all trades,
And if you want to know my name,
Just call me Jack of all trades.
I've tried my hand at everything,
From herringbones to hatpegs,
But I can raise my head and say
I've never been a blackleg.*

John Hasted, once a leading figure in the British folk revival in the fifties, now a professor of physics at London University, put together a number of highly singable songs. This tale of the indepen-

dent working man is a reworking of the Dublin street ballad 'Jack of All Trades.' Those who have complained that Hasted's politically conscious last line is out of keeping with the idiom of the traditional song may well be right; but it provides a fine final punch and a good contemporary reason for singing the song.

* * *

Side 1, Band 3: (1:05)
TIME AND MOTION STUDY
Words: Adrian Mitchell

*Slow down the film.
 You see that bit boy?
 Seven days old and no work done.
 Two hands
 Clutching nothing but air,
 Two legs kicking nothing but air.
 That yell.
 There's wasted energy there.
 No use to himself,
 No good for the firm.
 Make a note of that.*

*New film. Now look,
 Now he's fourteen.
 Work out the energy required
 To make him grow that tall.
 It could have been used.
 It could have all been used
 For the good of the firm
 And he could have stayed small.
 Make a note of that.*

*Age thirty. And the waste continues.
 Using his legs for walking.
 Tiring his mouth with talking and
 eating.
 Twitching.
 Slow it down. Reproducing? I see.
 All, I suppose,
 For the good of the firm.
 But he'd better change methods.
 Yes, he'd better.
 Look at the waste of time
 and emotion,
 Look at the waste. Look. Look.
 And make a note of that.*

The hero of 'Streets of London' is no use at all to capitalist production. Efficiency, rationalization, productivity—these are the keywords. Workers must be molded, processed, flattened into the proper shape to fit the system. There is no room for personality or the waste of human emotion. This poem by Adrian Mitchell—poet, novelist, playwright and socialist—says it all.

* * *

Side 1, Band 4: (4:36)
I JUST CAN'T WAIT
Words: Ian Campbell
Music: John Dunkerley

*Well I took this job when I left
 school
 And I thought it might be fun.
 And I signed the papers binding me
 till I was twenty-one.*

(chorus)
*But I just can't wait to collect me
 cards.
 I just can't wait to go.
 I can't get along with the people
 here
 And my work it bores me so.*

*So I learnt the trade for what it's
 worth,
 And the time has gone so slow.
 But soon my birthday's coming up,
 And I'll be free to go.*

(chorus)
*Well I think I'll wait till the
 wedding's over
 Before I say goodbye.
 For the girlfriend tells me we must
 save
 If a house we hope to buy.*

(chorus)
*Now I'll have to wait till the baby's
 born
 Before I can be free
 For I understand a pregnant wife
 Must have security,*

(chorus)
*Now I'll have to wait
 till the kids leave school
 Before I break away
 For growing kids eat money,
 And I need the steady pay,*

(chorus)
*Now I think I'll wait
 till the house is mine
 Before I break the tie,
 For the interest rates keep rising
 And the car it bleeds me dry.*

(chorus)
*Now I'll have to wait till retiring age
 Before I risk the break,
 For the pension scheme insures the
 wife
 And it's mainly for her sake.*

(chorus)

*Well thank you for the gold watch,
 sir,
 The silver collection too.
 But are you sure I have to go?
 I won't know what to do.*

(chorus)

*And I just can't bear to collect my
 cards
 I just can't bear to go,
 For I shall miss the people here
 And my life it bores me so.*

Ian Campbell—who comes from a Scottish folk-singing family and whose folk group was prominent in the early years of the revival (and still gives the occasional concert)—has written many notable songs. This real-life study (to which John Dunkerley supplied the tune) gives a relentlessly convincing picture of a man sucked in by the machine, pinned down, boxed in, trapped and, when his productive life is over, left an empty shell.

A pensioner came to us after a concert in Bradford and—while not denying the essential truth of the song—protested that not all old people were so bored with themselves that they didn't know what to do with their time when they retired. True. This item from that reactionary newspaper "The Daily Express" gives a different perspective: "After 20 years working for Ruston Paxman Diesels in Colchester, storeman Goodchild was presented with a gold watch. Called upon by the management to say a few words, Bert said, 'Goodbye and good riddance. This is the happiest day of my life. Conditions in the store are disgraceful and I'm glad to be leaving.' "

* * *

Side 1, Band 5: (5:30)
COATS OFF FOR BRITAIN
Words and Music: Leon Rosselson

(Chorus)
*Coats off! Coats off!
 Coats off for Britain,
 There's a battle to be won.
 On the Stock Exchange,
 And on the dole*,
 Selling garden gnomes
 And digging coal,
 It's coats off! Coats off!
 Coats off for Britain, everyone!*

*Coats off for Britain!
 says Her Majesty,
 From the bottom of her
 very gracious heart,
 Trying to boost the nation
 With a Royal Proclamation,*

To encourage everyone to play his part.

While politicians palter
And the bills remain unpaid,
Her step will never falter
And her smile will never fade.
Dutifully doing
What she's born and bred to do,
Working hard from morn till late,
Receiving dreary Heads of State,
Arranging Royal Weddings
And a Royal Birth or two,
For me and you,
To pull us through.
And on the Royal Yacht Britannia
they'll be singing then—

(Chorus)

Coats off for Britain!
says the businessman,
Flying to his island in the sun,
Trying to boost the nation,
Selling cures for constipation.
Got to keep the British worker
on the run.
He's a patriotic gentleman,
Just put him to the test,
All he needs is the incentive
And in Britain he'll invest.
Of course, if taxes take their toll
And strikes become a strain,
And profit margins start to shrink,
He'll have to have another think,
And maybe move his money into
property in Spain.
He's not to blame.
You'd do the same.
And from his overseas tax haven
he'll be singing then—

(Chorus)

Coats off for Britain!
says the high-priced call girl,
In and out of bed all day,
Trying to boost the nation
With a bit of copulation,
If you're British I'll be giving
it away.
Sheikhs fly in from Abu Dhabi,
Politicians from Peru.
Never mind Westminster Abbey,
It's her charms they've come to
view.
She's got the Diplomatic Corps in
tow
From Holland to Hong Kong,
Her speciality's a winner,
It would make a saint a sinner,
When she strikes a patriotic pose
And thrills them with this song,
With nothing on,
She can't go wrong,
She's got their expectations rising
as they sing along—

(Chorus)

Coats off for Britain!
says the working man,
Screwing little screws non-stop,
Trying to boost the nation
With a dash of perspiration,
Though we'll never climb the ladder
to the top.
Now the country is in crisis,
So don't strike for higher pay.
We must all make sacrifices
And work harder every day.
We've got to pull our belts in,
It's the same for rich and poor.
Today the cupboard's empty,
But tomorrow there'll be plenty.
It's the same old song,
We've heard it all a million
times before,
In peace and war,
Don't ask for more. They're
always singing it—

(Chorus)

*On the dole = receiving government subsistence money.

For as long as I can remember, politicians have been exhorting us to work harder in the national interest. The quotations that precede the song, contained in speeches by two prime ministers supposedly on different sides, are drawn from that great garbage heap of patriotic clichés that has sustained our political leaders in war and peace, slump, boom and crisis. Now the crisis grows more severe, the calls to pull together grow more urgent. Class differences, class conflicts are unmentionable, not to say un-British. Suddenly they're all waving the Union Jack. Bluff Jim Callaghan talks of a 'great national effort.' Even the Archbishop of Canterbury joins the crusade, delivers stirring messages urging the national reconstruction. Only for him there's more to it than hard work. We need, he declared in one memorable Easter sermon, not only the will to work and the will to fight but also "prayer, which draws on the endless resources of God." Coats off for Britain! is clearly not enough. The slogan really should be—Go to Work On Your Knees!

* * *

Side 1, Band 6: (0:34)

HIGH IN CONTROL ROOMS

Words and Music: Leon Rosselson

High in control rooms they
calculate,
A bumper crop sprouts from the
dead.
Those groping underground have
nothing to lose.
The word is 'progress', direction's
straight ahead.
I took my place in the queue.
The machines are always well-fed.
There was a sign over the company
gates which said:
'Those who are punished will be
rewarded with a weekly allowance
of bird-droppings.
Those who refuse to be punished
will be—punished.'

* * *

Side 1, Band 7: (2:30)

THE ANT AND THE GRASSHOPPER

Words and Music: Leon Rosselson

The ant and the grasshopper
Everyone knows
How the story goes
How the ant was diligent
Never spent
Anything lightly
He labored wisely
And gathered his store for
Tomorrow.
As for the grasshopper, glad of the
summer sunshine
Light as the wind on the broken
water,
His song he gave
To the summer days,
Singing 'Where the dance leads I'll
follow'.

Then came the hard winter
Nothing grew
And the cold winds blew
But the ant was safe and sound
Underground
Carefully counting
His pile around him,
Dividing his time until
Tomorrow.
As for the grasshopper, blown by
the north wind's fury,
Hungering for the easy summer.
Comes to the ant and says
'My brother, give me bread,
Now is the dance that I must
follow'.

'Why did you waste the summer?
Summers don't last forever,

*You're just an idle beggar,
You must pay the price,
Sacrifice
You would not heed me,
You took life easy,
Now take the punishments that
follow.'*

*Now see the grasshopper
Reel like a dry leaf falling
Weaving a dance that will last
forever.
Back goes the ant to his nest
To work, to feed, to rest,
For him there will always be
Tomorrow.*

*The ant and the grasshopper
Everyone knows
How the story goes
How the ant was diligent
Never spent
Anything lightly
He labored wisely
And gathered his store for
Tomorrow.
As for the grasshopper, glad of the
summer sunshine
Light as the wind on the broken
water,
His song he gave
To the summer days,
Singing 'Where the dance leads I'll
follow'.*

The old fable of the ant and the grasshopper—Aesop and La Fontaine are the two versions I know but there must be others—is usually told to children to instill in them a serious attitude to life. The grasshopper is held up as an Awful Warning, idling his time away, singing, dancing, enjoying himself, and in the end, getting his just deserts. The ant is offered as a Good Example. Thrift. Hard work. Self-sacrifice. As you sow so shall you reap. Invest in today and tomorrow will bring its own rewards. But for whom?

Well, I never liked the ant too much. Cautious. Calculating. Smug. Self-satisfied. A merchant banker through and through. So this song, while not changing the story overmuch, reverses the traditional sympathies.

* * *

Side 1, Band 8: (3:22)
THE ROSE OF YORK
Words and Music: Ken Thompson
and Lesley Hale

*Oh my name it is Mark Bennett,
I am a Yorkshire man.
I earn my living by my pen,
Tell a stirring tale I can.
But the one I tell you now, boys,
Was writ by foolish men,*

*And the petals fell from the Rose of
York,
Never to bloom again.*

*Come all you young married men,
You boys of the bulldog breed.
We're looking for the strong and
brave.
That's what Britannia needs.
We'll fight the Hun* in Flanders,
And the Germans on the Seine,
And the petals fell from the Rose of
York
Never to bloom again.*

*We first set out to Egypt,
Where the heat was hard to bear.
We were waiting for the call to
France,
For the Bosch* were fighting there.
And we talked of what we'd do
boys,
Brothers, sons and friends,
And the petals fell from the Rose of
York
Never to bloom again.*

*At last we heard the push was on,
And we sailed across the Med.
We never thought in two weeks' time
That most of us'd be dead.
And the girls at home would weep
With a grief that's hard to mend,
And the petals fell from the Rose of
York
Never to bloom again.*

*With shouts of joy we lads did
charge
Towards the German wire.
Our handsome mate was the first to
fall
As the guns they opened fire.
His face no longer handsome,
On the barbed wire met his end,
And the petals fell from the Rose of
York
Never to bloom again.*

*Now we had a sergeant major,
Bold by nature, Bold by name.
But the German guns don't pick and
choose,
And Bold died just the same.
And other gallants followed,
Their coin of life to spend,
And the petals fell from the Rose of
York
Never to bloom again.*

*Oh we did not want to lose you,
But we thought you ought to go.
Your King and country needed you.
Lord Kitchener told us so.
But the story now I've told you
Was writ by foolish men.*

*And the petals fell from the Rose of
York
Never to bloom again.*

*Hun=a WWI word for Germans.
*Bosch= WWI term for Germans.

*Those at the top say:
Peace and war
Are of different substance.
But their peace and their war
Are like wind and storm.*

*War grows from their peace
Like son from his mother
He bears
Her frightful features.*

*Their war kills
Whatever their peace
Has left over.*

This song serves to bridge the two related themes of the record—work and property. Ken Thompson, a journalist from Edinburgh, wrote the words; Lesley Hale, a folksinger also from Edinburgh, the tune. It is based on an episode in a documentary novel about the Great War of 1914-18 by John Harris called 'Covenant With Death' and relates a true incident from that war when the soldiers of a Yorkshire Regiment were slaughtered because of the incompetence and callousness of their commanders. As millions of ordinary soldiers on both sides were slaughtered to protect the property of the rich and powerful.

* * *

Side 2, Band 1: (6:33)
**THE WORLD TURNED UPSIDE
DOWN**
Words and Music: Leon Rosselson

(First part)
*The man who'd worked assembling
Rolls Royce
Silver Shadows all his life
Took the rush hour bus to work and
back.
One clocking off time in a dream
He took the car he'd helped to
make,
And drove around in style that
night.
A foolish trick, the big boss said,
I buy your work, you buy your
bread,
I pay you well to work for me,
So take your hands off my
property.
Three months inside was more than
he expected.
Society, the judge declared, must
be—protected.*

*We wandered out to find the spring,
The sun was hot, the air was free
In the green and pleasant
countryside,
Across the moors, we walked and
talked
And climbed the hills and felt the
wind,
And all the world lay at our feet.
Clear off, the Duke said testily,
These lands were given my family
For special favors to the King.
In short, my friends, you're
trespassing.
You'll frighten the grouse,
Next time I'll prosecute you,
Our magistrates like shooting
grouse,
They ought—to shoot you.*

*The old man looked the worse for
wear,
Moved on again he walked the
streets
With a bottle of wine to keep him
warm.
The house he broke into
Had long been empty, smelt to him
of home,
And like a child he fell asleep.
This house is ours, the churchmen
cried,
You have no right to be inside.
We'll sell it dear, we bought it
cheap,
As you sow, so shall you reap.
It's said, 'To him who hath, more
shall be given.
He who hath not will get his due
reward—in Heaven.'*

(Second part)

*In sixteen forty-nine, to St. George's
Hill,
A ragged band they called the
Diggers
Came to show the people's will,
They defied the landlords, they
defied the laws,
They were the dispossessed
reclaiming what was theirs.*

*We come in peace, they said, to dig
and sow,
We come to work the lands
in common
And to make the waste grounds
grow.
This earth divided we will make
whole
So it will be a common treasury for
all.*

*The sin of property we do disdain,
No man has any right to buy
And sell the earth for private gain,*

*By theft and murder, they took the
land,
Now everywhere the walls spring up
at their command.*

*They make the laws to chain us
well,
The clergy dazzle us with heaven
Or they damn us into hell.
We will not worship the God they
serve,
The God of greed who feeds the
rich while poor men starve.*

*We work, we eat together, we need
no swords,
We will not bow to the masters
Or pay rent to the lords.
We are free men, though we are
poor.
You Diggers all, stand up for glory,
stand up now!*

*From the men of property, the
orders came.
They sent the hired men and
troopers
To wipe out the Diggers' claim.
Tear down their cottages, destroy
their corn!
They were dispersed, only the vision
lingers on.*

*You poor take courage, you rich
take care,
This earth was made a common
treasury
For everyone to share.
All things in common, all people
one.
We come in peace—the orders came
to cut them down.*

*"Property came in by the Sword . . . the
murderer brought it in and upholds it by
his power." (Gerrard Winstanley 1648)*

This song is in two connected parts; the first sketches contemporary tales of a property-owning democracy; the second tells the story of the 17th century Diggers, drawing largely on the words of the man who became their spokesman, Gerrard Winstanley. Winstanley was the most radical thinker of his time, questioning and analyzing the fundamental premises on which society was—and is—based and proposing a practical revolutionary program for its transformation. He spoke for the poor, the landless, the propertyless, for whom the Civil War and the execution of the king had changed nothing. "We were before ruled by a King, Lords and Commons," said one ordinary soldier, "now by a General, Court-Martial and a House of Commons. We pray you, what is the difference?"

The main points of the Diggers' program were: 1. to abolish private property

and establish common ownership of the land; 2. to abolish rent and wage labor ('We must neither buy nor sell. Money must not any longer be the great god that hedges in some and hedges out others; for after our work of the Earthly Community is advanced, we must make use of gold and silver as we do of other metals but not to buy or sell,'); 3. to achieve this by non-violent direct action ('Action is the life of all and if thou dost not act, thou dost nothing.').

The most famous Digger community was on the waste land at St. George's Hill in Surrey (an area now heavily populated by stockbrokers). This community survived for about a year despite constant attacks by the gentry, the clergy, the law and the soldiers; but in the end it was destroyed.

The Diggers were ignored by historians until fairly recently. Now, largely due to the work of a Marxist historian, Christopher Hill, there is a revival of interest in their actions and ideas and in the other radical groups that flourished for a short time during the period of the English Revolution.

"The world turned upside down" is a recurring phrase in the writings and sayings of the poor. The British, apparently, played a tune with that title after their defeat at Yorktown during the American War of Independence. Winstanley used it in this context: "All men have stood for freedom . . . and those of the richer sort of you that see it are ashamed and afraid to own it, because it comes clothed in a clownish garment. Freedom is the man that will turn the world upside down, therefore no wonder he has enemies." (Watchword to the City of London, 1649).

Note for anyone who wants to sing the song. As the second part of this song has been taken up and sung around by a number of singers in England, it has gone through some changes. 'Poor folk' has been substituted for 'poor men', 'we are free people' for 'we are free men', though I think the original is justified on historical grounds. An alternative more positive last line has been used ('They were dispersed, but still the vision lingers on') but I think the point is made without that. One change I have adopted, though, is in the penultimate verse: 'But still the vision lingers on' instead of 'Only the vision lingers on'.

Leon Rosselson

* * *

Side 2, Band 2: (3:11)

THEY'RE GOING TO BUILD A MOTORWAY

Words and Music: Leon Rosselson

*They're going to build a motorway
Through my back garden,
No-one can explain
How I came to be chosen,
They're going to build a motorway,
They're ripping up the trees,
Soon the lorries* will be lurching
Through my cabbages and peas.*

*Word came from the Council,
It was all about a plan,
Which I didn't understand,
But it sounded very grand.
They spoke of urban
redevelopment,
And improving the
environment,
They said to ease the traffic
flow
A bit of my back-yard would
have to go.
Well, I don't know
I suppose that those who've
studied it must know best,
And I wouldn't want my
vegetable patch to hold up
progress.*

*They're going to build a motorway
Through my back garden,
No-one can explain
How I came to be chosen.
They're going to build a motorway,
They're ripping up the trees,
Soon the lorries will be lurching
Through my cabbages and peas.*

*My brother lives in Lilac Grove,
It's just across the street,
I've not seen him for weeks,
We always used to meet
And have a pint or two
At the Old Dun Cow,
It's just a heap of rubble now,
The pawnshop's disappeared
and so's
The barber's where we always
used to go.
And I don't know—
These noisy great machines are
working non-stop,
And funny things are growing
and it looks as though the
bomb's dropped.*

*The bulldozers are closing in
On my back garden,
No-one can explain
How I came to be chosen,
The bulldozers are closing in,
They've ripped up all the trees,
Soon the lorries will be zooming
Through my cabbages and peas.*

*I don't go out much any more,
Can't find my way around,
The wind nearly knocks me
down,*

*There's tunnels underground
And just to get about from
place to place
Is like a bleeding steeplechase,
Day and night the traffic flows
It's best to plug your ears and
hold your nose,
But I suppose—
I'm better off than some,
don't think I'm just sour,
And I'm grateful for the grand-
stand view
I'm getting of the rush hour.*

*They've built an eight lane
motorway
Through my back garden,
No-one can explain
How I came to be chosen,
They've built an eight lane
motorway,
They've ripped up all the trees,
Now lorries zoom where once I grew
My cabbages and peas.*

*Lorries = trucks.

The quotation that precedes the song is taken from the London Evening Standard and describes an old man's reaction to the road widening scheme at Neasden in North London. The song was not written specifically about that road development but about all the urban motorways that—as a result of the power of the road lobby—have been built over the last fifteen years, destroying houses, dividing communities, causing unbearable noise and pollution, making people feel, like the old man in the song, cut off and helpless.

* * *

Side 2, Band 3: (3:50)

PUNCH AND JUDY MAN

Words and Music: John Connolly

*Down the lanes of foggy chimneys
In the little seaside town
Drives the east wind like a dragon
Strewing leaves of ragged brown
Winter's planting icicles
Along the barren shore
And the Punch and Judy man is
gone forever—*

(Chorus)

*Mister Punch and Judy man,
Bring me back the childhood land
Of summer.*

*In the meadows, by the river
Where the elm and willow stand
Silver mist is creeping down
To lullaby the sleeping land
Through the bare and blackened
branches
Swallows fly no more
And the Punch and Judy man is
gone forever—*

Mister Punch and Judy man. . .

*Slot machines and penny arcades
Jingle, jangle on the pier
Gone the sound of children laughing
Fading with the dying years
Through the town he wanders
In the misty autumn haze
And the Punch and Judy man is
gone forever—*

Mister Punch and Judy man. . .

*Punchinello, Punchinello
Where have you and Judy gone?
Gone to join the swelling ranks
Of things that we look back upon
Memories can conjure you
From dreams of summer days
And the Punch and Judy man is
gone forever—*

Mister Punch and Judy man. . .

Written by a talented songwriter from the seaside town of Cleethorpes (he also wrote 'Fiddlers' Green'), this song looks back with nostalgia at the traditional Punch and Judy seaside show, small-scale, personal, human, that has now been largely swept away by progress and more mechanical and profitable forms of entertainment.

* * *

Side 2, Band 4: (2:56)

PERSPECTIVES

Words and Music: Leon Rosselson

*What do you feel? said the land to
the farmer.
Sweat on my brow, the farmer
replied,
Sun on my skin, said the springtime
lover,
Ball at my feet, the young boy
cried.*

*But the man whose eyes were made
to measure,
Said, 'Proud to invest in a high-
yield area,
Concrete and glass and a stake in
the future.'
What do you hear? said the song
to the singer.
Voice in the dark, the singer replied,
Rain in my heart, said the lovelorn
hearer,
Jumping stars, the young boy
cried.*

*But the man whose heart was made
to measure,
Said, 'Ring-a-ding-ding of a million
cash registers,
Making it big for a chart-topping
future.'
What do you see? said the boy to
his father.
Bundle of mischief, the father
replied.
Still just a baby, said the loving
mother.
I can run like the wind, the young
boy cried.*

*But the man whose mind was made
to measure,
Said, 'I.Q. subnormal, disturbed
behavior,
We'll grade him, we'll train him,
we'll see to his future.'*

*Now look—
The land is broken by walls, a
wilderness high,
The song is trapped on the turn-
table, everyone's queueing to buy,
The restless conveyor belt keeps the
boy busy from morning till night,*

*So tell me, who, after all, was
right?*

You're entitled to your opinions they say. You're free to express your ideas, they say. (As long as you don't do anything about them. . .)

It's heartening to know that our kind of liberal democracy can tolerate many different points of view. The question is, though: which point of view is to be allowed to prevail?

* * *

Side 2, Band 5: (4:00)

**PLAN (THAT'S NOT THE WAY
IT'S GOT TO BE)**

Words and Music: Leon Rosselson

*Piccadilly's just a slum,
Where the slugs and weirdies come,
Knock it down and clean it up
and watch the towers rise.
Make it look respectable,
Everything identical.
Trees will be permitted
of the regulation size.*

*But where have all the people
gone?
The concrete towers in spring
look sad.
Why does the wind blow hard
as stone?
Why is this place so cold and
drab?*

*Concrete is very neat,
Keep the people off the street,
Shove them down in tunnels
where they won't get in the way,
Hotels and offices,
Valuable properties,
What a lot of lolly*
we'll be making every day.*

*But where have all the people
gone?
The concrete towers in spring
look sad.
Why does the wind blow hard
as stone?
Why is this place so cold and
drab?*

*Road space is what we need,
Give the traffic room to breathe,
More cars are expected
so provisions must be made.
What to do with Eros,
Piccadilly's glamour boy?
Corner him and pen him in
and teach him to behave.*

*But where have all the people
gone?
The concrete towers in spring
look sad.
Why does the wind blow hard
as stone?
Why is this place so cold and
drab?*

BUT

**THAT'S NOT THE WAY
IT'S GOT TO BE!
PEOPLE BEFORE PROPERTY!
WE WANT A MEETING PLACE
AND NOT A TRAFFIC JAM!
LET EROS SPEAK FOR ALL OF
US;
LONDON'S STREETS BELONG
TO US,
NO TO THEIR PROFITS AND
THEIR PICCADILLY PLAN.
(sung simultaneously)
STOP THE TRAFFIC!
OPEN UP THE STREETS!
LET IT BE—A PLACE
WHERE EVERYONE CAN
MEET,
WALK AND TALK AND
PASS THE TIME OF DAY.
YOU CAN STAY
NO WALLS
OR RAILINGS BAR THE WAY.**

*Lolly = money.

The valuable sites on Piccadilly Circus are owned by three giant property companies. In 1972, at the height of the property boom, these companies, together with the Council's planners, proposed a massive redevelopment for Piccadilly which involved constructing hotels and offices, widening the roads to take more traffic, building decks in the air (afterwards changed to an underground concourse) for pedestrians. From the scheme, the companies, it was calculated, would make at least 100% profit on their investments. The Save Piccadilly Campaign—for which this song was originally written—was set up, and in the face of the enormous opposition it had generated, the scheme was withdrawn. J. Levy, Chairman of Stock Conversion, one of the companies involved, was not pleased. "If the next scheme which comes along from the planners is not viable" he said, "I will do nothing to help it along. I must put my

shareholders first." So the underlying conflict—between the needs of the property companies for profits and the human needs of the people who live and work there—remains.

In other places, the opposition has not been strong enough. Many cities have

been redeveloped in the interests of property companies and commercially-minded councils, their hearts torn out and replaced by concrete slabs, supermarkets, office blocks, carparks and one-way traffic systems. It's a nice contradiction of the system that claims to allow freedom and

individuality to flourish that its end result is to turn everywhere into the same as everywhere else.

The refrain of this song is easily adaptable and, in fact, has been adapted to meet the needs of other campaigns.

ABOUT THE SONGS:

These songs are not folk songs. They may, it is true, have been influenced by the idiom of folk song. It is true also that without the folk revival and the folk clubs, they would probably not have been written and would certainly not have been sung. And they do, I think, share with folk songs a concern for words—as opposed to the pop world's preoccupation with sounds, whether it be the sounds of protest, the sounds of poetry, the sounds of sitars rippling in the mystical breezes of transcendental meditation, or the sounds of a million well-fed cash registers playing a Song for Europe.

But they are not folk songs. I think the traditionalists are right in wanting to keep the term—if it is to have any meaning at all—to describe the traditional culture of a particular class. These songs are self-conscious rather than class-conscious, self-centered rather than community-centered, personal rather than impersonal. In any case, I don't believe modern folk songs can grow in the sort of urbanized, fragmented, intensely individualistic and competitive society we live in.

They're not pop songs either. Years of listening to mechanical disc jockeys plugging everybody's favorites must have left some trace, I suppose. And I'm not denying that some pop songs (a surprising number considering the limitations of a world in which a song is conceived as a

well-packaged product and judged solely according to its saleability and success) are good, good of their kind, that is.

But these songs are not really their kind. They're not sounds for drinking, driving, dancing, embracing, dreaming, cooking, chatting, shaving to. They don't fit into the BBC's conception of songs as teenage trivia to be purged of all (audible/comprehensible) references to drugs, sex, politics, religion or royalty.

So what's left? Pop-folk? All simple-minded abstractions, self-pitying sentimentality, adolescent platitudes, mindless sincerity and cotton wool protest. Not that. Cabaret songs? Intricate displays of meaninglessness. All sparkle and no beer. Sophisticated froth. No thanks.

What then? Perhaps the safest thing would be just to call them songs. It's not very satisfactory and could be quite misleading. But there seems no choice. Now if I were really shrewd, I'd call them something like 'poetry and music'. That would give them a certain intellectual status, a dash of real class. I might even become a posh-paper cult, like poetry and jazz.

But songs, or contemporary songs—who cares anything about songs? Who expects anything from songs? Normally intelligent people (who would sooner eat their posh papers than accept Patience Strong as representative of modern poetry or 'The Mousetrap' as representative of modern theatre) seem quite content to ac-

cept 'I'll never find another you' or 'Ramblin' Boy' as representative of modern song. Songs are sounds—for eating, shaving chatting, dancing to. Listen to Radio One for proof of that. And since that is what songs are, that, clearly, is what they must be. One generally adjusts one's level of expectations according to what is available.

But is this, after all, the best that songs can do? If there is one thing that the folk song revival has taught us it is that songs can be an essential part of people's lives, not just a background noise. Folk songs, the better ones, stimulate rather than deaden. They use words in a precise yet allusive way, to *carry* meaning rather than to give the *illusion* of meaning. They can be moving without being sentimental or self-pitying. They have the pride and dignity of people who refuse to accept the inferior status allotted to them, who refuse to give in.

It seems to me that this is a time for singing and that we need songs. Songs that provoke and stimulate. Songs that are tough, complex, violent. Songs that destroy the verbal mystifications of clean bombs, pre-emptive strikes, Western democracy, the underdeveloped countries, law and order, pragmatism, free enterprise, freedom of expression and the free world. Songs. Not soothing sounds, not background sounds. For this is a time for singing.

—Leon Rosselson

Music Credits

Side 1

Streets of London:	Vocal: Roy Bailey Guitars: Martin Carthy & Leon Rosselson
I Just Can't Wait:	Vocal: Roy Bailey Concertina: John Kirkpatrick
Coats off for Britain:	Vocal: Leon Rosselson & chorus Guitar: Leon Rosselson Piano: Roy Bailey French Horn: Firoz Shapur Accordian: John Kirkpatrick
High in Control Rooms:	Vocals: Roy Bailey and Leon Rosselson Guitars: Martin Carthy and Leon Rosselson
Ant and Grasshopper:	Vocals: Roy Bailey and Leon Rosselson Guitars: Martin Carthy and Leon Rosselson
Rose of York:	Vocal: Roy Bailey

Side 2

World Turned Upside Down:	Vocals: Roy Bailey and Leon Rosselson Guitars: Martin Carthy and Leon Rosselson Piano: Leon Rosselson
They're going to build a Motorway:	Vocal and Guitar: Leon Rosselson
Punch and Judy Man:	Vocal: Roy Bailey Guitars: Roy Bailey and Leon Rosselson
Perspectives:	Vocal and Guitar: Leon Rosselson
Plan:	Vocal: Roy Bailey, Leon Rosselson and chorus Guitar: Leon Rosselson Accordian: John Kirkpatrick Oboe: Sue Kirkpatrick Jew's Harp: John Kirkpatrick

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